

Leave of Absence

Thursday, September 24, 1998

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 24, 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 have received communication from five Members of the House who have asked to be excused from today's sitting. There is, therefore, the continued leave of absence to the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West and the Member for Arouca South, and leave of absence from today's sitting to the Member for Naparima, the Member for St. Joseph and the Member for Fyzabad, who are out of the country on official business.

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC (DNA) IDENTIFICATION BILL

Bill to provide for DNA forensic analysis, to include a DNA report as evidence, to provide for the use of DNA to determine parentage, and other related matters, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]

Question put and agreed to.

PETITION

**Chief State Solicitor
(Request for Hansard)**

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. President, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the Chief State Solicitor of No. 82—84 Queen Street, in the City of Port of Spain, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

I now ask that the Clerk be permitted to read the petition.

Petition read.

Question put and agreed to, That the petition be granted.

SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Presentation

Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following reports:

**Reform of the Management Structure of the
Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago
(Working Paper)**

1. Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to consider and report on the Working Paper on the Reform of the Management Structure of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

**House Committee of the House of Representatives
(1997—1998 SESSION)**

2. Report of the House Committee of the House of Representatives (1997—1998 Session).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Forensic Pathology Scholarships (1990s)

104. Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration:

- (a) Could the Minister indicate whether in the 1990s the Government of Trinidad and Tobago offered any scholarships in the field of forensic pathology?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, could the Minister state:
 - i. When any such scholarships were granted;
 - ii. What processes were used to select the scholars;
 - iii. The names of the successful applicants;
 - iv. The institutions of higher learning where the scholars were trained;
 - v. The total cost to the Government of the scholars' training;
 - vi. Whether the scholars successfully completed their training and returned to the service of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago?

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Speaker, in response to question 104, part (a), in 1992, the Cabinet agreed to the grant of two scholarships in forensic pathology at approved institutions in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, or Canada.

The scholarships were granted to successful applicants in 1994. The scholarships were advertised in the daily newspapers; circular memoranda were

issued to all Permanent Secretaries and heads of departments as well as the Trinidad and Tobago diplomatic missions. Interviews were conducted by the Scholarship Selection Committee and recommendations of the committee were submitted to Cabinet which agreed to the award of Trinidad and Tobago Government scholarships to the successful applicants for training in forensic pathology at an approved institution of study in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, or Canada.

The successful applicants were Dr. Hughvon Des Vignes, a non-public officer, and Dr. Eastlyn McDonald-Burris, Medical Officer I, Tobago House of Assembly. Dr. Des Vignes pursued training in forensic pathology for one year with the office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Dr. McDonald-Burris pursued a course in forensic pathology at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom for a period of four years.

The total cost to the Government of the scholarships training, inclusive of salary allowances or allowance is \$972,208.44, broken down as follows: Dr. Des Vignes' award, \$136,685.49; and Dr. Burris' award, \$835,522.95, totalling \$972,208.44.

The scholars successfully completed their training. Dr. Burris was awarded the Master's Degree in Forensic Medicine Pathology as well as the diploma in Medical Jurisprudence and returned to serve the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, while Dr. Des Vignes has been employed in the Ministry of National Security, the Forensic Science Centre, with effect from November 9, 1995. Dr. Burris resumed duties in the Tobago House of Assembly with effect from March 16, 1998.

Forensic Pathology Scholars

105. Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) Whether all Government scholars in the field of forensic pathology who have returned to Trinidad and Tobago are employed in the Public Service?
- (b) Whether all such scholars are functioning in the areas in which they were specifically trained?
- (c) If the answer to (a) or (b) is in the negative, could the Minister indicate:

- i. why this is so and what steps are being taken to ensure that the objective in awarding the scholarships is achieved; and
 - ii. how long this is likely to take?
- (d) If the answer is in the affirmative, could the Minister explain whether it is still necessary to retain the services of contracted foreigners in the Government service in the area of forensic pathology?

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Speaker, in response to question 105, part (a), all Government scholars in the field of forensic pathology who have returned to Trinidad and Tobago are employed in the public service. Dr. Des Vignes is attached to the Ministry of National Security, as I said, the Forensic Science Centre, and Dr. Burris in the Tobago House of Assembly.

In relation to (b), Dr. Des Vignes is functioning in the area in which he was specifically trained. Dr. Burris resumed duty as a Medical Officer I, Tobago House of Assembly with effect from March 16, 1998 on completion of a four-year scholarship awarded in 1994, and is presently acting as County Medical Officer of Health, Tobago House of Assembly. Dr. Burris is not now functioning in the area in which she was specifically trained.

1.50 p.m.

In answer to part (c)(i), arrangements are being finalized for her employment in the Ministry of National Security Forensic Science Centre and action is being taken with a view to her serving as a forensic pathologist there where her special training would be put to full use.

The Ministry of National Security is at present engaged in negotiating with Dr. Burris the terms and conditions of her employment in that position.

To part (ii) of that question. Mr. Speaker, once agreement is reached between the Ministry of National Security and Dr. Burris on those terms and conditions, action would be completed for her employment within one month thereafter. Negotiations are taking place currently.

To the final part of question 105 (d), the Forensic Science Centre requires two forensic pathologists to function effectively. Once these two positions are filled by qualified and experienced nationals, it is envisaged by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that there would be no need for the services of foreigners.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Rowley: A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Since the Government was aware that Dr. Burris was due back here in March this year after her \$800,000 training, what steps were taken to ensure that she be made available to the Forensic Science Centre sometime around March this year?

Hon. W. Mark: Mr. Speaker, the Government is, in fact, doing everything to encourage Dr. Burris and there is no objection on her part to take up her assignment at the Forensic Science Centre. What has happened is that the category or designation of medical specialist officer in the Classification Compensation Plan of the Public Service carries terms and conditions which are quite inferior in many respects and, therefore, there is no designation in the classification scheme of “forensic pathologist”. We are therefore in sensitive negotiations with Dr. Burris, who has expressed an interest to take up her assignment, and the CPO assured me two days ago that within at least a fortnight or thereabouts, we would be able to conclude negotiations with Dr. Burris and the Ministry of National Security, and thereafter, she would be able to take up her appointment at the Forensic Science Centre.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, is the Minister saying after six months that these negotiations have not been concluded, and that Dr. Burris is dictating her own terms for the position?

Hon. W. Mark: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, there is not on the classification scheme today a designation of “forensic pathologist” and we are seeking to negotiate with Dr. Burris with a view to having her on board. As I said, she has no objection; she is willing to work and we are confident that in the next two to four weeks we would be able to negotiate and conclude a reasonable settlement with her and she would be able to take up her assignment.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware that the Director of Public Administration has placed in a public document that it is in the process of appointing Dr. Burris to the post of Chief Medical Officer in Tobago?

Hon. W. Mark: I am not aware of that.

Dr. Rowley: In the event that you become aware of it, what would be your position?

Hon. W. Mark: Mr. Speaker, I think the Member is being hypothetical and speculative at this time and I would not want to engage in that particular path.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, the final question. In the event that Dr. Burris does not take up the position—*[Interruption]*

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Would the Minister say whether the Government is prepared to ensure that the scholars who were trained in forensic pathology function as forensic pathologists?

Hon. W. Mark: Mr. Speaker, I thought I answered that very clearly and explicitly earlier on.

Dr. Rowley: You did not answer it.

**Forensic Pathology
(Work Permits)**

106. Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

- (a) Is the Minister satisfied that we still need to grant work permits to foreigners in the area of forensic pathology?
- (b) Could the Minister advise when the services of foreign forensic pathologists would be dispensed with in the government service?

The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore): Mr. Speaker, at the present time there is no need to grant work permits to foreign nationals to practise in the area of forensic pathology.

To part (b) of the question, the present contract of the only foreign forensic pathologist ends on April 16, 2000.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell this honourable House if the contract of the current foreign practitioner has been recently renewed, or whether it was renewed and when?

Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore: It is a three-year contract which would have been renewed last year.

Dr. Rowley: Was the Minister aware that there are serious concerns about the qualification of the current forensic pathologist who is functioning in that position, and that the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago has registered qualification from that pathologist contrary to the laws of Trinidad and Tobago?

Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore: What I do know, Mr. Speaker, is that the matter of the registration of Dr. Des Vignes was before the Medical Board. I know nothing further at this time.

Dr. Rowley: I am not talking about Dr. Des Vignes. I am talking about the foreign practitioner who is now in the Government's employ, Dr. Chandulal, who

is on the register of the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago with qualifications which are contrary to the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore: I am afraid this is news to me Mr. Speaker, I have no information in that area.

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT

The Prime Minister (Hon. Basdeo Panday): Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce that this honourable House would be prorogued as of midnight tonight and the new session would convene without formal opening on Monday, October 5, 1998 at 10.30 a.m., at which sitting, the hon. Minister of Finance would present the National Budget for the year October 1998 to September 1999. [*Desk thumping*]

INDICTABLE OFFENCES (PRELIMINARY ENQUIRY) (AMDT.) (NO. 2) BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to redress some of the difficulties which have occurred in the hearing and determination of preliminary enquiries. Within the last three months, there have been an alarming number of motions to quash indictments which arise from preliminary enquiry on the ground of non-compliance by enquiring magistrates with section 18 of the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Act, Chap. 12:01.

Mr. Speaker, these motions contend that the provisions of the Act as to the conduct of a preliminary enquiry being of a jurisdiction, conferring, and a procedural nature that they are mandatory and, therefore, the breach of procedure set down vitiates the committal for trial which thereby renders the indictment referred therein void.

The decisions to quash these motions have been inconsistent in that there are some judges who hold that the preliminary enquiries were held in accordance with law, and others who hold that they were not. There is no procedure for any appeal on these matters and they are not the kind of matters in which an appeal machinery is advisable normally.

Those of us who do not know—and I think I should make it known for the purposes of the record—that when one is put on a serious criminal charge, and a preliminary enquiry is held before an enquiring magistrate, the magistrate does not have to determine guilt, but whether there is sufficient case made out against

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an accused person. If sufficient case is made out, the accused person is committed to stand trial at the assizes before a judge and jury. What has happened is that under the Act, after the examination of witnesses called on behalf of the prosecution, the magistrate would ask the accused person if he wishes to give evidence and the accused person would sometimes say that he reserves his defence, or make a statement, or he may remain silent. Where the magistrate does not record in writing what the accused person said, it is being contended that there is a duty on the magistrate to record that and if he does not record it, then the preliminary enquiry is null and void.

2.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, under section 18 of the Act, the accused shall be asked if he wishes to call any witnesses and if that request is not recorded it is being contended that that non-compliance, or failure to record that, makes the preliminary enquiry bad, null and void.

This Bill is making it clear that the magistrate ought to record it, and if the prisoner refuses to sign that, what the magistrate certified will be part of the deposition.

Mr. Speaker, I should mention that under the present law, if the preliminary enquiry is held and the committal is declared null and void, the state must have a new preliminary enquiry and call all the witnesses again. Some of the witnesses may not be available; some may have forgotten and there is no procedure for those statements to be admitted in evidence at a preliminary enquiry.

So that what this Bill does is a way in which the procedure can be complied with, but it also provides that if a magistrate does not follow the procedures, instead of having a preliminary enquiry again, an application can be made to the High Court or to the Court of Appeal for the Judiciary to intervene and determine whether a Bill of indictment should be preferred.

Mr. Speaker, the Criminal Proceedings Act shall apply to an indictment granted under that section. In the Bill, clause 3 makes it quite clear to add a section that:

“Where a Magistrate informs an accused person that he is entitled to give evidence upon oath or remain silent and the accused person—

- (a) replies that he reserves his defence or uses words to that effect;
- (b) makes any statement; or

(c) chooses to remain silent,

the Magistrate shall record, in writing and read to the accused person, the latter's response or record the fact of his silence, as the case may be, and the record shall be read to and signed by the accused person, if he will, and the Magistrate, and it shall be kept with the depositions".

And the same procedure applies to section 18 in clause 4 when he wishes to call evidence. In the other place there was an additional amendment that:

"Where the accused person refuses to sign the record...the Magistrate shall record in writing, the refusal and such record shall be kept with the depositions."

The amendment also in the other place was after the indictment is issued in accordance with clause 5. That is to say:

"Notwithstanding sections...an indictment charging any person with an indictable offence may also be preferred by the Director of Public Prosecutions on the direction of or with the consent of a judge of the High Court or the Court of Appeal where any procedural defect has occurred during the course of a preliminary enquiry."

Mr. Speaker, may I say that the concept of applying to a judge for a warrant in relation to preliminary enquiries exists in relation to where a magistrate discharges an accused person. Under the present law, the Director of Public Prosecutions applies to a judge for the judge to determine whether a warrant should be issued, and whether an indictment should be filed.

In Jamaica and some of the other Caribbean countries, there is also the procedure as set out in clause 5, where it is called a Voluntary Bill of Indictment, where the High Court or the Court of Appeal can review depositions and determine whether a warrant and indictment can be filed.

Mr. Speaker, right now in Trinidad and Tobago there are approximately 400 indictments, which can be affected by this matter and therefore in the public interest the Government decided, after a request was made by the Director of Public Prosecutions and in consultation with the Law Commission that this bill should be brought before the Parliament to redress the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, first of all we on this side have followed the developments in this area of the law as they manifest themselves in our courts, and we recognize the need for this particular amendment.

As the Attorney General pointed out, recently, attorneys have been arguing upon indictment in the High Court, that sections 17 and 18 of the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Act, have not been strictly complied with. All the cases that have gone in respect of the interpretation of these two sections made it quite clear that those provisions must be strictly complied with. Practitioners recognizing that in some cases that has not been so, capitalized—if I may use that word—on that, and the problem arose. I am not clear as to whether at this point the Court of Appeal has made any definite ruling on the matter.

Hon. R. L Maharaj: There cannot be an appeal, because under the law which provides an appeal for the state it is when the trial has started. When the indictment is quashed, the trial has not started. When you look at other jurisdictions, there is no provision to appeal for matters like that.

Mr. F. Hinds: That is indeed the case, and I am grateful to the Attorney General. It is for that reason the Court of Appeal was unable to pronounce on the matter. Therefore, parliamentary input is obvious and necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments are not troubling to those of us on this side. We have recognized that since this Government has come into office, notwithstanding its often inexplicable philosophical position, much has been done to improve the criminal justice system in Trinidad and Tobago. No lawyer can dispute that.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, that although the Attorney General has brought 50-plus pieces of legislation affecting the criminal justice system in this country so far, while he does that, his Government behaves in a particular manner. So, while he sharpens up the criminal justice system, if you like, making the size of the net smaller—I like to describe it as such, Mr. Speaker—if the fishing net that we once used were six inches square, the Attorney General has made it two inches square. It means, therefore, that smaller fishes will be caught in it, as it makes it more difficult for smaller fishes to come through those spaces that were previously there.

Mr. Speaker, the big fishes continue to find their way either over, around, or under the net. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was recently in a contribution by the Member for San Fernando East that this Chamber was reminded that it was under this Government that the life of a man who was secured for the purpose of giving

evidence for the conviction of big fishes, went “poosh”. He was arrested during our time in office, and it was under the watch of the Attorney General, the Prime Minister and this Government, their negligence at the minimum—God knows what the maximum is—but at a bare minimum; it was their negligence: the failure of that Government to procure the life of that man, and today Clint Huggins is no more.

2.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to that very beautiful presentation by the Member for San Fernando East only Monday in this Chamber, in which one of the “big fishes” managed to jump/walk out of the Trinidad and Tobago tank, and found itself across the ocean, the seas, the short strip of land between south-west Trinidad and Venezuela. It became amphibious as it hit the shores of Venezuela, and now one “Ramdhanie” has disappeared from Trinidad and Tobago, under the watch of the Member for Couva North and his Government. So while he is busy making life more difficult for the small criminal in Trinidad and Tobago, he is oversighting—not overlooking—the fact that the big ones are escaping, and they ridiculously try to blame others for it.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General explained correctly that when an indictable offence is committed, after the police investigate and decide to charge, they may lay the process—as we call it—indictably. If the matter is to be done indictably—as some offences must—then the enquiring magistrate does his bit at the preliminary enquiry stage—some people say ‘inquiry’, but the Act says ‘enquiry’, PE’ rather than ‘PI’; and the Magistrate commits, having found that a *prima facie* case has been made out against the accused in the circumstances.

When, as happens, attorneys go to the High Court and argue that the provisions of sections 17 and 18 were not strictly complied with, in those circumstances it may be that a fresh enquiry could be ordered; as well as—in the two cases that I am familiar with,”out went the weasel”. But, Mr. Speaker, when that happens, assuming that there is a need for a fresh preliminary enquiry, the Attorney General did allude to the fact that it is very difficult to do so. Sometimes by then—I was dealing with a case only recently, where the enquiry took as many as five years—between 1992 and 1997; five years! When that happens, if a fresh preliminary enquiry is ordered or necessary, then evidence becomes stale, witnesses leave the jurisdiction, some virtual complainants simply get fed-up with the whole thing and abandon their cause. It has also happened that the files containing all this useful information simply disappear—I am sure the hon. Attorney General must be very familiar with that kind of event.

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As a matter of fact, if I thought it necessary—and I do not—I would remind this Chamber about a matter: *The State vs Maraj and Ors*. In that particular case, exactly that happened, Mr. Speaker, and it was necessary to have a fresh preliminary enquiry. But before that time—the Attorney General knows well about the case about which I am speaking—the file simply disappeared, and that was the end of the matter.

Mr. Manning: It took legs and walked.

Mr. Hinds: It walked. Justice, in that sense, was never served. The trial process, the justice process, was actually aborted, Mr. Speaker—God knows by whom, but it was aborted—and today there is a kind of a quiet in the society. Members of the public, including criminals, potential criminals—and we try our best, as Parliamentarians, to minimize the existence, or the size, or the army of those—are in a kind of a lull wondering “Well, what next?”

I deal with many criminals, Mr. Speaker, as a practitioner of the law. I am a criminal lawyer and I practise some aspects of the civil law, as well. But in my dealings with some of these young persons, and as a Parliamentarian, it is strange—and we need to take note of that in this House, and in this country, those of us who are not wont to committing crimes, it is interesting that some of them, rightly or wrongly—I am not a sociologist—argue that they feel a sense of justification because when they look to the top and they consider the Government, its members, Parliamentarians, senior persons, senior operatives in the various arms of the state, persons in business, and see things that they in their youthful minds find to be improper, out of context, unjust, dishonest, then they feel a sense of justification for what they do. Of course, I hasten to point out that two wrongs do not make a right. But those young persons, Mr. Speaker, when they look at the performance and behaviour of some of the Parliamentarians—well, of some of the members of the—let me put it frankly.

Mr. Manning: The Prime Minister.

Mr. F. Hinds: Yes. When they look at the conduct of some persons in this society, persons who hold high office, they feel a sense of justification. This is very sad. This is why, Mr. Speaker, we have to be mindful of the implications of what we do.

The Member for Caroni East is suggesting—

[Interruption]

Let me disregard him and continue with the presentation of my text; let me forget him. Yes, the Member for Caroni East—we are told it took him an inordinately long time to have acquired his law degree, Mr. Speaker: nine years, minimum.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General in passing mentioned the role of the DPP, and as exists in other jurisdictions, the Voluntary Bill of Indictment. I want to take this opportunity because I read extensively about the new DPP, the young man who was appointed recently. I have not had an opportunity to extend my congratulations to him. I wish to take this opportunity to do that; in fact, to join the Member for San Fernando East and everyone on this side, (*desk thumping*) in congratulating that young, brilliant soul, and wish him well as he embarks upon that very trying office.

However, I want to urge the DPP that it is not only a matter of constitutional arrangement that his office was entrenched in section 90 of our Constitution. In reality, he must be independent, he must be strong—and he has to be particularly strong, when one considers the office of the Attorney General. Because we have seen right here in this Chamber, only last week, the Attorney General brought a list of 16 amendments on the Squatters' Regularization Bill and between the Attorney General and the Member for St. Augustine, no pleading, no request, could cause them to recognize that if we were to properly discuss this important issue, we needed time to ingest the substance of those amendments. They refused.

The Member for Couva South has a tendency—perhaps because he is fortified with more than one—to push things down the mouths of people who are very reluctant. We, therefore, urge the DPP to recognize that and to be very strong in his deliberations because he may very well find, if he is not careful, the Attorney General will attempt to overpower that office of the DPP, to the detriment of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, it was a very good thing that we demonstrated to this Parliament and to this country that the PNM is strong and resistant to UNC malpractice and misconduct. Had we not done that, today, in Trinidad and Tobago, the Government would have had its way in respect of its stated intentions on the death penalty—and we had no problem with that; but it would have done so to the detriment of even law-abiding citizens, of which you and I form part. So thank God for the strong PNM! We took our position against them and we urge the DPP to do likewise, on a day-to-day basis.

But more than that, Mr. Speaker, in the wee hours of the morning, as we debated these amendments, as we stood up—as we are debating sections 17 and

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18 of the amendments to the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) (Amdt.) Bill—something magnificent happened, which history will record. It was in those wee hours of the morning that something beautiful happened; so we maintain “God is great! God is great! His wonders to perform! His wonders to perform!”

2.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the need for these amendments, and we compliment the Attorney General’s wisdom in bringing them. We also ask that, as he performs his public duty, he be mindful of the fact that it must be done with dignity and decorum.

With these very few words, we support the amendments proposed. I am hearing mutterings from the Member for Oropouche, who is neither economist nor lawyer. We do not know what he is. I refuse to be deterred by him. I thank you.

Mr. Barendra Sinanan (*San Fernando West*): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to join my colleague from Laventille East/Morvant and to record my appreciation of the speed at which the Attorney General moved to have this legislation introduced to Parliament to clear up difficulties which have occurred at the High Court concerning the said amendments.

The situation at the Magistrates’ Courts is in need of urgent attention. The Chief Justice, at the opening of the law courts, alluded to the fact that the magistracy is in urgent need of attention. I am sure as head of the Judiciary he is doing what he can. I appeal to the Attorney General to lend assistance to the judicial arm by putting in place measures to allow it to function.

Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, at the Magistrates’ Courts, there is a clerk who takes notes of everything that is said—questions posed and answered—in long hand. It is a very tedious process. There are cases in the Magistrates’ Courts which must be 15 or 20 years old, simply because science has not yet hit the magistracy in this country.

It has to some extent been extended to the higher judiciary. In some courts, there are palantypists as we have in Parliament. I am not sure that there are shorthand writers, but certainly in the Assizes and the Appeal Court there are palantypists.

Mr. Speaker, the kingdom the Attorney General is hoping to inherit is very much in doubt. However, for posterity, he can do something about the Judiciary so that he would be remembered. It is in this regard that I am urging the Attorney General to influence his Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance to look again at

money that is being allocated to projects which, whilst necessary, may not be necessary in the size in which they are proposed. I speak of the airport project. What are we in Trinidad and Tobago doing with an airport which costs \$900 million? Take some of that money and improve the Judiciary! Provide palantypists for the Judiciary; provide shorthand writers!

Certainly, provide them in the Magistrates' Courts and in the High Courts. It is a tedious process. Notes are taken by a clerk in the lower court. In the High Court the judge writes every single word. We have passed that stage. As we approach the 21st Century, I appeal to the Attorney General to convince and influence those on that side who hold the purse strings to allocate more money to the Judiciary and certainly the magistracy.

I read somewhere—I think it was in yesterday's newspapers—that the Attorney General got some money to repair one or two Magistrates' Courts and there is some ceremony carded for the Magistrates' Court in San Fernando. Whilst the building has been painted, only recently a prisoner escaped from those courts. This is reported in the Friday's edition of the *TNT Mirror*. It was also reported in another newspaper. The prisoner hid in a ceiling and escaped. The *TNT Mirror* of today's date says that it is easy to put your hand through the BRC door and open the hook which serves as a lock. The repairs appear to be very cosmetic and a simple thing like the security apparently was not attended to. Certainly, in the Magistrates' Courts throughout the country more attention is needed, as I said before.

In closing, whilst I compliment the Attorney General for the speed with which he brought this legislation before the House to correct the problem, let me again indicate to him that the kingdom he is hoping to inherit is very much in doubt and posterity demands that he look at the Judiciary so that practitioners in the near future will remember him as doing something about and for the Judiciary.

I thank you.

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I thank hon. Members for the congratulations offered the Government for making improvements to the criminal justice system.

When members of the PNM say that the Magistrates' Courts are not equipped with proper mechanisms to prevent escape of prisoners, one has to understand that these courts did not deteriorate in the last two or three years. If they are in a mess because of lack of attention, the PNM is responsible.

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The Chief Justice as head of the Judiciary has recognized, both at the opening of the Magistrates' Court in Tunapuna and the High Court, that this administration has done tremendously well in improving the lot of the magistracy. I do not think that it is fair to give the impression that this administration is responsible for all the ills that have occurred in the magistracy.

Mr. Sinanan: Mr. Speaker, [*Inaudible*] What I said, too, was that the San Fernando Magistrates' Court was refurbished and just last week a prisoner walked away from it. In terms of spending money to refurbish, one must look also at the security aspect. It is not only painting.

2.35 p.m.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, that is totally correct. But, a prisoner could walk out from a properly secured prison because of lax officers, officers who were not paying attention at the time. Therefore, the politicians and the Government are not responsible for that. As a matter of fact, politicians here do not put on uniforms; they are not police officers; they are not prison officers. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: So, if it is that there has been an escape from the police station then obviously one would look at all the circumstances under which the escape occurred. But, I do not think it is fair to say a government is responsible because a prisoner escapes.

Mr. Speaker, this statement has been made all the time—that it was under the last administration that Mr. Dole Chadee and his companions were arrested and prosecuted. All right, under the last administration, he was arrested but, I want to say that at the appropriate time I would make available facts which would show that if that administration was in power, Mr. Dole Chadee and his companions would not have been convicted.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Attorney General, put some dignity in office! [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Panday: Methinks they protest too much.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Diego Martin West thinks he could shout from there, I am saying that at the appropriate time I would make available to the population, facts which would show that if the

Opposition were in Government, Mr. Dole Chadee would not have been successfully prosecuted. I say that.

Also, they come here and give the impression that the “big boys” are not being dealt with. Which is the administration which dealt with the “big boys”? This administration has dealt with and continues to deal with the “big boys”.

Dr. Rowley: Because you are the “big boys”!

Mr. Panday: Of course. We are bigger than you.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand the hon. Member for Diego Martin West. He allowed Dole Chadee to—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Parliament cannot be conducted like this. There is no way, when a Member is on his legs, that there are constant questions being thrown at him. It cannot be done like that. I ask you please to take it easy. Please continue.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, as a Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources responsible for land, allowed Mr. Dole Chadee to squat on state lands—150 acres—at Piparo. He knew about it; he allowed it; he condoned it; he did nothing about it. He allowed that gentleman to build buildings on the land. He knew at the time that there were all these transactions about his leader with a motor car. Files came to him; he knew about it and he did nothing about it. He sits in that seat and talks about this Government condoning “big boys” being in crime.

As a matter of fact, he knew that was a front for money laundering and he did nothing about it. When I say in this Parliament that at the appropriate time I am going to produce facts to this country to show that if Mr. Dole Chadee was prosecuted under them as a government, there would have been no conviction, I am saying that as a fact and I will produce the facts.

Mr. Speaker, when the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant gets up here and talks about the “death penalty bill” and the attitude of this Government which prevented them from supporting the “death penalty bill”, he knows that is not true. He knows that support for the “death penalty bill” was twisted because the Opposition did not want to support it because they had friends on Death Row.

Dr. Rowley: Rubbish!

Hon. Member: No, Ramesh! Not rubbish.

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order please!

Mr. Hinds: Would the Member give way?

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant specifically raised the death penalty issue in this debate. It is that Leader of the Opposition who has contended in this House that the people on Death Row, including that lot, must be given a fundamental right to have prison conditions. They are the ones saying that.

Mr. Hinds: He never said so! No!

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: They are the ones who are saying that if a death warrant is read to those people, they are entitled to file a constitutional motion about prison conditions, that they are entitled to shampoo and some of them are mad. They are the ones saying that.

Dr. Rowley: He never said that.

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: They have voted against a bill which was introduced here to prevent that abuse in order for justice to be done to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and, here it is they come today to say they praise the Government for all it is doing about the criminal justice system. They come to praise the Government because they know they cannot get away from the public mind, the fact that the Opposition has failed the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, another issue raised was—look how boldface and brassface these honourable Gentlemen are, that the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant got up to congratulate the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Mark Mohammed, but it was his leader who accused the Chief Justice and the Judicial and Legal Service Commission of conspiracy with the Government. He made a public statement accusing the Chief Justice, the head of the Judiciary of this country and the members of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission of conspiracy with the Government to appoint Mr. Mark Mohammed, and the Chief Justice and the members of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission made a public statement putting the facts straight. Up to today, he has not apologized, not to the Prime Minister and the Government, but to the Chief Justice and the members of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

He tried to introduce the question of race in the appointment of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He mentioned specifically at his public meeting that Mr. Anthony Carmona was entitled to it. He tried to give the impression that it was the Prime Minister in conspiracy with that.

He sees race in everything and this Member, the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant, obviously recognizing that his leader is not a leader, recognizing that he has betrayed the trust of a Leader of the Opposition, tried to do damage control. But, before he did that, he should get his leader to make a public apology to the head of the Judiciary and the Judicial and Legal Service Commission for trying to introduce race in an important area as an appointment by the Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

Dr. Rowley: I will apologize. Would you give way?

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I have learnt in this House that the PNM would make allegations against any Member of this House. As a matter of fact, they are on record for arresting people, interfering in the police process. The records in the files show that the Member for Diego Martin West and the Member for San Fernando East were politically involved in the prosecution of the political leader of the United National Congress at the time.

Dr. Rowley: Nonsense!

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: It shows that they are well-known and then they try to make statements to the effect—all these matters would come out but I am—

[Mr. Hinds rises]

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: I am not giving way. They come here and they talk about missing files but if they had any evidence about anybody, they were in power and did nothing about it, but the facts are revealed that they destroyed the file because they wanted to subvert an action for damages by the person involved. They were involved. As a matter of fact, they were in office and the facts showed that they were involved in politically prosecuting people in this country who were close to them. They sit there. *[Crosstalk]* They talk about who killed whom. There was a state witness who was killed and an inquest was held.

Mr. Panday: They were in office. They killed the man.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have already indicated that the Parliament cannot proceed on the basis in which Members of the Opposition keep shouting things across while a Member is on his feet. Apart from which, I have refrained

All I am saying is this. It was introduced in this House today, as indeed it had been introduced on several other occasions, a question of missing files, to which the Attorney General is now responding. I am saying that is not on because that is a direct imputation concerning a Member of this House which we will not permit.

[Mr. Manning and Dr. Rowley attempt to catch the Speaker's eye]

No. Really, all I was doing was making an observation and a ruling with respect to something. There was too much noise and I intervened. Could the Member please continue.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, in order to show the commitment of this Government to the parliamentary process and to rules, we are prepared to comply and we will comply with your ruling but, I am sure they would have to comply with it and I will get off this aspect of it.

Mr. Speaker, they cannot make allegations against Members on this side and—

Mr. Panday: Escape unscathed!

Hon. R. L. Maharaj:—escape unscathed. They cannot do it!

But, since there was a reference about killing a witness, I want to put on record that there was a man called Mervyn Hall who was used by the police as a state witness. That man was shot and killed while robbing a grocery. An inquest was held. That was done under the last regime of the PNM. An inquest was held by a magistrate and the magistrate found that this witness went to rob a grocery and he was shot and killed by a policeman while robbing the grocery. Yet, they get up here and make allegations about people on this side killing state witnesses.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, one sees that the Opposition is really grabbing at straws. We have come with an important Bill in the public interest. People who are charged for rape, murder and incest, their cases are done in the Magistrate's Court and when they are done in the Magistrate's Court they go to the High Court. The High

Court is ruling that these enquiries are null and void so victims of crime are suffering, people who are robbed and killed, their families are suffering and this Bill is brought here in order to address that procedural difficulty and ensure that criminals do not have the upper hand on law in Trinidad and Tobago. This Bill is brought here and this is what the Opposition has caused this debate to descend to.

Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the Opposition would have come and—there are two distinguished lawyers. The hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant knows that in the courts there is one set of rulings in which a few judges have ruled that there is no basis for quashing an indictment like this. Then there is another set of rulings in which the courts have quashed indictments. There are about six indictments which have already been quashed and the state had to refile and have a new preliminary enquiry. In some of those matters witnesses cannot be found. This is a serious matter affecting the administration of justice and here we come to fiddle and make allegations which have no basis at all.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding those matters, I would like to thank the Opposition for giving their support to the measure and 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 5 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

House resumed.

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

DENTAL PROFESSION (AMDT.) BILL

Senate Amendments

The Minister of Health (Dr. The Hon. Hamza Rafeeq): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Senate amendments to the Dental Profession (Amendment) Bill, 1998 listed in the Appendix be now considered.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 3.

Senate amendment read as follows:

Clause 3(a)

Delete and substitute the following:

- (a) by deleting the definition of diploma and substituting the following:

“‘diploma’ means—

- (a) any diploma, degree, fellowship, membership, licence or certificate granted by any university, college or other institution referred to in the Schedule; or
- (b) any university, college or other institution conferring authority to practise dentistry in the country or place where granted and recognized by the Council as furnishing a sufficient guarantee of the possession of the requisite knowledge and skill for the efficient practice of dentistry;”

3(b)Renumber as 3(c).

New 3(a)

- (a) In the definition of “Council” delete from the words “elected by” to the end and substitute the words “established under section 9 of the Act;” and
- (b) Delete the definition of “temporary registration”.

Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Mr. Eric Williams (*Port of Spain South*): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are so pleased that some measure of good sense has prevailed when this Bill went to the other place because we argued a number of these amendments which have come

before us in this House and we are pleased that the Government was constrained to reconsider some of its position.

I read in a daily newspaper that the hon. Minister said in the other place that the Government has no pleasure in bringing the Bill at that time because of the nature of what is being addressed in it. We are pleased that it has come back. We still believe that there is need for a clearer definition of what is a diploma, what are the correct universities and so forth for temporary registration and the Dental Council. I have a problem here because I am wondering if by changing the definition of “diploma” and substituting (a) here:

any university, college or other institution referred to in the Schedule; or

(b) any university, college or other institution...”

I am wondering, and I hope that the Minister could somehow—I would give way because, given your ruling, he does not have the right to respond, but I will give way to him to respond to the question: is he implying in this amendment that the qualifications of students who may have attended any of these universities that are now on the schedule, would be retroactive once we pass this Bill? I would give way if the Minister could respond to the question because I am wondering.

Dr. Rafeeq: The parent Dental Profession Act provides for a schedule to be published as established by the Dental Council and those in that schedule will be recognized. As I said, the one that we have in the Bill at present was published by the Dental Council. Those in the schedule will now have automatic registration. When I say automatic registration I mean will be recognized by the Council for registration.

Mr. E. Williams: I asked the question because there is an amendment to the schedule to include another school. I am wondering if we are saying that we are applying retroactive accreditation and, therefore, recognition to those who would come under this amended definition of diploma. This is what I am trying to establish.

Dr. Rafeeq: The answer to that is yes, but it is a provisional yes because we did have an amendment where those who are graduates of the University of the West Indies Dental School will have to go through a period of vocational training.

Mr. E. Williams: I thank the hon. Minister for that. I am not sure where the period of vocational training is in these amendments.

Dr. Rafeeq: Those were the amendments made in this House.

Mr. E. Williams: I thank the hon. Minister because, again, there are certain areas of clarification which I required and he has given that clarification.

There is a question that I think is very germane to this particular clause. There are students who have attained diplomas from university or college which, if it has not been, will be recognized as an accredited school. I am advised—because I continue to research this matter—by those who are competent to advise that eight students of one of those approved universities or colleges sat the exam of the Dental Council in November of last year and failed. Three of the students from Barbados, I am advised, resat the exam in April of this year but the other five students who are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago did not attend and did not participate in that examination.

3.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I have the question of the retroactive nature of this new definition of “diploma”, because those five students, in effect, boycotted the
[Interruption] There is a lot of speculation in the public domain, as well as in this honourable House, that they may have been advised that it may not have been necessary for them to take that exam. I do not wish to become too *ad hominem* about the matter, but we see commentaries in the newspapers about dentists qualified by legislation, and one wonders if any promises were made, or what advice was given.

On the previous occasion when this matter came before this honourable House, one observed several students present, correctly seeing about a matter which is in the public domain and, in which they were interested. One also observed that at least one of those students was a guest of the hon. Member for Couva South, so much so that he sought advice from him, shuffling papers in the alcove that is associated with officials. It gives me no pleasure to raise these sorts of questions, but in the enactment of legislation, one has been faced with allegations of promises.

If it is that there is some degree of retroactive qualification—and as the hon. Minister has clarified, there is to be a period of vocational training—then what of those five students who are in limbo? They would not have been qualified under the provisions of this Bill, and they would be subject to some means of accreditation as dentists in the society. I think, Mr. Speaker, these five individuals have been out of the active dental profession for too long. They should have been practising by now. Appropriate arrangements ought to have been made so that

they should be in the practice of dentistry in this nation by now. We need qualified dentists to see about our populace.

I ask the Government to address that question, Mr. Speaker, because it is still not clear to me—and I guess maybe to other Members of this House—whether those five students who are, as was said earlier, neither fish nor fowl, because they have not taken the exam that existed before, and there is no provision set up as yet, when; and as the Bill will be proclaimed, that would cause them to be in a situation to become accredited as dentists. They are, indeed, holders of a diploma from a university which, after we pass our arrangements today, would be an accredited school, but they would not have satisfied the requirements either under the old Act or the amended Act which would give effective meaning to their diploma as now defined in this amendment to practise. I ask the hon. Minister and maybe other Members of the Government side to give some consideration to that matter if it has not already been considered. If it has, please enlighten this humble Member of this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 4

Senate amendment read as follows:

4(b) In subclause (b) delete the words “Medical Faculty” occurring in proposed subsection (1A)(a) and (b) and substitute the words “Faculty of Medical

Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 5

Senate amendment read as follows:

5 A. Renumber as clause 6.

- B. Delete the proposed section 9(1)(e) to (g) and substitute the following:
- “(e) two other members;
 - (f) two members appointed by the Minister of Health one of whom shall be the dentist holding the most senior dental post in the Ministry of Health, the other, a lay person to represent the general interests of the public;
 - (g) two members appointed by and from the University of the West Indies Faculty of Medical Sciences Dental School who shall be dentists other than those who hold temporary registration;”
- C. In the proposed section 9(2)—
- (a) delete the words “(d)” and substitute the
 - (b) insert after the word "dentist" the words “other than those who hold temporary
- D. In the proposed section 9(3) delete from the word “at least two” until the end and substitute the words “at least one of whom shall be a member appointed under paragraph (g) and at least one of whom shall be a member appointed under paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d).

Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Mr. Eric Williams (*Port of Spain South*): Mr. Speaker, again I wish to thank the Almighty that good sense prevailed in the other place, such that the attempt at tampering with the independence of a professional body, in this case the Dental Council, has been thwarted by the activity in the other place. [*Desk thumping*] Can one imagine what would have happened in this nation had we not had the

wisdom and had the Government not had to accept this amendment that is contained here at clause 5? *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker, there are Members on the other side, Ministers of Government, who are entirely unprepared. They do not even know how to read the Bill and understand what amendments are before this House. Then, they seek to taunt first-time Parliamentarians like myself, as if that would thwart us from dealing with the business of the nation. I say shame on them! *[Desk thumping]* It has no effect, in any event.

There are several points in subclause (f), and I would like to quote:

- (f) two members appointed by the Minister of Health, one of whom shall be the dentist holding the most senior dental post in the Ministry of Health, the other, a lay person to represent the general interests of the public.”

Mr. Speaker, this is a laudable inclusion and, in fact, I am advised that the Dental Council and practising dentists wholeheartedly support this particular amendment.

Again, I understand, they even suggested it and commended it to the Government, and we have absolutely no problem. What we have a problem with is, what will be the qualification of this lay person? We wish to allow the hon. Minister of Health to choose from the widest possible pool of the society because the public interest must clearly be served. It must be served! We endorse that. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, those who throw stones should not live in glass houses, or dance on tables in the public if they do have any projectiles to use as missiles.

Mr. Speaker, there are some individuals in this society who are described as artisans who somehow engage themselves in a form of practice of dentistry. Quite a number of them I am told, have soft hands in the sense that they provide pain relief in a way that patients find comfortable. Almost all of them have no qualification that falls under the definition of “diploma” as defined in the original Bill, nor as amended in this amendment. These individuals are, therefore, not allowed to be registered under the definition of this Act but they are, indeed, members of the public, and could conceivably convince a person that they would like to seek the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, because of the very nature of their activity, they fall outside of the umbrella of the profession, and I would contend that they ought to be excluded from being qualified as lay persons who would represent the general interest of the public, as defined in this clause. I would like to ask the Government to please

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define the qualification of a lay person who would fall under this heading and to not allow the situation where one of those individuals who it has been determined may actually be acting in a fashion that is detrimental to the health of our citizenry to not be included as a lay person under this subclause (f).

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, again, I must commend the Members of the other House and the Government for making this particular amendment, subclause (g), because we could have been faced with a situation which would have been untenable. Allow me to explain. The individuals who are the holders of diplomas from schools not in the Schedule but who lecture at the university could obtain temporary registration. Therefore, they have a qualification in dentistry, they lecture in dentistry, but their qualification does not allow them to obtain full registration to practise dentistry in this nation.

What subclause (g) has done, which is why I am particularly pleased about it, is that it has ensured that while including members of the dental school on the Dental Council as a right—which in a sense is a good thing because it now formalizes a forum for discussion between practising dentists and those at the university who are teaching and preparing our future dentists—it also ensures that only those at the university who have full registration are allowed to interact in this manner. I think that is a very acceptable and welcome situation. I commend the Government and certainly Members of the other place for this particular inclusion. This certainly was not in the original Bill.

Mr. Speaker, in clause 5C it states:

"In the proposed section 9(2)—

- (b) insert after the word 'dentist' the words 'other than those who hold temporary registration.'".

In effect, that should be "dentists", plural. I believe this may be an error in the drafting but for clarity it ought to be suitability changed.

In clause 5D it speaks of members appointed under paragraph (a), (b), (c) and (d), but it is my understanding that a member of the council who qualifies under paragraph (a), (b), (c) and (d) is, in fact, elected. Those we are speaking about are the Chairman, who will be the President of the Board, a vice-chairman, who will be the Vice-President, a secretary who shall be the Secretary of the Board, a treasurer who will be Treasurer of the Board and two other members as is contained in this

amendment. In fact, the correct definition of these people is that they are elected under these paragraphs and not appointed.

I believe this ought to be amended to reflect that they are not appointed but, indeed, elected. I do not know if it is an error in the drafting as it came to this place or not, but I think it is a minor oversight.

All in all, apart from those points I have sought to make in clause 5, I indicate that we have a fair measure of support for this particular amendment.

Thank you. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*): Mr. Speaker, I give my colleague from Oropouche the assurance that I would not be speaking for 75 minutes. I take the opportunity at this juncture in this amendment to put on the record a concern I had when this matter came before the national community.

I preface my contribution by drawing attention to a comment made by our current President a while back, when he said that one of the great difficulties is that the professionals have failed the country. I commend that statement to my former colleagues at the university and those professionals on the Dental Council. What this amendment should do is reaffirm our commitment to our parliamentary system.

Mr. Speaker, you were here when in this place we sought to point out to the Government that there was something here which was not right, and no amount of persuasion could have caused the Government to take note of that point. It is now before us—we told them it would come back here—and what was not right was the fact that whatever difficulty that arose with respect to the accreditation of the university Dental School, there must have been an overriding difficulty created by the fact that the Government was going to legislate to put a majority of government appointees, non-dental persons, to oversee the dental profession.

No matter how it is presented, no matter how useful the matter is, the damage that development would have done was to create an impression that we were legislating passes when at exam they were given failures. The fact of the matter is—and I have not seen any rebuttal from the university—that you had a failure rate of 8 out of 12 students; that in itself should have humbled the university. Whether it was quality of personnel or equipment, but certainly as the maxim says "nothing is taught until it is learned", and clearly if the examination had showed that 8 out of 12 students had failed, clearly the learning level was something we should be concerned about.

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When the issue arose, what we expected was that the professional people at the university would have dealt in a professional way with their colleagues on the Dental Council. Even if there were persons in Government—as they are wont to do—to seek to use their authority in Government to rectify the situation, I think would have been detrimental to the university and still is. What should have happened is that the position of the university as academia should have been the first voice to have said, "No, this is not the way to rectify it, because to do that is not only to cast aspersion on the dental profession in the University of the West Indies, but on the wider university!"

I remember not too long ago, that one of our colleagues in the other place had reason to make some very uncomplimentary statements about the quality of staffing at the University of the West Indies with respect to their research and production. I do not want to be overly critical of my former colleagues at the university, but I was very disappointed to see that the university was quite prepared to accept from the Government a situation which however you put it, was tantamount to legislating a control of a profession so as to solve a problem which had a deeper root than that: the whole question of the quality of teaching and resources being made available to the dental school at the University of the West Indies.

We can say what we like, but at the end of the day, the worst thing to happen to an academic institution is to have its accreditation or the quality of its teaching questioned. This development in recent weeks has done that to the University of the West Indies.

I would have been happier if my colleagues from the university had said to the Government, "that was not the way to go, we have to find a different way to preserve the integrity of the profession". That other way is to ensure the university dental school is provided with adequate staffing and equipment so that when people are taught there, they stand a reasonable chance of getting a proper pass rate. But to tell me you have an exam that 8 out of 12 students passed and you have a confrontation with the Dental Council which is supposed, under law, to regulate the profession, and then you rectify that, not by finding some common ground but by behaving like the Government, coming to the Parliament and seeking to legislate passes when, in fact, they have failed!

Now we are hearing that they have not taken the exams but will be let lose on the public by virtue of the legislation. What is going to happen is that forever more

there would be questions over any person graduating from the university dental school, and that is not good for anybody. [*Desk thumping*]

Of course, by extension, people have to ask what else is happening in the university with other degrees—

Mr. Speaker: It is not permissible to go outside of the particular clause we are debating, and I think you are touching on other aspects of the Bill. According to the rules you cannot do that. You can talk on every single amendment but you have to confine it to that clause. Please confine your comments to clause 5.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your intervention, but I was not going much further. I had just touched on them. The point is, all that is contained in clause 5 is the question of coming around to ensuring that what was proposed in the beginning, was detrimental to the wider situation. We are happy that it has now been brought where it is. We take note though that it should never have been in this position before. We thought we would have been protected by the objectivity of academia and we were not. I am happy that it has come to this maturation. That is all I have to say on the subject.

Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 6

Senate amendment read as follows:

- "6
- A. Renumber as clause 8 and renumber subsequent clauses accordingly.
 - B. Delete proposed section 12(b)."

Mr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, you will have to forgive me as I am a little under the weather. I could not resist the opportunity to make the point that the person who drafted this amendment seems to believe that there is going to be a problem. Why are we looking at a situation where a general meeting would not be convened? This entire process of legislation has been confrontational.

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When I see an amendment before me which says that within one month of the coming into operation of the Dental Profession Act—I am very sorry, Mr. Speaker. [*Laughter*]

Question put and agreed to.

New Clause 7

Senate amendment read as follows:

New Clause 7 Insert the following new clause:

7. The Act is amended by inserting after section 10 the following new clause:

'New Council to be elected	10A(1) Within one month of the coming into operation of the Dental Profession (Amendment) Act, 1998 the Chairman of the Council shall convene in accordance with this Act a general meeting of the Board for the purpose of electing a new Council.
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(2) Members of the Council established under the Act and holding office at the commencement of the Dental Profession (Amendment) Act, 1998 shall continue to hold office until the election of the new Council in accordance with subsection (1).

(3) Where within one month a general meeting is not convened in accordance with subsection (1) and notwithstanding section 9 the Minister shall appoint an Interim Council consisting of—

- (a) three dentists one of whom shall be the dentist holding the most senior dental post in the Ministry of Health;
- (b) a lay person
- (c) a member of the Council established under the Act and holding office at the

commencement of the Dental Profession (Amendment) Act, 1998 other than a person appointed under paragraph (a).

(4) The Interim Council shall within one month of appointment convene a general meeting of the Board to elect a new Council under the Act."

Mr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

3.35 p.m.

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin East*): Mr. Speaker, let me apologize for jumping the gun.

The point I was making and I will now make it, is that this clause seems to contemplate a confrontation within the dental profession whereby it will be necessary for the Minister to appoint an interim council. Really, all of the debate on this matter has been with a central theme: that there should be more consultation between the Dental Council, the University of the West Indies, the Government, all the participants, to avoid a confrontational situation. This, in fact, reminds me of a piece of legislation brought by the Minister of Agriculture to convene, in an emergency situation, a general meeting of one of the sugar unions. I really wonder why this is necessary. Does the Minister believe that present members of the Dental Council will attempt to frustrate the objects of this legislation and the amendments to the legislation?

I would like him, well somebody, since the Minister cannot tell us, perhaps the Member for Tabaquite can tell us what is going on. Is it the intention of the Minister to force a situation and is the Minister anticipating that there is going to be a controversy and that the Dental Council would attempt to frustrate the new provisions of the legislation?

While we are at it, perhaps there is a drafting error. I know the Member for Couva South has recently had to seek medical attention and perhaps this is why we see a drafting error here, but perhaps the Member for Tabaquite can tell me why the provisions made earlier, which speak about temporary registration, where you

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put in a catch-all phrase, “other than those who hold temporary registration”, why is that not here? Why, in this interim Council, you are not excluding persons who hold temporary registration? It seems to me that if we leave this like this, that one can appoint persons who have temporary registration in the Interim Council.

Dr. Rafeeq: What is wrong with that? That is their only function.

Mr. C. Imbert: I see the Minister asking what is wrong with that. One asks oneself what is going on here? If in previous amendments one excluded persons who had temporary registration: why do you want to allow yourself—

Dr. Rafeeq: The function of the Council is to regulate the entire practice of the profession. The function of the Interim Council is only to conduct the elections.

Mr. C. Imbert: Precisely. Would you want temporary members to participate in that? Would you want them to vote and be involved in the annual general meeting, for example? If previously you wanted to exclude them, why do you want to bring them into the most contentious aspect of this legislation, which would be the convening of a general meeting? Why do you not keep them out of that and convene your general meeting and your Interim Council and proceed? Why allow yourself the flexibility to bring these people who have been in direct confrontation with the Dental Council over the last year or so? This may even give you the opportunity to appoint, as I said on a previous occasion, relatives of Government members, who only now qualify for temporary registration and do not qualify for permanent registration? Why does the Minister want to hold himself up to suspicion? This is clearly a drafting error. I would ask that the words “other than those who hold temporary registration” be added.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 7

Senate amendment read as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 7 | A. Renumber as clause 5. |
| | B. Renumber proposed section 5A as 5A(1) and insert the following new subsection: |
| | “(2) An Order made under subsection (1) shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament.”. |

Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 8

Senate amendment read as follows:

8	Delete the proposed section 46 and substitute the following: “Minister may review curriculum of Dental School	46. The Minister shall within two years of the commencement of the Dental Profession (Amendment) Act, 1998 and at least once every five years thereafter review, in collaboration with the Council the curriculum and training programme of the University of the West Indies Faculty of Medical Sciences Dental School and make recommendations thereon to the Council of the University of the West Indies.”
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Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Mr. Barendra Sinanan (*San Fernando West*): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed happy that the Minister has recognized that there is a problem at the Dental School and that the problem would not necessarily be solved immediately with this piece of legislation. I am happy to see this new clause included, which will give the Minister the opportunity to review, with the Council, the curriculum and training of the Dental School and for him to make recommendations.

The Government recognizes that it is not only a question of the dental students having passed their exams and being automatically licensed to practise. They have recognized that there has been and will continue to be, in the short-term, hopefully, a problem at the Dental School. It is in this regard, when one looks at the amendment before us, which would allow the Minister to review in

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collaboration with the Council the curriculum and training of the dental school and make recommendations thereon, I wish to place on *Hansard* certain aspects of a contribution made by Michael J. Williams which is reported in the *Trinidad Guardian*, Wednesday, September 23, 1998 under the headline, “Dentists qualified

“Thirdly, and of paramount significance, are the people of TT to accept dentists who are qualified only by legislation, but who are not acceptable to their peers in TT, or Caricom or anywhere else in the world and who can only practise dentistry on two islands in the Gulf of Paria.

Thus, we have three distinct issues—but the Dental Profession (Amendment) Bill before the Senate, seeks to deal only with one.”

Here, hopefully in this two-year period, the Minister has the opportunity to deal with the others. It goes on:

“This is politics at its lowest. Its horizon is limited to a few political supporters and the next election.

Any journalist reading the reports of the dentistry professors who come and go at UWI (Dr. Richard Walker and Newton Johnson); as well as the voluminous literature on the fiasco which is the UWI Dental School, will conclude that it is no better, and perhaps it is worse, than what we read about the San Fernando Hospital situation and other TT health institutions.

But what can one conclude about a new dental school which is nine years, has had seven directors averaging 15 months each, been refused accreditation by the UK Dental Council, the Dental Councils of Jamaica and Barbados and even its own home Council in TT?

How much confidence would a patient have in a dentist who had only completed 31 percent of his/her prescribed clinical hours; and in a dental school which moved from one staff crisis to another?

One understands that an emerging school of any kind, in a third world country, could have difficulties in recruiting competent staff, in competition with the wider world. But if the end result should be a third rate product, and we merely legislate for acceptance of that product, our parliamentarians would betray a third rate intellect.

This can be no credit to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. And all Mr. Panday's proclamations about a ‘total quality nation’ will be bared in all its transparency as mere hypocrisy—nothing more, nothing less.

But what is to become of the eight DDS-UWI graduates if we should decide on the ‘best or nothing’? Could we not have a ‘product recall’ like the auto makers when they discover major product defects? UWI has not delivered on its promises to its dental students and UWI yet has obligations to fulfill.

With government funding if necessary, UWI must complete and upgrade the clinical hours of its curriculum for its graduates.

The Dental Council’s exam requirement does not seem onerous. attitude seems motivated purely by pique and pride, encouraged by politicians who one day will want favours for their sons or daughters.

Accreditation by legislation in TT is shortsighted for it will apply only to TT.

The problem at UWI’s Dental School is clearly one of management, with a generous buttering of arrogance—patient shortage, unstable staffing, seven directors in nine years, two failed attempts at accreditation, teaching staff from non-accredited dental schools, non-payment of dental school bills, etc.

The dental and medical schools should be separated each with its own dean. This should eliminate much of the administrative friction now evident under the Dean of the Medical School, who is responsible for the Dental School, and who by normal management criteria must take the credit for its success, or the debit for its failure.”

“The literature emanating from this controversy paints a picture of a little ‘public service’ fiefdom, where egos take precedence over dental education.

If all else fails, and this will likely be due to inadequate funding, the UWI Dental School should be closed. Our objective must be dentists of international standing. We should encourage neither quasi-dentists, super-quacks, nor quacks!”

3.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is in this regard and, in particular, with respect to the new addition to clause 8 which gives the Minister the authority and the leeway over a period of two years to examine exactly what the writer, Michael J. Williams, has identified in this article. I wish to commend the Minister for the inclusion of this clause in the Bill so as to give him an onward hands-on responsibility to look after the situation of the Dental School. This legislation will not immediately solve the problem. The problem will continue to exist and only with the co-operation of the

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Minister, the Dental School and the Council of Education, would students who attend that Dental School, be deserved what they have been paying for—\$55,000 a year—and they will be qualified properly and be an asset to this nation.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Sudama: Port of Spain South again? He is making up for the whole year he did not talk.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, again, and following after my distinguished colleague from San Fernando West, I believe that a further intervention is required in this matter because clearly, there are still some serious questions and considerations that ought to be brought to the debate.

Mr. Speaker, I reviewed the news of the city of Houston which was recently visited by the Member for Couva North, seeking to build strategic alliances with business and other educational institutions.

Mr. Sudama: What does that have to do with the Dental Bill?

Mr. E. Williams: In the city of Houston, there exists the University of Texas which is included in the Schedule of the Bill and certainly, the amendments. The University of Texas is one of the largest schools in the United States, and certainly in the southern part of the United States. Apart from having a dental school, they also have several branches in the medical faculties. Among those faculties is a Faculty of Emergency Medicine, which, like the Dental School here at UWI, is part of the allied health system.

Mr. Speaker, in the city of Houston—and for the benefit of that voice crying in the wilderness, I attended the University of Houston and I do business there from time to time. It is in my interest to check what is going on in the city of Houston. The University of Houston where the Member for Couva North went, is my *alma mater*. The university of Texas Emergency Medical Programme is about to lose its accreditation as a teaching institution because it has had a frequent change of director over a very short period of time and the accreditation boards in the Southern United States have determined that a frequent change of directorship is indicative of a lack of leadership in that programme and, therefore, that school has been put on notice that it will either be suspended or its accreditation will be revoked.

We have a situation here, Mr. Speaker, where, in this amendment, as my colleague has pointed out, we are pleased to see that the Minister in collaboration

with the Dental Council, will be reviewing the training programme. The Minister has also alluded to the fact, previously, that a new curriculum will be adopted. A curriculum, if I am not mistaken, from the University of Bristol, I believe.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the problem. The problem still remains, not the training programme as is mentioned here, but the question of staffing. While it is commendable that according to this amendment, the Minister in collaboration with the Council, will review the curriculum and the training programme—and we believe this is a very important thing—a lot of attention ought to be given to the staffing at the university. Part of the reason the students are not exposed to a proper training programme is the fact that the university does not have the staff to expose them to that training programme and certainly, from certain reports, the calibre of staff as well. So we are pleased about this, but please, this would be doomed to failure if the question of staffing at the University Dental School is not addressed.

In addition, the Minister proposed as part of the training programme as has come from the university, the institution of one year's vocational training. I notice that it has not been enshrined in this amendment but it has been referred to as part of the overall training programme. There are some serious questions with that. I commend, while we would go along with the amendment as is, serious questions are raised and they ought to be considered, maybe in the form of regulations at a later stage.

There is the question of who would administer or control this vocational training programme. Would it be the Dental Council or the Dental School? We submit that it is probably preferable that the Dental School be the one to administer and control the vocational programme. At the same time, who is going to assess the students?

Mr. Sudama: We decide that.

Mr. E. Williams: Mr. Speaker, again, it is not clear to all whether it will only be the school or whether the Dental Council will have a role in the assessment of the students who have gone through this vocational programme. It begs the question. In addition, that additional year of vocational training is not without a cost. It is questionable as to who will bear the cost of the additional years vocational training which will become a part of the training programme that the Minister will be reviewing occasionally. One could find oneself in a situation where students are placed in the office of a practising dentist to gain this experience. The dentist will necessarily have to take time away from

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administering to his or her patients in order to ensure that the student receives the necessary attention, which we all would like the students to have. At the same time there is a cost to that. Is the student going to bear the administrative and other costs of giving effect to the training programme as pointed out here in this amendment, or would the private practitioner be required to bear that cost? Who would be the one to do that?

The students are already being asked to pay in excess of \$65,000 for their programme and this additional vocational training is now required because of what has been demonstrated to be inadequacies in the training programme at the university. To my mind, it is not right that the students must be made to bear the cost of this training that has come about through no fault of their own.

Mr. Speaker, in any event, in this case it is not so much the matter as the fact that it ought to be addressed and that an amicable solution should be arrived at that will, at the end of the day, cause the training programme at the University of the West Indies to be the best that it can possibly be and that we can have the calibre of dental students, and dental practitioner by extension, that this nation so rightly deserves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin West*): Mr. Speaker, again, we see the very ambivalent hand of the Government in this amendment. From the beginning of the introduction of this legislation, we have seen that the Government has been unwilling to deal with the core issues in this matter. We see here, Government is offering as a palliative or a panacea, they will review the curriculum and make recommendations to the council of the university. They should have just left this clause out. What happens if the university does not accept the recommendations? The university has already demonstrated that in this particular matter, it feels that it is correct. This is the cause of the battle. The university is of the view that its course of training, including the practical side of the training, is appropriate. The university has been at pains in seeing the newspaper ads, all of the propaganda coming from various sides in the newspapers. Therefore, if you have an institution where you already believe we are interfering with their right to certify dentists, why should such an institution pay any notice to any recommendation coming from a mere Cabinet Minister? What is the point of this arrangement? Why is all this silence on the other side? Even though at this stage of the proceedings the Minister cannot himself respond, any other Member can reply.

and substitute the words ‘Faculty of Medical Sciences’.”

Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

COHABITATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BILL

Senate Amendment

The Attorney General (Hon. R. L. Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Senate amendment to the Cohabital Relationships Bill, 1998 listed in the Appendix be now considered.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 2.

Senate amendment read as follows:

“In the definition of ‘child’ after the work ‘of’ in line three, insert the words

Mr. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

The purpose of this amendment is that in the definition section of child in the Bill:

“‘child’ when used in relation to the parties of a cohabitational relationship means a child of both parties and includes an adopted child;”

The amendment is to make it clear that the child would be a child of either of the party or of both parties and includes an adopted child.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill was to confer on cohabitants rights and obligations and to give the courts jurisdiction to make orders with respect to interests in property and maintenance in favour of a cohabitant. But in relation to the Bill there are clauses which dealt with where there was a child and for example, where a common-law spouse had a child to take care of which disabled her from being able to support herself, then that would have been one of the grounds for the court to consider to make an order of maintenance for the cohabitant, and it is in that setting that the child would include a child of either, or both parties.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, in relation to the other matter, the Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Identification Bill, certain discussions were held with the Opposition and we would not proceed with that Bill today.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn *sine die*, but there is a Motion on the Adjournment.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Parliament is going to be prorogued at midnight tonight, but I have checked and have been told that the Motion should be adjourned *sine die* which is a date to be fixed.

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Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, by agreement, there is a Bill with respect to TUCO which would lapse if it is not done.

TRINBAGO UNIFIED CALYPSONIANS' ORGANISATION (INC'N) BILL

Order for second reading read.

Mr. Edward Hart (*Tunapuna*): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a bill for the incorporation of the Trinbago Unified Calypsonians' Organization (TUCO) and matters incidental thereto, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, many would agree that the calypso as an art form is one of the pillars on which the cultural identity of Trinidad and Tobago was established, and while our nation has been promoted internationally as the land of calypso and steelband, the well-being of the calypsonian has always been neglected.

Mr. Speaker, TUCO was established in 1993 as a unifying force out of the traditional Calypsonians' Association and a young, but vibrant Trinbago Calypsonians' Organization. The main dynamic of TUCO is the well-being of its members, also respect for the calypsonians, and what we are witnessing now, apparently Members on the other side have no regard or respect for the calypsonians. Why I have said that, Mr. Speaker, of late we have witnessed the calypsonians being dictated to, being told what to sing, and where to sing. The Dimanche Gras Show where, traditionally, there was the calypso finals, was removed to the Thursday night. The Mighty Prowler, as a guest artiste, and who is the reigning champion was told which calypso to sing on Dimanche Gras night, and as a result of that, there is a distinct possibility that we might be faced with two Dimanche Gras at different venues. I could go on and on to cite instances. Champs in Concert—Pan Trinbago received a message from the Office of the Prime Minister stating that Sugar Aloes should be taken off the show and that is why I am saying this today.

The dignity and empowerment of the calypsonians' organization is designed and structured to meet the challenges in the competitive world of music business so that calypsonians may benefit from the wealth which they help to generate on a national and international level. In TUCO's constitution, its aim and objective is that the organization must carry on all or any of the business of entertainment of promoters, calypsonians, and artistes, managers and personal representatives in all or any sphere of entertainment.

TUCO is structured in four zones namely: Tobago, North, East, and South/Central. This national body is governed by an elected executive comprising

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a president, vice-president, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, assistant treasurer, public relations officer, assistant public relations officer, marketing manager, welfare officer, education and research officer, and two trustees and they have achieved quite a lot. As a matter of fact, they, in collaboration with Caribbean Prestige Productions have introduced the Soca Monarch Competition which generates much interest with thousands of patrons flocking to these shows. There is also the Soca Boat Entertainment Centre and they have also been involved in having a caucus on new copyright legislation with the Ministry of Legal Affairs, displays and performances at Carifesta VI, training workshops in the calypso at NCC, funding sessions of the International Caribbean Carnival Association, and at the current Expo '98, TUCO has a booth.

TUCO's mission is to provide consultancy services, legal accounting and management, training workshops in the art of calypso; seminars on the business of music; recording studio facility, and calypso on the Internet. They have great plans for 1999 which include the running of four calypso tents: Kaiso House, South/Central Kaiso Showcase, East Calypso Caravan and the Tobago Bacchanal Tent. The organization also has to see about the National Calypso Monarch; National Extempore Monarch and Limbo Competition; National Junior Calypso Monarch Competition; Unattached Calypso Monarch Competition; Tobago Road Show; Calypso Fiesta and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, presently the organization is finding itself financially strapped. They are not able to provide adequate staff, telephones are always down, and there are numerous problems. I am wondering whether this Government has a well-orchestrated plan to divide or destroy the calypsonians. It is hard to say, but this is how I see it. I could well recall an editorial written in the *Trinidad Guardian* and as a result of that, Mr. Jones P. Madeira found himself under serious pressure.

I am not against promoting chutney, we must promote all the other festivals, all the "chowtal" singing, the "pitchorie", all these things because it is a cultural pot-pourri but why attack the calypsonians? I often wonder. There are some interesting projects for the year 2000 and I hope that this initiative, the incorporation of this body which is a worthwhile venture would be considered.

Those on the other side have attacked the calypsonians, the steelbandmen, the trade union movement, and individuals who have even helped to put them in office, that is why the Member for Tobago West is seated on this side today.

Miss Nicholson: Do not bring me in it.

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Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Members on both sides of this House would agree that it is a worthwhile effort to incorporate the movement, and with these few words, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

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 10 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The preamble ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

House resumed.

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

4.25 p.m.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, by agreement, we will be doing Motions Nos. 2 and 3 under "Committee

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

Working Paper on the Management Structure of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago Adoption

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move:

That this House adopt the Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to consider the Working Paper on the Management Structure of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, it can be taken that the Committee Report has been read, and I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Report adopted.

Report of the House Committee

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**Report of the House Committee of the
House of Representatives (1997—1998 Session).**

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move:

That this House adopt the Report of the House Committee of the House of Representatives (1997—1998 Session).

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, there is a Motion on the adjournment, but obviously there is no mover, so we cannot deal with it.

Motion made and question proposed, That the House do now adjourn sine die.

Question put and agreed to

House adjourned accordingly

Adjourned at 4.30 p.m.