

New Year Greetings

Friday, January 06, 1995

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 06, 1995

The House met at 1.35 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, this is the beginning of a new year, and I take this opportunity to wish Members of this House a productive 1995. I look forward to the co-operation and harmony that existed in 1994, and as a team we move forward as we engage in our task of nation building and the nation's business.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, at this point, I wish to indicate that I had granted leave of absence from today's sitting to the Member for Siparia (*Mr. Sahid Hosein*) from January 6, 1995 for a period of two weeks, and to the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's west (*Mr. Desmond Allum*) just for today's sitting.

**PUBLIC HOLIDAYS
(Joint Select Committee)**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received a communication from the President of the Senate. It is as follows:

“Hon. Speaker, I wish to inform you that at the sitting of the Senate held on Tuesday, December 20, 1994, the Senate agreed to the following resolution which was moved by the Leader of Government Business in the Senate:

Resolved that this Senate agree that it is expedient that a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be established to consider the entire question of public holidays and to report by March 31, 1995.

Be it further resolved that the following five Senators be appointed and nominated to serve with an equal number of Members of the House of Representatives on the said Joint Select Committee. The Members are Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis, Pundit Ramcharan Gosine, Mrs. J. Elder, Mr. J. Barrack and Mrs. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt.”

Season's Greetings

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**SEASON'S GREETINGS
(Tobago House of Assembly)**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I also have a communication from the Secretariat Division of the Tobago House of Assembly which reads as follows:

“Dear Madam,

The Tobago House of Assembly 1992—96 at its plenary sitting, 27th meeting, held in the Tobago House of Assembly Chamber on Thursday, December 15, 1994, by resolve, directed that the season's greetings for a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year be extended to the Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Leader of the Opposition and other Members of the House of Representatives and their families.

Yours faithfully,

Lennox Denoon
Chairman
(THA)”

LATE START OF SITTINGS

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, at this time, there is a matter that I wish to bring to the attention of this House. From time to time I have observed in the printed press that the Speaker was responsible for the late start of sittings. I think hon. Members would know that that is not so. I have noted that in the press on four or five occasions.

I want to remind hon. Members that in accordance with the Standing Orders we ought to begin the sitting of this House at 1.30 p.m. This is the beginning of a new year and I should like Members to make a special effort to be here for 1.30 p.m. It would indeed expedite proceedings, and I would not have to be blamed for the late start of the House. Members know that I am in my chamber from 9.00 or 10.00 a.m.

I do urge all Members to heed this request so that we could begin the proceedings of the House on time.

**CONDOLENCE
(Lord David Pitt)**

Madam Speaker: I think hon. Members are aware that since the last sitting of this House, Lord David Pitt, a notable West Indian gentleman who made a great contribution in England and in the West Indies, passed on. I am sure that members of this House would like to pay tribute to him. I now invite Members to do so.

Condolences (Lord David Pitt)

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The Minister of Education (Hon. Augustus Ramreakersingh): Madam Speaker, on December 17, 1994, Lord Pitt of Hamstead, otherwise known as Dr. David Pitt, died in the United Kingdom. Tomorrow, the deceased Lord Pitt will be buried in Grenada and will be accorded a state funeral. I am very happy to have been asked to say a few words on the career of such a notable Caribbean man.

Dr. Pitt was born in Grenada on October 3, 1913. Having obtained a scholarship, he traveled to Scotland in 1933 and enrolled at the University of Edinburgh where he did a medical degree. Even during his student days, Dr. Pitt was someone who had a sense of fair play. As President of the Students' Union at Edinburgh University, he was extremely active and articulate. He completed his medical degree in 1938 and he had a choice to return to the Caribbean or to accept an offer to work as a doctor in Ghana. He chose instead to return to the Caribbean and to Trinidad and Tobago, where he joined the medical services and was attached to the San Fernando General Hospital.

Dr. Pitt was extremely interested in politics. No doubt, his interest and indeed his views on politics were shaped by events and by the mood of Britain in the 1930s, where many of the anti-colonial leaders would have studied at that time. In the early 1940s, he served as a Member of the San Fernando Borough Council and for a brief period he was the Deputy Mayor of San Fernando.

He founded the West Indian National Party, and in 1946 contested the election in association with a group which was known as the United Front comprising persons like Dr. Patrick Solomon and Mr. Simboonath Capildeo.

The year 1946 is important because it marked the beginning of universal adult suffrage in Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Pitt was not successful in his bid for a seat in the legislature in that year. That may have brought about some disillusionment, but I suspect the greater reason for his disillusionment was the backward nature of the 1946 constitution which had been imposed on us by the colonial powers.

In 1947 he left with his family for England and joined the British Labour Party. He continued his medical practice and for several years he was a Member of the Greater London Council, one of the outstanding institutions in local government in Britain, until its abolition a few years ago, rising to be Chairman of the Greater London Council.

1.45 p.m.

As a member of the Labour Party, Dr. Pitt contested the Clapham South seat in the British election but was unsuccessful.

Condolences (Lord David Pitt)
[HON. A. RAMREKERSINGH]

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In 1975, in recognition of his service, especially his community service, he was made a Life Peer by the British Government and took his seat in the House of Lords as Lord Pitt of Hampstead.

In 1976, Lord Pitt received the Trinity Cross from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for his outstanding work in assisting people of the Caribbean in the United Kingdom. He was also Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Community Relations Commission in Great Britain and was, in fact, asked by the British Government to chair a commission of inquiry into racism in one of the colonies.

Interestingly, he continued his community work even while he was a member of the House of Lords, and West Indians, and, indeed, people from the former British colonies, flocked to his house and office.

In 1984, Dr. Pitt achieved the singular distinction of being elected President of the British Medical Association, the first black person to be so honoured, and in 1985 he carried out those duties.

In the late 1980s, Dr. Pitt's health began to fail. Nevertheless, he continued sitting in the House of Lords and his community work continued. It is true that most of this life was spent outside the Caribbean, but the contribution he made has been recognized in the United Kingdom and at home, so that I have very great pleasure in saying something about this son of the Caribbean.

Dr. Pitt undoubtedly achieved much in his lifetime, but like many other persons, I am sure there were unfulfilled dreams. On occasions like these, when we pay tribute to those who have passed on, I am always reminded of the words of Thomas Gray:

“Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust
Or Flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of Death?”

Lord Pitt gained recognition in his lifetime for his contribution. So that whatever dreams were unfulfilled, he passed on to the next world with the sense of having achieved. I feel that the words of Shelley, on the occasion of the death of the poet Keats in 1821, in a poem called *Adonais*, are especially appropriate.

“Why weep for Adonais?
'Tis Death is dead, not he.”

Condolences (Lord David Pitt)

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I take the opportunity to extend our most profound sympathies to his family—in fact, one of his daughters is a lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine in Trinidad and Tobago—and pray that God grant him eternal rest. May his soul rest in peace.

Mr. Ramesh L. Maharaj (*Couva South*): Madam Speaker, just before the Parliament started today, I was informed of the opportunity which was to be given to say a few words on the passing of this great Caribbean man.

The life of Dr. Pitt showed that although a person may not be totally accepted in his own society, he can go to other parts of the world and his worth is recognized.

Lord David Pitt sat in the House of Lords, which, as you know, comprises Members of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, but in that body members of the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords and the Privy Council also sit. He was a good ambassador for the Caribbean. By his works he demonstrated that although there were the problems of a coloured man fitting into a society dominated by the white sector, he was able to withstand the pressure and the problems and attain one of the highest positions in that country. I am sure that his experiences in the Caribbean, being a plural society, served him well.

Although Lord Pitt is dead, I think his life leaves an indelible mark on the history of the Caribbean and the promotion of the rights of coloured people in the United Kingdom.

We on this side of the House, the United National Congress, extend our sympathies to the family, and join in paying tribute to the departed one.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I should like to take this opportunity to join with Members in offering my condolences to the family of the late Lord David Pitt. I think one can truly say of him that his life was his message.

I now direct the Clerk of the House to issue a letter on behalf of this House to his daughter, Dr. Phyllis Pitt-Miller, Head of the Anaesthetic Division of the Intensive Care Unit of the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, expressing our condolences, and asking that our expressions of grief and regret be conveyed to the entire family.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation for the period October 01, 1991 to December 31, 1991. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Wendell Mottley)*]

Papers Laid

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2. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Institute of Marine Affairs for the year ended December 31, 1993. [*Hon. W. Mottley*]
3. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts and Financial Statements of the Technical Assistance Loan Project for the year ended December 31, 1993 as required by Loan Contract No. 3153—TR between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. [*Hon. W. Mottley*]

Papers 1 and 3 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

4. The Regional Health Authorities (Contracting for Goods and Services) Regulations, 1994. [*The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein)*]
5. The Regional Health Authorities Order, 1994 [*Hon. J. Eckstein*]
6. The Minimum Wages (Security Industry Employees) Order, 1994. [*The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives (Hon. Kenneth Collis)*]
7. Thirty-third Report of the Salaries Review Commission—Review of the Terms and Conditions of the Employment of the office of Executive Director, Investment/Divestment. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker I would like to inform this honourable House that of the questions on the Order Paper today the Government has answers for the following: Nos. 4, 19, 27, 32, and 45. I would request that question No. 33 be deferred for a period of two weeks; the other questions being deferred for a period of one week.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, question No. 5 has been on this Order Paper since November last year and we have had a series of deferrals of what is really a rather simple question. I cannot understand why we come here. There is a three-week period that is fixed by the Standing Orders and after three months we are still awaiting a response to that question. I find that gross discourtesy to this House.

If the Minister is not available someone else can answer the question on her behalf. But a question being deferred from November, 1994 to now is totally intolerable and indeed, is not in accordance with the respect which should be accorded to this House.

Madam Speaker: Will the hon. Minister take note of the Member's comments, please.

**Report on Visit to Recreation Grounds
(Victoria)**

4. Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*) asked the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) Whether a report was submitted to her by officials of her ministry with respect to a visit to recreation grounds in the Victoria section of the Oropouche constituency on April 21, 1994?
- (b) Whether any recommendations were made with respect to the improvement and upgrading of the grounds and facilities?
- (c) If the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, whether funding could be made available from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs for this purpose?
- (d) Why no arrangement has thus far been made for a visit to the recreation grounds in the St. Patrick section of the Oropouche constituency as promised on April 21, 1994?

The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Hon. Jean Pierre): Madam Speaker, subsequent to a visit by ministry officials to recreation grounds in the Victoria section of the Oropouche constituency on April 21, 1994, a report was made to the Minister. The situation is as follows:

- (i) The recreation grounds visited were of a community to club level.
- (ii) The Regional Corporation/Local Government Authority has been involved in the maintenance of the established recreation grounds.
- (iii) Of the facilities visited several required acquisition. However, it was noted that most of them did not satisfy the minimum recommended area for recreation grounds, that is, five acres.

The provision, improvement and upgrading of sporting facilities at community level is the function of the Regional Corporation/Local Government Authority.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs provides technical assistance in the pursuance of such matters.

The standard procedure is that the Regional Corporations/Local Government Authorities, through their technical officers, liaise with their counterparts in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in order that the specific technical advice required for the improvement of grounds at the community level may be ascertained.

Funding for these projects is normally available within the development programme allocation of the various regional corporations.

In similar fashion to the procedure established for the visit by ministry officials to recreation grounds in the Victoria section of the Oropouche constituency, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is still awaiting information from the hon. Member with regard to the specific areas he wishes to visit in the St. Patrick section of the Oropouche constituency.

Mr. Sudama: Am I to understand, Madam Speaker, that since April 21, 1994 the Ministry has been awaiting a response from me? What is the function of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs if the Ministry cannot assist in the upgrade and development of recreation grounds when the local government bodies do not have the finances available to do so? What exactly is its function? Does the Ministry have a function at all?

Hon. J. Pierre: Madam Speaker, it is a different question and if the Member would like an answer to that, it can be done in a similar manner. With regard to the time frame, I think the hon. Member was negligent in following up our visit to the Oropouche constituency.

Mr. Sudama: Madam Speaker, I take umbrage at the remark. When this tour was made on April 21, 1994 I made it clear to the ministry's officials that they should get in touch with me when they are ready to proceed on the St. Patrick side. So to come here and mislead this House—*[Interruption]*

Madam Speaker: Now that the hon. Member knows what is keeping the situation back, maybe the hon. Member can follow it up. I note that questions Nos. 19 and 27 are in the name of the Member for Siparia. Is there any deferment?

Mr. Maharaj: Madam Speaker, we would ask that Nos. 19 and 27 be deferred for a period of two weeks.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

**Provisions for Repairs
(Debe Community Centre)**

5. Could the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs state:

- (i) Whether any provisions have been made in 1994 for repair work on the Debe Community Centre?
- (ii) If the answer is in the negative, could the Minister state why not? *[Mr. T. Sudama]*

**Mohess Road
(Repairs)**

11. Could the Minister of Works and Transport state:

What work does his Ministry propose to undertake on the Mohess Road to effect repairs and how soon is that work to be undertaken? *[Mr. S. Hosein]*

**Acquisition of Land
(Procedure)**

16. Could the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs state:

- (a) What is the procedure for the acquisition of land for the purpose of building community centers?
- (b) Whether the Palmiste Village Council, via Longdenville, has applied for the acquisition of land by following such procedure?
If the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, would the Minister state what is the status of such application?
- (c) When would such acquisition be completed? *[Mr. R. Palackdharrysingh]*

Water and Sewerage Authority

19. Can the Minister of Public Utilities indicate when the Water and Sewerage Authority will undertake the following works:

- (a) Laying of a new 16-inch main from the Barrackpore Police Station to the Clarke Road Booster?
- (b) Laying of new mains at Katwaroo Trace?

- (c) Refurbishing of the Penal Water Works?
- (d) Replacing of the AC Mains referred to as the Daisy Mains along Cottage Road and Rochard Road? *[Mr. S. Hosein]*

**Divestment of Real Estate Holdings
(Trintoc/Trintopec)**

27. Can the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries indicate to this honorable House:

- (a) What plans does Petrotrin or the Government have for divesting the real estate holdings of Trintoc and Trintopec which were not vested in Petrotrin?
- (b) What mechanism is going to be employed to ensure that there is transparency in this divestment process?
- (c) If any such holdings have been divested, to whom, and at what price?

If the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, can the Minister indicate the procedures involved? *[Mr. S. Hosein]*

Questions, by leave, deferred.

**Residents of Demerara Road, Arima
(Lead Poisoning)**

32. Mr. Ramesh L. Maharaj (*Couva South*) asked the Minister of Planning and Development:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) Whether the Government caused investigations to be done in respect of lead poisoning of residents of Demerara Road, Arima? If it did, could the Minister give particulars of the investigations conducted?
- (b) Could the Minister indicate if a report was presented to the Government with respect to (a)? If a report was presented, could the Minister give particulars of the report and its recommendations?
- (c) Could the Minister say whether his Government has any objections to the laying of the report in Parliament? If he has, could he give the reasons for his objections?
- (d) Could the Minister indicate whether his Government has implemented any of the recommendations of the report and what steps, if any, have

been taken or will be taken by Government to minimize the effects of lead poisoning to the residents?

- (e) Could the Minister indicate whether his Government has any information or any evidence of lead poisoning to residents in other areas of Trinidad and Tobago? If it does, please state the areas?

The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam Speaker, the Government has carried out investigations into the occurrence of lead poisoning of the residents of Demerara Road, Arima. After discovery of the problem in April 1993, where a six-year-old child was diagnosed with lead poisoning, the County Medical Officer of Health in St. George East immediately initiated an environmental assessment which revealed excessive lead waste in the surroundings of the patient's home.

Further enquiry by the relevant ministries and agencies convinced the Government that more careful investigation was required to arrive at an appropriate solution. This led to the establishment of a multi-disciplinary task force under the advice of Cabinet in June 1993. The task force consisted of representatives of the Ministries of Health, Housing and Settlement, Local Government, National Security, Planning and Development, Public Utilities, and Works and Transport.

The task force submitted its report on June 29, 1993; the main findings were as follows:

- (i) Approximately half of the 500 occupants of the area were under 12 years of age.
- (ii) A major implication of lead poisoning is the long term negative effect on all organs of the body, particularly the brain and nervous systems of foetuses and young children and result from prolonged exposure.

2.05 p.m.

- (iii) The contaminated site poses a risk to other communities because of the possibility of transport of contaminants through air or water.
- (iv) Medical treatment of victims of lead poisoning incurs tremendous financial costs.

The major recommendations of the task force were:

- (1) Compulsory evacuation of the area to be undertaken after a survey of households to establish the number of persons to be relocated.

- (2) A legal opinion on compulsory evacuation and prevention of re-occupation of the affected areas to be obtained.
- (3) The Ministry of National Security should ensure the effective evacuation of all occupants of the site and prevent its re-occupation and further use.

Madam Speaker, a copy of the report has been forwarded to the Parliament Library.

The Government has begun to implement the recommendations of the report of the task force as follows:

- (a) Preparation of the site for relocation of the affected residents is 80 per cent completed. The facilities being provided include gravel roadways, unpaved drains, water supply, communal wash and bath facilities, sewerage disposal and electricity. Full completion was due by the end of 1994.
- (b) The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs has been requested to advise on measures to enforce the compulsory evacuation of affected persons and to prevent re-occupation of the area since it has been reported that there was a reluctance on the part of some residents to leave the area.
- (c) A survey of the households in the affected area was conducted to determine the families to be relocated. Verification of the location and identity of some 54 of the 140 families identified in the original survey is being undertaken. This should have been completed by the end of 1994.

A technical team under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Works and Transport has identified the activities and estimated cost of the excavation, treatment and disposal of contaminated material on the site. These costs are estimated at approximately \$1.5 million. These activities must be ideally carried out in the dry season but have to await the relocation of the inhabitants.

The Government has no information on or evidence of lead poisoning affecting residents in any other area in Trinidad and Tobago.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

**Point Lisas Companies
(Emergency Safeguards)**

33. (a) Could the Minister of Labour and Co-operatives state what protective measures (if any) have been taken and what safeguards (if any) are in place in the operations of the Companies at Point Lisas to prevent injury to life and damage to property of residents of Couva and the surrounding areas in the event an emergency arises as a result of the escape of poisonous gases or substances or chemicals or any other matter?

- (b) Could the Minister say whether there is any risk of the escape of any toxic fumes, gases or chemicals from any of the plants at Point Lisas?
[Mr. R. Maharaj]

Crime Committee

- 34.** (a) Can the Minister of National Security state the functions and duties of the Crime Committee which was recently appointed by Government?
- (b) Can the Minister give particulars of the matters the Committee addressed since its appointment and state whether any Report was submitted to Government in respect of such matters?
- (c) Can the Minister state whether his Government has any objections to the laying of the Crime Committee Reports in Parliament (if there are any)? If he objects, could he give reasons for his objections?
- (d) Can the Minister indicate what criteria was used in selecting the members of the Committee? Could he explain why the church, the Trade Union Movement, the Police and the non-governmental organizations were not given representations and/or where relevant, a wider representation on the said Committee? [Mr. R. Maharaj]

**Polyclinic
(Establishment)**

- 40.** Would the Minister of Health state:
- (a) Whether Government has taken a decision to establish a polyclinic instead of reopening the Princes Town Hospital?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister state whether the present building is adequate to accommodate this polyclinic?
- (c) If the answer is in the negative, would the Minister state what arrangements are being made for same? [Mr. M. Haniff]

**State Companies/Agencies
(Divestment/Privatization)**

- 41.** Would the Minister of Finance state:
- (a) How many state companies/agencies have been divested/privatized since 1992 to date?
- (b) How many more state companies/agencies are currently being divested/privatized?
- (c) How many other state companies/agencies are listed for divestment/privatization?

- (d) What sum of money Government received to date from each state company/agency divested/privatized?
- (e) How is the money being utilized or what proposals are there to utilize same? [Mr. M. Haniff]

Questions, by leave, deferred.

**Landslip, Syne Village
(Repair of)**

45. Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*) asked the Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government:

Could the Minister state whether the Government intends to repair a landslip in existence now for eleven years near the 10 ¼ mile mark on the busy San Fernando-Siparia-Erin Road at Syne Village, Siparia?

The Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, the landslip is located at the 10.35 mile mark on the Erin Road. The soil type is predominantly sand and the landslip has affected approximately 2.5 metres of the roadway. Detailed soil investigations have revealed that there exists an active water table under the slip plane, which is believed to have washed away the embankment support resulting in failure.

Since the conventional gabion basket wall did not work as a repair method, it has been decided that new technologies are required. As such, the Victoria West/St. Patrick district intends to utilize Geo-grid technologies to solve the problem in 1995. In the interim, to minimize the inconvenience to motorists, the vertical alignment has been shifted incorporating the shoulders as part of the road. Protective barriers have been installed and have been marked off and signed.

The landslip is programmed for repair within the first half of 1995 under the Road Improvement Fund Programme, and the repair cost is estimated to be \$250,00.

Mr. Sudama: Madam Speaker, does the Minister recall that in answer to a similar question in 1992 he gave the following response:

“The Minister of Works and Transport wishes to advise that repairs to this landslip are proposed for the 1992/1993 programme.

If that undertaking was given in 1992, what guarantee do I have that a similar undertaking given in 1995 will, in fact, be carried out?

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, there are two issues here: subject to the availability of funds and, in addition, in the response that I gave today, I indicated that

the conventional gabion basket wall did not work as a repair method. This should imply that repairs were attempted but were not successful and new technologies are being used in 1995, so that repairs will be completed within the first half of 1995.

**Victoria East District
(Allocation of Funds)**

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. M. Haniff (Princes Town)

- 50.** Would the Minister of Works and Transport please state:
- (a) The amount of funds allocated and released as at 30th November, 1994 to the Ministry of Works, Victoria East District for Goods and Services under Recurrent Services, Highways Divisions and the Transport Section?

Question, by leave, deferred.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Buildings Tenanted by the State

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. S. Panday (Naparima):

- 31.** Can the Prime Minister state:
- (a) The number of buildings which are tenanted by the State?
 - (b) The addresses of these buildings?
 - (c) The name of the landlords of each building?
 - (d) The date of commencement of each tenancy?
 - (e) The Ministry and/or division of each Ministry which is in occupation of each building?
 - (f) The monthly rental of each building?

Question, by leave, deferred.

DEFINITE URGENT MATTERS

**Withdrawal of Senior Medical Officers' Services
(San Fernando General Hospital)**

Madam Speaker: Having regard to the reports coming out of the media, is the Member still pursuing this matter?

Dr. Carl Singh (Tabaquite): Madam Speaker, that does not solve the problem.

Madam Speaker: Before the Member proceeds, may I advise him that on matters of this nature a Member is allowed to raise one matter—not matters

Definite Urgent Matters
[MADAM SPEAKER]

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incidental thereto—a matter of definite urgent public importance. That is the matter which we would be dealing with. All right, proceed.

Dr. C. Singh: The matter is definite, Madam Speaker, because of the chaos in the health services resulting in an impasse at the San Fernando General Hospital over the new year weekend, January 01, 1995, when the senior medical officers withdrew their services and several patients were denied medical attention at the institution because of administrative bungling of the 1978 Industrial Agreement.

The matter is urgent in that the junior staff were unable to perform their functions without supervision from the senior medical officers and, as a result, the patients were unable to receive adequate medical treatment at the public health institution.

It is urgent because, for example, there could be a road traffic accident where about 20 or 25 persons could be injured and to access treatment at the San Fernando General Hospital would be impossible. This is a rather important institution in the southern part of the country for provision of medical attention.

I am of the view, Madam Speaker, that this matter demands immediate attention so that a recurrence in the future would be avoided.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I am not satisfied that this is a matter which falls for consideration under Standing Order 12.

Water Shortage

Mr. Mohammed Haniff (*Princes Town*): Madam Speaker, as a result of my experiences during the Christmas holidays, when I had tremendous difficulty in communicating with the authorities in a situation where there was no water, I was forced to send you a letter this morning seeking leave to raise a definite matter of urgent public importance, the matter being the critical shortage of water throughout the country.

The matter is definite since it concerns the critical shortage of a basic necessity essential to the sustenance of life.

It is urgent because the shortage of water directly affects the daily life of each citizen of this country and negatively impacts on the economic and social life of the nation. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that we are currently in the dry season, and school reopens on Monday.

The matter is of public importance because this shortage is being experienced throughout Trinidad and Tobago and affects the majority of citizens and, to date, there has been no indication of imminent relief.

Madam Speaker, in several parts of the country for periods of 14 days, 21 days and 25 days, there has been no water and during the Christmas season I had extreme difficulty. I contacted some of the senior officials. I also called for the Minister of Public Utilities whom I was not able to contact. The situation continues and there is need to have a discussion on this issue with a view to bringing some relief to the suffering public.

Madam Speaker: This is not the type of matter which falls under Standing Order 12.

2.15 p.m.

Free School Transport

Mr. Gideon Hanoomansingh (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Madam Speaker, I, too, seek your leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, that is, the failure of the Government to guarantee that adequate arrangements are made to provide school children with free, safe and reliable transport.

The matter is definite because it relates to the present situation where school children are being denied access to free bus transport to and from school. The matter is urgent because the new school terms is due to commence in three days and several thousand children will be affected. The matter is of public importance because affected school children may be forced to absent themselves from school, thus denying themselves the opportunity of a sound education.

I feel this matter should be treated with priority for discussion.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I wish to advise the hon. Member that I am not satisfied that this is the type of matter that falls for discussion under Standing Order 12.

BWIA (DIVESTMENT)

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I have been authorized by the Cabinet to make the following statement to this honourable House.

BWIA (Divestment)
[HON. K. VALLEY]

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This morning Government signed an Investment Agreement among Acker/Loeb, Loeb Partners, and a newly registered company, BWIA International Airways Corporation. This agreement represents a significant milestone in Government's efforts to serve our strategic national interests by enlisting the managerial and financial support of the local, regional and international private sectors to secure the establishment of an efficient, well-capitalized national flag carrier. This morning's agreement sets the stage for such an equity injection by the private sector on January 31, 1995

The agreement signed this morning provides a credible basis for the establishment of long-term viability for the airline while providing more than adequate protection for Government's strategic and commercial interests.

A pre-new investment value of US \$80 million is to be placed on new BWIA. At closing, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will be issued common stock in the amount of US \$19.2 million and US \$10 million of preference stock. In addition, Government will be issued with preference share warrants of up to US \$51.8 million. The conversion of the warrants to preference stock in the books of new BWIA will depend on the process from the sale of three L1011 and one MD83 aircraft and their related spares.

In order to protect Government's commercial interest in the airline, certain safeguards have been built into the agreement. In this regard, it is mandatory that board approval be sought in the following matters:

- (i) declaration of payment of any dividend;
- (ii) investments not provided for in the annual budget or annual business plan that are in excess of US \$250,000 individually or US \$500,000 collectively, during any fiscal year;
- (iii) the creation, incurrence, assumption or guarantee of any indebtedness, including obligations as lessee under lease, not provided for in the annual budget or annual business plan, in excess of US \$250,000 individually or US \$500,000 in the aggregate, during any fiscal year;
- (iv) any material contract;
- (v) the audited annual financial statements or any financial information to be made public;
- (vi) the annual budget and annual business plan;

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- (vii) capital expenditure not provided for in the annual budget or annual business plan in excess of US \$100,000 individually, or US \$250,000 in the aggregate, during any fiscal year;
- (viii) any proposal for new BWIA to become a public company;
- (ix) the issuance of capital stock;
- (x) any direct or indirect redemption, purchase or other acquisition by New BWIA on any of its subsidiaries of any of new BWIA's equity securities; and
- (xi) the establishment of any committee of the board with the power to approve any of the above.

In order to protect Government's strategic interest in respect of secure air transportation and the promotion of the tourism industry, Government will retain a golden share. The rights attached to the golden share include veto power by Government in respect of the following matters:

- (i) any merger or consolidation with, or sale of all or substantially all of new BWIA's assets to any person, including without limitation, any Caribbean air carrier;
- (ii) any voluntary liquidation or dissolution;
- (iii) any strategic alliance or joint venture with any Caribbean air carrier;
- (iv) the acquisition, sale, transfer, or relinquishment of any route authority or operating rights involving Trinidad and Tobago;
- (v) any change in jurisdiction of incorporation, location of principal executive offices or any of the headquarter operations to a jurisdiction outside the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago or any change in the name of new BWIA;
- (vi) appointment, compensation and dismissal of the Chairman of the Board, the Deputy Chairman of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, or any other officer with similar responsibilities but with a different title;
- (vii) any transaction between new BWIA and any company; and
- (viii) any proposed amendment to the articles of association of new BWIA which alters or amends the rights and privileges associated with the golden share or the governance provision as set out in the Investment Agreement.

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Further, should new BWIA propose a change to the flight schedule which may have an adverse effect on air transportation to and from Trinidad and Tobago, Government shall have forty days to develop a plan which addresses this concern.

The Investment Agreement provides for the establishment of an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) of 10 per cent in which all non-executive employees of new BWIA may participate. However, employee participation in new BWIA goes well beyond the traditional ESOP. The employees of BWIA will utilize some of the surplus in the existing pension plan to purchase an additional 15.5 per cent of the airline, thus with the 10 per cent in the Employee Stock Ownership Plan, the employees of the airline will own 25.5 per cent of the equity in the new airline.

In pursuing this vision of a share-owning democracy, the unions together with Government and BWIA, have also fashioned one of the most progressive pension plans in the country.

Madam Speaker, in keeping with Government's commitment, two copies of the Investment Agreement will be lodged with the Clerk of the House by the next sitting of this Parliament for the perusal of Members. In addition, immediately on closing the transaction, Government will lay an executive summary of the transaction in Parliament.

I thank you.

2.25 p.m.

Mr. B. Panday: Madam Speaker, would the hon. Minister indicate his agreement to lay that document and all other relevant documents in Parliament and to have this matter debated in the Parliament?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, the Government expects to introduce, at the next sitting of the Parliament, a Vesting Bill which will have the effect of vesting assets of old BWIA into new BWIA, which is one of the closing conditions. This would provide the Parliament with the opportunity to debate the whole transaction. I can inform the Parliament that the Investment Agreement, in its entirety, is the only document that was executed.

As I said, two copies will be lodged with the Clerk before the next sitting of the Parliament.

**PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES (COMMISSION OF
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES) ORDER**

The Minister of External Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj): Madam Speaker, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

Whereas it is provided by section 9 of the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic, Consular and International Organisations) Act, Chap. 17:01 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that the President may by Order declare that any international or regional organization or agency named or described in such Order shall, to such extent as specified in the Order, be accorded the privileges and immunities set out in the Fifth Schedule therein;

And Whereas it is also provided by section 9 of the Act that every Order made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

And Whereas it is expedient that the Order now be affirmed:

Be it resolved that the Privileges and Immunities (Commission of the European Communities) Order, 1994 be approved.

This Motion seeks the approval of this honourable House for the granting of the same privileges and immunities to the mission of the Commission of the European Communities and its members as are now enjoyed by diplomatic missions here in Port of Spain.

The delegation of the Commission of the European Communities has had a mission in Trinidad and Tobago since 1976. At present, 14 persons make up the staff of the delegation’s mission in Port of Spain. This number includes the head of the delegation of the 14 staff members. Seven are Trinidad and Tobago nationals: one project secretary, one receptionist, one accounts/secretary, one secretary/typist and three drivers.

The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Commission of the European Communities on the establishment and on the privileges and immunities of the delegation of the Commission of the European Communities was signed at Brussels, Belgium, on September 14, 1993, with a view to normalizing the status of General Relations Incorporation in accordance with Annex LXXIII of the Lomé IV Convention’s joint declaration to Protocol 3 on Commission Delegations. I quote the text:

“Within the context of their respective regulations, the ACP States shall grant Commission Delegations privileges and immunities similar to those granted to diplomatic missions so that they are able to carry out the functions incumbent on them under the Convention in a satisfactory and effective manner.”

This agreement formally expresses the consent of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the establishment of a commission delegation

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in this country and similar formal establishment agreements have been signed by 51 ACP countries, including some in the Caribbean: Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica.

The establishment agreement requires the Government to accord legal personality to the Commission of the European Communities in Trinidad and Tobago and to grant it the capacity to conclude contracts and to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property; to conduct legal proceedings and to be represented for that purpose by the commission in Trinidad and Tobago.

The establishment agreement also accords to the delegation of the commission in Trinidad and Tobago and its head and members, together with members of their families forming part of their respective households, the same privileges and immunities corresponding to those which in conformity with the United Nations 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations are granted by Government to diplomatic missions accredited to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and to the staff of such missions.

The agreement also takes into account the very important concept of reciprocity. The grant of these privileges that we are asking this House to agree to is conditioned on the Trinidad and Tobago's mission to the European Communities in Brussels being accorded the same privileges and immunities, which are already in operation.

The agreement requires the Government to exclude from being accorded diplomatic privileges and immunities in Trinidad and Tobago, members of staff of the delegation of the commission in this country who are residents of Trinidad and Tobago who are locally recruited. Where such persons are appointed as international staff, that is locals appointed as international staff of the delegation of the commission in Trinidad and Tobago, with the consent of the Government of this country, they are entitled only to functional immunity, that is, they are entitled to immunity only whilst in the exercise of their duties.

The agreement requires the Government to recognize as a valid travel document the *laissez-passer* issued by the European Communities to officials and other servants of this institutions. Trinidad and Tobago, as you know, already recognizes the United Nations *laissez-passer* and the European travel document would be accorded a similar status.

This agreement will come into force on the date on which the commission receives notification from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that domestic legal requirements for giving effect to the said agreement in Trinidad and Tobago have, in fact, been completed.

Full diplomatic privileges and immunities to staff of the delegation of the Commission of the European Communities have been granted by other countries; countries as varied as Japan, the former Soviet Union and the United States of America.

Although the Commission of the European Communities is not regarded as a state—as you know, the European Commission represents all the countries of the European Community, and this commission, though not regarded as a state, is regarded as a supra-national, legal and political entity on the international stage, possessing certain attributes of sovereignty, in that it is able to conduct various kinds of business based on its own authority. The community is therefore clearly distinguishable from any ordinary international organization.

As you know, one of the major instruments of relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and the European Community is the Lomé Convention. Indeed, we place great emphasis on this convention. This country, either through the regional indicative programme or the national programme, has reaped tremendous benefits. We have had infrastructural development, road repair, community centres being constructed, and so forth. As I say, with a degree of pride, that since the coming into office of this administration, the utilization of the opportunities and the funds under this Lomé Convention has, indeed, improved tremendously and we are seeing the benefits of that.

As I said, we have placed great emphasis on this, not only in terms of the aid that we get from this Lomé Convention but also in terms of the preferential market access that we do enjoy.

2.35 p.m.

This country has been a participant in all four Lomé Conventions, and it was one of the first three countries to ratify Lomé IV, which came into effect on September 1, 1991. Under the Lomé Convention IV, for example, Trinidad and Tobago has been allocated ECU \$20 million (TT \$115 million), ECU \$70 million in grants for national projects, and ECU \$3 million for structural adjustment. The latter is another dimension that is coming into the Lomé Convention, the recognition that there is need to set aside programmes to help countries through this period of structural adjustment.

Assistance under the Lomé Convention can come in the form of financial, technical or other co-operation at either the national level, under the National Indicative Programme.

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Some barriers to the achievement of goals under the convention have been eliminated under Lomé IV as the local authorities and the resident delegate of the European Commission have been given the authority to approve local work contracts of up to ECU \$5 million, and supply contracts of up to \$1 million without reference to the European Commission in Brussels. It is a measure of further instance of delegation of authority existing within the commission of Port of Spain.

Just to give you some more information on some of the benefits that Trinidad and Tobago has enjoyed under the Lomé I, II and III. Trinidad and Tobago received a total allocation of ECU \$36 million for projects in water supply, road infrastructure, industrial equipment, rural development, tourism and trade promotion sectors, as well as in human resource development.

National Indicative Programme renegotiated in 1993 under Lomé III and IV, focused on road rehabilitation, support for structural adjustments, as well as support for three programmes, agricultural youth training programme, small business development programme and rural electrification programme. Trinidad and Tobago, as you know, also benefits in the framework of the Lomé Convention under the sugar protocol, in that we are able to export a quota of 47,000 tonnes of sugar to the European market, and annual earnings of this export may be estimated at about ECU \$20 million.

Not only do delegations play the usual role of liaison in the various countries, but they also help with on-the-ground action with the implementation of community policy towards the ACP states. Their essential role in this respect is to oversee the proper execution of projects financed by the European Development Fund.

What we are seeking to do here essentially is really to formalize an arrangement that is already in place, a relationship through which this country has benefited tremendously, and to accord privileges and immunities to an organization which enjoys these privileges and immunities in other countries, and which in our view, deserves to enjoy them in Trinidad and Tobago. As I said, it is based on the premise that these privileges and immunities would be accorded to our mission in Brussels. The enactment of this order would facilitate the entry into force of the agreement.

I ask hon. Members of this House to give it their full support.

Thank you.

Question proposed.

Mr. Chandresh Sharma (*Fyzabad*): Madam Speaker, this being our first meeting for 1995, I take the opportunity on behalf of Members on this side to wish your good self all the best for 1995, and also to wish Members opposite, and by extension the entire community, prosperity.

I also want to congratulate the Member for San Fernando West on his presentation today. Perhaps, the Minister, and by extension the Government, does not understand the role of foreign affairs. I have looked at all the legislation brought to this House by the hon. Member for San Fernando West, and I have found that in more than 70 per cent of the cases, they are always to the benefit of foreigners.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry here does not imply that the Minister must do everything in his power to accommodate those outside Trinidad and Tobago. It is his moral obligation to ensure that the legislation brought to this House, in the first instance, is for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

He went on to give us a historical background of the CEC and the role of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. He indicated that this has been here since 1976, and is now being formalized. He mentioned the travel document *laissez-passer*. Perhaps, one has to ask the question: Does *laissez-passer* mean that this Government would let anything pass through this country?

We have seen in the last three years the largest amount of illegal drugs coming into and leaving Trinidad and Tobago—under this administration. We have seen in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated January 3, 1995, that the deadly Rhino ammunition, the Black Talon bullet is available in Trinidad and Tobago. One asks the question: How is all this entering Trinidad and Tobago? Is it *laissez-passer*? Is it in the bags of the diplomats? Is it coming in the travel bags of the Ministers opposite? If it is in fact correct to say that in recent times we have seen the passage of drugs in and out of Trinidad and Tobago, the immediate question that comes to mind is: How is it being done?

Dr. Rowley: I am trying to follow the Member. Did he say something about whether they enter the country through the Ministers' travel bags? If he did say that I wonder whether I can ask him to withdraw that comment in the light of imputing improper motives.

Mr. B. Panday: By asking it?

Dr. Rowley: You keep quiet. Do you think this is Couva Courthouse?

Mr. B. Panday: Imputing improper motives by asking it?

Mr. C. Sharma: Madam Speaker, the Standing Orders of this House allow for the use of the English Language.

Mr. B. Panday: Suppose I ask how much the Government spent in Haiti. I cannot ask that?

Mr. C. Sharma: It also extends it though, to say that the Members opposite would also understand the English Language. I want to proceed.

Mr. B. Panday: One can ask anything in this House.

Mr. C. Sharma: I want to proceed.

The Minister went on to talk about the funding that has come to Trinidad and Tobago. Is it that this Government is prepared to give all kinds of immunities and privileges for a few dollars? We have seen under the CEC—the grants in 1994 for instance under the EEC have been \$46 million. I am not talking about loans here. I am talking about grants. The Minister went on to indicate that we have received close to \$150 million. These moneys come into the country in the form of grants. How are these moneys being utilized? What is the procedure? Is the national community outside this House told of this funding? For what is it being used?

He went on to indicate that some of the money is being spent on roads. We have seen an increased surcharge for the cost of fuel to address the question of roads. We are receiving grants—where are they being spent? He went on to say that some of the money is being spent in the agricultural sector. One does not have to question what the agricultural sector is at this time.

On the question of youth development and small business, on many occasions in this House we have raised the question of small business and now we are seeing grants coming into this country, and the Government is treating this as if it is its personal money and giving it to whom it wants with no accountability.

We saw the question of rural electrification. I must highlight the recent crime situation in this country, and recently in my own constituency, the death of a young lady, Marlene Andrews, who was 19 years old. You have seen in the newspapers and in the electronic media where the community has been protesting about the lack of street lighting. Of course, that comes under rural electrification. Here the Government is prepared to accommodate anybody under any system once some funding is available. Where is this money being spent? No report has been submitted or laid in this House. Members on this side are unable to access any kind of information.

2.45 p.m.

When I raise the question of drugs and ammunition, perhaps I need to refer the Member for Diego Martin West to the contribution of his political leader, the Member for San Fernando East. This is what he said on December 1, 1989. I quote from *Hansard*:

“You know very well, Mr. Speaker, that it is recorded in the history of Trinidad and Tobago that—without wanting to name any country or individual—the diplomatic bag, which is part of the privileges and immunities, has been abused in many instances.”

So, he should be withdrawing the question. You see the double game. We have confirmed on many occasions that the Member for San Fernando East speaks sensible when he is on this side—and he is returning here soon—but during that process we see too many instances of abuse by the Government in matters of this kind. [*Interruption*] He went on to say:

“What I am saying is that in the light of the acknowledged concern of Members on both sides; in the light of the acknowledged concern of the population of Trinidad and Tobago for drugs, the abuse of diplomatic privileges and immunities for the trafficking of drugs and situations such as those that were alluded to before this honourable House ...”

Members opposite raised this concern in 1989. They have been in power for the last three years and they have done absolutely nothing to address this. We have seen in recent times that both the DEA in the United States, and the Food, Drugs and Alcohol Organization have indicated to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago their concern that the country is a transshipment point for drugs and other illegal substances, and more than that, very little is being done. You will recall, Madam Speaker, that the Government of the United States had granted money and were very disappointed in the use of that money.

Today, in addressing the whole question of privileges and immunities, we again ask the question: In whose interest? In the first instance, it must be in the interest of Trinidad and Tobago.

I come to the question of what is happening with the local people who are employed, for example, in CEC. What protection do they have? At this time there is no protection for any employee. While the CEC can take one to court, the employee cannot question any of its actions. While it enjoys all the tax benefits and duties off all the assets, real and otherwise, it can sell its real estate or any

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asset in Trinidad and Tobago at any price, making a profit. So, in the first instance, we see where it obtains tax exemptions, and this is not reflected in the disposal of same.

The question of the assets of the CEC cannot be taken to court at any time. The property and assets are also immune to search or to any legal action. Also all property and assets of the CEC shall be free from restrictions, regulations, controls and similar things.

The Member for San Fernando East also raised the question in 1989 of 100 cases of wine brought in through the diplomatic bag—perhaps he meant boxes.

We are seeing where the Member questioned certain actions in 1989. From then to now, I have indicated that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has brought legislation to this House always to the benefit of foreigners and very little benefiting the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

In addition there is the question of what will happen to the grants that have been received. Does the Lomé Convention give any guidance that these grants should be used in a particular manner, meaning that they should benefit the national community? How are these programmes executed? During the last few days, I have enquired, through Government agencies, how they arrive at the way the grants are spent. To date, no information has been made available. No one knows for certain how they determine if a particular project can be executed in certain areas.

I have looked at my own constituency. The members of my constituency have applied for rural electrification programmes and to date there has been no response. When we wrote T&TEC, they indicated that there was no funding. We wrote a second letter indicating that the CEC gave a grant for same, and again there was no response.

The same things holds for a number of Members on this side. When applications for small business assistance come about, no one is told that grants are available. Here a grant is totally different from a loan. The intention of these grants, as the Minister attempted to indicate, is for development. The CEC has agreed that some assistance must be made available to persons in the national community who may not have access to other sources of funding for small business. The intention of this fund is to make money available. I hoped that the Minister would have indicated to us how we benefit from these grants.

He went on to indicate that Japan and the United States of America had signed, but he failed to indicate that Japan and the United States have clear policies and directions on the application of all these measures. There are checks and balances. In our case, there are no such checks and balances.

The other point is that under the Lomé IV Convention, Trinidad and Tobago will again be granted ECU \$17 million, in 1995, out of a total of ECU \$86 million. We need to know how this grant will be spent. We need to be certain that it will benefit the national community, and the Government will not use it for political propaganda. We have to be very certain of this. In previous times we have seen grants coming from a number of organizations where there was much political interference.

There are two offices in the Eastern Caribbean: one here in Trinidad and Tobago and one in Barbados. The other matter I would like to raise is the office in Trinidad and Tobago. We have had an instance in CARDI, in 1989, where local employees were given a very raw deal. What provision is the Minister making to ensure that that does not recur? Members will recall that those employees are not covered under the Industrial Relations Act; they are all on their own. The Government cannot provide jobs for nationals and when nationals are able to obtain these jobs on their own, it is the Government's obligation to safeguard them, as far as possible, in terms of the conditions.

The other matter I would like to raise concerns families. The Minister has not indicated to us what he means by the privileges and immunities to the delegation of the commission, its head and members together with members of their families. What does he mean by that? How are we to accommodate families here? Is it to be the extended family? Is the *laissez-passer* to apply to them as well? What is the cost? One has to take these into consideration. We cannot keep sweeping this matter under the carpet. We had a serious problem, as indicated by the Member for San Fernando East, five years ago, of drugs passing between Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere, here being a transshipment point, and the whole question of the abuse of the diplomatic bag, or bags. The Minister has to be very clear what provisions are available to safeguard nationals.

2.55 p.m.

Madam Speaker, the other point is that privileges and immunities will not apply to members of staff who are nationals resident in Trinidad and Tobago and who are recruited locally. Here we have a scenario of two employees of the CEC leaving Port of Spain or Piarco, as the case may be, and travelling to another country, both from the same place of employment. One is accorded diplomatic privileges in terms of whatever might be expected of him at the other end, and one has to go through the normal procedures.

It might cause some degree of inconvenience, also some degree of embarrassment, so that some further provision should be considered for the

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employees who must be treated equally in the eyes of the law. One cannot take two employees performing the same functions and treat them differently. And I cannot see why the Minister of Foreign Affairs would want to negotiate that.

The question of the sugar protocol: If one looks at the example of Mauritius one would see that they have been able to have their quota increased. The seven tonnes has been in existence for a number of years. The Member for Diego Martin West in his capacity as Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has indicated that we are going to increase sugar production. Are there any efforts to have this tonnage increased from seven? Seven is a small amount considering our own production in Trinidad and Tobago. It would be worth our while to examine that with the intention of having it increased.

The last area I want to raise is the expertise and the assistance that come to us in terms of technical support, technical directions in the area of agriculture and engineering, economics and the whole development. We have been told that there is assistance available to us in Trinidad and Tobago, but we do not seem to see the benefits. Very often one would hear the Member for Diego Martin East talk about the shortage of expertise in a particular area, so perhaps through the CEC we can target that kind of assistance. In terms of agriculture, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources indicated that we were protected under this GATT only for three years, whereas in other countries it is going to be up to ten years, so that our agricultural sector would be very much affected.

Recently, we saw a greater demand for cacao beans, and perhaps we can seek assistance through the CEC to develop our cacao beans to get back into the world market. As you are aware, the cacao beans from Trinidad and Tobago are highly in demand to flavour the chocolates of the world. It seems that the Government is not making any effort to bring into this country the kind of expertise that comes through this commission.

I want to conclude by asking the Government to open its eyes to make Trinidad and Tobago a better place for all of us by using what is available to us at this time at no cost.

I thank you.

Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh (*Caroni Central*): Madam Speaker, let me congratulate my colleague the Member for Fyzabad on his very pertinent contribution to the matter before us this afternoon. I want to say that when we think about the granting of privileges and immunities to other organizations it is quite a serious matter. You know very well it has been the practice in

international relations between states that they exchange these privileges and immunities on a level that is highly sophisticated.

When one is granting privileges and immunities to other organizations, one is, in fact, allowing part of one's soil to be used by another country or another organization. In a sense it is an extension of the territorial status of that country or organization sending this delegation. That has to be of concern, because the moment that is done, one is telling the people that the State of Trinidad and Tobago no longer has any jurisdiction in these matters. With this in mind, why would the Government want to extend these privileges to a delegation of the Commission of the European Community?

The Minister has stated that they were operating in Trinidad and Tobago as a delegation since 1976, and if that is the case what is the justification for now granting this further privilege? I do not think that that case has been made out in the Parliament today. I do not think that the Government has shown ample reason for granting to a delegation this very scared status.

The Minister spoke about the supra-nationality of the Commission of the European Communities and, of course, that is true because these communities are evolving in a manner that impinges more and more upon the sovereignty of members. That is working to their advantage in the sense that they are moving towards a situation of bloc cohesion. However, the specific relationships have not been clearly articulated in a manner that would indicate that the delegation of the European Commission is worthy of such a status.

3.05 p.m.

Madam Speaker, if you understand the formation of the European Commission you would clearly see that the delegation is really a sort of functional tentacle of the commission. The commission itself is responsible to the Council of Ministers and the Council of Ministers is responsible to the Assembly. It would seem that this delegation is more or less a watered-down entity of that organization. In that respect, I think the granting of diplomatic status to the members of that delegation ought to be considered with respect to its importance within the scheme of things. That is the point.

If they were operating since 1976 in a manner that seemed to have been functional and satisfactory, what is the need today for the enhancement of that status? This is why the contribution of my colleague the Member for Fyzabad seems to be pertinent.

Madam Speaker, you notice as often as I speak in this House the Member for San Fernando East would get up and leave this Chamber. I should like to know why.

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It is very important for us to understand that the inviolability of the premises of the diplomats or those who have been given such privileges would mean that, in a sense, we have acquiesced to certain rights that they have enjoyed. When one talks about the current situation in the Caribbean affecting the lives of people, particularly with respect to drugs, that situation has to be very pertinent indeed.

I refer to an article on page 6 of *Newsday* of November 15, 1994 in which the United Nations links liberalization and drugs. When my colleague the Member for Fyzabad asked about that, I noticed that the Member for Diego Martin West got up as though he is the most self-righteous man that has ever been in this Parliament; an attitude with which we have to contend.

Dr. Rowley: Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Caroni Central for giving way. I should like to follow the debate so I should like him to explain to me the connection between Ministers' travel bags and trade liberalization.

Mr. R. Palackdharrysingh: Madam Speaker, as usual, his intervention is of no import.

Madam Speaker: Will the Member proceed, please.

Mr. R. Palackdharrysingh: Yes, Madam Speaker. What I have indicated here is the fact that we have had situations in which there have been abuses of diplomatic privilege in this country. We recall the behaviour of a diplomat of a particular South American country with respect to allegations made, and I do not think that that matter has been put to rest or that there has been a satisfactory explanation to this nation. That is what we have to contend with.

On the other hand, with respect to the formation of this delegation, who are the persons? Where are they coming from? What precautions are there? There seems to be an impression, especially when the Government speaks, that once it is something that follows the Vienna Convention there can be no diversion from it. The Vienna Convention was accepted in 1961 and right after that we saw a number of countries having reservations about some of the provisions of that convention, some of them not subscribing to it and so forth. It would seem that countries seek their interest first and foremost.

One would see that with respect to many international conventions the United States of America, for example, always has serious reservations and it does not ratify them because it does not see its interest being served by some of these conventions. It is not just because Japan or 51 other countries signed this convention that it is an obligation on this country to extend similar privileges. Of

course, it is a common principle that we sign conventions and so forth, when they work in this country's interest or when they assist in tackling a problem in the international community; but I do not think that such a case has been made out today for the granting of these privileges.

The Member for Fyzabad indicated that our nationals here are at a disadvantage, particularly those who are not employed at the technical or administrative level or those who are not granted the same privileges as the international persons—and one cannot say that that is not a point worthy of consideration. The fundamental rights and freedoms must be preserved. By the granting of diplomatic privileges and so forth we cannot touch certain people because they are covered, but what about our workers here who have relationship with these higher technical people whom we cannot touch and they make adverse decisions for our nationals who are merely staff? Is that not a concern for us?

What about some of these higher technical and administrative personnel making decisions that adversely impact upon the lives of our workers here and for some reason they are sent back by the commission or they go back to their homeland? What is the recourse for our nationals who have suffered in this country? That question has to be answered! Is the Government saying that whatever distress they find themselves in, it would look at it; or just leave them to fend for themselves so that many of them end up in a situation not befitting human dignity? Madam Speaker, you see the point.

3.15 p.m.

Again, I think the Minister of Foreign Affairs must make it known that the ACP countries, more or less, act together in representing their interests and, in the Caribbean, especially with respect to our products in Europe, we act, more or less, with one accord. Is he saying the mere fact that it is now possible for us to have the delegation here, there is now a direct line to the European Communities, and that there is no need, particularly for the Caribbean, to act in foreign relations in terms of representation as a single entity? Is he saying that?

Implicit in what is being said and by this action, is the fact that there could be a splintering of what is called the umbrella approach of the Caribbean Community to making representation, particularly with respect to the provisions of Stabex and Sysmin. That has to be explained.

Is it that the whole political, economic and international system is now in a state of flux and there is no clear position for the Caribbean Community any more, particularly with respect to its own position in ACP *vis-a-vis* the European

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Communities? That has to be clarified because if it is not, we would be sending out a stronger signal to our Caribbean neighbours that we all have to fend for ourselves.

There are one or two other matters I want to raise briefly. We saw in one of the European countries some time ago, after an uprising in 1956, a particular clergyman went into asylum in an embassy. The question is: What is the position of the Government with respect to asylum of a person in an embassy, or in this case, with respect to the delegation which will be granted this privilege? What is the required understanding with the Government and embassies with respect to having people face justice in our courts?

Secondly, I would also like to find out whether diplomats are required to cooperate with Government, and if they do not, how is such a situation treated? It is being said that there is standard practice and maybe standard practice is recall and so on, but that is merely wishing away the problem, because there will be fallouts sometimes and those are the things that are important.

Madam Speaker, we believe that there has not been a sufficient case made out. We are not saying that we should not foster deeper and more meaningful relationships with other countries and agencies, but we believe too much is being left in the realm of our own anxiety as to what are the possibilities for breaches and abuses of these privileges, and the Government should give full assurances that Trinidad and Tobago's interests would be served.

With this very short contribution, I wish to end. Thank you very much.

Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*): Madam Speaker, may I, on my own behalf, wish Members of this House a very productive, if not happy, 1995. We on this side intend to carry on with serving the interests of the people of Trinidad and Tobago in our quest for justice for all.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome the two newest entertainers on the cultural scene, the Member for San Fernando East and the Member for Diego Martin West. I believe they have come on the scene at the right time in the run-up to Carnival, so we expect to see much of them.

Mr. Maharaj: We express our sympathy to the Member for San Fernando East but he is always welcome on this side.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, it is a pity that that talent is not displayed in Government administration. There is one Minister in charge of the public service who seemed not to have been deficient in the number of calories he

normally takes in, and when the television camera showed him, it showed him gorging food as if, in fact, he came from some other country.

Madam Speaker: The preamble is taking a bit long. Will the Member come to the point, please.

Mr. T. Sudama: I just want to welcome the new entertainers and hope that they will carry out their functions for the benefit and entertainment of the local population in this time of Carnival revelry.

I have to touch on this matter. There was a photograph of the Prime Minister of this country—

Mr. Valley: What are you talking about?

Mr. T. Sudama: It touches on our relationship with the outside world. This is what we are discussing here—our relationship with the outside world. This is the subject of debate here. The image we present to the outside world must be a matter of concern.

Madam Speaker: If the Member feels so strongly about it, maybe the Member can put it down as a motion. Let us get on with the debate.

Mr. T. Sudama: Yes, Madam Speaker. What I am talking about is, quite apart from our relationship with the European Communities; we have the question of a relationship with the Caribbean people and Caribbean countries. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago goes into a presidential palace and he is not suitably attired. What kind of image are we presenting to the outside world?

Mr. B. Panday: He should be jumping up in jacket.

Mr. T. Sudama: What sort of image? He is not here, because he has more important things to do. I just wanted to put that on the record. When he goes abroad he must know that he represents the whole of Trinidad and Tobago; he is not just the Member for San Fernando East; he is not just a carnival reveller. He represents, by the position he occupies, the whole of the Trinidad and Tobago, and there are comments being made by all and sundry who looked at that photograph and they are asking: Is that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago?

Now, on this specific issue which is before this House, I must put in context that what we are dealing with here is our relationship with the outside world. In particular, we are talking about our relationship with the European Communities. Our colleagues have commented on certain aspects of that relationship.

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I want to re-emphasize a point and go into some amplitude in dealing with that point made by my colleague the Member for Fyzabad, the shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs. The matter he took up was the statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs that tremendous benefits have accrued to Trinidad and Tobago by the grants, loans and so forth, from the European Communities.

3.25 p.m.

The question I want to ask is: Tremendous benefits for whom? Are they really tremendous benefits? If they are, for whom? Because the projects which constitute these programmes which are sent up for funding are a critical issue. Are they tremendous benefits on the say-so of the Government of the day? Does the European Community have an independent monitoring system, independent criteria, to evaluate the projects which are sent up for funding? I want to go through the various projects here, as listed in the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme for the year 1995*. I want to indicate to this House the gross imbalance in the target groups for which those projects are being funded.

In such a case, the Opposition would have to write to the European Community independently on this issue to find out the basis on which they make these grants and loans. What representation is made by the Trinidad and Tobago Government? Is it merely a case of propping up certain political elites in the countries which receive these loans and grants?

There ought to be independent criteria, and if there are, we on this side would like to know when funding is being offered and accepted, whether an invitation goes out to all and sundry to put in applications for projects to be included in that funding. We cannot just leave it to the machinations of Members of the Government who are playing politics every day of the year with whatever funding that is available.

Secondly, I am making a case also to have parliamentary monitoring, first of all, of the applications which go to the European Community and other organizations which give grants and loans, and secondly, the expenditure of these grants and loans so that we would be satisfied. We want to propose to the European Community that that should be made a condition for giving these grants and loans, so that there is parliamentary oversight of this expenditure to make sure that it is not being used for purpose of political patronage—the whole question of the inequity in the implementation of these projects and the targets which are being financed.

In another place the Minister mentioned that under Lomé Conventions to date, over \$300 million has been received by this country. What do we have to show for it? Water supply? Madam Speaker, you know the water situation in Trinidad

and Tobago. I do not know if your area is affected, but over 75 per cent of the population of Trinidad and Tobago is affected in one way or the other by the gross inadequacy of our water supply. Yet we are receiving grants and loans to improve the water supply.

I wonder whether the European Community enquires at all, whether as a result of these fundings, there is improvement in the services concerned; whether it is community centres being built, rural access roads, electrification and so forth; whether there has been any tangible improvement as a result of the Government expending money.

Another issue I want to raise is the capacity of the Government for planning and implementing projects, because there is no point in accessing loans and grants if you cannot spend the money, if the money gets carried over and there are unspent balances all the time. What is the point of it? It is not as if they have not been getting funding, whether it is by loan or grant, for institutional strengthening in planning and project cycle management.

In 1994, the estimate for that was \$37,760,000; the revised estimate for 1994 was \$21,935,000 and the estimate for 1995 is \$24,575,000. So significant provision is being made for institutional strengthening in planning and project cycle management.

Is that, in fact, happening? These are loans from the IDB. We are taking loans which we shall have to repay. We are not sure whether that institutional strengthening of the planning and implementation process is taking place. I want to draw the attention of this honourable House to some of the ways in which the funding is being applied.

In the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme for the year 1995*, at page 34 we see an amount of \$3 million was estimated to be spent in 1994 for environmental improvement of South Quay and the Beetham Highway. I do not mind South Quay and the Beetham Highway being improved environmentally, but only South Quay and the Beetham Highway? It is the inequity of which I speak.

But while the Government is estimating \$3 million, do you know how much is the revised estimate for 1994? —\$1,300,000. In other words, it is spending less than fifty per cent of what it estimated would have been spent for 1994. Now that points to the question: Does it have the capacity to implement? It does not appear so. So that \$1,700,000 goes unspent for 1994, and in 1995, it is planning to spend \$11,450,000, again in a specific area—South Quay and the Beetham Highway.

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What is happening to environmental upgrading in the Oropouche constituency? Is that area not part of Trinidad and Tobago? We shall have to write to the EEC to tell them what is going on. The Opposition will have to take it upon themselves to let the outside world know how their funding is being utilized and what is the approach of the Government in doing this.

I continue on page 48—and this is where we want the monitoring: Youth Agricultural Credit and Training Project—estimate for 1994, \$2,500,000. The Government was not able to spend a penny in 1994, and it is estimating 1995 to be \$2 million on this project. My constituency, Oropouche, is basically an agricultural one but not a penny of this funding has been directed to youth training there. So I want to know where the Government is targetting to expend this sum of money.

3.35 p.m.

Again, I think I would have to write the EEC and make a case that the Government would have to insist that these programmes have a national perspective and that it is not giving this regime money to prop up itself in office, by the hook or the crook. It is more by the crook than by the hook.

Let us proceed to community development and construction of community centres. In this House, I have raised the question of a number of community centres in my constituency and the Government cannot find the money. It would not answer the question.

A question about upgrading and repairing the Debe Community Centre has been on the Order Paper for three months. The Government does not want to answer it. That is the only conclusion I can come to, because it would not spend any money there.

On the Pleasantville Community Centre, in the constituency of San Fernando East—I am not say that Pleasantville should not get anything—but over \$750,000 has so far been spent on the repair and renovation of that community centre. But there has not been one penny for Debe. Do you understand what is going on? This so-called national government has not given a penny for the community centre at Debe.

The Government has a grant for the construction of community centres. Surely, if it is for the construction of community centres, then it could negotiate or some of that money could be utilized, if there is no funding. But the Government never has funding when it comes to the constituencies of the Opposition—perhaps a portion of that could be used to repair community centres which are in a very bad state. That could be done, but I would give you the joke about this.

The Government estimated to spend \$15 million in 1994 from this EC grant. There are so many areas in Trinidad and Tobago which are in need of community centres. In my constituency, at this time, there are probably 10 to 12 districts which are in need of a community centre, a place for community organization; a place which is non-religious to be used as a place where the community could meet to conduct community business. Yet, the revised estimates for 1994, show that the Government is able to spend only \$3 million.

The need is there, the demand is there; \$15 million has been estimated, but the Government can spend only \$3 million. When it is programmed to spend \$3 million, not one penny is spent in the constituency of Oropouche. There is an unspent amount of \$12 million in 1994.

This kind of discrimination is what we have to highlight and deal with both here and overseas, so that in our relationship with the outside world they would know what is going on in Trinidad and Tobago. I am committed to letting the outside world have that information. The Government budgeted for \$19 million in 1994, and spent only \$3 million, but in 1995, it is budgeting for \$18.5 million. I want to know which community centres are going to be constructed with this. When one looks at the community centres that are going to be constructed, by and large, one would see that there is inequity, outright and blatant discrimination.

I move on to road rehabilitation. I do not have to tell you the condition of the roads in the constituency of Oropouche; you are there very often for one reason or another. You appreciate the hazard, especially when you travel in the night and *[Interruption]* You have not been. I am sure you would come in due course.

Hon. Member: As soon as the election is due, you would be there campaigning.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, it is a hazard to travel on those roads during the day, let alone in the night when you normally come to the Oropouche constituency. It is doubly hazardous then.

There was an amount for road rehabilitation. In 1994, the estimate was \$5 million. The roads in Oropouche are in a most deplorable condition, yet the Government could spend only \$1,318,000. Why could the Government not spend the rest of the money? Oropouche needs significant road upgrading and improvement, but rather than spend it in Oropouche, the Government prefers not to spend it all.

The Minister cannot tell me that he cannot mobilize to repair roads. If he cannot do that, he should give up his post and the Member for St. Augustine would be more than willing to assist. He has shown a capacity for mobilization

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second to none. He is more than willing to do that job of utilizing the funds which are already accessible for the benefit of the people of the country.

Now in 1995, the Government is getting a grant from the European Community of \$25 million. We want to know—that should be a matter for parliamentary scrutiny and discussion—how that \$25 million is going to be spent. We want a report. On the basis of that report on how the Government would spend this money, in a situation where Oropouche is so badly served with respect to the condition of its roads, I shall write the European Community.

I think the time has come that we go not only national, but also international with our programme of questioning this Government and eventually displacing it.

The Member for Fyzabad spoke about rural electrification. The Government is getting another EC grant. This is not a loan. This is money made available which the Government does not have to repay. The impression being given here is that these moneys are really for boosting the political fortunes of the Government in the manner of the selection of the project. Rural electrification has to do with electrification in the rural areas. There are many parts of my constituency where many of the rural access roads do not have electricity.

When the people go to T&TEC, they are told that they have to pay the capital cost. T&TEC is insisting that low income earners in the rural districts existing on very meagre incomes, pay the capital cost for this, and it is not refundable. These poor people in this country have to pay. Yet, of a grant of \$6 million estimated in 1994, the Government could spend only \$5,100,000. There is a balance of \$900,000 which it could not spend, and in 1995, there is an estimate for \$8,500,000.

I am wondering whether a portion of this money could not have been utilized to provide street lighting which is such a dire necessity in a period of escalating crime. Was the Minister of National Security on the trip to Haiti as well? A third entertainer is on the scene. He has been entertaining this country since he became a Minister. He tends to put his foot where it does not really belong.

3.45 p.m.

I see the entertainer of San Fernando East has now taken his seat. I welcome him for the new year. May I say that I hope he has a good season in entertaining for the Carnival.

Mr. Manning: I am seeing about ladders.

Mr. Panday: In whose stockings?

Mr. T. Sudama: Do you see what is on his mind, Madam Speaker? He is talking about ladders.

Madam Speaker: Please, Gentlemen!

Mr. Manning: In other words, construction.

Mr. T. Sudama: What are you constructing?

I am asking whether this Special Electrification Programme—Extension of Supply to Rural Areas could not accommodate areas which currently do not have a supply, and street lighting, which is a dire necessity. The Member for Barataria/San Juan said that we can sleep with our doors and windows open in the very near future because there will be such security in this country. There was an entertainer Minister, who was reinstated as Minister of National Security, who said that in 1995 crime will be a thing of the past. The following day, the heaviest spate of murders we have had for the last two or three weeks started.

There is armed banditry all over the country, whether it is in the urban or rural areas. It is a malaise. And Members opposite are talking about crime being a thing of the past. At least they should do something. Streetlighting is very important with respect to crime prevention. The trouble is they do not have to ask for the money; they have it from the EEC as a grant.

They cannot ask, where is the funding to come from? Especially the Member for Diego Martin East. From the time one talks about things for an Opposition constituency, that Member for Diego Martin East starts to fidget about money. “Where will the money come from? We have no alternative. Everything is stringent” and so on. Well, they have money now; they are getting a grant. Why can they not spend some of that for the installation of street lights to try to alleviate the frightening escalation of crime in Trinidad and Tobago somewhat?

Instead they sit there and twiddle their thumbs, they jump on a plane and fly off to Haiti, having a ball. While the people of Trinidad and Tobago are covering in fear, trepidation, anxiety and insecurity, they are having a good trip, joining the circle of entertainers in Trinidad and Tobago. Where have you ever heard anywhere in the world, 130 persons going to entertain 52 persons? That is a three-to-one ratio of entertainer to audience. This must be a joke, but I think the Trinidad and Tobago public has become accustomed to jokers.

While he is here, let me tell him that we were all very disappointed in his attire when he met the President of Haiti.

Madam Speaker: We are trying to approve an order here—the Immunities Order. I think the Member is straying.

Mr. T. Sudama: What I am saying is that he does not have immunity to the wearing of proper clothes in the position he occupies. I am talking about his status as Prime Minister.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, if there was any authority in this Parliament on proper clothes, it would hardly be the Member for Oropouche.

Mr. T. Sudama: I do not represent this country in a ministerial capacity. I get feedback from people who look at the television, as to how I look, whenever they choose to put me, and it has been very favourable. It is always reflected in the polls. There has been a resounding majority over the years.

The Government has received a grant for welfare services from the European Community and I have no problem in spending money in organizing the St. Michael's School for Boys, but I want to tell this Government that as far as welfare services are concerned and the provision of homes for youths and the aged, there is a need throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Yes, there must be priority, and that is what we are concerned about. On what basis does the Government prioritize, and on what basis does it exclude?

We are saying that some money was spent there, but we should also look at the other areas of need. With the era of liberalization which it has entered, there will be increasing inequities, increasing pauperization and therefore, increasing need for welfare, and it cannot be confined to just one or two projects in one or two areas of Trinidad and Tobago. That is the experience all over the world where they have gone into trade liberalization and increased foreign investment.

What has happened is that the strong element of the community has done better and the weaker elements have suffered and suffered enormously, with inflation, retrenchment, increase in unemployment and the unavailability of employment opportunities. That will be the subject of a full-scale debate. I do not want to get into that right now.

We have had a response to a question in this House on sport and sporting facilities. There is such a dearth of sporting facilities in the rural areas—the forgotten areas of Trinidad and Tobago—and we need to address the question of facilities for our youth. When we refer to that imbalance, there is always some excuse. Do you know what is one of the excuses now? That the recreation grounds are not of the right size. That is one of the excuses that the Member for Port of Spain South comes up with.

The second excuse is that that is the responsibility of local government—these are district grounds, community grounds. This is the responsibility of local government, whose funds the Government is cutting back year after year. It wants to do away with local government and grab that area for patronage purpose as well. It is cutting back their funding and then blaming them.

3.55 p.m.

That Member for Diego Martin East has the knack of talking about productivity in local government. I should like him to look at productivity in the Ministry of Works and Transport. The fact is that these people do not have funding to buy the basic equipment for them to do road repair work.

In the Penal/Debe region one of the primary responsibilities is to repair roads. But they do not have a roller, the backhoe is non-functional, they have one truck. Do you understand that? And then the Government comes here and talks about productivity in local government. One of the most inefficient, corrupt and wasteful ministries is the Ministry of Works and Transport. But I will deal with that when we are discussing the Road Improvement Programme.

The Prime Minister, who ought to know what is going on, condones the corruption in the Ministry of Works and Transport. We will see what happens when he reshuffles his Ministers—if indeed he is going to reshuffle the "pack" and if indeed he is not dealing with a whole pack of jokers. Whoever is reshuffled, what we would end up with is non-performance. Maybe that is why they have taken to the entertainment business because we are dealing with a pack of jokers.

There is an EEC grant for the purpose of constructing sporting facilities. When we look at where they are spending this money what do we see? There is nothing in constituencies which have been starved for 30 years of recreational facilities. Nothing! Minimal recreational facilities; just a recreation ground with a pavilion to play cricket and football. The local government authorities do not even have money to maintain the grounds. In the whole of the Penal/Debe Regional Corporation there is one old brush-cutter which breaks down every so often; it is used to brush-cut over 100 recreation grounds at the regional corporation. Yet the Government comes here to talk about how it cares and is loving and is a national Government concerned about productivity and so forth.

Look at where the Government is spending some of the money: St. Paul Street Indoor Sports Hall, Irwin Park Recreation Ground, development of Arima Municipal Stadium, completion of cycle track; and then it comes with recreational facilities: construction of four indoor halls. I do not know how Chaguanas was

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mentioned there; maybe through the persistence in the contributions of my Friend the Member for Caroni Central. I see there is a provision here: San Fernando, Tacarigua, Point Fortin, so nowhere else in Trinidad and Tobago requires development of sporting facilities and the Government is getting money which does not have to be repaid. But one sees what it is utilizing it for.

As one goes through this list one sees the small business sector. The Member for San Fernando East has a big conference stating they are now targetting small businesses and so forth; the first meeting was so well attended they had to go to a bigger venue. He does not understand why people went there. They are being retrenched at such a pace, it is a question of not knowing where their incomes are going to come from; they went there out of sheer desperation in order to try to get on to smething. If the Government is serious about small business, if there are no jobs available, then it ought to get into this avenue here.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for Oropouche for giving way. I just wanted to remind him and hon. Members that that consultation in its resumed form took place over a two-day period and the attendance was very significant over both days. Arising out of that consultation we set up a task force to come up with an approach to small and medium-sized business development. I just wanted to advise hon. Members that today I took possession of an interim report of that task force. It is dated January 1995, and the final report should be available to us not too long from now, after which we would reconvene the consultation, consult on that document, articulate our small and medium enterprise policy and implement it.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, I was making a point and of course I shall take the contribution of the Member for San Fernando East in stride, and deal with it. But I am saying the reason for this large turnout was that most of the people who went there acted out of sheer desperation. There is nothing else to do, no other avenue for employment and this carrot about small business is dangled before them. They went there hoping that the Government would provide the necessary financial infrastructure of knowledge, information, and marketing.

I am going to talk about the problems of small business as he has mentioned. As I said, almost half of the people went out of desperation and the others went probably because they thought it was an avenue for freeness. How many small businesses would actually be established and be viable is another question.

Look at what is happening. Small business project, totally funded by the European Economic Community—estimated 1994 expenditure, \$5 million. Do

you know how much was actually spent in 1994 in the revised estimates? Seven hundred thousand dollars. The Government professes to having such interest in small business, yet it is getting free money and \$4,300,000 it cannot spend on this much-touted small business programme in which it is involved. *[Interruption]*

Mr. B. Panday: The Government gave the money to Neal & Massy to implement small businesses.

Mr. T. Sudama: Yes, it is giving it to all the financial backers of the PNM to generate small business activity. It is projecting \$5 million for 1995. The point I want to make in response to the Member for San Fernando East is that the problems of small business were not known yesterday or today, they were known a long time now. If one looks at the latest *McIntyre Report* one would see the problems that were identified in it. What has the Government done?

Do we need to have consultations to get action? We need to get people to come and air their views, talk about all sorts of things, but we also need action in order to put the infrastructure in place to assist small business. All the Government's concern was propaganda, and that symposium was another in the propaganda entertainment programme which the Government has now devised.

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. *[Mr. K. Jurai]*

Question put and agreed to.

4.05 p.m.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, with all this propaganda about the focus on small business, the Government should come to this House and tell us why \$5 million cannot be spent in one year on small business and why only \$700,000 can be spent. If the need is there why can this not be done? Is it an incapacity of the Government? Or are they just a bunch of jokers? When the Government is getting free money, the question of funding is not a problem. With all this talk about report and task force and what the Government would do coming from the other side and its much vaunted commitment to small business—I do not think that the country is looking at that with the degree of skepticism which it deserves.

As I said, the problems of small business are not overnight; they were known a long time. It is the incapacity of this Government to take small business seriously. It is so engrossed in big business that it has no concern for the small

and medium-sized businessmen of Trinidad and Tobago; how to encourage and establish people in viable business activity and not just give handouts.

Mr. B. Panday: He was asking sharks to protect sardiness.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, do you know whom he is going to? He is going to the conglomerates for them to assist small business. Have you ever heard that? Whichever small business they have a hand in creating and establishing, it would only be a matter of time before they gobble it up. That is pie-in-the-sky Government, propagandistic Government; Government which is not capable and which would never deliver to the people of Trinidad and Tobago—but soon the people would have to pass judgment.

The other issue which the Minister raised was how EEC funding is used to deal with problems in the era of structural adjustment—the dislocation and so forth. What is happening? Structural adjustment is also associated with the liberalization of trade; the displacement and retrenchment of resources; the increasing unemployment levels; the increasing disuse of existing resources and so forth.

In the other place he noted that the international community—and presumably the PNM Government—has now begun to realize the vulnerability of small states in the era of free trade. We on this side realized that a long time ago, and every time we speak about the issue of liberalization we speak about the vulnerability of economies like that of Trinidad and Tobago. The Government had to go to a conference in Miami to learn about the vulnerability of small developing states in an era of trade liberalization. It had to go quite to Miami to be told that. We have been telling the Government that for years.

All the concerns about trade liberalization, we have put on the table and we have spoken to the population at large. There is trade liberalization—and it has happened in every country. Right now, if one looks at what is happening in Mexico, one would see that the import bill, after one year of being in NAFTA and in a liberalization state, has jumped tremendously! Today the peso is under so much pressure in Mexico that despite Canada and the United States going to its defence, it cannot be bolstered.

When a government is going to liberalize and enter the era of free trade, it has to plan for this. But there was no planning whatsoever! The Government waved the free trade flag; it espoused free trade as something that would cure all the economic ills of Trinidad and Tobago—another propaganda stunt. Now it is jumping into NAFTA. Whether this country goes into NAFTA or not, there are

certain imperatives with regard to the economy of this country which must be observed such as introducing greater efficiency; maximizing the use of our resources; improving technology; and updating marketing skills.

When the country gets into NAFTA, the question would be: What advantage can be taken of NAFTA? If the country does not get into NAFTA—and the signs are that this country would not get into it in the near future—what is the Government telling this nation? Would it just sit back and die? Are there no alternatives or other options which can be pursued in the absence of getting into NAFTA?

It all turns back to the fact that the Government does not have a proper perspective on what ought to be the proper relationship of Trinidad and Tobago with the outside world, whether in economic, political or cultural terms. No proper framework. No perspective! No policy as to how we deal with the outside world for the benefit of the nationals of Trinidad and Tobago. That is the issue. If the basis is not right, the outcome of the Government's policy would not be right either, and would not be to the benefit of the average man in this country.

When trade is liberalized, imports increase and displace production. Existing investment goes out and people are retrenched. What are the new areas of investment which will take up the slack and re-mobilize the existing physical capital resources? No such concept of that, but free trade! The Member for Diego Martin Central, the chief salesman on the other side, would sell anything. If he is given a chance, he would sell the Red House.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, I would have extreme difficulty in selling that Member. Even to give him away, I would have problems.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, do you know why he would have difficulty in selling me? I am not an issue of corruption; I do not represent corruption.

Mr. Maharaj: Make sure and do not privatize him.

Mr. T. Sudama: A corrupt deal cannot be cut with me, so how would the Member sell me? He cannot sell me.

Madam Speaker: Member for Oropouche, bear in mind that we are trying to approve the Privileges and Immunities (Commission of the European Communities) Order. Maybe the Member can go on.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, the Member said—and I am trying to make that connection—that the funding from the EEC was to try to cushion the problems created through the structural adjustment programme, free trade and so forth. I

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am trying to point out that the Government has not addressed the critical issues of free trade as they impact on the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. So that, EEC grant or not, there is no proper framework to deal with it. All that would be done is that the money would be frittered away and any structural adjustment problem which is created in the country would not be dealt with.

The Government went to Miami to find out that small developing states are vulnerable in the era of free trade. Then, it was said that the declaration, which emerged after the Miami meeting, made mention of special arrangements that will have to be put in place for small island economies when, indeed, the free trade of the Americas comes into operation.

4.15 p.m.

Madam Speaker, I should like to know what are these special arrangements which form part of this declaration. This is another attempt to hoodwink the population of Trinidad and Tobago. What are these special arrangements which will be put in place, and what does the EEC funding have to do with these arrangements to deal with the problems of structural adjustment?

Members oppoiste do not have a clue. All they know is to come here to propagandize and make all kinds of big statements in the media. Yet, the basic everyday concrete problems which all and sundry in this country face, they have absolutely no idea how to really address them in any tangible or substantial way, because they do not have a philosophy on anything.

There is no proper strategy for sustainable, economic development in Trinidad and Tobago now that the flag of free trade is being waved as the panacea for all the ills in the economy of this country. But the time will come when the population will have its say. As indeed, I mentioned in this House, the population of India is beginning to have its say as to the pace at which reform takes place in India and the impact on the people who cannot now buy rice. Substantial sectors of the Indian population cannot afford even the basic staple of rice under this reform liberalization programme that they are pursuing.

What is happening in Mexico? Much touted foreign investment to come in through liberalization and so forth. Foreign investment inflows have dried up in Mexico. Mexico negotiated and was given international acclaim for the kind of negotiations which they entered into when they got into NAFTA. Despite those negotiations Mexico is now in serious trouble with respect to the value of its currency, capital inflows with respect to the huge upsurge in import bills and

whatever. Members opposite do not seem to learn the lessons. How do we guard against these things in a small developing island economy?

The other matter is about the preferential treatment for Caribbean goods and services. Under the Lomé Convention certain preferential treatment was accorded, quite apart from the funding. The point is that this preferential treatment is rather temporary. Are they planning for the day when preferential treatment will no longer be available from the European Communities?

Mr. Manning: Yes. We are.

Mr. T. Sudama: How? Tell us how you are planning. Because, that is one of the key benefits from being involved in the Lomé Convention as a signatory. How are they planning for this? At this point they have admitted that the United States is opposed to these preferential agreements and preferential treatment for the transaction in goods and services from the Caribbean states going to Europe.

The United States is totally opposed, and while they themselves are heavily subsidizing their own agriculture, they are, in fact, opposed to preferential treatment for exports to the European community. Do you know why? Because once the thing is fully liberalized, once there is production which is, in a way, protected as a result of these concessions and preferences, then that production cannot be taken over or displaced.

What they want is to do away with all these preferences, so the economy would be opened up and what would happen is that products from the United States or its multi-nationals would then come in to displace the existing production. That is why they are opposed to it. If we have to make ourselves globally competitive what I am arguing here is that these loans, grants and preferences will exist only for a certain time. Members opposite are not preparing for the future. They are merely biding time. They have no plan. They have no industrial policy. They have no agricultural policy.

The Member for Diego Martin West in one of his lucid and honest moments, said that the PNM Government never had an agricultural policy. I commended him, but it looks like a slip of the tongue. There is no agricultural policy—from the mouth of the Minister of Agriculture—there is no industrial policy and yet they say there is a plan to deal with the dislocation and so on, as a result of getting into the arena, that syndrome of free trade.

Madam Speaker, as I stand here today, it is perhaps with a kind of foreboding—

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Mr. Manning: No. "Trepidation" is the word.

Mr. T. Sudama: Trepidation. He is now a linguist. Entertainer to linguist, Member for San Fernando East. A linguistic entertainer—goes quite to Haiti to jump up and goes into the presidential palace with an open-necked shirt.

Miss Nicholson: Poorly dressed.

Hon. Member: Pathetic.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, what I am arguing is that I fear for the next year or two when they go even more full blown into the area of liberalization without any plans for protection of displaced resources and without making proper arrangements. I have a sense of foreboding as to what is likely to happen in Trinidad and Tobago in the near future with the increasing social discontent, the fallout from this economic programme that they are pursuing, increasing inequities. I fear for Trinidad and Tobago under the Manning regime.

And today, I want to issue a little warning that Members opposite should re-examine themselves, their policies, see what is taking place on the ground in Trinidad and Tobago, look at the adverse social consequences and increasing crime. Despite what he may say, is he going to retake the Ministry of National Security? What is the basis for this increasing crime? What is the basis for the increasing poverty today?

One of the consequences of the import liberalization scheme was that tariffs were to be reduced. The bush economist, the Member for San Fernando East, said that prices were going to fall and they would fall flat by 1995. He said that. As I said, he is a bush economist and maybe he should stay there as far as economics is concerned.

Madam Speaker, do you know what is happening today? For this season, almost everything has jumped in price, but our bush economist says that prices are falling. The impact that that will have and which it is already having on the poorer sectors of the community is something they are not concerned with, so long as they could jump on a plane to Haiti. They are not concerned with the poor of this land, so long as they could give selected handouts—"ten days" and so on—to certain of their supporters.

4.25 p.m.

Do you think they are concerned with the welfare of the nation. So long as they could put a little bribe here and a little concession there; so long as they could protect their friends in big business—up to today they would not answer

why they do not free-up the importation of beer. We all know why. Because one of their chief backers, the Mc Enearney group, which owns the Carib Brewery plant, has a monopoly on the production of beer in this country.

They cannot do that. Because if they do, you know what would happen the next day. He would call them in, as the Chairman of Neal and Massy says from time to time how he calls in the Prime Minister. Every week he calls him in to give him lessons on how to run the economy of the country. We know who is calling the shots.

We have come here to discuss a very important matter. I am appealing again that the formulation of these programmes for assistance has to be a transparent one. We want to know how these programmes and projects are put there; what suggestions have come from where; how the bureaucracy works in developing these project schedules. We also want to know how the money is being expended and when they get free money from overseas as grants why they cannot spend it. What is the problem?

So a parliamentary committee, for which we have been agitating, to overview this kind of project formulation, implementation and monitoring of expenditure is a vital necessity, not only for loans and grants from the EEC, but in all areas of governmental fiscal operations. So that this Parliament would then be able to do its job with greater incisiveness and effectiveness, so that we would have ensured accountability to the masses of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Secondly, the structural adjustment, liberalization, the inflow of foreign investment, the terms on which that investment is being encouraged into the country, the terms on which divestment takes place in this country, the lack of transparency, the backdoor deals that are being made with respect to the divestment of our key resources—all these are matters of which we want to have a full-scale examination and analysis in the interest of our people.

I do not care how many grants and loans we get under the Lomé Convention, if we do not deal with our basic problems of how we locate projects and their development strategy to benefit the country and to have sustainable development, and how, in fact, we spend that money, critical to maximizing the efficiency and the output of our resources, we could get \$1 billion from Lomé, it would make no difference to the "price of cacao" in Trinidad and Tobago, to the levels of poverty and welfare in this country.

So today, as it is the opening session of the 1995 term, I want to tell the population that I have begun to do my duty in this new year, to do it on their behalf and to deal with this ineffective, inefficient Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.03 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj): Madam Speaker, I suspect that I am going to be rather brief in my wrapping up because really, many of the issues that were brought up in this debate did not pertain directly to the Motion before this honourable House.

What we are seeking to do in this Motion is to grant privileges and immunities to the commission. The Member for Oropouche spent all of his 75 minutes attempting to point to all kinds of imagined and alleged failings of the Government, based on the utilization of the funds that we get under the Lomé Convention. That is the subject of another debate: that is not the matter that we are discussing here. We are seeking to grant privileges and immunities to the European Commission.

I do not really have a clear picture of the position of the other side. I know that when the Motion was presented in the other place, the Minority Leader made it very clear that they were in full support of the Motion. We do not really know what is the position of the Opposition here in this House.

I just want to say in response to what the Member for Oropouche was talking about, as to how the funds are being spent and whether there is equity, that is not what this debate is all about. I want to say as well that he did bring up one matter which had to do with the capacity for implementation; the capacity for utilization of the funds under the Lomé Convention.

The fact is that when this administration came into office in 1991, the record for implementation and utilization of funds was atrocious. Funds under the Lomé Convention, under the National Indicative Programme, for example, Lomé Conventions I, II and III were under-utilized or not used at all. This Government saw the need to set up a special unit in the Ministry of Planning and Development to look at this whole question of utilization of funds under the Lomé Convention. May I say, that we have been very successful indeed, to the extent that we are now regarded as one of the countries that are doing very well with respect to implementation and utilization of the funds. In fact, we have letters from the European Commission which point to the improved situation.

I am sure that as we go into the future all of the matters dealing with the infrastructural problems in Oropouche will eventually be dealt with. As I said, that is not the matter we are dealing with here at this time. There are certain

issues that one needs to refer to, arising out of the contribution of the Member for Oropouche. One of the issues he brought up was whether we had to go to Miami to find out about the vulnerability of small island developing states.

I should like to let this honourable House know that this Government has repeatedly made a case for small vulnerable economies. In the run-up to the Miami conference, we had to lobby very hard and wage quite a battle to ensure that we got onto the agenda of that summit—matters dealing with trade and the position of small island vulnerable economies within the context of the entire integration process that is taking place in the hemisphere.

We were successful in having the summit address these concerns. We consider it a victory to have had the summit declare that the hemispheric integration process must take into account the particular vulnerabilities of small island economies. As to what is going to happen and how this concern is going to be manifested, is yet to be seen. Plans have to be developed and policies have to be put in place. All this would be the subject of discussion, as the decisions of the summit are taken into the institutionalization process, through the Organization of American States. We are going to see that happen.

5.10 p.m.

I just want to make the particular point that we in the Government, and in fact Caricom, have been waging a war, expressing our concern and lobbying for small vulnerable economies. For example, we constantly seek to protect the preferential access to the European market of bananas produced in Caricom in order that they are able to stand up to the competition from the dollar bananas produced elsewhere in the hemisphere. That is another area we are pursuing as part of our responsibilities in Caricom and as we seek to have solidarity with other small and vulnerable economies.

Whilst the concerns of the Member for Oropouche may have some relevance in another debate, they really do not have any relevance to this one. Whilst they are connected in some way, we are dealing here with the granting of privileges and immunities to the European Commission. The Member did not really say whether he agrees or disagrees with the granting of these privileges and immunities. I got no indication from him there at all.

However, I got the impression that his colleague the Member for Caroni Central is vehemently opposed to the granting of these privileges and immunities to the European Commission. He used extreme language saying that these people are a part of the soil and that the country had no jurisdiction over them, and that just for a few dollars we were granting privileges and immunities.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I said no such thing, particularly the words, "for a few dollars." I cannot disagree with him for that sort of interpretation, but I suppose he does not understand the language I use.

Hon. R Maraj: Madam Speaker, I think if we look back at *Hansard*, it would show what the Member expressed. He talked about abuse by diplomats and used language trying to suggest that the granting of these privileges and immunities would violate the sacred statutes of the country. Those words came from him. So, I get the impression that he is against it, and clearly it is a position which is very different from the view expressed by his colleagues in the other place. I think the Member ought to co-ordinate his position.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: A point of order again, Madam Speaker. I think that the Member is trying to mislead the House. His impressions cannot be taken to mean that that is my position.

Hon. R. Maraj: I therefore get the impression that the Member is now articulating the position that he supports the granting of these privileges and immunities. It is clear that he supports it and I am glad to hear that.

The Member for Caroni Central and the Member for Fyzabad, in particular, ought to remember that we are part of the Vienna Convention with respect to diplomatic relations. So that when the Member spoke about not having to adhere to all the conventions, I wonder if he is suggesting that we deviate from the practice of privileges and immunities to which we have agreed, which is practised worldwide, and which we enjoy abroad.

Our personnel working in places where we have diplomatic missions enjoy the privileges and immunities that we are trying to grant to the European Commission through this Motion. For example, our mission in Brussels enjoys these privileges and immunities. As I said earlier on, the granting of these privileges and immunities is conditioned upon our mission in Brussels enjoying the said privileges and immunities that we are seeking to grant the European Commission.

I think that must be remembered, and if we accept that we are part of this international arrangement and that we have international obligations, we would not seek to deviate from the practice and suggest that Trinidad and Tobago ought to go its own way with respect to this particular matter. If we do, one can foresee the alienation of Trinidad and Tobago from the international community; the rupturing of diplomatic relations and the general throwing into chaos of our relationships and friendships in the international community. One must be very, very careful as to what is said with respect to this particular matter.

The Member mentioned something about the African, Caribbean and Pacific group and how the granting of these privileges fits in with the solidarity of the ACP countries. I really do not fully understand what he was trying to say, although I got the impression that he was suggesting that if we grant the privileges and immunities to the European Commission, maybe we are not in solidarity with the rest of the ACP grouping or Caricom.

I should like to inform the hon. Member that this granting of privileges and immunities is something which is accepted by all the ACP countries. In the Caribbean there is a forum, the Cariforum, which is the Caribbean component of the ACP group, at which we discuss matters; and this granting of privileges and immunities is something which is acceptable to all the countries. That is how I should like to deal with that matter which the hon. Member brought up.

The Member talked, as well, about whether anything can be done if diplomats did not co-operate, for example, if they were violating the laws of the country. He wondered whether there is anything we could do about it. Let me just say that when a diplomat comes to Trinidad and Tobago or Trinidad and Tobago sends a diplomat to another country, these people move based on certain conditions, privileges and immunities which have been established. If they violate the principles of the Vienna Convention, the laws of the land, if they threaten the security of the country, or in any way prove to be inimical to the development of the country in which they are located, there is an easy way to deal with that, and that is, the host government can exercise the option of having them recalled. Their government will then be in a position to deal with them.

There is no fear of anyone coming into your country and abusing his privileges, violating the laws of the land and living free from any kind of restrictions. The granting of privileges and immunities is based on certain conventions, norms and traditions, all of which are normally observed in the conduct of international relations.

I do not think there is anything further I need to refer to with respect to the Member for Caroni Central.

The Member for Fyzabad talked about the Government bringing legislation; that when the Minister of Foreign Affairs brings legislation, it is usually for the benefit of foreigners. That is really a very superficial way of looking at this whole business of international relations. Of course, if the Foreign Minister of a country brings a piece of legislation, it has to do with relations with other countries, whether it is the Economic Sanctions Bill, the Transfer of Prisoners

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Bill, or this particular matter. This is because he is dealing with the international environment and with a world which is becoming increasingly inter-dependent.

5.20 p.m.

One must bring legislation to consolidate one's position in the world. One must introduce legislation to bring concrete benefits to one's country as a result of one's international relations and the making of new friends, for example, in the world. One must do that and one has to understand as well that foreign policy/international relations is an evolving phenomenon. The world ten years ago was vastly different from the world that we are in today. International relations in the era of the cold war was a different thing.

Today, in our view, there is an international community that is in a state of flux, there is an international economic relations space out there into which one must go and carve one's place; one must be more activist, for example, one must take up one's own bed and walk, as it were; no longer can one seek to bob and weave and manoeuvre between super powers as they compete for spheres of influence.

One has to be independent. That is the new reality. One has to be an activist, one can no longer rely on the intellectuality of the cold war era; one has to go out there and seek to shape things and make new discoveries. What is relevant today may not be relevant four years from now, because the whole situation is one where one has moved away from the rigidity and predictability of the past into new opportunities, new alliances, new formations, and so one must approach foreign policy with that in mind.

The purpose of legislation being brought by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is two-fold. That legislation is linked to the domestic reality, that legislation is a manifestation of domestic policy, that legislation is intended, in the first place, to further the cause of Trinidad and Tobago. How do you further the cause of Trinidad and Tobago in the international environment? One does that by co-operating with others. So that when, for example, we seek to sign the Vienna Convention, we seek to co-operate with the international community in dealing with a drug menace. When we talk about co-operation with the Economic Sanctions Bill we seek to join the rest of the community to use a tool of modern diplomacy to deal with insurgencies, dictatorships and oppressions in certain countries and so forth. You join with others: no one country can impose economic sanctions on another, it would be futile; you need to co-operate in the international community.

That is what this whole programme of legislation which the Foreign Minister has embarked upon is intended to achieve. Of course, to the superficial eye it seems that one is only dealing with things outside, but then there is a very strong and real substantial connection.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fyzabad talked about the *laissez-passer*; he said something about allowing everything to come through the country. That is a distortion. The *laissez-passer* is a travel document. *Laissez-passer* in French means "allow to pass" and I suppose he is taking the thing literally. We do not intend to allow anything and everything to pass through Trinidad and Tobago through the *laissez-passer*.

This whole question about drugs and the abuse of the diplomatic bag and so forth, the abuse of diplomatic privilege—let me say that we in this Government are fully aware that unscrupulous individuals can use diplomatic privileges and immunities for corrupt means—we are aware of that but we will monitor the situation. Our national security systems are in place looking at the entire country and anybody who we see indulging in nefarious activities or corrupt activities—there are ways, as I said before, in which one can deal with these matters.

The Member for Fyzabad asked how the money is being utilized; I think he was answered by the Member for Oropouche who looked at the *Public Sector Investment Programme* and talked about the community centres and rural electrification and so forth. He had his questions to ask but that is where the money is going.

The Member for Fyzabad also went into a bit of extreme language when he said we should not grant these privileges and immunities, once some funding is available. We have got to be very careful. We are talking about the Lomé Convention; we are talking about one of the first examples in the world of North/South co-operation; we are talking about co-operation between developed and developing countries; we are talking about an arrangement for which Third World countries fought and negotiated hard. Trinidad and Tobago was part of that negotiation.

We ought to be thankful to all those people who helped to shape and hammer out this Lomé Convention. You cannot dismiss this Lomé Convention as just some funding that is available, even though preferential access, for example, might be a temporary thing, be something that might not be possible in the future in the context of our liberalized environment.

We feel that the Lomé Convention represents a very sound example and precedent for co-operation between developed and developing countries, between North and South and through which Trinidad and Tobago, countries in Africa,

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countries in the Pacific have benefited tremendously, especially in times when commodity prices have dropped and so forth. Access to the European market for these products has proved to be very, very beneficial.

I just want to make that particular point in reference to the statement made by the Member for Fyzabad. He talked about nationals working in the European mission here not having the same privileges and immunities as foreign nationals working in Trinidad and Tobago. One really cannot give to one's own nationals privileges and immunities which separate them from the rest of the national community. One cannot do that; they belong to Trinidad and Tobago and they are subject to the laws of the country. As I said in my earlier contribution, in the exercise of their duty they have functional immunity. In other words, if they are carrying out a particular function as part of their job, they have the same immunity as the foreigners. I just wanted to make that particular point.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Madam Speaker, is the Minister saying that all nationals employed by their staff are not granted immunity?

5.30 p.m.

Hon. R. Maraj: No national at any level whatsoever, be it technical or administrative, employed in any foreign mission in Trinidad and Tobago enjoys diplomatic privileges at the moment.

Mr. Manning: At home.

Hon. R. Maraj: At home. The same happen for our mission in New York. There are locals whom we employ in our missions abroad and they do not enjoy the privileges and immunities that our diplomatic and clerical staff enjoy in foreign countries. That is part of the arrangement. I think those were the issues that were raised, and I thank Members for their contribution to this debate.

Finally, let me say that in granting privileges and immunities to the European Commission, this country would be granting privileges and immunities to a good friend of ours and would be doing nothing that is not in accordance with international norms. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I seek the support of hon. Members for this Motion that stands in my name.

Thank you very much.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

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That the Privileges and Immunities (Commission of the European Communities) Order be approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday, January 13, 1995 at 1.30 p.m.

May I inform the House that next Friday we plan to debate Bill No. 1 on the Order Paper—the Tourism and Industrial Development Company Limited Vesting Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.31 p.m.