

THE  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD  
AND TOBAGO WHICH OPENED ON OCTOBER 17, 2002

---

---

SESSION 2002—2003

VOLUME 1

---

---

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Thursday, October 17, 2002*

**10.00 A.M.**

The House of Representatives having assembled, and it being the first meeting of the First Session of the Eighth Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Clerk of the House read the following Proclamation:

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

No. 7 of 2002.

[L.S.]

By His Excellency ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, T.C.,  
O.C.C., S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief  
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON

*President*

**A PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS it is provided by subsection (1) of section 67 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago that each session of Parliament shall be held at such place within Trinidad and Tobago and shall commence at such time as the President may by Proclamation appoint:

Now, therefore, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, do hereby appoint the Red House, Port of Spain, as the place at which the First Session of the Eighth Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago shall be held and 10.00 a.m. on Thursday the 17th day of October, 2002, as the time at which the said Session shall commence.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of  
the President of the Republic of  
Trinidad and Tobago, at the Office  
of the President, St. Ann's, this 11th  
day of October, 2002.

*Election of Speaker*

*Thursday, October 17, 2002*

**ELECTION OF SPEAKER**

**Clerk of the House:** Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Orders 3(1) of the House of Representatives, I now invite proposals for the Office of Speaker of the House.

**Mr. Valley:** Madam Clerk of the House, I propose that Barendra Sinanan do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

*Seconded by Mrs. D. Seukeran.*

*There being no other nominations, the Clerk of the House declared Mr. Barendra Sinanan duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Mr. Barendra Sinanan took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 4(1) of the House of Representatives, I invite proposals for the office of Deputy Speaker of the House.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honour and pleasure to nominate my colleague from La Brea, Mr. Hedwige Bereaux.

*Seconded by Mr. F. Khan.*

*There being no other nominations, the Speaker declared Mr. Hedwige Bereaux duly elected Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Mr. Hedwige Bereaux took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I now invite the other Members of the House to take the Oath of Allegiance.

*The following Members took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law:*

Mr. Kenneth Valley

Mr. Ganga Singh

Mr. Patrick Manning

Mr. Basdeo Panday

Dr. Keith Rowley

Mr. Winston Dookeran

*Oath of Allegiance*

*Thursday, October 17, 2002*

Mr. Colm Imbert

Mr. Gerald Yetming

Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar

Mr. Jarrette Narine

Mr. Kelvin Ramnath

Mr. Eric Williams

Mr. Manohar Ramsaran

Mr. Roger Boynes

Dr. Fuad Khan

Miss Penelope Beckles

Dr. Hamza Rafeeq

Mr. Lawrence Achong

Mr. Chandresh Sharma

Mr. John Rahael

Mr. Harry Partap

Mr. Franklin Khan

Miss Gillian Lucky

Mrs. Eulalie James

Dr. Adesh Nanan

Mr. Edward Hart

Mr. Subhas Panday

Mr. Stanford Callender

Mr. Nizam Baksh

Ms. Diane Seukaran

Dr. Roodal Moonilal

Mr. Anthony Roberts

Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds

#### **PRAYERS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, Her Excellency the Acting President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, desires to address all Members of Parliament. This sitting is now suspended.

**10.43 a.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**11.05 a.m.:** Members of the Senate arrived and took their places in the Chamber.

**11.45 a.m.:** *Her Excellency, the Acting President, accompanied by the Vice-President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, arrived in the Chamber.*

[INVOCATIONS]

#### **ACTING PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

*Her Excellency, the Acting President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Linda Baboolal, addressed both Houses of Parliament as follows:*

*Acting President's Address*  
[DR. L. BABOOLAL]

*Thursday, October 17, 2002*

*Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice-President of the Senate, Members of Parliament, religious leaders, distinguished guests, I thank God for bringing us here today after peaceful elections and ask Him for guidance in the deliberations of this Parliament so that we may do our duty to God and to country.*

*I extend congratulations to all elected and appointed Members of Parliament and wish you well in your endeavour. As we celebrate 40 years of Independence, we as a nation face several challenges, many of which are similar to those experienced in other parts of the world and others peculiar to our own circumstances. Our maturity as a nation will be tested by how we deal with these situations in an ever-changing global environment. What is obvious, however, is that there is no one group of persons or any one individual who can find the solutions. All citizens of Trinidad and Tobago working together must join in the effort to achieve this end. The task starts here with you, the leaders of the nation.*

*The Parliament, which is meeting after a long recess, must address the people's business since this is the central purpose of your presence here. The road may be long and tedious, but that must not diminish the effort of every single Member of this Parliament to achieve the passing of legislation necessary for the well-being of every sector of our society. The House of Representatives must set the pace. A Senate can only be effective if the House of Representatives accomplishes the task. Let us keep the debate at a high standard.*

*In the wider community we are all disturbed about certain problems in the nation. We point fingers and lay blame on various people, but that is the easy part. However, I am convinced, and I have been for a long time, that a major element of the solution to some of these problems is the preventive measures that may be employed in our families and in our schools. Therefore it is important that the necessary support structures be put in place to buttress our people-oriented programmes.*

*I am concerned at the disregard for civilized behaviour; lack of respect for elders and leaders in every sphere; the absence of kindness; the erosion of moral values in our daily lives, public and private. Truth and integrity have become victims. And what has become of good manners and courtesy? It is therefore up to every parent, every teacher, every community, the media and every leader, to reinforce these values in our children's lives, to persevere in teaching them the difference between good and bad, right and wrong and to emphasize through our own good example what is expected of a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago.*

*Hon. Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a role to play in instilling and maintaining the principles that nurture our higher self. Leadership cannot escape*

*Acting President's Address*

*Thursday, October 17, 2002*

*the responsibility of setting and upholding the highest standard of behaviour by which this country should be guided. Dignity, self-esteem and respect for others must be our watch words as we collectively continue to mobilize our country in every aspect to take its place alongside leading nations of the world.*

*You in this honourable Parliament must demonstrate the noblest characteristics of true leadership so that our youth, who will succeed you in this august place, will have examples and role models on which to draw and through which to shape their own character. We can all together ensure that our beloved country, Trinidad and Tobago, experiences the reality of discipline, tolerance and production and become a beacon of hope for people everywhere. We have the intellectual capacity and other resources to succeed.*

*Let me conclude with these unforgettable words of wisdom from Rabindranath Tagore, by which I hope every citizen of this great nation will be inspired:*

*“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, where knowledge is free, where the world has not been broken up into fragments of narrow domestic walls, where words come out from the depths of truth, where tireless striving stretches the arms towards perfection, where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert of dead habit, where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action, into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake.”*

*I thank you and God bless you. [Applause]*

**12.05 p.m.:** *Her Excellency, the Acting President, accompanied by the Vice-President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, left the Chamber.*

**12.15 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

#### **PAPERS LAID**

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):**  
Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the following:

#### **Legislative Proposals**

1. Legislative Proposals emanating from the Bipartisan Team to seek solutions to the problems within the Police Service.

Mr. Speaker in laying this document on the Table, may I advise this honourable House that these proposals have arisen out of a bipartisan team that had been set up between the Government and the Opposition in 1999 and that we would be in a position to debate these bills at the earliest opportunity.

*Papers Laid*  
[HON. P. MANNING]

*Thursday, October 17, 2002*

They are being laid in the Parliament at this time for public information and it is our intention to introduce the first reading of these bills and to take them through all their stages immediately after the budget debate is over.

2. Address by Her Excellency the Acting President on the occasion of the opening of the First Session of the Eighth Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry (Hon. K. Valley)*]

*To be printed as a House Paper.*

**BUDGET 2002/2003**  
**(PRESENTATION)**

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):** Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the Standing Orders of this honourable House, I would like to announce that the annual budget for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for fiscal year 2002/2003 will be presented to this Parliament on Monday, October 21, 2002, at 2.00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Industry and Trade (Hon. K. Valley):** Mr. Speaker, there being no other business I beg to move that this House now stand adjourned to Monday, October 21, 2002, at 2.00 p.m.

**Congratulations**

**Hon. P. Manning:** Before you move the adjournment of the House, Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity on behalf of my colleagues, and I feel I can speak for all Members of this honourable House, to congratulate you on your elevation to the exalted office of Speaker. [*Applause*] In the strictest traditions of Westminster, your election would have been considered unusual; however, your independent thought and mind are qualities that eminently qualify you to hold this office and, therefore, we on this side had no difficulty in nominating and electing you. The fact that our colleagues opposite did not nominate anybody in opposition to your own nomination indicates that you enjoy the confidence of all Members of this honourable House. So I would like to congratulate you.

I have every reason to believe that under your own stewardship this Eighth Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago will grow from strength to strength and will be very well conducted. In fact, we hope that in that time we can take some landmark decisions that will redound to the credit and the upliftment of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We wish you all our best as you discharge your responsibilities to the Members of Parliament and the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you. [*Applause*]

*Congratulations*

*Thursday, October 17, 2002*

**Mr. Basdeo Panday** (*Couva North*): Mr. Speaker, we on this side wish to congratulate you on your elevation to this high office of Speaker. Notwithstanding your close and intimate association with the PNM, we trust that your rulings will be fair, without bias and impartial and in accordance with the Constitution, the law and the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker, it is worthy to note that the last time a southerner sat in that Chair, it took a state of emergency to move the Speaker. [*Laughter*] We trust that your interregnum will be less dramatic. [*Laughter*] [*Applause*]

### **Vote of Thanks**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I wish to thank you all for your expressions of goodwill in electing me the Speaker of this honourable House for the duration of the Eighth Parliament. It is my fervent hope that the deliberations of the Members of this House will be conducted with dignity and decorum and in strict accordance with the Standing Orders.

I think the public is eagerly anticipating a return to the pristine days of our Parliament when the debates were of such quality and content that the broadcast of proceedings was an occasion rarely missed. This Parliament is composed of Members that can readily style their contributions to promote the advancement and welfare of our citizens and I look forward to being part of this experience.

We can only achieve these noble objectives if we are civil to one another and whilst there may be those rare occasions when the proceedings may tend to get out of order, I wish to assure Members that the Speaker possesses the resolve, ability and power, through the provisions of the Standing Orders, to quickly restore the House to order.

Finally, I wish to thank my proposer and seconder, and I also thank the honourable Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition, for their kind and generous remarks.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 12.23 p.m.*