

*Leave of Absence*

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I wish to advise that I received communication from several Members of the House who have asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House: the Member for Oropouche (Hon. T. Sudama), who is out of the jurisdiction on official business; the Member for St. Joseph (Hon. M. Assam), who is similarly circumstanced; the Member for Couva South, the Attorney General (Hon. R. L. Maharaj), who is in the same position; and the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro (Mr. R. Ali), who is ill. The leave of absence which they seek is granted.

**MATERNITY PROTECTION BILL**

Bill to provide a minimum level of maternity leave benefits and protection, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives*]; read the first time.

**PAPER LAID**

1. Report on the Terms and Conditions of the US \$150Mn. Floating Rate Bonds - 1998. [*The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung)*]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Caroni (1975) Limited  
(Professional Services)**

2. **Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*) asked the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources:
  - (a) Would the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources indicate whether any member of the board of Caroni (1975) Ltd. has been engaged to provide professional services to the company?
  - (b) If so, would the Minister state the date on which the board approved the engagement and the payment of these services?
  - (c) Would the Minister further state:

- (i) when was the board member so engaged?
- (ii) has he/she submitted a report?
- (iii) if so, on what date was the report submitted?
- (iv) the total cost to Caroni (1975) Limited for the services so engaged?
- (v) whether any Caroni (1975) Limited personnel and material resources were utilised in the exercise?

**The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Reeza Mohammed):** Mr. Speaker, the answer to part (a) of the question is yes. The board member of Caroni (1975) Limited was engaged to provide professional services to the company in keeping with the company's Articles of Association.

In response to part (b), the board approved the engagement of these activities on October 23, 1996. Negotiations for full payment was referred to the Lands and Projects Sub-Committee of the board. Payment was approved by the board in September, 1997.

In response to part (c)(i), the board member was engaged in October, 1996. Part (c)(ii), yes, a preliminary, as well as a draft final report have been submitted. Part (c)(iii), the preliminary report was submitted in December, 1996. The draft final report was submitted in May, 1997, and payment was made in September, 1997. Part (c)(iv), the total cost to Caroni (1975) Limited for the services so engaged was \$150,000 plus VAT. In response to (c)(v), in keeping with any such consultancy, Caroni (1975) Limited was required to make available to the consultant, relevant documentation, personnel support and other such materials, which would allow for the efficient execution of the exercise.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to inform the Member for Diego Martin West and this honourable House, that this exercise is consistent with the recommendations of the Tripartite Agreement which required the company to undertake such an exercise for all the company's diversification programmes to ascertain their financial and economic viability. Consequent upon such an analysis, an informed decision can then be made as to whether the programme should then be continued.

Thank you.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, a supplemental question. Since the approval was done in the company's Articles of Association, did the board at any time approach the Minister for approval for this? If so, when, and what response did you give?

**Dr. The Hon. R. Mohammed:** Mr. Speaker, I am advised that the Ministry of Finance was approached for approval and that approval was given. I cannot say at this point in time, exactly the date when the approval was given.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, that was not the question I asked. I asked whether the board approached the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.

**Dr. The Hon. R. Mohammed:** The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources was approached, but according to the letter to which I indicated with respect to the Ministry of Finance, I am advised that permission had to be obtained from the Ministry of Finance. I said that I am also advised that permission was granted by the Ministry of Finance.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister saying that before a board enters into a consultancy with any of its members, that permission has to be had from the Ministry of Finance? Is that what he is saying?

**Dr. The Hon. R. Mohammed:** What I am saying simply, is that I was advised that permission had to be obtained from the Ministry of Finance for any such consultancy, Mr. Speaker.

### **State Enterprises (Board Members)**

3. **Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*) asked the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism:
- (a) Would the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism state whether any board members of the state enterprises, appointed since December 1995, have themselves secured contracts with the state enterprises on whose board they serve?
  - (b) Would the Minister indicate whether any such board members have assumed posts in the state enterprises on whose board they serve?
  - (c) If the answer is in the affirmative, could he give details of these and state whether the positions were publicly advertised?
  - (d) If they were so advertised, would he state the total number of unsuccessful applicants who responded to advertisements for each position which was subsequently filled by board members?
  - (e) Could the Minister give details of the remuneration packages involved in each case?

**The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung):** With regard to item (a), the following board members of state enterprises as at January 31, 1998 have secured contracts with state enterprises on which they serve.

Caroni (1975) Limited, Dr. Mahfouz Aziz, a member of the current board of Caroni (1975) Limited was contracted to develop a Livestock Master Plan at a cost of \$150,000.

Mr. Calver Stephens, a director of National Quarries Company Limited, during the period April 1992—July 1996, provided accounting and financial services to the company during 1995 and 1996 at a cost of \$1,050.

Mr. David Moses, a director of National Quarries Company Limited during the period April 1992—December 1996, provided an evaluation of Quarrying Services in 1996 and was paid \$13,375.

Mr. Herbert Sukhu, a director of National Quarries Company Limited during the period April 1992—December 1996, provided an evaluation of Scott's Quarrying at a cost of \$6,000.

Mr. Kenny Soodhoo, a director of National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited, who resigned on September 30, 1997, was appointed Consultant, Project Implementation with effect from October 1, 1997. Mr. Soodhoo was paid \$26,600 per month. This was determined by using the mesne of the compensation packages of the Chief Executive Officer and Line Managers.

Bourse Securities Limited, whose Managing Director is Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan, a former director of National Flour Mills Limited—resigned October 31, 1996—was engaged in July 1996 to undertake a Treasury Management review for \$59,000. Bourse Securities Limited was also engaged in September 1996 to perform a feasibility study on a flour mill in Grenada at a cost of \$71,000. This latter bill is under review.

Mr. Raymond Sowley, a member of the present Board of Directors of the Agricultural Development Bank, served as Corporate Secretary from July—September, 1997 after the Bank's Corporate Secretary resigned. The board felt that in keeping with the thrust of the New Companies Act and the Agricultural Development Bank Act, that there should be a Corporate Secretary. There was an on-going search for same, one has since been appointed. Mr. Sowley was paid a fee of \$10,000.

**1.40 p.m.**

Mr. Sowley is also on the company's panel of 13 attorneys and performed legal work for the ADB and was paid fees of \$12,617.

Mr. Fitzroy Alleyne, a director at Solid Waste Management Company Limited whose expertise is in marketing and financial planning was given the responsibility for exploring the possibility of setting up a composting facility at the Beetham Landfill Site. He also contributed to the preparation of the feasibility study. Mr. Alleyne was paid a fee of \$16,500 for the work done during the period October 1, 1997—December 31, 1997.

In addition, the following companies in which members of the Board of Directors have interest were awarded contracts:

Taurus Services Limited. Mr. Vishnu Deonarine served as Director of Taurus Services Limited during the period May 1994—January 1997. The firm of Girwar and Deonarine to which he is attached was paid fees of \$377,312 during the period December 1995—December 1997. This firm has been on the panel of attorneys since 1992.

Mr. Winston Thompson served as Director of Taurus Services Limited during the period June 1994—December 1994. The Firm of Fitzwilliam, Stone, Furness-Smith and Morgan to which he is attached was paid fees of \$47,265 during the period December 1995—December 1997. This firm has been on the panel of attorneys since 1992.

Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL). Precision Environmental, a company in which Mr. Miguel Bermudez a director of Solid Waste has an equity interest, received two contracts at a value of \$37,253. These contracts were for ground water, faecal pond and monitoring well testing. The services of this international laboratory were used to endorse local test results.

Secondly, General Earth Movers, a company in which Mr. Bill Ramrattan, a director of Solid Waste is engaged as a consultant, received two contracts in the amount of \$5,596,060. These contracts were awarded for the use of equipment at Beetham and Forres Park Landfill sites and the rental of a roller. General Earth Movers has had a business relationship with SWMCOL for over six years.

Thirdly, Sookhai Diesel, a company in which Mr. Ramnarace Sookhai, a director of Solid Waste, has an ownership interest, obtained five contracts in the

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[HON. B. KUEI TUNG]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

amount of \$26,286. These contracts were for the overhaul and installation of an engine and repairs to injector pumps. Sookhai Diesel has had a business relationship with Solid Waste Management Company Limited for over nine years.

John Williams Construction, a company in which Mr. Oliver Houlder, a director of Solid Waste is engaged as a consultant, has obtained eight contracts in the amount of \$1,673,738. These contracts were for the provision of equipment for use at Guanapo Landfill site, Guaracara Boulders and rental of equipment. John Williams Construction has had a business relationship with Solid Waste Management Company Limited for over 14 years.

Regarding items (b), (c) and (d) with respect to board members who have assumed posts in the state enterprise on whose board they serve and whether such posts were advertised, the information is as follows:

Mr. Howard John, a former director of National Quarries Company Limited served on the board during the period May 1993—December 1996. He acted as General Manager for the period August 1994—December 1996. During this period Mr. Howard was on special leave from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. In March 1997 he was appointed Chief Executive Officer. This post was publicly advertised and there were no other applicants.

Mr. Veshpati Manohar-Maharaj was appointed to the office of Manager Director of National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS) from January 29, 1997 on a fixed term basis as acting Chief Executive Officer, while the substantive CEO and other executive managers reduced their outstanding vacation leave. The CEO requested and was granted vacation leave from February 3, 1997 to January 14, 1998. The position was not advertised.

Mr. Dennis Nancoo a member of the board of Directors of MTS was appointed to the office of acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer while executive managers reduced their outstanding vacation leave. The executive managers had an average of 75 working days vacation leave accumulated to December 31, 1996. In the circumstance the position was not publicly advertised.

Mr. Krishna Gooriesingh, a former director of the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) was appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer with effect from October 1, 1997. The post was advertised and initially eight persons applied but were unsuccessful. Two additional candidates were considered, one rejected the offer and the other was found to be unsuitable by the board. At a board meeting it was suggested that in the circumstances facing the board, Mr. Krishna

Gooriesingh may be considered since he is leading the team preparing the Strategic Plan and he was in every way qualified for the position. He was asked to consider and subsequently submitted an application. He was interviewed by the board and was offered the position.

Mr. Tickram Guyadeen a former member of the Board of Directors of National Feed Mills Limited assumed the post of Marketing Officer of the company. He assumed the position on February 3, 1997 and resigned from the board effective January 31, 1997. Human resource consultants were engaged to short-list candidates. Three other candidates were short-listed and interviewed for the position.

Remuneration packages are as follows: Mr. Howard John as General Manager August 1994—December 1996 received a monthly remuneration of \$9,500 plus a housing allowance of \$500 and the use of company-rented vehicles.

As Chief Executive Officer, March 1997 to the present time, there is a monthly remuneration of \$13,500 plus use of a company-rented vehicle. Mr. Veshpati Manohar-Maharaj receives a monthly basic of \$9,500 and a car allowance of \$2,800. Reimbursable expenses are as follows: With respect to entertainment, company related entertainment to a maximum of \$3,000 in any calendar month with bills and justification for expenses. With respect to telephone, the rental and local call charges and company related overseas calls charged to be reimbursed.

Mr. Dennis Nancoo receives a monthly basic salary of \$9,000 and a car allowance of \$2,800. His reimbursable expenses are as follows: Regarding entertainment, company-related entertainment to a maximum of \$3,000 in any calendar month with bills and justification for expenses. The telephone rental and local call charges and company related overseas calls are to be reimbursed.

Mr. Krishna Gooriesingh receives a basic salary of \$14,000, a housing allowance of \$1,500, an entertainment allowance of \$1,000 and a travelling allowance of \$1,500. His gratuity is 20 per cent of his basic annual salary, payable on expiration of each year of the three-year contract period. Company vehicle to a maximum cost of \$180,000, fully maintained by the bank inclusive of fuel and insurance costs. He also receives a local credit card allowance of \$8,000 per year.

Mr. Tikaram Guyadeen receives a monthly salary of \$6,300, a gas allowance of \$700, a vehicle upkeep allowance of \$900 and an overseas travel grant of \$5,500 per annum. He is also a member of the company's group health, life and pension plan and ESOP.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I need some clarification under supplemental. Did the Minister say that Mr. Sowley was Corporate Secretary as well as a member of the legal panel of the ADB? Also, did the Minister mention in that long list, the member of the Cariri board who is now an executive officer? *[Interruption]* Did I hear the hon. Minister say that Mr. Sowley took the position of Corporate Secretary and was also a member of the legal panel to the ADB? Did you mention in your list, Cariri, where a member of the board is now Chief Executive Officer?

**Sen. The Hon. B. Kuei Tung:** Mr. Speaker, I have no idea whether Mr. Sowley who had acted as the Corporate Secretary was at the same time on the panel. I have been given information that Mr. Sowley is on the company's panel of 13 attorneys over the period. I am not sure whether he suspended his position on the panel to assume the one of Corporate Secretary, thus I cannot say whether they were together.

As far as Cariri was concerned I dealt in the substantive answer—seeing that the question was addressed to me—with respect to state enterprises, Cariri is not regarded as a state enterprise, CARIRI...

**Dr. Rowley:** Who appoints the board of CARIRI?

**Mr. Speaker:** Please confine yourself to supplemental questions.

**1.50 p.m.**

**Dr. Rowley:** Who appoints the Board of CARIRI?

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, just confine them to supplemental questions.

**Dr. Rowley:** Since the Minister had to give approval for the contract awarded to Dr. Mahfouz Aziz at Caroni (1975) Limited, did the Minister of Finance give approval for any and/or all of these contracts which were given to other board members on the boards mentioned this afternoon?

**Sen. The Hon. B. Kuei Tung:** Mr. Speaker, I really do not remember if these were approved by the Ministry of Finance on an individual basis. As a matter of fact, I am not even sure whether we are required to give an approval for it. The Member merely stated that as far as he was aware Caroni (1975) Limited has to get the approval of the Ministry of Finance. It may very well be that all enterprises are not required but that Caroni (1975) Limited is a special case or maybe other companies are special cases.



**Visit to India  
(Cash Donations)**

**9. Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*) asked the Hon. Prime Minister:

- (a) Could the Prime Minister state whether the cash donations made to his relatives in India during his official visit to that country were funded by Government?
- (b) If so, could the Prime Minister identify the specific vote from which such funds were withdrawn?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Basdeo Panday):** Mr. Speaker, permit me to read the question so that the electorate, whom we represent here, may become aware of the malevolence and the desperation of the PNM and the racial undertones inherent in the question. I read the question.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(5).

**Mr. Speaker:** One second please. Standing Order 36(5) says:

**“Contents of Speeches**

No Member shall impute—”

*[Interruption]* May I?

“No Member shall impute improper motives to any Member of either Chamber”

The hon. Prime Minister just started to answer a question in which he spoke about malevolence and *[Interruption]* If anybody there wants to sit in this Chair and do what I am doing, it could be considered. In the meantime, while I am here, for whatever period I am here, I would appreciate if I am permitted to do it.

There was reference to malevolence in introducing the answer to the question. I rule that the use of that word should be reconsidered. I think the answer could be given without the use of that word. Please proceed.

**Hon. B. Panday:** I read the question now, Mr. Speaker:

“Could the Prime Minister state—” *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Is this another point of order?

**Dr. Rowley:** Same Standing Order 36(5). You ruled on malevolence, could I get a ruling on the accusation of racism? While I am on my feet may I ask for Mr. Speaker’s guidance?

**Mr. Speaker:** On this point of order?

**Dr. Rowley:** Guidance from the Chair.

**Mr. Speaker:** On what?

**Dr. Rowley:** Whether, in fact, it is now the practice to read the question. I remember before I tried to read a question and I was told I was not permitted.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is not a point of order.

**Dr. Rowley:** I was asking for your guidance, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think you are referring to an occasion on which you attempted—

**Dr. Rowley:** To read the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** There was an occasion on which you attempted to repeat the question and the Standing Orders state quite clearly that in asking the question—not in answering—you are permitted simply to do certain things. I drew to your notice that was what you had to do. There is no similar provision with respect to answering a question.

**Hon. B. Panday:** I read the question, Mr. Speaker:

- “(a) Could the Prime Minister state whether the cash donations made to his relatives in India during his official visit to that country were funded by Government?
- (b) If so, could the Prime Minister identify the specific vote from which such funds were withdrawn?”

You would note, Mr. Speaker, that the question does not ask if donations were made at all, but the presumption was—there is a presumption [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** One second, could I remind the Member for Diego Martin West that that behaviour is unacceptable and whilst one is answering a question I will not permit, while I sit here, what you have just done.

**Hon. B. Panday:** As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, you would note that the Member did not ask if cash donations were given but presumed that it was so, so as to cast aspersion even before the question was answered. The question assumes that cash donations were made by the Prime Minister to his relatives in India during his official visit to that country in 1997. That presumption is totally incorrect; the rest of the question, therefore, does not apply. [*Desk thumping*]

**Carenage Boys' School  
(Work Stoppage)**

**10. Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*) asked the Hon. Prime Minister:

- (a) Is the Minister aware that construction of the Carenage Boys' School has stopped?
- (b) Could the Minister state:
  - (i) the reason for the work stoppage?
  - (ii) the Government's plans to address this situation so as to ensure the speedy completion of the school in time for the commencement of the next school year?

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet may I take the opportunity to apologize for any infraction which I might have incurred in seeking to respond to the incredulous situation I was facing.

Question No. 10 to the hon. Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, I think there is an error here. This was supposed to be to the Minister of Works and Transport. To the Minister of Works and Transport, Mr. Speaker.

**The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Transport (Mr. Chandresh Sharma):** Mr. Speaker, yes, the Minister is aware that as of January 2, 1998 the contractor, Homes Affordable Limited, has not recommenced construction works on site.

The contractor has served notice to the Construction Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport through his consultants, that the continuance of what appears to be a breach of contract would cause his firm to cease operations  
[Interruption]

**Mr. Speaker:** The recording is not coming through clearly. Is there something that could be adjusted further to solve the problem? Thank you. Would you mind starting over again?

**Mr. C. Sharma:** Mr. Speaker, yes, the Minister is aware that as of January 2, 1998 the contractor, Homes Affordable Limited has not recommenced construction works on site.

The contractor has served notice to the Construction Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport through his consultants, that the continuance of what appears to be a breach of contract would cause his firm to cease operations pending a solution to the following matters:

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[MR. SHARMA]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

1. Failure by the client, Ministry of Education, to issue timely payments on Certified Valuation Certificates.
2. Failure by the Ministry of Works and Transport to pay full claims on the certificates submitted to date which has resulted in a severe shortfall of finance for the execution of the project.
2. Loss of interest which he suffered on the shortfall in certificates.
4. Errors in the Bills of Quantities which will increase the tendered sum should be grounds for the Ministry of Works and Transport to seek rectification.

The following are the actions which have been taken and are proposed to be taken to address the contractual matters and to ensure the timely completion of the Carenage Boys' Government Primary School:

**2.00 p.m.**

1. The contractor has issued a Certified Valuation, Interim Certificate No. 5, on January 8, 1998 for construction works to be executed at the school. The value of the construction works executed has been priced at the contractor's rates in the Bills of Quantities.
2. The contractor has been informed that all works will be paid in accordance with the terms and conditions of contract.
3. The Ministry of Works and Transport has sought legal advice on the status of the contract regarding the contractor's performance and the resolution of the matter in dispute, arising from errors in the Bills of Quantities.
4. The Ministry of Works and Transport shall communicate with the Ministry of Education to ensure timely payment to the contractor within the stipulated contract time.
5. The contractor shall be instructed to continue construction work on the basis of the above as he is still under contract.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, a supplemental question. In light of all that has been said, is the Minister of Works and Transport prepared to reiterate his position that the contract will be completed within time and within schedule as he has said publicly in the last few days?

**Mr. C. Sharma:** Forgive me. I did not hear the entire question.

**Dr. Rowley:** A public statement was made recently by the Minister of Works and Transport that the contract will be completed within budget. I am asking, based on what you have just said, whether you are in a position now to reiterate that statement, that the contract will be concluded within the time-frame and within the budgetary cost?

**Mr. C. Sharma:** Mr. Speaker, I will advance that answer to the question in writing to the hon. Member at the next sitting.

**Dr. Rowley:** Having said that, Mr. Speaker, am I to understand that they are expecting delays in that construction, or are we to expect that the project would be in time for the opening of school in September?

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think that really arises.

**National Housing Authority  
(Glencoe Townhouses)**

**11. Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*) asked the Minister of Housing and Settlements:

- (a) Could the Minister state whether any non-national of Trinidad and Tobago is a recipient or occupier of any of the National Housing Authority (NHA) Townhouses at Glencoe?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, could the Minister identify the non-nationals and give details of the terms and conditions of their occupancy?
- (c) Could the Minister further state how many nationals applied for the said units and how many have been successful and have had units allocated to them?

**The Minister of Housing and Settlements (Hon. John Humphrey):** Mr. Speaker, there were a total of 32 housing units, that is, duplex townhouses at La Horquette, Glencoe, of which three are occupied by non-nationals on a temporary basis. The non-nationals comprise six Chinese professionals engaged on short-term consultancy with the National Housing Authority for a period of one year. The provision of rent-free, fully furnished accommodation during their consultancy is consistent with the terms and conditions of their engagement which had been agreed to by Cabinet.

A total of 3,961 nationals of Trinidad and Tobago responded to an advertisement for the sale of the housing units at La Horquette, Glencoe.

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[HON. J. HUMPHREY]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

Approximately 100 persons out of 3,961 met the qualifying income requirement of \$6,000 per month. The units were accordingly disposed of on the basis of the applicant's ability to make a down payment of 10 per cent of the purchase price and to liquidate the balance within a period of 90 days.

The procedure adopted for the disposal of these units is consistent with the policy of Government to encourage home ownership by nationals. This does not mean that Government is indifferent to the housing needs of nationals who cannot afford outright purchase and who would continue to depend on rental accommodation.

Twenty-nine nationals have been allocated units at La Horquette, Glencoe. Of the 251 units made available in the housing construction programme that I, as Minister, inherited, there are 14,724 applicants, of which fewer than 500 meet the qualifying criteria. It is statistics like these, that is, one house for every 59 applicants, that has led to the Government of National Unity using a different approach to provision of shelter for all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago with particular attention being paid to the poor. *[Applause]*

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the units, according to the Minister, are one to every 59 applicants, does the Minister consider that there might be nationals who have been deprived access to the three units which were given to non-nationals who are here in a commercial capacity and who could have accessed housing on the open market?

**Hon. Member:** Yes. Let me hear you.

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** Mr. Speaker, let him file that, because that is an additional question.

**Mr. Manning:** No, no, no. That is no additional question.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, may I—

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** All right, Mr. Speaker. Let me deal with it.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker—

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** The answer is no, because the terms of engagement—

**Dr. Rowley:** But, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Manning:** But you are on your feet.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker—

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** —of the contract that was awarded included provision—

**Dr. Rowley:** I am on my feet.

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** —of furnished accommodation.

**Mr. Speaker:** All that happened there just now was that a supplemental question was asked, the Minister initially said that he would supply that information on another occasion.

**Dr. Rowley:** I am asking another one.

**Mr. Speaker:** Would the Minister please proceed.

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** The answer is no. They could not have found accommodation on the open market because those were not the terms of engagement under their contract.

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Minister saying that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago entered into contractual arrangement with a Chinese—

**Mr. Speaker:** No. That is not a supplemental.

**Dr. Rowley:** But, Mr. Speaker, I have not asked the question yet.

**Mr. Speaker:** I rule that just the introduction of it tells me that it is not a supplemental question. Please take your seat.

Did the Member for San Fernando East have a supplemental?

**Mr. Manning:** No! No! I have nothing to say under these conditions! No!

**Dr. Rowley:** We have nothing to say!

**Mr. Speaker:** I warn both the Member for San Fernando East—

**Dr. Rowley:** We have nothing to say!

**Mr. Speaker:** —and the Member for Diego Martin West that whether or not they have “nothing to say”, that is not the way to say “nothing”. I warn them that if both of them proceed with this type of behaviour, I will deal firmly with it.

**Mr. Beraux:** You will have to deal with all of us.

**Mr. Hart:** We in jail or what?

*National Flour Mills Limited*

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

**NATIONAL FLOUR MILLS LIMITED  
(RECONSTITUTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS)**

**The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform this honourable House that Cabinet at its meeting on Thursday, February 5, 1998 authorized the Minister of Finance as Corporation Sole, to requisition an Extraordinary General Meeting of the National Flour Mills Limited immediately for the purpose of reconstituting the Board of Directors. Cabinet has decided that the new Board of Directors will comprise two senior public servants, a labour representative and the two private sector representatives.

Cabinet views this action necessary in order to ensure that the investigation ordered by the Prime Minister should proceed under circumstances in which there should be no appearance that interested parties are left in a position where they may be perceived as having the opportunity to exert any influence on the outcome.

I wish to place on record, Mr. Speaker, the sincere gratitude of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago to the members of the board who have served so willingly and diligently over the past years.

Furthermore, I wish to give the assurance that every possible measure will be taken to ensure the smooth operations of the company given its responsibility for the supply of rice and other food staples to the country.

I thank you.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ELECTRICITY COMMISSION  
(STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS)**

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh):** Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Public Utilities I take this opportunity to apprise this honourable House on the status of negotiations for a Power Purchase Agreement for the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission and InnCogen.

Mr. Speaker, T&TEC, on July 3, 1997, presented the Ministry of Public Utilities with an overview and a plan of action for the provision of additional capacity to satisfy the country's growing demand for electricity.

The present contract with PowerGen provides for a maximum contracted load of 719 megawatts plus a contracted spinning reserve of 100 megawatts. This load will be sufficient to meet T&TEC's maximum 1998 load commitments.



**2.10 p.m.**

In order to meet the system load beyond 1998, T&TEC, based on its history and forecast projections, indicated that new generation capacity would have to be added by September 1999 to meet T&TEC's Phase I generation requirements.

Consequently, T&TEC had been holding discussions with three co-generators with a view to finalizing an agreement for the purchase of additional power.

Co-generation allows for the production of electricity for its own use and for sale to the national grid. In addition, co-generators bring to the host country other industrial enterprises thereby creating more employment and other economic benefits. The three co-generators who had expressed a desire to supply additional power to T&TEC were:

- (1) Norsk Hydro Aluminium;
- (2) the Aluminium Company of Trinidad and Tobago (ALCOTT)
- (3) Inncob Industries (T'dad) Ltd.

With respect to Norsk Hydro Aluminium, T&TEC indicated that discussions commenced about a year ago and according to the Hydro's project implementation schedule, T&TEC's deadline of September 1999 could not be complied with.

Similarly, bearing in mind the time-frame to work out financial details and to conduct technical feasibility studies, T&TEC has advised that ALCOTT would not have been in a position to install new capacity by September 1999. Consistent with the Government's policy, these companies are likely to meet T&TEC's Phase II generation capacity requirements for the year 2001.

With respect to Inncob Industries (T'dad) Ltd., T&TEC's view was that InnCogen (Inncob's Electricity Generator) was best positioned to meet the September 1999 deadline for new power generation. This position was arrived at after T&TEC conducted a due diligence exercise and visited its facilities in New York. The company has proposed the installation of two 73 megawatt generating units, with the possibility of a third plant being added at a later date.

Inncob Industries (T'dad) Limited, has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TIDCO) and Caroni (1975) Limited for the purposes of establishing:

- (1) a glass manufacturing plant;

*T&TEC*  
[HON. G. SINGH]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

- (2) a paper manufacturing plant;
- (3) a particle board plant;
- (4) an ethanol refining plant;
- (5) a plant to generate electricity to supply energy to the above mentioned four plants and the excess power capacity to T&TEC.

Together these five plants are expected to create permanent employment for over 725 persons at an estimated capital cost of US\$350 million. It is expected that these industries will engage approximately 2,000 workers at the construction stage.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Floating Glass Plant, I have been advised that a commercial contract has been signed with Stein Heurtey of France to provide 250 metric tonnes per day. With respect to the Paper Plant, a commercial contract has been signed with the Beloit Corporation of Jacksonville, Florida, USA. The sod-turning for these two projects is scheduled to take place in April, 1998.

Having regard to T&TEC's generation requirements and the benefits which will accrue to this country, Cabinet, on July 31, 1997, authorized T&TEC to enter into negotiations with InnCogen.

The negotiations between T&TEC and InnCogen commenced on August 21, 1997 and after 22 meetings between T&TEC and InnCogen, an agreement has been reached with InnCogen for a Power Purchase Agreement. The Board of T&TEC approved the Power Purchase Agreement on Wednesday, February 4, 1998. T&TEC's negotiating team comprised the following:

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Mr. Devanand Ramlal | - Deputy Chairman of T&TEC                                       |
| Mr. Stanley Ottley  | - Assistant General Manager - Administration, T&TEC              |
| Mr. Denis Singh     | - Assistant General Manager - Administration, T&TEC.             |
| Mr. Kenrick Bobb    | - Assistant General Manager - Transmission & Distribution, T&TEC |
| Mrs. Judith Morris  | - Assistant General Manager - Finance, T&TEC                     |
| Mr. Indarjit Singh  | - Chief Engineer - System Operations & Planning, T&TEC           |

T&TEC

Friday, February 06, 1998

Ms. Colleen Licorish - Senior Accountant.

The law firms of Slaughter & May of London, Pollonais & Blanc and Byrne & Byrne both of Trinidad and Tobago, acted as legal advisers to T&TEC. The salient features of the Power Purchase Agreement are as follows:

(i) Price:

The current conversion price for electricity paid to PowerGen is approximately US 1.67 cents per kwh. This price will be approximately US 1.86 cents in 1999. The average conversion price agreed by InnCogen for September 1999 is approximately US 1.2 cents per kwh (i.e. the Base Capacity Rate US \$0.012 per kwh and the Base Energy Rate US \$0.00045 per kwh). The InnCogen price is, therefore, competitively superior to the price being paid to PowerGen.

(ii) Commencement of Operations:

Commercial Operations for the generation of electricity by InnCogen in accordance with the terms of the Agreement will commence on September 9, 1999.

(iii) Equity Participation:

InnCogen has indicated its willingness to a minority equity participation by T&TEC and by the local private sector in the Company.

On Thursday, February 5, 1998, Cabinet authorized T&TEC to sign the negotiated Power Purchase Agreement with InnCogen. This Power Purchase Agreement is in keeping with our stated policy on electric power enunciated in the *Medium Term Policy Framework 1998—2000*, and I quote:

“New generation expansion of the system will be done utilizing the Co-generation /Independent Power Producers (IPP) approach. This will relieve T&TEC of the financial responsibility of generation expansion while at the same time deepen the involvement of the private sector at the generation level.”

The electricity sector continues to be one of the leading sectors in Trinidad and Tobago's economy and provides the catalyst for our sustained economic growth and development. This decision by the Government will ensure the continued stability, growth and expansion of this sector and will initiate the process of competition in power generation in Trinidad and Tobago for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I wish to indicate that another statement is to be made by the Prime Minister which I would allow to be made later in the proceedings.

#### LIQUOR LICENCES (AMDT.) BILL

Bill to amend the Liquor Licences Act, Chap. 84:10, [*The Attorney General*] ; read the first time.

*Motion made,* That the next stage of the Bill be taken forthwith. [*Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Legal Affairs and Acting Attorney General (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to amend the Liquor Licences Act, Chap. 84:10, be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to amend the Liquor Licences Act, Chap. 84:10, basically to provide for the issuance of a special event licence, to allow persons, and in particular small vendors, to sell intoxicated liquor during any day or days which the President may, by order, declare to be a special event.

#### **2.20 p.m.**

Also, the purpose of the Bill is to provide for a very simple procedure for obtaining of such a licence on the payment of a nominal fee. Carnival is a very unique event in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. It is celebrated by all and sundry regardless of race, colour, class or creed. It is truly the only celebration in the twin-island of Trinidad and Tobago which forms part of the different cultures in this very cosmopolitan country of ours. It is all-embracing, indigenous in its flavour and flamboyancy; it is such an event which unites its people in camaraderie and merrymaking. Indeed, it can be said that carnival is an integral part of the social and cultural history of Trinidad and Tobago.

Every year thousands of tourists visit our shores to join with citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in the celebration of carnival, and whilst the hotels and guests houses cater for the accommodation of visitors, the small vendors play a very important role in providing refreshments to all—tourists and locals alike—who participate in the celebrations.

In October of 1997, the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association together with the National Carnival Commission made representations to Government concerning the very high and exorbitant cost of a liquor licence, that is, an occasional licence to sell intoxicating liquor during the celebration of carnival.

The Trinidad and Tobago Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association and the NCC made representation that in order for them to carry out their trade, they had to obtain an occasional licence under the Liquor Licences Act, the cost of which was \$450.00 per day. This sum, when computed over the 14-day period which is normally associated with carnival, adds up to more than the cost of a restaurant and bar licence for an entire year. If we take a \$450.00 occasional licence fee per day over the 14-day period of carnival, we are looking at \$6,300.00 being spent for those licences. On the other hand, for an entire year a restaurant and bar licence—not 14 days—is only \$4,000.00. The cost of an occasional licence fee is, therefore, more suited to occasions when a person organizes a fete during the carnival season or any other season, charges an entrance fee to take part in that fete and the entrance fee received by that person can more than compensate for the cost of the occasional licence. This, however, does not apply in the case of the small vendor who plies his trade during the carnival season for a limited period of time, and who has to meet the cost of the occasional licence out of the profits derived from his sales. In most cases after he pays this very exorbitant sum he is left with a very small sum which can barely compensate him for the toil, labour and efforts which he employed in providing an income for himself and at the same time, to provide refreshments for all who participate during the carnival celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, if one can put it graphically in the words and in the terms of the Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association, they have described, for example, that they would have to sell at the outset, about 14 cases of beer in order to cover the cost of a present licence at \$450.00 per day. So before they even sell anything they would have to put out this \$450.00 and just to cover that, they would need to sell, for example, about 14 cases of beer, and in addition pay for ice and containers in which to cool them.

Government is very sympathetic to those members of its population, and in particular to small vendors, who by their initiative and resourcefulness, are willing to engage in an enterprise which can make them independent and self-reliant and thereby can make a positive contribution to society. We have no doubt that our colleagues on the other side are similarly disposed and sympathetic to the small

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. K. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

vendor, since to give encouragement and to render assistance to those who are willing to help themselves is, in my respectful view, the greatest benefit that we can confer upon a willing, conscientious and enterprising person. Basically, this is the philosophical base in which my Government views the present situation and has, therefore, decided to help the small vendors who are willing to help themselves by trying to make an honest living during the carnival season.

The Trinidad and Tobago Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association and the National Carnival Commission put forward the proposal, and as I said the fee for an occasional licence of \$450.00 per day should be reduced so that during the season the small vendor would be able to realize a greater measure of profit. The measure is two-fold, it would allow the small vendors to make a larger marginal profit and at the same time, it would allow those who might previously have operated outside of the law to come into the folds of the law because of the simplification of the procedure and the very nominal fee that is being required.

After considering the representations of the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association and that of the National Carnival Commission, the Government then decided that the granting of such a licence to reduce fees should apply not only to persons during the occasion of carnival, but it should also apply to other recognized occasions such as, Emancipation Day or Indian Arrival Day, whether these other occasions are looked at as public festivals or public holidays or not. So what we have done is to put the definition of "Special Event" and have allowed it to remain flexible, that is to say:

"special event" means the celebration of any event so declared by the President under section 47 C(2)."

That gives it a flexibility which is to say that any representative organization that wishes to celebrate an occasion in a similar manner like the vendors association did, can make representations for declaring that occasion to be a special event, and if there are organizations that do not wish for certain periods of time to be declared "special events" because of religious sensitivities or otherwise, then those representations can also be made.

I want to make it very clear that the amending Bill does not specifically exclude religious holidays or religious occasions. We have left it in a flexible manner to allow any interest group to make representations to have any period of time declared as a special event. Therefore, in that way we would not be discriminating against any particular group. It would be for those interest groups to come forward and make representations. This is the genesis which led to the Bill. This

Bill, as one would note, amends the Liquor Licences Act. It does so by adding a new Part VA to give effect to representations made by the National Carnival Commission and the Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association.

This new Part VA which is contained in clause 4 of the Bill, comprises nine new clauses from clause 47A to 47I. Mr. Speaker, I also have caused to be circulated amendments to clause 4 of the Bill, and we will deal with those at the appropriate stage.

These new clauses in Part VA will be added to the parent Act to provide a very simple procedure for an applicant to obtain a special event licence and this will allow that applicant to be granted such a licence to sell intoxicating liquor on premises on a day or days which would have been so declared as a special event. The other provisions in other parts of the Bill with respect to licences, generally, will apply, save where those provisions will conflict with the provisions of the new Part VA in which case the provisions of Part VA will prevail over any other sections in the parent Act.

The expression “premises” in the Bill is defined to include a booth erected for the purpose of selling intoxicating liquor during the celebration of a special event, and the premises in respect of which an application is made, must not be more than 500 square feet. The reason for this is very simple. It is in a sense to allow those who operate smaller businesses, small vendors, to have access to this new provision which is being put forward in the special event licence.

### **2.30 p.m.**

In a sense, it could preclude or discourage persons who organize a fete on their premises or larger premises where an entrance fee is charged on a day declared to be a special event, from applying for a special event licence. The premises are confined to small ones to deal with the issue which was raised with the Government.

In the Bill, the expression “special event” is defined to mean the celebration of an event declared by the President to be a special event. Should we gain the approval of this honourable House and the other place, it is our intention that an order would be made by the President to declare the carnival period as a special event. Usually, it is fourteen days, but for this year, we hope to have that in place to take effect from February 12 to 11.30 p.m. on Carnival Tuesday.

The procedure for applying for a special event licence is a simple one. The person who wishes to apply for the special event licence will apply to the licensing authority. Under this amendment, the Licensing Authority has now become the

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. K. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

Clerk of the Peace assigned to the magisterial district in which the premises are situated. This is provided for in the new section 47D in clause 4 of the Bill.

The form and manner in which the application shall be made is set out in the new section 47E in clause 4 which provides that every application shall state the name, occupation and address of the applicant. In the amendment circulated we have asked that the word “age” be inserted. In addition, the applicant must give the address of the location of the premises and the date of the special event. In the proposed amendment we are also asking the applicant to provide an identification number such as may be contained in an identification card, passport or driving permit.

The amendment, coupled together with the substantive section 47E is to allow an applicant to make one application. We are inserting a new section 47J where the applicant may not apply for more than one special event licence. The extra information in 47E such as the age or some form of identification is to allow us to see very easily whether duplicate applications have been made for other venues. I ask this honourable House to remember that the purpose of this is for the small vendor and not necessarily the man who can set up booths at various locations. It is one application per applicant. The additional information is to provide easy identification of applicants.

The applicant would then lodge the application with the Clerk of the Peace. The form and manner of such application is set out in section 47E. The next step is for the applicant to take the original application and a copy of it to the police station within the magisterial district where the premises are situated. When he goes there he must give a copy of the application to the officer in charge of the police station. The officer who receives that copy must acknowledge such receipt by affixing the station’s stamp on the original application and certify that a copy has been received. This is set out in the new sections 47F(1) and (2) in clause 4 of the Bill.

This procedure is to ensure that police officers who are entrusted with the power to preserve law and order are brought into the picture and the Licensing Authority is aware that the police have been brought in. After this original application has been certified, the applicant would then take it to the Clerk of the Peace assigned to the magisterial district in which the premises are situated. The Clerk of the Peace then has four days within which to grant the licence.

The Bill makes provision for the police to object to the granting of a special event licence. If the police should object, that objection should be submitted to the



licensing authority, that is the Justice of the Peace, within two days after the date the police had received a copy of the application. This is provided for in the new section 47F, in clause 4. Where there is no objection by the police, the Justice of the Peace must grant a special event licence to the applicant within four days of the receipt of the application. This is provided for in the new section 47G, in clause 4.

However, where there is an objection by the police, the Clerk of the Peace must then set down the matter for hearing for the following day by a magistrate, who shall then be the licensing authority. This is provided for in the new section 47G. Where there is no objection the procedure is fairly simple. The Clerk of the Peace would grant it within four days of receipt. Where there is objection it would go back into the hands of the licensing authority, the magistrate.

It should be noted that in the amendment circulated, as I said before, the applicant may not apply for more than one special event licence. Vendors who wish to ply their trade in several locations would be the big ones. If they want to have several such booths, they would avail themselves of the other licences of the Act, such as the occasional licence and pay the higher fee. The small vendor would go through the simple process, pay \$10.00 per day and get a special event licence for the day or days declared to be a special event.

In essence, this is the procedure which the Bill prescribes for the application of a special event licence. In my view, when enacted, this Bill would be of tremendous advantage to the small vendors who ply their trade during the carnival season and look forward to engage in lawful enterprise to earn some money. On this side of the House we are of the view that this Bill is laudable and it would provide appropriate incentives to small vendors and have the effect of attracting other persons to engage in similar ventures during the celebration of a special event.

We trust that our colleagues on the other side would have no objection to the principle of this Bill which does not seek to create any new law. I think this point should be made because some concern was expressed. The law as it exists provides for the making of an application to get an occasional licence to sell liquor during the carnival season or at any other time. Under that existing law the fee is \$450. We have maintained the principle of the law as it stands. This amendment Bill simplifies the procedure to reduce the cost of the licence. It is not creating any new law in the sense that we are saying that alcohol is to be sold everywhere. We are saying that those who would have applied for a liquor licence can now utilize the procedures set out in this Bill and pay the \$10 per day.

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. K. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

The Bill seeks to prescribe a simple procedure to enable the small vendor to apply on his accord for a licence which would cost \$10 per day to ply his trade, on the day or days to be declared a special event. The utility of this Bill in prescribing a simple procedure for obtaining the licence at such a low fee, provides its own justification.

When the Bill is enacted it would achieve these results. It would be more affordable for persons, particularly small vendors, who operate during the carnival celebration or any other occasion declared to be special events. To obtain a special event licence to carry on their trade, the fee would be \$10 per day, as opposed to the cost of \$450 per day. It would encourage small enterprise. It would also encourage unregulated persons and small vendors who in the past may have been operating outside the law during the celebration of carnival or any other special event, to apply for this licence, or for any subsequent occasion to ply their trade in accordance with the law.

There is a spin-off from all this. In addition to the small vendors, there is another category of persons who could benefit from this amendment and avail themselves of the provisions under it. I am thinking of non-governmental organizations, community groups and neighbourhood groups, that raise funds for charitable purposes, not only during the carnival season, but also at other times. Those organizations would benefit from having to pay the lesser fee for the licence during the time of a special event, and therefore would have more money in terms of their fund raising to use for worthy causes.

**2.40 p.m.**

In closing, I would like to thank the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association, Mr. Raphael De Leon, and the members of that association, some of whom are with us here today. We have had discussions with them and wish to thank them for their comments and suggestions on the drafting of this Bill. When we met with them earlier this week, Mr. De Leon was quite fulsome in his praise when he said that he was happy with the rapid response he had received with respect to the representations they had made.

This Government listens to individuals and interest groups. It does so whether it is in the matter of the liquor licence, company law or in the matter of housing. This Government listens to individuals and interest groups, be they the small man, the large man or any individual in the society. It is our belief that the views of our citizens are a very important aspect of participatory democracy. In this way, we

can get legislation in terms of what people want. This approach moves us further towards our goal of a total quality government as well as nation.

I commend this Bill and beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds** (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you very kindly, and the Member for Siparia who, obviously not thinking these measures thoroughly through, was very lucid in her presentation of them.

Lest we be misunderstood by the national community and, more importantly, lest our comments be wilfully and maliciously distorted, as we have begun to become accustomed to within recent times, I would like to make it abundantly clear that we on this side, who represent the People's National Movement and our constituents, have supported, do support and will continue to support anything that is done legally, morally, and that is spiritually underpinned, for the benefit and well-being of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Our record demonstrates that beyond question. [*Desk thumping*]

I represent the people of Laventille East/Morvant, a constituency that has a significant number, if I may use the description put to us today by the Member for Siparia, of "little" people. We have "big" people, "medium" people—by the Minister's definition—and, indeed, we have "little" people. I feel quite confident and happy to say that I have sought their interest, have sought it thoroughly and will continue to do so.

This measure purports, as the Minister said, to bring some assistance to the so-called "little" people. In fact, the explanatory note says that it will encourage small enterprise. The Member for Siparia, as all or most Members on the other side, is quite capable of saying soft, soothing and nice-sounding things, but when one examines them more closely, as we have had to do for the past two years and as I, in particular, have had to do, one recognizes that it is important to listen very carefully and to watch with very discerning eyes every single thing that comes from the other side. There is always a sting in the tail.

At the present time the cost of an application for an occasional licence is \$450 per event. For some persons this is a significant amount. The Minister took time out with some interesting statistics. She said that over 14 days, the cost of these licences would be more than \$6,000, which is what one would be required to pay for a restaurant and special licence. While in theory that is possible, it is not often—and I bring common and street sense to this debate—that one has a

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. HINDS]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

celebration in one's community, outside of the carnival season, which will be run for 14 days. While in theory the example is useful, the reality does not reflect it. At any rate, I will go along with her theory.

The Minister, in this measure, has proposed that the cost of an occasional licence, when there is a special event as described in this Bill, will now be \$10.00. It means that an applicant, for a particular day, will save \$440.00. Fantastic! It has to be supported. However, I ask: What is the real purpose of this measure?

When one applies for a licence, the appropriate fee is for one of two purposes. It is either for regulatory purposes or for revenue-raising purposes. In this measure the Government is prepared to forego some of the revenue that would come to it when someone makes an application for the said licence, so one cannot be speaking about revenue-raising. One must forget that.

Is it for regulatory purposes? I see no reason to answer yea to that. One must consider that with that procedure, now simplified, one must still make an application, a copy still goes to the police station in the district, the Clerk of the Peace must still take time to examine it, the police can still highlight objections and once an objection is made, the other aspects of the legislation come to bear. It then goes before a full committee, time is taken, all the other objections that are now in the legislation can very well be taken, and I suspect that the Member for Siparia is fully aware of them. I need not read them: they are here. The Laws of Trinidad and Tobago are public documents and anyone sufficiently interested can access them.

The point is that the cost of all that, even if we approach it by this new procedure, will certainly be much more than \$10.00. So this is not now an outrageous question to ask. If the fee is \$10.00, the purpose is not a revenue-raising measure, nor one hinged on any regulatory purpose, what is the purpose of imposing the fee? Why not a fee of \$5.00 as someone has asked? Why not make it free of cost? Certainly the cost of this will be much more than the \$10.00 proposed at this time, though we concede that for the person who was paying \$450.00, \$10.00 is an advancement indeed.

**2.50 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated that this is to assist small vendors. What is the reality? If a community group, or an NGO is having a fund-raiser, again I maintain the position that it is very unusual for it to last 14 days, usually, it is a one-off event like a barbecue, a fete, a day of sports, or a family day. Typically that is the case, but there may be exceptions. That has happened and that kind of

activity would continue, I cannot readily see how these new measures will encourage more of that kind of activity.

When one looks at the carnival scenario, the example which the Minister gave or used, carnival activity is centred around the main city centres in Trinidad and Tobago. Let us talk about Port of Spain, the area of the Queen's Park Savannah and down town. In the area of the Queen's Park Savannah, there are, and can be only a very limited number of booths. The Minister said—and this is why we have learnt that we have to listen to them very carefully—very loudly at the beginning of her presentation that this would assist the small businessman or business persons, and encourage small enterprise. It is on the record and I would not do like a Member of this House and seek to twist and distort what she has said, I shall paraphrase her nonetheless. She said that this legislation simplifies the procedure for those who would have applied anyway. Those are largely her words.

What she expressed is a recognition that there were a limited number of booths around the Queen's Park Savannah, you cannot have any more than those that are now erected. *[Interruption]* I am speaking specifically about Port of Spain, Member for Caroni East. I will come to San Fernando and Siparia later if you would permit me. The point that I am making, Mr. Speaker, and I am not surprised that the Member for Tobago West does not understand, she hardly ever understands—

**Miss Nicholson:** You are nonsensical.

**Mr. F. Hinds:** What I am saying is that last year or at present, in the absence of this legislation, under these proposed measures, an individual would have had to apply for his licence attached to particular premises. This licence is not one given to an individual to keep in his pocket, he must apply for it, and I quote clause 47E sub-clause 1(b) of the amendment which states:

“The precise address and location of the premises...”

must be stated.

Just as it now exists, it has to be applied for in respect of a particular premise so that if there are only a limited number of booths that can go around a venue where carnival activities are taking place—whether it is Chaguanas, Siparia, San Fernando or Port of Spain, and bearing in mind that the Minister has said quite honestly, I think, though I suspect unthinkingly—it simplifies the procedure for those who would have applied anyway.

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. HINDS]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

What I see is that persons who have these booths—and I understand it is a repeat thing: if I had it last year, I am likely to get it again this year and so it continues—would now be getting the licence at a reduced fee, but the small person about whom the Minister spoke, I do not know where he could come in because he would have to have a fixed premise from which to operate and base his application for this licence. That is the point. Therefore, there is to my mind, a very limited number of persons who practise in this trade around that season in that festive period, and who will continue. I do not take the argument that these measures would necessarily assist many small persons and small enterprises as the Minister is arguing. That is the point I am making.

Let me make it clear again, we do not and would not object to the measure in the sense that it reduces the cost to the persons who are operating. What we are saying is that we cannot find in these measures any particular philosophy, and the argument that it is designed to assist small businesses and small persons is nothing but a false argument, a populist approach to government for which they have become well known. That has to be made quite clear, and I do not see these measures as necessarily encouraging many more persons to come into this trade on the basis of it. I am saying this because people listen to us out there and when that kind of comment is reported, there are those who will feel that I am a little man, I could not have afforded to pay \$450.00, if I got my two buckets and fill them with beers and guinness and maltas—not malta, that is not an alcoholic beverage—if I fill them with spirits, alcoholic beverages, I could probably go selling now or apply for a licence for \$10.00. The answer to that is a resounding “no”.

In fact, as now exists under this legislation, if someone has a booth under the Grand Stand or around the Queen’s Park Savannah, or in the carnival centre in Chaguanas, Siparia, San Fernando or Scarborough in Tobago and he or she leaves with these buckets and ventures away from those premises selling alcohol and he is accosted by a police officer who asks for his licence, he cannot be heard to say it is over there. He is guilty of the offence of selling here without his licence and the people must be told that. The fine for doing that is \$1,000, so while it may seem trite and unimportant, it is our duty to inform the national community because they would be misled by that Government as they have been before and our duty is to let them not be misled.

One would have thought when they are talking about small man, they would include the little fellow from Laventille East/Morvant who came to me yesterday at my constituency office and said, Mr. Hinds, I understand that licences would be

\$10.00 well I am all right because last year, when I had my few buckets, I had to be running from the police. I had to tell the young man, as I want to tell all others: “Do not let this twisting UNC Government fool you, it will not work small man, you are still in the same position today as you were yesterday and you will still be when these measures are proposed”. That is what I had to tell him. *[Interruption]*

Having told him that he said, if they wanted to assist the small man, why did they not consider writing an itinerant or a roving sort of licence which a fellow can have in his pocket? It does not have to be attached to any premises and the small man could walk through the bands and all over selling beers and so forth. I am being reminded by more experienced persons on this side—I, having accepted the reality of having just come to this Parliament—that it is that Government who increased the fee in 1996.

**Miss Nicholson:** Which fee?

**Mr. F. Hinds:** You do not have a clue Member for Tobago West, you do not even know what the people in Tobago West are now saying, but your time will come.

I continue, Mr. Speaker, I am being distracted. If this Government is so bent on assisting little people, as it claims falsely behind its mask, what it can do is consider such a licence which would be good for itinerant vendors, and then it would be helping little persons.

**3.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, since there is no philosophy of regulation or revenue raising in this measure, make it free. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, I am afraid to respond to the Member for Couva North. It is only recently I made one statement, by way of example. I said you did not see Jack, you see James but he suddenly found it logical and sensible to say, I said Jack is James. What twisted and contorted—*[Interruption]* It reflects the state of his mind but I will not let him distract me.

*[Words Expunged]*

**Mr. F. Hinds:** The nation has now seen him for what he is worth.

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish that the comment which has just been made by the Member for La Brea be expunged from the record. May I say to the hon. Member that that comment should not have been made.

**Mr. Bereaux:** I did not expect it to be reported.

**Mr. Speaker:** You will be surprised at the things which are picked up by the *Hansard* Reporters, who ought to report everything they hear. It was unkind. Please do not repeat that.

**Mr. F. Hinds:** When a government decides, as this Government is doing, supposedly in the interest of assisting the little people of this country by foregoing revenue, it must be able to account to the national community to demonstrate, perhaps, that it can raise that revenue. Mr. Speaker, remember the budget was based on certain figures. As a matter of fact, let me take this opportunity to say this measure could very well have come in the *Provisional Collection of Taxes Order* which was done recently. *[Interruption]* But we did not. So thanks to the Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival Vendors Association and the names the Minister called a while ago for prodding this Government, for teaching it good sense. Obviously, the Government did not think about this before. *[Interruption]* And they claim that this is listening.

Similarly, I am reading, Mr. Speaker, when we on this side and other persons in the national community point out evidence, at least *prima facie* evidence of mismanagement and corruption on certain state boards and other places, then a certain Member from that side—whose name I am now afraid to call, Mr. Speaker—twists and says, we are dealing with this matter and we are happy for the PNM's input.

Mr. Speaker, when a government decides to forego revenue, even if it were \$10.00, it has to understand that like all governments, in all national economies, its income is raised from taxes; fees from licences, which is a form of taxation, local and foreign borrowings, investment earnings and royalties. Those are the things that all go together to create, what the economist calls, national income.

National income, as I recall from my first year as a student in Economics, ought to be equal to national expenditure. When one is foregoing income, as this Government is doing in this measure, it follows then that one would have less money for national expenditure. When one considers that there was a fall in VAT revenue last year, such that the Government is proposing to implement a revenue collecting agency, an internal revenue service, if you like, and when one considers that oil prices, one of the major income earners for Trinidad and Tobago are fluctuating at a low, as it has been for the past few weeks, this Government should be particularly keen on raising revenue. However, it appears that the Government, in its usual irresponsible way, has no concern with that. It is spending money, as I have said here and elsewhere, to use a colloquialism, "Lablash", populist in its



orientation, trying to make everybody happy with no overview of the national economy.

The Government told us that for the years 1996 and 1997, there was growth in the economy. It did not tell us—we had to read between the lines to see that though there was growth, the momentum from the years, 1991—1995—that the growth rate for those two years was declining. This Government should be very concerned about raising more revenue, even as it seeks to assist the little people, as it falsely claims here today. When one considers these things, one wonders where we are really going.

Mr. Speaker, revenue is important. It is our revenue. It is our taxpayers' money which must fund all the losses and the corruption which is prevalent in the economy and across the state enterprises and otherwise today. I heard the Minister of Finance say today, at least he sent a signal that a certain board, I think it is the National Flour Mills Board, should be on its way.

Mr. Speaker, the national community must know—notwithstanding the comments of the Member, whose constituency I am now afraid to mention—when one considers that he indicated to the national community recently, I do not know if he made mention of this Bill and the licences, as we were dealing with it. He said that it appears as though these organizations have endemic qualities of corruption from which they have not been able to extricate themselves. That is his explanation for what is happening today, but all by boards which they have put in place.

Mr. Speaker, I read the *Express* dated February 3, 1998, and I saw that in our national airline, sadly—and there is no rejoicing in this for anyone who loves this country—there have been significant losses. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago holds the golden share of that organization, therefore it is our loss.

I read on the same day—we are here today to debate the reduction in the cost of licences, but Angostura Limited which plays a very important part, particularly around this festive season, and for some persons, all year through—Mr. Speaker that “Rum prices up.” So that the persons who will benefit from the reduction in the fee proposed in this measure, will find that they will be selling less of this spirit because the prices have gone up. Why?

“Angostura explains, higher utility bills; rising cost of raw materials, molasses, in particular.”

And you know from where we get molasses.

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. HINDS]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

**3.10 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I am no economist, but I understand enough about economics to know that if there is inefficiency, corruption and mismanagement in a company which produces sugar, rum and the by-product molasses, and over \$700 million pumped into it since we made it bankable, then there is an interlocking relationship between that and what Angostura Limited is now saying. To some extent, it is plausible to argue then that the Member for Princes Town, and also, the Member for Caroni East, who is the Minister of Public Utilities, might be able to explain to the nation why rum prices are going up.

The people who are getting these licences have to affix these licences, or apply in respect of premises and, if they are there through the night, they will have to use electricity. The Member for Caroni East came here a few months ago and again made another very populist comment, that there was a moratorium in terms of disconnection for people who could not pay their electricity bills.

**Mr. G. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification, I never came to this House to indicate that there was any moratorium on electricity disconnection. I indicated in December, 1995 that there was a three-month moratorium on water disconnection, and I hope the Member will note this.

**Mr. F. Hinds:** I am guided by the Member. Just looking at these Members on the other side—especially the Member for Arima—has a very confusing, debilitating effect on the sober mind. I must be excused. I concede the point had to do with water, but Angostura uses a lot of water to distil their beverages. Mr. Speaker, they consume significant amounts of it, and it is a utility, so the argument obtains.

In any event, since then, more and more people who could not afford the water rates have suffered. I understand that WASA has become, perhaps rightly so, more efficient at disconnection and that people are being fixed with meters.

Close to the Tokyo panyard alcoholic beverages are sold. The people at the Tokyo panyard will have to apply for a licence and will presumably benefit from the measures, if and when this legislation is passed. But right across from the panyard, there is a fly-over; I see it every day. A very interesting affirmation is now written across it: “If you have to drink and drive, drink Pepsi” a positive affirmation. What is more attractive about that is that Carib is the sponsor of Tokyo. I see the fly-over, and all the pillars that keep it up, now nicely painted in celestial white—if I can call it that.

Trinidad is a peculiar country, and this Government is even more peculiar. I have never seen those prefabricated bridges painted anywhere else in the world. I have been through the Caribbean, to Europe, the United States, and I have not seen one such prefabricated bridge painted anywhere. This Government talks about efficiency. Those structures, like the facade of the Hall of Justice which stands next to this building, are designed to be left raw as they are. They are cleaned by sandblasting, but this Government saw the wisdom, or lack of it, in giving a contract to one of its friends to paint that bridge, but it is now reducing revenue further by this measure. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, from \$450 to \$10—very good for the people who will benefit. But revenue is important. If one is not raising revenue, how will one find money to meet Government expenditure.

Talking about expenditure, one can safely argue that the fact of painting that bridge is inefficient and a waste of money altogether. They were never designed for painting. While one must admit it improves the ambience, that is the trick with this Government, there is always a sting in the tail. It makes some of their friends' pockets feel good. Someone now has a contract to keep that celestial white clean for the next three years, and the tanks at the top of the hill in the constituency of Laventille West, \$300 per gallon, we are told for paint. The birds are painted red. They are supposed to be flying, now they are running. It is a wanton waste of money but, at the same time, the Government is coming with this measure to forego revenue.

While they might find us pedantic, we have to watch this Government very closely. The ambience feels good like persons who buy a lottery ticket. Lottery is another revenue raising measure. We are talking about the licence fee, so it is very relevant. When a person purchases a lotto ticket, while the ticket is in his wallet, he enjoys what the psychologist calls the "feel good factor". He plans what will happen if he only won this money. He goes on mental excursions abroad for holidays, new homes, new cars, educated children, sons who are in university could be financed to the core, but when the results come, that "feel good factor" for the many would be gone.

This Government as one very notable activist in the United States, Malcom X, said, puts the injection into the jaw. One is injected with that drug, cocaine, and one is bleeding from the mouth but peacefully, not feeling the immediate pain. That is this Government. It gives you 20 per cent and sets up a friend to benefit 80 per cent for a contract to paint a bridge that should have never been painted in the first place, in addition to the tanks that never should have been painted.

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. HINDS]

Friday, February 06, 1998

Where is Sen. Baksh? They no longer see him in Laventille. I heard on the news today than a small vendor who wanted to apply for this licence said that the people in Siparia are not seeing the Member for Siparia. The people in Laventille are now complaining equally about the Minister of Works and Transport. Right now, they do not want to see him, period! They prefer to see the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, but he does not want to see them either, so he transposes this problem to the regional corporations around the country.

I have in my hands the *Provisional Collection Of Taxes Order, 1996* and, I said earlier in my discourse that it was this Government that increased the cost of the occasional licence fee under section 40 and section 44 of the legislation we are amending today. It increased it. It was they, in 1996 in the *Provisional Collection Of Taxes Order*, who increased it to \$450.

**3.20 p.m.**

Then suddenly, as typifies the Members from that side, particularly the one we call Janus, who is absent, but he can defend himself when he returns. The Member for Siparia denied it a moment ago, she said, "No, we did not". *[Interruption]* The Member for Tobago West, well, I will excuse her, she really does not have a clue, so we must leave her out of the equation. Getting back to the Member for Siparia, it was they who introduced the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order for 1996 and increased it to \$450. Suddenly, they now have a love in their hearts for the little people and they have come to make all of the little people feel so much better. A trick and a trap! It is my duty to remove their mask and to let the nation see them for what they truly are.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to continue without being distracted. I am dealing with this debate and I want to deal with it comprehensively. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, I am being distracted.

So, we have before us this amendment. The Member for Siparia argued wrongly, misleadingly, that it will benefit so many little people. Well, we have now—I am sure—ruled that out entirely. The persons who are there with their booths and who have been there, presumably, for the last few years, will continue and they will benefit from this, and this is fine. What if a young man from Laventille West, on top the hill by the shrine—

**Mr. Speaker:** May I suggest to the hon. Member for Tunapuna and the hon. Member for Tobago West that such an aside should really be carried on elsewhere. It is disturbing the *Hansard* reporter, it is extremely difficult for it to be done.

**Miss Nicholson:** I wish to apologize, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. F. Hinds:** Mr. Speaker, I am entirely grateful for your protection. The sound that was disturbing me really came from on that side, but I am obliged.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not on what is disturbing you, I am on what is disturbing the *Hansard* reporter.

**Mr. F. Hinds:** Mr. Speaker, I honestly thought you cared sufficiently about the Member for Laventille East/Morvant to offer your protection, but now I know, I shall continue. I am grateful anyway.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking here about a revenue measure. In this particular case, it is a revenue reducing measure. While this Government came today to talk to us and to propose a reduction in Government revenue of \$450 per licence, they having put it up in the first place, it is like if one inserts a six-inch dagger into a man and then pulls it out three inches and says how good one is to the man, what a favour one has done. One should not have put it in, in the first place. I wish to continue. While we deal with revenue, I am seeing here another utility is proposing—I do not comment on the merits or the demerits of it—to increase its rates to the industrial consumer and representations are being made by an interest group, the joint technical committee. The *Independent* newspaper of Wednesday, January 28, 1998 says that a 22.75 per cent increase is simply not necessary.

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

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. F. Hinds:** I am indeed grateful to the Member for Tobago West, most grateful. I am indeed grateful to the Members of this House for the extension of time as I take this opportunity to demonstrate the sham and the trick that she and that Government really are. [*Laughter*]

**Miss Nicholson:** No respect.

**Mr. F. Hinds:** Mr. Speaker, we support any measure that is designed to bring comfort or relief to the so-called small man in this country, of which I am one. When one reads the daily newspapers, again, cement prices go up. I remember—we are talking about revenue here—the Government has proposed a measure to forego certain revenue, so it is quite legitimate to speak of this. Shortly after I

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. HINDS]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

came to this House, shortly after that concoction of the UNC/NAR and some straggling Independents formed the Government and came to this Parliament, I remember seeing advertisements on my television saying how prices had fallen, everything was so good. Again, trying to drug the people of this country—not in a literal sense, I have to be careful, but in that metaphoric sense—trying to mislead the people of this country that prices have fallen. You know, the person who was running the advertisement, the speaker on the advertisement almost reminded me, in those matters that concern revenue, of the Member for Couva North, prices have fallen, things are so good in the country, but cement prices are going up, utility costs are going up, whether it is water, electricity, and—

**Mr. Speaker:** I am warning that the hon. Member is straying too far from the Bill entitled an Act to amend the Liquor Licences Act, Chap. 84:10. While I am at it, I simply want to say that from here on, any time I determine that somebody is straying too far, I will be prepared to call on another Member to continue the debate.

**Mr. F. Hinds:** I am guided, Mr. Speaker, and my record will demonstrate that whenever, unwittingly, I stray from the terms of the Bill, I am guided by the Speaker. I am so guided and I shall deal with the Bill as I was.

Mr. Speaker, the explanatory note in this Bill says:

“(c) it will encourage hitherto unregulated persons and small vendors who have been operating outside of the law...”

to come in. Well, to some extent I have already alluded to that. The hon. Member was saying, and this Bill says that the premises must be no more than 500 square feet, but if some organization is having a fund raiser, it could make proposals or approach the Government so that it could be declared a special event. I foresee, and it is reasonable to see, one may have a large car park that can hold 3,000—4,000 persons, but the premises for which this licence would be issued could be within the definition as prescribed here. So that if the Minister is wrongly believing that this provision of no more than 500 square feet as the premises, for the issuance of this licence, all one has to do is have it declared a special event, have a little booth from where the drinks are sold, have a car park or an open area that can hold 5,000 people, put up a sound system, pay their COTT fee and there they have it.

Then there would be a mad rush to the very small bar, 500 square feet. If the Minister believes—as I think she said in her contribution—that by limiting the

space you will achieve—I cannot remember—but in any event I want the Minister to consider that.

**3.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I think we have made our position clear. We are all in support of any measure to bring relief to the little people. We are in support of this measure, specifically, because it reduces the cost of the licence fee as a second thought by the Government which increased it in the first place. We simply wanted to point out that to claim it was assisting small businesses and enterprises was all a farce; typical UNC farce. All the so-called little people who were operating illegally last year and will continue to do so this year—and this is no encouragement from this Member, let me make that abundantly clear—this legislation does not make their position any better. I have made two recommendations: make it free or give—if you like—a roving itinerant licence.

With these few words of wisdom directed at a government which seems incapable of that, I close and say, thank you for the opportunity to make my contribution to this debate.

**The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives (Hon. Harry Partap):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to this Bill, an Act to amend the Liquor Licensing Act, Chap. 84:10

I am disappointed in the contribution from the Member for Laventille East/Morvant. I sense panic, fear and desperation every time the Member speaks. I understand this fear because if you notice in his contribution he made many spurious allegations against us on this side. I think this was done merely to have the population distracted from the unprecedented successes of this Government. [*Desk thumping*] In itself, that is a bit distressing to those opposite because as the hon. Prime Minister said, it keeps them on that side and it keeps us on this side.

The Member for Laventille East/Morvant indicated in his contribution that we had increased the occasional licences fee. What is wrong with reducing it? Yes, the occasional licences fee was increased, we had representation from small vendors and we listened to them and brought it to \$10 per day. Is the Member against listening to people or he is against us listening to people?" I would suggest that even though you are against our listening to people we will continue to give an ear to those small people in our society.

The Member also made reference to the painting of the overpass at the entrance to Port of Spain. I do not know what he has against beautification. Is he

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. H. PARTAP]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

against beautifying the City of Port of Spain and making it attractive for people coming in?

**Mr. Hinds:** Absolutely not!

**Hon. H. Partap:** I hope not! I hope that is not his intention, because we want to beautify this place so that people would feel comfortable where they live. We will continue to do that despite what the Member opposite says.

The Bill before us this afternoon seeks to amend the Liquor Licences Act to provide for the granting of a Special Event Licence to allow small vendors to sell liquor during celebrations marking special events. It is what we consider to be a very important piece of legislation even though it is an amendment. It does not introduce the sale of intoxicating liquor for the first time. The parent Act already provides for the selling of liquor and it has been so for donkey's years.

**Mr. Panday:** Do not refer to the Member in those terms.

**Hon. H. Partap:** A simple reading of this amendment will show that the Bill seeks to make it more affordable for small vendors to carry out their trade paying a smaller licence fee. Basically that is what it is about. This facility is only for special events declared by his Excellency, the President.

**Mr. Hart:** That is why so many of your Members are always so drunk.

**Hon. H. Partap:** The acting Attorney General has already indicated that small vendors will benefit because they will pay a reduced licence. Instead of paying \$450 a day for a licence as the law now stipulates, a special events licence is a mere \$10 a day. A small vendor will save \$440 a day on his or her licence. Do you know what this could mean for small vendors, small enterprises, little people who rely on these special events to earn a little cash to care for their families?

The question of morality does not arise in a debate on this amendment because all the procedures for obtaining a special events licence remain. Very soon the acting Attorney General is going to introduce the amendment. In a sense we are protecting the small man from the bigger folks who may want to have several licences because you will only have access to one licence. The Bill provides for measures to ensure that this happens. For example, an applicant would now have to provide age and identification card number. If one does not have an identification card, a passport or driver's licence can be used.

The normal procedure will continue; the police is still able to object and the application is still subject to the jurisdiction of the Licensing Authority in the



particular district where the celebration is taking place. Therefore, we are taking these steps to protect small vendors and to ensure that they benefit from the actions we are taking.

It is not the intent of the amendment to encourage people to consume liquor. It merely seeks to allow small vendors to participate in trade and to be better poised to earn a return on their investment. This Government continues to assist the little people in our society. We have been using every opportunity to remove the hindrances to the little people benefiting from the heightened economic activities now taking place in Trinidad and Tobago. This amendment is just a part of this whole process. I support the Bill and commend it to those opposite to give the little people a chance. Therefore they should vote in favour of the Bill.

**3.40 p.m.**

**Mr. Hedwidge Bereaux** (*La Brea*): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a short intervention on a Bill to amend the Liquor Licences Act.

Just before I make my contribution I would like to indicate to the Member for Arima, who has been interfering with me for some time across the floor, that I am proud to represent the pitch area and the people there do not use my effigy as a bobolee as they do of his in Arima. Please leave me alone.

**Dr. Mohammed:** What is an effigy?

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** If the Member is illiterate that is not my fault, please get a dictionary. It took me a long time to learn to speak and to use the words that I use so if the Member for Princes Town has some difficulty in understanding my speech I suggest he use the dictionary we have in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal first with a few matters raised by the Member for Nariva. He was saying that it appears that the Member for Laventille East/Morvant speaks with fear and desperation when he comes here. I am saying, very well he might, having regard to the various attacks to which he has been subjected. When he speaks about the unprecedented success of this Government, I want to itemize some of them. The success in murders in this country, the success with respect to the corruption at the airport, the success with respect to the corruption at National Flour Mills. *[Interruption]* As I was saying, I notice also that the hon. Member for Nariva went on to ask if we were against them listening to little people. I am satisfied, and I agree that he should listen to little people. We are not against that.

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. BERAUX]

Friday, February 06, 1998

We only hope that he would have listened to the little people around Christmas time who worked in the Unemployment Relief Programme and who did not get their pay, and who are still trying to get their salaries. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker, I say I want to support this measure because, unlike some of those on the other side who might get their money in different ways, I have been a person involved in the liquor trade myself so I understand the cost of liquor licences. I support the reduction in the liquor licence fee. But I want to underscore, as my colleague from Laventille East/Morvant did, that it was this Government that increased the occasional licence. When the hon. Member for Siparia comes up here and multiplies the 14 days by 450 and gets \$6,000 and she says that is what it costs, she must not look at us. I know she is too young to have studied Latin in school but she should have said *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*.

I do not want them to come to try to fool people, to pull wool over the eyes of the population by saying we have reduced it to assist little people. Admittedly, the licence fee in respect of special events has been reduced. In respect of those areas less than 500 square feet. That is fine, but the cost of the occasional licence remains unless a special event is determined. They should do away with the licence fee and let carnival, if it is truly one of our festivals and special events—once certain criteria are met—make money. That is what we want people to do and we have no problem with that. But I am pointing out that the occasional licence at \$450 still persists and there is a sting in the tail. I will tell you. Not only does the occasional licence at \$450 still persist, even in respect of the special events licence there is the question of the approval of the police. I am saying no, I am not taking any objections to the approval of police at all, but they have not told you about another cost. You may get away from that cost around carnival time. I am from the country, I do not know too much about what goes on in town around carnival but I know what happens.

When you go to get a licence, be it special event or whatever licence, you have a situation where if the police have any objections and they may say no objection and then the magistrate or the Clerk of the Peace or whoever is going to grant the licence says, “police strength” and therein lies the cost. Because the magistrate, the justice or the Clerk of the Peace will not, in some instances, grant a licence without the police strength. There is no appeal from the police strength. When the police prosecutor gets up and he says one sergeant, one corporal, five constables and if you are going from 4 o’clock to 2 o’clock or 4 o’clock in the morning, all those hours, they work it out and you get the police strength. Usually, when you get that

police strength it comes up to thousands of dollars sometimes. They lime sometimes and you still have to bring other private security.

It is all well and good and very acceptable for the Government to appear to be reducing the licence fee in respect of special event licences, and I mean special event licences for special events. We note that those special events, in most cases, will not be on religious holidays and I support that. But when you say religious holidays, Christmas is a religious holiday. Whit Monday is a religious holiday. I do not know if it is there.

**3.50 p.m.**

I want you to know if you do not know, Whit Monday is a religious holiday.

**Miss Nicholson:** No, no.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** When you have the goat race and the boat race in Tobago on Whit Monday—

**Miss Nicholson:** That is Easter Monday.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** It is Easter Monday. That, too, is a religious holiday, because it comes out of Easter. So you have to be concerned, in doing this and in determining there is a special event, when Parliament does not say what the special events are, we are opening a Pandora Box of controversy and confusion. It is good to determine, because there are people whom I know. I know some very African-conscious people who tell me that Emancipation Day is a day of prayer and reflection and every time I hold my Emancipation celebration in La Brea, they tell me I should not have any alcohol.

**Mr. D. Singh:** But you still have.

**Mr. Hart:** And you had in your Ramayan.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** I doubt he would do a thing like that.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we have people who will tell me that, so we can have a controversy as to whether or not Emancipation Day could be declared a special event holiday. There are others who could have a special concern about Indian Arrival Day. There are others who see—

**Mr. Hart:** Phagwa.

**Mr. H. Breaux:** No. There are some people who make it their business to go and play cricket and do certain things on Good Friday because they are not Christian, as I am. I am concerned that Good Friday is—

**Dr. Mohammed:** Hee hee!

**Mr. H. Breaux:** Yes and it was a conscious act. I have been from eight days old, if you do not know, so when I hear you deriding it, I realize that you have no regard for the Catholic religion of which I am, but if you want to say that, say that. You are upset because I am. The Member for Princes Town and the Member for Nariva are deriding me because I say I am a Catholic. Well, you may not like it, but that is your problem.

All I am saying is that on Good Friday, which I hold sacred, and when members of the community with whom I worship were walking up San Fernando Hill and the Member for Fyzabad instructed that we be blocked and we could not go up that hill, although we had gone up there for years; other people were drinking elsewhere and they may want it declared a special event and we have a problem with that.

So, the question of the special events, I feel that this Parliament should at least determine, a core of special events and then say, “Well, you know, we will have Emancipation, Indian Arrival, whatever day, Carnival celebrations, Borough Day in Point Fortin, Siparia Fete in Siparia”, all of these, I think, could very well qualify for special event nomenclature or designation, and, if we do that, Mr. Speaker, we could then have these numbers of celebrations identified, so we know definitely which special events we will have. Then, in so doing, diffusing and dispersing the numbers of special events throughout the country, we will not only benefit a few persons—and I say a few in the context of the population of Trinidad and Tobago and in the context of the small vendors and the small entrepreneurs who will benefit and who will seek to take advantage of that situation in order to earn.

My colleague also indicated that we have to look carefully at how we deal with these licences. I want to tell you that he indicated that there might be situations where only the same number of vendors who are operating today, will be the only people who will be able to benefit. I almost guarantee that that is what is going to happen, and I will tell you why.

It comes back to the question of the permission, or the support, or the approval, which has to be given by the police. The police in their own minds with a view to security, tend to determine how many bars they would like to see in an

area. I am going to come to this again, but let us not doubt ourselves, alcohol is a spirit—I am not against it because I drink alcohol. I am only better able to hold it than some other Members of this House who shall remain nameless, lest you, Mr. Speaker, tell me I am out of order and uncharitable. I have no problem, but alcohol is a spirit and when some people drink and they cannot hold their alcohol, they do all sorts of things. They interfere with people; they behave in a most improper manner; and that is why I think that now the police is being more active in stopping people from using the sides of walls and so on as toilets.

I hear people talking about fights in parties and saying that it is because of the music. I believe, to some extent, it is because of stealing, pickpocketing and the use of alcohol, but I say that to get to the point that the police seem to believe, and maybe with good reason, that if there are too many bars or too many people selling alcohol, it encourages the numbers of drinkers. There are some people who like to stand by one bar and there are others who like to take a drink at every bar and you find that there is a likelihood that there will be violence. So they usually have a predetermined number of bars which they will permit.

**Mr. Hinds:** That is right.

**Mr. H. Breaux:** Mr. Speaker, I am saying that nothing in this legislation enables a Clerk of the Peace to overrule a decision not to recommend by the police. I want to look at clause 4, section 47D(1):

“Every person desiring to obtain a special event licence shall, within a reasonable time after the publication of the Order referred to in section 47(C)(2), make an application to the Licensing Authority.”

**4.00 p.m.**

Clause 47G(1) states:

“Where there is no objection by the police, the Licensing Authority shall, within four days of the receipt of the application, grant a special event licence to the applicant in respect of the premises referred to in the application.

(2) Where an objection has been submitted by the police, the Licensing Authority shall set the matter down for hearing for the day following the day on which the objection was received and such objection shall be heard and determined by a Magistrate within a reasonable time before the day on which the special event is celebrated.”

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. BERAUX]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

It shall be set down for hearing where there is an objection by the police and such objection shall be heard by a magistrate. The minute you get to the magistrate, \$450 for an occasional licence is now in the realm of chicken feed. As the learned acting Attorney General and Member for Siparia will know, once you get into court and you get an attorney to represent you in a matter—and you yourself will know, Mr. Speaker—we are talking about money of a larger sum than \$450.

Not that I am saying that the police should not have the ability to object; not that I am saying that the objection which the police may raise may not in some occasions be justified, but I happen to know that the police have a predetermined number of bars which they permit in a certain area. Therefore, this great innovation and this gift which the Government purports or is counted as giving to the small people, is just what it is; and for what it is, they say you have to be thankful for small mercies. So a government like this which refuses to give water to the people of La Brea; to hear the cries of the people of Parrylands for the H2S that is killing them, when they give a \$440 a day to the vendor, I say, thank you for small mercies. I say, thank you on behalf of the vendors. I am not going to obstruct them; I would push them further to give more. So they would not have the opportunity to say that I obstructed them. I want them to deal with the people other than that.

The Government has now started in the right direction and I propose to push them along. So as I said before, first I want to ensure that the benefits of these special events would be spread throughout Trinidad and Tobago; that will be special events in Mayaro. The Member for Mayaro is not here, but I am speaking for him. It is a PNM constituency and we are reclaiming it.

**Hon. Member:** You have any in La Brea?

**Mr. H. Beraux:** Mr. Speaker, there is an encumbrance opposite me who continues to obstruct me and I am seeking your protection.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not know that I could refer to a Member as an encumbrance, but insofar as the Member opposite, as the Member for La Brea has alleged, is obstructing him, I appeal to such Member not to obstruct the hon. Member. Please proceed.

**Mr. H. Beraux:** I thank you for your intervention, Mr. Speaker. I have become immuned to these obstructions, but I do not want to attack today; I want to deal with this measure and put it in proper perspective.

I want this measure to be spread throughout the country. There are occasions in Trinidad and Tobago which qualify and I do not want it to be left to the whims and fancy or to the particular proddings of any pressure groups in the society to determine what is a special event.

I want us to determine them now. I will tell you why. This Government is noted for seeing about its friends and family. I would deal with that. This Government is noted for discriminating against areas that support the PNM. [*Desk thumping*] As a result of that, I do not want, when we have a special event in La Brea or Point Fortin, or Siparia fete—and I would like to point out that the town of Siparia is very supportive of the PNM. The results of the election showed it; they lost both seats in the local government elections. They had me to deal with.

I do not want the Siparia La Divina Pastora Committee to have to come to this Government, cap in hand, for them to be treated in the way they treated people in respect of the URP, saying “you have to get a party card to get a special event.” I want it to be down in this legislation for which we, on this side, will vote and support. I do not want the people of Point Fortin—the whole borough is PNM—who have good reason to say that they are unrepresented because the Minister of the Environment is not seeing about Parrylands—to have to come here, cap in hand, to the Government to get a special event licence. I do not want that to happen at all.

I want us to put those things in the legislation. I do not want the people of Carenage to have to come to this Government, cap in hand, to beg for a special event licence for St. Peter’s day. I do not want the people of Arima to come, cap in hand, to beg this Government for a special event licence for Santa Rosa fete. I just want us to put that in the legislation so that we have a core of special events.

If, perchance, another unexpected occasion comes up, when we, as a nation feel that could be properly identified and proclaimed a special event, then we would deal with it by making the necessary application. But I feel all well known special events in the country should be put in the legislation.

The reason for saying this is because I have seen and noticed the behaviour of this Government. I have been to the calypso tents and heard the various social commentary—very graphic and very much to the point—in respect of the performance of this Government. They say, do not look a gift horse in the mouth, so I am saying we would support it, but I see this piece of legislation which is dealing properly with the vendors, as a means to deflect the kaiso blows which the Government has been getting from the calypsonians in the tents.

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. BERAUX]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

**4.10 p.m.**

How would it look if they use this, and after that they start refusing to grant this special event licence and refusing to grant that special event licence and it is only this year you will get it and next year you would not get it? This is a Government and there must be projections. I believe that the vendors made a valid and proper point in calling for a substantial reduction of the licence fee. I support that. They are quite correct. It comes from experience. I speak here as of right, and I am making a point that they are correct. But they are not the only vendors, and even if the vendors in Port of Spain have made that point, there is no jail built around them to prevent them from going somewhere else to ply their trade, in another special event. Any Government, with any semblance of planning and forward-looking ability on something like this which requires a reduction in revenue must have some projection as to how much revenue it is prepared to forego. When I catch the Government neglecting to identify the number of special events that they are going to forego, I come to the conclusion that this is not vaps, that they are crafty and not really wanting to make this big contribution and assistance to the small entrepreneur. They are using them.

There is a statement which says if one cannot be used, you are useless but I say further, if you want to use the vendors and you want to use this opportunity to gain some mileage in the community, let us go abroad and let us deal with all the vendors in Trinidad and Tobago now. Even now, notwithstanding what the Minister has said, nowhere in this legislation says that carnival is a special event and no where in this legislation says, if an order is made this year that we would get one next year. This is pie in the sky. I have no doubt, and I do not want to accuse the Government of not intending to make an order this year. They said they have brought vendors here and I am glad they are here. I want to explain to them that the word “President” in respect of this Bill does not mean the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in his sole discretion. It is translated in this case to mean the Cabinet. It is not as though His Excellency the President is there to exercise a dispassionate view of their request for a special event. No. It is the Cabinet. I again remind them that this is the same Government that has done all it could do to shift calypso competition from Carnival Sunday—when it is aired throughout the world—to put it on a Thursday. *[Interruption]* Do not try that. They do not even want that. The day they are being criticized, they will damage that too. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, I like to keep the names of persons who are not here out—because you crossed the floor so your brother could get a work.



I want to go on to another area to show the duplicity and the ambivalence of this Government. We are going through a certain period in the history of Trinidad and Tobago and I recall a person in the other place went ahead and said he wanted all the parties to come together on a platform for peace. That was because of the violence that is going on in this country. I am not going to pretend or even try to insult the intelligence of anybody that violence in Trinidad and Tobago is something totally new. I know about carnival and violence. I know about the time the steelband clashed because as a young boy I was in the middle of it, but, the violence was not serious violence as exists now.

Machel Montano who lives in my constituency in Parrylands Development, a member of his band was shot while trying to help somebody. At some of these fetes there are people with daggers, and people dying. To some extent, the violence has come about as a result of pickpocketers. To some extent, it has come about as people would say, by drinking too much alcohol. Even very intelligent and educated people when they drink liquor they behave so badly it is not funny.

Mr. Speaker, where the LNG plant is situated you are tested for drugs and for alcohol. Whereas I am agreeing with the Government to deal with this particular economic provision, I am saying that any Government worth its salt when it comes to deal with alcohol in the way they are prepared to deal with it, and to appear to project a proliferation of people selling alcohol, would have said we recognize something and they would have put somebody more competent to deal with it in a more indepth manner.

I would have expected to hear from the Government, "we have to do this." We cannot stop persons from drinking alcohol on carnival day otherwise carnival would not be carnival, but we recognize the harm, the domestic violence that is caused as a result of people under the influence of alcohol. We recognize that alcohol causes some people to lose their balance and not only fall down, but do other things. Whereas we are doing this, these are the steps we are taking to cushion the deleterious effect which alcoholism has on the society. But no, I would have expected today to hear something from the hon. Minister of Community Development and Women's Affairs, but we do not have that. That shows the ambivalence of this Government. They say one thing and, on the one hand, they are getting ready to bring in the breathalyzer.

The Minister of National Security talked about a breathalyzer. I hope he knows that the breathalyzer he is going to bring to Trinidad and Tobago cannot be the one used in England. They are not thinking through what they are doing.

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. BERAUX]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

**4.20 p.m.**

On one hand he is saying that, and on the other hand, he is causing a proliferation. We are prepared to look at this as an economic measure designed to help a number of persons who have been helping themselves for a long time. Now, they need an impetus and I am prepared to give them that.

I warn that there is another element. My colleague, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, alluded to it. When the police officers in their wisdom have determined that they have reached the number of bars which can be present at any special event, there would be someone selling illegally. Whereas previously, if that person is caught he/she would pay a small fine, today, this legislation is making it a fine of \$1,000. That may be the way in which this Government proposes to recover the revenue which it purports to forego in respect of this licence. *[Interruption]*

Thanks for reminding me that I have not dealt with the Member for Nariva in entirety. There is the other element. There was a big claim that it is for small people and it is keeping out big people. Which small man owns any big liquor store and orders alcohol by the cases from Fernandes? Which small man could order a truck-load of beers? *[Interruption]* I am not a small man. I may be small in stature, but I am bigger than you in mind.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the Member for La Brea has expired.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. H. Beraux:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, no small entrepreneur can order a truckload of beers or cases of alcohol. Even if this measure improves the lot of the small entrepreneur, as I anticipate it will, the point is that we must look behind it to see the extent to which those who are raising the price of alcohol are benefiting.

I laud the attempt of the Minister to limit any of these licences to one person. As much as I appreciate what is trying to be achieved by this Bill, there is nothing to prevent one person from having all the stocks and causing a number of other persons to apply for licences to sell. That is not new. We know that at the Drag Brothers, some persons are selling for some of the big store owners. When it comes to equity, come with clean hands and bare the entire thing. Whereas we may

support the Government, our business is to critically examine what it is doing and to point out the pitfalls in its attempts.

I now turn to this situation with 5,500 square feet. If there is a function on two acres of land, the booth would be small. What must the plan show? Must it show only the booth, or the entire acreage?

With these few words, I state unequivocally, as my colleague has stated before, that we on this side support the legislation, but more importantly, because the people asked us to support it. They spoke to us. They did not only speak to the Government. In the amendments I would like to see an identification of the various days in the calendar which would be declared special events, if only, in a limited area.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Legal Affairs and Acting Attorney General (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Members for their comments and suggestions on this Bill. I thank those on the other side for their unequivocal support of the Bill. When the Member for La Brea said that those who come with equity must come with clean hands, the maxim continues. The second part of that maxim is that he who wants equity must do equity. I ask the hon. Members on the other side what equity did they do when they came today. They said that we are bringing this Bill for the small man, for revenue or whatever, but what did they do when they were in office in terms of simplifying the procedure and making it easier for these members of the public. If they want equity they must do equity as well. I never thought that I would have heard the Member for Laventille East/Morvant talking about foregoing revenue to assist the small man. I would have thought that his sympathy for the small man would have been with this measure.

Both Members said that they supported the Bill, yet the Member for Laventille East/Morvant proceeded, in the most roundabout way, to spend his entire contribution giving all the reasons why it should not be supported. When one talks about duplicity, that is duplicity. He wants the public to understand that he supports the Bill, yet gives all the reasons why it should not be supported. That is inconsistency as well. He said to tell him what events are special within the Bill, yet he said that he did not want religious occasions. He talked about Good Friday, yet he did not want it done for St. Peter's Day. He asked that it be done for other days.

This measure is clearly to benefit the small vendors, not only in Port of Spain, but throughout Trinidad and Tobago. It is to benefit small vendors in Siparia, Chaguanas, Point Fortin, Arima, Scarborough, Crown Point and, of course, La Brea.

**Mr. Speaker:** The sitting is suspended for half an hour.

**4.32 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.01 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**PRIMARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS  
TASK FORCE REPORT**

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Basdeo Panday):** Mr. Speaker, on October 10, last, I reported to this honourable House on the initial findings of the Special Task Force which I had appointed in September and which was headed by Mr. Clive Pantin.

The mandate of the Special Task Force was to determine the nature, scope and causes of the extraordinary number of errors in the primary school books which had been approved by the Ministry of Education for the 1997/98 academic year. Today it is my duty to bring to the attention of this honourable House the decisions of Cabinet on the implementation of the recommendations proposed in the *Final Report of the Special Task Force*.

In my statement on this matter in October, I expressed the view that the egregious injustice for so many years inflicted on the nation's children, their parents, guardians and teachers, the misdeeds that have been brought to light by the task force have thrown the issue of accountability in the use of public finances sharply into focus.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is often reminded by Members opposite, media practitioners, guest newspaper columnists and, most recently, by the so-called leader of the National Alliance for Reconstruction, of my Government's avowed—and I must add, manifest—commitment to transparency and accountability in the conduct of the people's business.

In recent weeks, breaking news on a number of state enterprises have brought the question of transparency and accountability even more sharply into focus. It would be understandable, Mr. Speaker, that the issue of transparency and accountability should provide the context for my submission to this honourable House today.

I see transparency and accountability as two separate sides of the same coin. I hold transparency and accountability in public affairs to be indivisible. I am irrevocably resolved that transparency and accountability shall be inviolable under my watch. This is in direct and dramatic contra-distinction between this

Government and the former regimes of the PNM. It must surely be with a sense of irony that we now recall that in its incipient years that party had aspired to and, indeed, had proclaimed a commitment to morality in public affairs. What evolved instead, some say what was nurtured, under successive PNM regimes over several decades was a you-scratch-my-back-I-scratch-your-back, jobs-for-the-boys, self-sustaining network.

Parallel with this, the PNM systematically set up and sustained a syndrome of dependency in which those who saw themselves as beneficiaries of favours granted by the then political elite were, in fact, victims of a brutal system of token patronage.

During those decades, the leaders and the power networks of the party opposite sowed the wind. The nation is now reaping the whirlwind. Opacity was accepted by the population as the way government worked. Under the PNM, who did not like it was invited to “get to hell out of here”.

It was not before the middle eighties that the concept of transparency and accountability in government was clearly articulated. Given my central involvement in the articulation, the introduction of this ideal foundation of good governance, I consider myself obligated to ensure that in the future, for my administration and all future administrations, transparency and accountability would not be merely options, but inescapable obligations.

This will only happen, Mr. Speaker, when the Standing Orders which govern the business of this Parliament, and the laws of this land are so framed as to deny any wriggle space to any elected official or appointed officer holding any position of public trust and vested with any fiduciary responsibility for public funds, who might be possessed with the proclivity for improperly using public funds for personal gain.

This declaration of my intention to institutionalize a culture of transparency and accountability in the body politic should not be seen as expedient or aspirational on my part. I have long been preaching it and I have been resolute in practising it since my appointment as prime minister.

Permit me please, Mr. Speaker, to quote from *Hansard* to remind this honourable House that on August 28, 1992, in the first of the fewer than four years in which the Member for San Fernando East sat where I now have the privilege to sit, I petitioned Parliament on this very issue of transparency and accountability. I was speaking then in support of and adding to an amendment put

*Primary School Textbooks*  
[HON. B. PANDAY]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

forward by the Member for Couva South, then my colleague in opposition and now my Attorney General, when the government of that day, which is now and for the foreseeable future the Opposition of the day, had tabled a proposal to amend the financial year.

I quote the remarks I made on this question of transparency and accountability five years ago:

“Let me make it abundantly clear from the word go that this proposal to amend the financial year, or the parliamentary year, has been a matter which we have been advocating a long time. We want such a provision to be introduced...We have always advocated that if we pass a budget in December or early January, by the time all the red-tape has been gone through...the dry season would be over and it would be very difficult to do any kind of developmental work.”

Speaking directly to the issue of accountability, I had this to say, five and one-half years ago, and again, Mr. Speaker, I quote from *Hansard*:

“Year after year, we on this side, in this House, have complained about the absence of a system that assures accountability in the handling of the country’s finances. We have been complaining for more than a decade in this House that under the present arrangement there is no system that allows for genuine accountability of the Government.”

Mr. Speaker, the substance of the amendment of which I was speaking sought to give Parliament the competence to investigate and influence the functioning of government ministries, statutory authorities and enterprises in which public funds were invested. That was in 1992.

Who told me to be so fast and out of place to say that? To my consternation, the then Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, now the shadow Opposition Leader, scathingly rejected my submissions for enhancing the competence of this Parliament in the matter of accountability in the handling of public funds, with these words:

“I do not care what the Member for Couva North says, the underlying argument is an argument based on power sharing...this whole concept of power sharing...that is not in our system of Government, it is not in our culture.”

**5.10 p.m.**

Well, I go on record with the pledge that transparency and accountability is our culture and will become the legacy of this UNC Government. I doubt that my good friends opposite will have the temerity to even suggest that the PNM started this one. Transparency and accountability shall be the new political culture in Trinidad and Tobago. I am not only talking the talk, Sir, I am walking the walk. [*Desk thumping*]

The current upheavals in the state enterprises have not come to light just so. Before November 6, 1995, bobol and corruption in government were as Trinidadian as pelau, pastelles and phoulourie. Corruption was the order of the day, but it was kept tightly covered until now.

For a quarter of a century, from Lock Joint to Lockheed and Boeing and Homes International at Diamond Vale and the gas station racket which cost Gene Miles her life, and the Mount Hope Hospital were all covered up under conspiracy. While the Twin Towers lower down St. Vincent Street were going up at a cost with cost overruns that could have made the *Guinness Book of Records*, or Ripley's "Believe it or not", Johnny O'Halloran's twin towers were going up in Toronto and ISCOTT was turning so-called consultants into multi-millionaires overnight.

Persons like Dr. Kenneth Julien and Dr. Lenny Saith were in positions in which they exercised seemingly untrammelled power at the centre of the commanding heights of the economy without the ceremony of advertisement or parliamentary sanction as I recall.

And we must not forget DEWD and its successors. At Christmas—and today, mention was being made of that—we saw many people ranting and raving and waving placards, demanding payment from the URP for what they did not do. There is over a million dollars lying down there, waiting to be claimed by people, who had claimed to have worked on URP projects. The claimants from "ghost gangs" have since run for cover. When in its 34 years of government did the PNM ever take the bull by the horns in that fashion? In all the years preceding 1995, not one prosecution, not one conviction, not one dismissal, not even a resignation involving a high level public official, or a state company executive or board.

PowerGen and Severn Trent came in, the Parliament and the public had no idea on what grounds. The Member for Diego Martin West gave away BWIA to Acker.

*Primary School Textbooks*  
[HON. B. PANDAY]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

The country never knew what was the deal. They liked it so, but I would not have it so. There are still conspiracies, but I will not countenance any cover-ups.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** It is the Member for Diego Martin Central.

**Hon. B. Panday:** The Member for Diego Martin Central. Thank you. There are still conspiracies, Mr. Speaker, but I will not countenance any cover. So I welcome the public's scrutiny, and I particularly welcome the ferocity of the Opposition's pursuit and promulgation of every rumour, every item of gossip, every line of *mauvais langue* directed at any of my Ministers. I must concede that the PNM is more effective in Opposition than they were in government. [*Desk thumping*] I have no real problem with that, for it helps to keep Ministers and public officials on their "P's" and "Q's", and it gives me an opportunity to face these issues head-on.

No sooner had they opened their mouths, I called for the Justice Deyalsingh Enquiry into the Airport Project which was suspended. The future of the airport is now in the hands of NIPDEC and they said nothing has happened. The Joint Consultative Council had its say, and had its way and Mr. Galbaransingh had his day in court. That is the just way, the responsible way, the fair way of doing things. But the airport project will continue so that this country can become the hub of economic activity in this part of the world.

When there was the ridiculous allegation of corruption with the 999 programme and Cherokee jeeps, I called on Justice Jim Davis to investigate the purchase of those vehicles. Nothing was found to be irregular and no one can say that the country did not get its money's worth in purchasing the Cherokee jeeps for the police.

I took the position that the Winsure/Maritime matter be investigated by the Public Accounts Committee. That report is now a public document, and is now the subject of a motion down for debate in this House. I can now confirm to this House, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Mr. Justice Gerard des Isles has been appointed to head a three-member team to investigate the problems at the National Flour Mills. I have not only been talking the talk, Mr. Speaker, I have been walking the walk.

Mr. Speaker, within the space of weeks, chief executives and senior executives in at least five state-related organizations, NFM, MTS, NP, BWIA and WASA have been made to walk the plank. When, in the history of this nation, has strong action like this been taken in the state sector?



In his response to the Minister of Finance's Budget presentation, the Leader of the Opposition made reference to what, with calculated malevolence, he termed "the removal from state enterprises of CEOs who look like PNM." How does a PNM look? I would never know. I have no way of knowing "how it go look" when he scrutinizes this group of erstwhile CEOs and the key executives, one cannot but expect another discourse on genetics from the hon. Member for San Fernando East. It is not unlikely that other developments of this nature will be forthcoming.

As will be apparent today, when I summarize the Cabinet decisions on the recommendations on the Special Text Books Task Force, a number of scoundrels whose greed drove them to rip-off the parents and children and the treasury, will have no need to seek, or to know for whom the bell will next toll. They already know that when next the bell tolls, it will be tolling for them. The school books racket is not a phenomenon that began under the UNC Government. It was conceived, crafted, engineered and flourished under the PNM for decade after decade, after decade.

On other current matters, I expect to get the full and factual story when the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries hands in the report on National Petroleum (NP) which I requested on January 14, 1998. I have allowed him the time he needs to do a thorough and conclusive job. I never rush into judgment. I want to know all that has been going on at NP; and I have reason to believe that a lot is yet to be revealed in the operations of that organization. I want to know too, how many former elected officials, previously with oversight responsibility for public sector organizations have been supplying services as consultants to such organizations.

I particularly want to know what really happened in National Fisheries, Tanteak, National Quarries, Agricultural Development Bank, Plipdeco, BWIA and Farmland, but that is another story, and the reports are still coming in.

Mr. Speaker, the new political culture of transparency and accountability which I seek to bring about will not evolve simply because I issue the call and set the example. Corrupt practices such as I seek to stamp out have been long endemic, and have for so long been widespread, it calls for measures so stern, and so vigorously enforced, as to induce a catharsis in the body politic.

I thank the Opposition for helping to create the atmosphere and the milieu that enables me to go where no leader has gone before, in what I intend to be the complete exorcism of the corrupt once they are revealed. Had the PNM been in

*Primary School Textbooks*  
[HON. B. PANDAY]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

Government, this surely would not and could not have happened. There is need for tough rules and strict regulations, and for the enforcement of such rules.

Next week Wednesday, I shall meet with the chairmen and directors of state boards. They will all be read their rights, their duties and their responsibilities, and they will be told what will be demanded of them and what will be exacted upon them should they violate the trust placed in them or should they in any way abuse their offices.

**5.20 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, none of this should be taken to suggest that the state sector has a monopoly on malpractice. That is why the Government has updated the relevant laws and introduced new statutes to regulate the conduct of company directors and the behaviour of financial institutions, particularly, with respect to money laundering. However, my purpose in this communication to this House is to define the measures, which I am putting in place, to clean up the stables in the state sector, and to set the framework for an enduring culture of transparency and accountability in public affairs.

To this end, the Cabinet has approved a draft constitution amendment bill which seeks to give each House of Parliament the power to appoint select committees or joint select committees, to investigate and report to either, or both Houses of Parliament, on the powers, methods and functioning of ministries, statutory authorities and enterprises controlled by, or on behalf of the state, or in which public moneys are invested.

When I proposed such a measure in 1992, Members opposite would have none of it. The Opposition Leader has already signalled opposition to the proposal which was announced by the Minister of Finance in the 1998 Budget Statement, for rescheduling the fiscal year to fall within the October to September period.

Mr. Speaker, so crucial do I consider the need for stern measures to force the transition from the culture of immorality in public affairs which flourished so robustly in the fertile fields of corruption cultivated by the PNM, that I have decided to take this issue directly to the people.

The draft bill entitled the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill, 1998, giving power to both Houses of Parliament to monitor and investigate the functioning of ministries, statutory authorities and state-related enterprises will, therefore, be circulated for public comment prior to its introduction in the Parliament.

The leadership of the party on the other side, took stringent exception to this proposition when they were in control of the state apparatus. They would have no part of what they saw as an attempt to share power; a view that was to prove entirely consistent with the Leader of the Opposition's pompous and insular posturing when he rejected my invitation to all parties to join in national unity, with his declaration during the 1995 election that the PNM would win alone or lose alone. He has been losing alone ever since, Mr. Speaker, in free and fair elections, and elections free from fear. [*Desk thumping*]

It must be noted, however, that the Opposition Leader's losses in seven consecutive elections must be having a markedly humbling effect, if we are to judge by the great gusto and the loud fanfare with which he was seen to be welcoming an NAR alumna—once the Member for Princes Town—as his personal saviour and his party's salvation, at the PNM's recent under-subscribed party's convention at the Convention Centre in Chaguaramas.

The proposition I put forward in this Parliament five and a half years ago is embodied in the draft of the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill, 1998, which is to be circulated, very shortly, for public comment. It is in consonance with my fundamental belief that Trinidad and Tobago will be best served, by a government of national unity. That is still my belief, Mr. Speaker.

I plead guilty of trying to find a mechanism for sharing power with the Opposition. Where else in the world has a government struggled so hard in the interest of unity of its nation? Where else, Mr. Speaker? I do not share the Opposition's view that there is something reprehensible in sharing power. I hold steadfast to the belief that real power derives from the Almighty and is vested in the people, not in the politicians. We are mere agents for the expression of the people's will. Election to government has vested authority with us, not power. I am committed to sharing that authority with the people, by whose authority the United National Congress and our coalition partners are on this side of the House, and the PNM is on the Opposition Benches.

I am also giving consideration to another measure, revolutionary to the body politic of this country. This is for the establishment of a permanent, independent commission for transparency and accountability, with powers to investigate any agency of government, and any transaction involving public funds, at any period in the life of the nation; present, future, and past. The commission will be vested with retroactive authority and there will be no statutory limit to the time in which the commission may address any transaction. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** May I appeal to the Member for Diego Martin East, the Member for San Fernando East and the Member for St. Ann's East that it could be terribly offsetting when one immediately opposite to you is making a statement and one keeps up—I have heard it—that din, as though, deliberately, to put one off. Please, I ask you to desist.

**Hon. B. Panday:** Thank you kindly, Sir, but you would congratulate me for failing to be put off.

Mr. Speaker, all this might sound quite draconian, but I am resolved that under my watch, every dollar intended for a public purpose will be so invested. A dollar directed to the public purpose will be a dollar so delivered.

This brings me, specifically, to the textbook issue, Mr. Speaker. It is not a pretty sight. It is sickening. It is saddening. It is maddening. What is revealed in the Special Task Force Report should be taken as a wake-up call to every citizen of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Every parent, every guardian, every teacher must now seek and seize the opportunity to make sure that the kind of disaster which the task force has documented, should never again take place in this country.

I appeal to the teachers of the nation, at all levels, to take pro-active action to ensure that one will never again have to suffer the horrors which many must have had to endure with substandard teaching aids, such as those notorious textbooks. It is tragic that in the evidence at hand a number of teachers appear to have been part of the conspiracy of scoundrels responsible for the textbooks disaster. It is my view that we must rely on the nation's teachers as the first, and strongest line of defence against the scoundrels who might have the gall to surface again; using different trading names, and different pen names to fleece the Treasury again, and to put our children's education in jeopardy once more.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, teachers, curriculum officers and facilitators should be encouraged and trained to play a greater part in the development of supplementary materials to improve texts and to create teaching material where there are no approved textbooks. Let me list some of the options agreed to by the Cabinet in implementation of the recommendations of the Special Task Force Report.

1. Official investigations be initiated into the actions of designated members of the textbook committee.
2. Purchasers of textbooks which have been withdrawn should be reimbursed as a matter of extreme urgency.

3. A thorough investigation should be carried out by the fraud squad into the book-selling and book-publishing activities of the principal supplier of books withdrawn from the current primary school book list.
4. All authors, publishers and booksellers involved in the textbook industry to be audited by the VAT office and the Board of Inland Revenue for compliance with the revenue laws of the country.
5. All textbook publishers to be scrutinized on their compliance with all relevant ordinances.
6. Full investigation into the possibility of collusion between booksellers, publishers, authors, officers of the Ministry of Education, school principals and teachers.
7. The introduction of draft legislation to control the registration of publishers, printers and booksellers to regulate practices in the authorship, production and publication of textbooks.
8. Assistance should be sought from UNESCO, the Bureau of Standards and other competent agencies, in the development of standards for the textbook industry.

**5.30 p.m.**

- (9) The establishment of a publications unit responsible for the commissioning, design and production of teaching and learning materials in primary schools initially. Bearing in mind the changing role and physical make-up of textbooks, the potency of television, radio and the computer in education, the unit should be equipped to combine the conventional book with other evolving teaching and learning materials.
- (10) Executive management and administrative personnel in the Ministry of Education should immediately be provided with management training.

The Minister of Education is to convene an early meeting with the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association, the National Parent/Teacher Association, the Primary School Principals Association, and representatives of the other stakeholder organizations in the national education system.

I will be present at the meeting, as will the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Legal Affairs; both of whom will be concerned with safety in our schools, as well as with bringing the book bandits to book. The purpose of that

*Primary School Textbooks*  
[HON. B. PANDAY]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

meeting will be to collate reaction to the Report compiled by the Special Task Force, and to evaluate recommendations from the various organizations which will be represented at the meeting.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the relevant agencies of the Government, including the office of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education will be proceeding with the measures recommended by the Clive Pantin Task Force and approved by Cabinet.

Once again, I salute and thank Mr. Clive Pantin and the members of the Special Task Force for the outstanding manner in which they have carried out a sensitive, demanding, trying, and perhaps even dangerous assignment. The nation is deeply in their debt.

Mr. Speaker, I now beg leave to table the Final Report of the Special Task Force on the 1997—1998 Approved Primary School Book List.

I beg to move that the report entitled “Final Report of the Special Task Force on the 1997/1998 Approved Primary School Book List” be printed as a House Paper.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*To be printed as a House Paper.*

**Mr. Patrick Manning** (*San Fernando East*): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get some clarification on the statement just made by the hon. Prime Minister. I wonder if the hon. Prime Minister is prepared to have his statement the subject of a debate in this House.

**Hon. B. Panday:** I certainly would.

#### **LIQUOR LICENCES (AMDT.) BILL**

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar:** Mr. Speaker, I just have a few points to raise on the debate on the Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill, in response to queries raised by the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and the Member for La Brea.

It seems as though the Member for La Brea is confusing the penal provision contained in clause 4(d) of \$1,000 as being the fine for a person selling alcohol in a bucket. That penal provision in clause 4(d) is only applicable to an applicant who contravenes subsection (1). That is to say that he applies for more than one special

event licence, therefore, that \$1,000 is in relation to that. However, the penal provisions with respect to any person who sells intoxicating liquor without a licence—whether special event, occasional or otherwise—will remain as in the existing law, in section 48 of the parent Act, a fine of \$5,000.

Just to clarify the point made. I say to the hon. Member that if he listened to my introduction, we made it very clear that the special event would be for carnival. I indicated that we had the Order ready and we had to put a shortened period this year. This is why we did not want to tie our hands into what was happening this year, so next year we will be able to have the special event for the entire Carnival period of 14 days.

I indicate to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant that booths are not limited to Carnival celebration areas around the savannah. They would be to premises on other streets. We talked about bringing street sense to the debate, and I am sure he knows that there are people playing mas in Woodbrook and other places. People put out small booths from their homes, and anywhere that celebrations are taking place. All of these people are to benefit, and not just those at the savannah. I want to make it very clear, because the point was being made on the other side all the time that this was not for the small man. They did not give us a reason as to why we brought the Bill, except the Member for La Brea saying that it is to distract and divert the Kaiso blows.

Calypso has always been a part of the tradition of Trinidad and Tobago, and there is no one on this side who would attempt to say that there should be no calypso in this land. *[Interruption]* This Bill is in no way an effort to distract from Kaiso blows. The Member would know that the Members on this side have been to the tents and we like them. There is no effort to distract from Kaiso blows. This is an effort clearly designed to assist the small vendors who made representations to this Government, and I object strongly to the hon. Member saying that the Government was using the small vendors. I think it is denigrating to those members in a participatory democracy like ours, who came with their interests and views to the Government, and the Government listened to those people, that the Member now describes them as being used.

I think it is denigrating to the members of the Carnival and Savannah Vendors Association to say that they are being used. All they have done is come forward to make representations to Government and, as I have indicated before, this Government will listen, and will always be prepared to listen, to those who come forward to bring their interests and to make representations. I feel fairly certain

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. K. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

that representations were made in the past, and this is why I want to end as I started, that he who wants equity must do equity. I also want to tell the hon. Member that I come with very clean hands in this Bill, as does every other Member on this side.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

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

*House in committee.*

*Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 4*

*Question proposed, That clause 4 stand part of the Bill.*

**Mr. Chairman:** There is circulated a list of amendments with respect to clause 4.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the amendments as circulated to clause 4 as follows:

4. A. Delete the definition of “special event” occurring in section 47B and substitute the following:
 

“special event” means any occasion declared by the President under section 47C(2) to be a special event”.
- B. In section 47E(1)(a):
  - (i) insert after the word “occupation” the words “age”
  - (ii) renumber paragraphs (b) and (c) as paragraphs (c) and (d) and insert the following new paragraph:
 

“(b) the identification number appearing on his -

    - (i) I.D. Card;
    - (ii) passport; or



(iii) driving permit”.

- C. Delete section 47H.
- D. In section 47I delete the word “to” occurring in line one.
- E. Insert the following new section after section 47I:

“Restriction 47J.(1) An applicant may not apply for more than one special event licence in respect of each special event.

(2) An applicant who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction of a fine of one thousand dollars.”.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to propose amendments to clause 4, section 47D(1): Application to Licensing Authority.

“Every person desiring to obtain a special event licence shall, within a reasonable time...”

If that could be replaced with “within the prescribed period”, giving you the flexibility to adjust at a later date.

The question is, should they not be applying for the licence at some reasonable period before the special event, thereby giving the authorities enough time to inspect and object, and so forth?

**5.40 p.m.**

Because, a situation could arise where the Order comes out and the event—you understand what I am saying, the Order can come out, the event may be—let me explain. Let us say the Order comes out on January 29, the event referred to is January 30, therefore, the two-day period for the police falls by the wayside, the four-day period falls by the wayside.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** What are you suggesting?

**Mr. Imbert:** Within the prescribed period.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** What would be the prescribed period?

**Mr. Imbert:** You would prescribe it, according to the event and so forth. I am not questioning that the person makes the application within a reasonable time after the Order. It is just that the event may be so close to the publication of the Order that one may not have the time for the other clauses to take effect.

**Mr. Panday:** Why would they not have time, because it says reasonable.

**Mr. Imbert:** No, no. Not after. I am talking about a situation where you have a publication of an Order and the date of the event is so close to the publication of the Order—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** I understand your concern, but I do not think it is justified. I believe that the Order will be published in sufficient time to give the applicants the time within which to make applications. I do not see why you would want to put a prescribed time, you would then have to adjust so many other things within it and set up regulations. [*Discussion with Mr. Panday*] The point being made is that if we prescribe a time, it could operate unfairly to persons who fall outside the prescribed time, whereas “reasonable” gives a discretion and, in law, in that discretionary period one could take into account a lot of unforeseen circumstances to give a longer time or shorter time. At least the Member for San Fernando West will bear us out. Very good point.

**Mr. Imbert:** No problem.

**Mr. Sinanan:** Mr. Chairman, with regard to 47A(1), does this application envisage licensed spirit retailers?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** No. This, in fact, is a major change from the existing occasional licence where one had to get a licensed spirit retailer, the big man, in order to get an occasional licence. We have removed that to give a simpler procedure and remove the dependency on the larger retailer to provide you with a letter in order to get a licence.

**Mr. Sinanan:** Mr. Chairman, 47G(1) says:

“Where there is no objection by the police, the Licensing Authority shall, within four days..., grant a special event licence...”

Clarification again. What if the licensing committee, that is, the justice of the peace, has good grounds for denying a licence? This attempts to make it mandatory that once there is no objection from the police, a licence shall be

granted. What, within the licensing committee, the justice of the committee, would cause him not to grant a licence. In other words, the authority has no discretion at all.

**Mr. Panday:** Suppose the objection is made by somebody nearby because there is noise, like a school or something? That is a good point.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** I would like to point you to sections 13 and 21 of the Parent Act which both deal with the grounds for objection and the persons who may make objections. I think what we can do to deal with your concern is use “may” instead of “shall”. Therefore, any of these persons under 13 and 21 could still make—*[Interruption]* Yes, so you could use your discretion. It is a good point and we take your suggestion. Mr. Speaker, if we may change “shall” in 47G(1) to “the Licensing Authority may”, and, therefore, he has a discretion and he could take objections from others as well. Thank you.

**Mr. Imbert:** At 47F(3), the two-day period, if one has a deluge of applications the police officers may not have the resources to deal with applications within two days. It is a real situation we are dealing with. How can we not, again, put a formulation which would allow flexibility there rather than specifying the two days.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** The reason for specifying the two days was, obviously, to ensure—because the special event period is going to be so small, it is not going to be for the whole year, this is not happening all year, it is for a specific restricted period. If you do not limit the time the police could sit on your application and then prevent or preclude the small vendor, so I think we need to keep the two-day restriction. The point will be remembered, the police will not be called upon to deal with this for the whole year, special event periods only.

**Mr. Imbert:** The formulation within a reasonable period would not work there.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** No, they can sit on it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the question is that clause 4 be amended as circulated with the addition of “shall” being replaced by “may” in 47G(1).

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Question put and agreed to, That the Bill, as amended, be reported to the House.*

*House resumed.*

*Bill reported, with amendment, read the third time and passed.*

*Liquor Licences (Amdt.) Bill*

*Friday, February 06, 1998*

*Motion made and question proposed, That the House do now adjourn to Friday, February 13, 1998 at 1.30 p.m. [Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar]*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.50 p.m.*