

Leave of Absence

Friday, May 09, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 09, 2003

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, leave of absence has been granted to the Member for Diego Martin Central, Hon. Kenneth Valley and the Member for Arima, Hon. Penelope Beckles.

VALIDATION OF THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION (LOCAL GOVERNMENT) BILL

Bill to validate the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission under the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50 for the purpose of Local government election, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of Local Government*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Hon. J. Narine*]

Question put and agreed to.

PAPERS LAID

1. Annual audited financial statements of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited and subsidiary companies for the financial year December 2001. [*The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert)*]

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

2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a special audit of certain areas of internal control at the South-West Regional Health Authority. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]

To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Committee of Privileges
Presentation**

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Mr. Speaker, I wish to lay on the Table the First Report of the Committee of Privileges of the House of Representatives for the 2002—2003 Session.

**Police Service Reform Bills
Presentation**

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Camille Robinson Regis): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to lay on the Table the Second Special Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Bills entitled: the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill, 2002; the Police Service Bill, 2002 and the Police Complaints Authority Bill, 2002.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that the Government would be answering the following questions today: Questions for Oral Answers: Nos. 65, 89, 102, 113 and 115 and Questions for Written Answers: Nos. 58, 67, 75, 88, 93, 98 and 114. I would ask that all other questions be deferred for a period of two weeks.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, I am not clear as to whether or not question No. 80 has been dealt with.

Hon. C. Imbert: Question No. 80 is deferred.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Ganga Singh (Caroni):

**Natural Gas Pipeline
(Government's Policy)**

- 80.** Could the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries inform this House what is the Government's policy with respect to Government's proposal to build a pipeline to convey natural gas to several Caribbean Islands? Could he further state:
- (i) whether a feasibility study is being conducted on this proposal?
 - (ii) if the answer to (i) is in the affirmative, what organization is conducting this feasibility study?
 - (iii) what is the cost thus far of this feasibility study and what is the final projected cost?

Question, by leave, deferred.

**St. Helena Public Library
(Operation of)**

65. Mr. Ganga Singh (*Caroni East*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information:

Could the Minister indicate to this House when will the Public Library at St. Helena Village, Piarco, be operational?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Mr. Speaker, the National Library and Information Systems Authority (NALIS) assumed responsibilities for the St. Helena Library in April, 2001. The National Insurance Property Development Company Limited (NIPDEC) was contracted to upgrade the facility at St. Helena, however this work was poorly completed. NALIS, therefore, hired another contractor to repair the poor tiling and to effect additional repairs.

It should be noted that while the sum of \$300,000 was allocated in 2001, for the leasing of the facility and to effect repairs to the premises, no funding was provided for book stock, computers, furniture, equipment or staff, which are primary resources of any library. The work on upgrading the facility was completed in November 2002. The relocation of the Port-of-Spain Public Library to the National Library Building in February 2003 has enabled NALIS to transfer books, furniture and equipment from the Port-of-Spain Library to the St. Helena Library.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the additional staff required for the operation of the St. Helena Library, the Public Management Consulting Division, on September 10, 2002, recommended the following three positions for the library: A library assistant II, a library assistant I and a branch library assistant. Security and janitorial services would be contracted out.

On April 16, 2003, Cabinet approved the creation of the positions recommended and the public library of St. Helena Village will be opened as soon as these positions are filled.

**Dead Animal Retrieval Team (DART)
(Cost of Launch)**

89. Mr. Ganga Singh asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment:

Could the Minister inform this House of the detailed costing of the launch on December 09, 2002, of the Dead Animal Retrieval Team (DART) by the Solid Waste Management Company Limited?

The Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas): Mr. Speaker, the Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL) has advised that the total cost of the launch of the Dead Animal Retrieval Team (DART) on December 09, 2002 was \$6,890. Details of the cost are as follows: Miscellaneous suppliers, providing decorations and miscellaneous items for the event, \$1,000; Cary Codrington, music provided at that launch, \$600; and Grannies Catering Service Limited, catering services for the DART launch, \$5,290.

Mr. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, supplemental question please. Could the Minister advise how many dead animals have been picked up to date?

Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas: I think it has been a few thousands.

Mr. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, second supplemental question—that is a poor guess. Would the Minister advise if champagne and caviar were served at the launch? [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: I will not permit that supplemental question.

Dr. Khan: Could the Minister indicate what part of Trinidad and Tobago these dead animals were picked up and how many?

Mr. Speaker: Again, hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan, I would not allow that supplemental question; that is perhaps the subject matter of a new question.

Fyzabad Market (Construction of)

102. Mr. Chandresh Sharma (*Fyzabad*) asked the hon. Minister of Local Government:

- (a) Would the Minister indicate the proposed date for the commencement of construction of the Fyzabad market?
- (b) Would the Minister also indicate whether:
 - (i) a contract has been awarded and if so, whether the award was made by the Central Tenders Board?
 - (ii) if the answer to (i) is in the affirmative, could the Minister provide:
 - (a) the name of contractor;
 - (b) the estimated cost of construction of the market?

The Minister of Local Government (Hon. Jarrette Narine): Mr. Speaker, it is instructive to note that for the financial year 2002/2003, the Siparia Regional Corporation did not request funds for construction works on the Fyzabad market. As a consequence, there is no proposed date for the construction of the Fyzabad market, and the Ministry of Local Government awaits a proposal from the Siparia Regional Corporation for this project.

The reply to part (a) of this question negates the reply to part (b) of the question.

Mr. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware that other markets are being repaired, renovated and built without going through regional corporations?

Hon. J. Narine: Mr. Speaker, no, I am not aware.

Social Programmes for Religious Bodies (Moneys Available)

113. Mr. Chandresh Sharma asked the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:

Could the Prime Minister advise this House of the sums of monies available within the social programmes for religious bodies and identify sums available to each religious body?

The Minister of Social Development (Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has no special provision for financial assistance to religious organizations within its social programmes. However, the Government provides ecclesiastical grants, administered by the Office of the Prime Minister, Social Services Delivery. Budgetary provisions in the sum of \$420,750 are available under the ecclesiastical grants to religious bodies as follows: Roman Catholic Church, \$115,724; Anglican Church of Trinidad and Tobago, \$51,576; Divine Life Society, \$2,132.80; the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha, \$43,428; the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, \$12,775.20; the Kabir Panth Association, \$8,515.60; Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, \$4,256.60; the Shiva Dharma Sabha, \$14,050.80; the Muslim League Incorporated, \$17,738; the Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association, \$11,292; the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association, \$11,298; the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, \$26,440; the Methodist Church of Trinidad and Tobago, \$10,148; the South Caribbean Conference Seventh Day Adventist, \$17,608; Independent Baptist, \$4,418; National Evangelical Spiritual Baptist, \$4,418; West Indies Spiritual Sacred Order, \$4,410; Baptist (Orthodox), \$16,940; Moravian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, \$3,589; Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies, \$25,080;

Association of Jehovah Witnesses, \$4,808; Church of God, \$3,225; Ethiopian Orthodox Church, \$896; and Stewards Christian Bretheren Limited, \$488.

Mr. Speaker, in appreciation of the importance of the multi-cultural and multi-religious nature of the society, religious groups are assisted financially with their annual festivals. In this connection, over the 2002/2003 period, financial contributions were made, through the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to religious observances and festivals as follows: Indian Arrival Day, \$67,000; Phagwa, \$131,500; Divali, \$25,000; and Baptist Liberation Day, \$213,000.

Contributions were also made in 2002/2003, under a Community Action for Revival and Empowerment (CARE) Programme of the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs to religious organizations for annual observances as follows: Morang Village Hindu Organization, Divali, \$2,165.36, Vishwanath Hindu Social and Cultural Organization, Divali, \$1,500, Kailash Hindu Mandir, Divali, \$1,500; Hindu Prachar Kendra, Divali; \$2,500; the Orisha Spiritual Community, Annual Rain Festival, \$7,500; Orisha, Annual Shango Festival, \$10,000; and Pleasantville Pentecostal Assembly, Christmas celebrations, \$1,500.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, supplemental question. Could the Minister advise how he arrived at the quantum considering that one body obtained \$115,000 and another body received \$2,000?

Mr. Manning: The number of seats.

Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid: Mr. Speaker, that seems to me to be the subject of a new question, and you could direct that question to the Office of the Prime Minister, Social Services Delivery.

Road Improvement Fund (Revenues)

115. Mr. Chandresh Sharma asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

Would the Minister please state:

- (a) the roads scheduled to be repaired under the Road Improvement Fund in 2003?
- (b) the total revenues collected under the Road Improvement Fund in 2002?
- (c) the revenues anticipated from the Road Improvement Fund for 2003?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Franklin Khan): Mr. Speaker, the road schedule to be repaired under the Road Improvement Fund is listed as a detailed appendix, which would be circulated.

In summary, however, it is broken down into districts—which is the way the Ministry of Works and Transport is organized—as follows: St. George West, estimated expenditure of \$1.6 million; St. George East, \$2.3 million; St. Andrew/St. David, \$1.68 million; Caroni, \$2.34 million; Victoria East, \$3.2 million; Nariva/Mayaro, \$1.45 million; Victoria West, \$2.80 million; St. Patrick, \$1.13 million; and Head Office, which includes cost for plant and equipment, \$4.17 million thus giving a subtotal of \$20.75 million; and the bridges programme will have an expenditure of \$3 million; giving a grand total of \$23.75 million.

The total revenues collected under the Road Improvement Fund (RIF) for 2002 is \$63,980,095.46.

The budgeted anticipated revenue from the Road Improvement Fund (RIF) for 2003 is \$50 million.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the revenues collected are distributed as follows: 47.5 per cent goes to the Ministry of Works and Transport; 47.5 per cent goes to the Ministry of Local Government; and 5.0 per cent to the Tobago House of Assembly.

Mr. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, Members on this side would be denied the opportunity to ask supplemental questions, if the Minister's intention is to circulate the answer after he gives the answer halfway. [*Interruption*] Could the Minister indicate why there was a decrease in 2002 from \$63 million to an anticipated \$50 million, which is a decline of almost 20 per cent?

Hon. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, through you, this is the budgeted anticipated revenue for 2003 as per the draft estimates. It is very likely that by the end of 2003, the actual figure would approximate to \$60 million, which would probably then give us a basis for a more accurate forecast for 2004, which seems to be more in the \$60 million range.

Mr. Sharma: What is your quarterly revenue?

Mr. Rahael: Divide it by four.

Appendix lodged in Parliament Library.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following question was asked by Mr. Nizam Baksh (Naparima):

**Contract Workers
(Termination of Service)**

- 58.** (a) Could the hon. Minister of Housing provide this House with a detailed list of the names of all contract workers under his Ministry and its Statutory Agencies whose services were terminated prematurely between January 2001 to date and indicate by whom they were replaced?
- (b) Could the Minister provide a list of the names of persons whose contract ended during the said period, indicating by whom were they replaced and what criteria were used in the recruitment process?
- (c) Would the Minister inform this House of all the new positions that were created from January 2001 to date in his Ministry and its Statutory Agencies, and the names of persons who were appointed and their qualifications?

Answer lodged in Parliament Library.

The following question was asked by Mr. Ganga Singh (Caroni East)

**WASA Employees
(Details of)**

- 67.** Could the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment inform this House of the following:
- i. The names, addresses, salaries, benefits and positions of all the persons employed by WASA, whether contractually or on a permanent or temporary basis from December 24, 2001 to January 31, 2003?
- ii. The names, addresses and salaries of all trainees employed by WASA from December 24, 2001 to January 31, 2003?

Answer lodged in Parliament Library.

The following questions were asked by Mr. Chandresh Sharma (Fyzabad):

**CEPEP Vehicles
(Providers)**

- 75.** Could the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment also provide a list of the names of the providers of all vehicles rented and/or bought by CEPEP in 2002, detailing the cost of each?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**WASA Booster Pumps
(Location)**

- 88.** Would the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment state the locations where Booster Pumps were installed by the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) in 2002 and advise whether they were installed by contractors?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**Phagwa and Hoosay Groups
(Recipients of Funds)**

- 98.** (a) Would the hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism list the names of all the individuals and groups who were recipients of funds for the hosting of Phagwa 2003, including addresses and amounts of monies granted?
- (b) Would the Minister list the names of all the individuals and groups who were recipients of funds for the hosting of Hoosay 2003, including addresses and amounts of monies granted?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**Maintenance Training and Security
(Contracts)**

- 114.** Would the hon. Minister of Works and Transport please submit the following information:
- (a) The total number of contracts issued by MTS from January 2002 to March 2003?
- (b) List of recipients of contracts and the dollar value of each?
- (c) Dates on and medium in which contracts were advertised?
- (d) Lists of contractors who submitted bids and the dollar value of each bid?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

The following question was asked by Dr. Adesh Nanan (Tabaquite):

**Certificates of Environmental Clearance
(Approval of)**

- 93.** Would the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment provide a list of the Certificates of Environmental Clearance approved for the years 2002 and 2003 and also identify those pending for the said years?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that Motions Nos. 1 and 2 under “Government Business” would be taken after “Bills Second Reading”.

Agreed to.

VALIDATION OF THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION (LOCAL GOVERNMENT) BILL

The Minister of Local Government (Hon. Jarrette Narine): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to validate the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50 for the purpose of Local government election, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, section 4(2)(b) of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act Chap. 25:50 requires that the Elections and Boundaries Commission submit a report to the Minister of Local Government, not less than two years, and not more than three years from the date of submission of its last report.

The last report was submitted by the Commission on the 8th day of July, 2002 and the Third Report was submitted on the 2nd day of November, 1998. Mr. Speaker, this means that the Fourth Report is outside of the period required by law. With this Bill, the Government seeks to ensure that despite the late submission by the Commission, the report is still valid. This validation is done by deeming, regarding or considering the Reports to have been submitted to the Minister within the time required by law. It is therefore necessary and expedient that the late submission of the Fourth Report of the Commission be validated for the purpose of local government election.

Section 4(1) of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, requires the Elections and Boundaries Commission to define and review the boundaries of electoral districts into which an electoral area is, or is to be divided and shall submit to the Minister, reports either by showing the constituencies into which it recommends that the electoral area should be divided, in order to give effect to the rule set out in the set schedule, or stating that in the opinion of the Commission, no alteration is required to the existing number of boundaries of electoral districts, in order to give effect to the said rules.

The Commission uses several rules to determine the number of electoral districts, their sizes and boundaries. There are a number of electors in each

electoral district. A regional electoral district shall, insofar as is practicable, be the number obtained by the application of rule 2, but the Commission in consideration of rule 3, may vary such a number, provided that in no case shall the number of electors in any one electoral district of an electoral area exceed or be less than the number of electors in any other electoral district of the electoral area by more than 25 per cent.

The number of electoral districts in the regional electoral area in Trinidad shall be determined as follows: There shall be in every electoral area, a basic number of four electoral districts. To this basic number there shall be added the number obtained by dividing the electorate of the area by 15,000; but where in any electoral area, the electorate is less than 15,000, there shall be five electoral districts; more than 15,000 by any residual area numbers left after dividing the total electorate by 15,000, shall be treated as if that number were 15,000, and one electoral district shall be added in respect of that residual number. In the division of the electoral districts, in regional electoral areas natural boundaries such as major highways and rivers shall be used wherever possible.

Mr. Speaker, in simple language, the first rule ensures that each electoral area has about the same number of electors, but in any event, any electoral area should not have more than 25 per cent more than any electoral area. Rule 2 stipulates that each electoral district shall have at least four electoral areas, and any other areas are to be found by dividing the remaining population by 15,000, but if there are less than 15,000—the remainder in the electoral district—there shall be five electoral areas. Further, rule 3 requires that natural boundaries, such as major highways, be used wherever possible.

In respect of the municipal corporations, the following rule is relevant. The number of electors in an electoral district of a municipal electoral area shall be the number obtained by dividing the number of electors in that electoral area by the number of electoral districts, shown opposite the name of that electoral area in the Third Schedule of the First Act, but the Commission in consideration of topographical factors, may vary such number provided that in no case shall the number of electors, in any one electoral district of an electoral area exceed, or be less than the number of electors in any other electoral district of the electoral area, by more than 25 per cent. Again, in simple language, in respect of municipal corporations, rule 4 ensures that each electoral district has about the same number of electors but, in any event, any electoral area should not have more than 25 per cent more than any electoral area.

In accordance with subsection 4(1)(a) and the application of rules 1, 2, and 3, as I said before, the Commission has recommended changes in the boundaries of

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[HON. J. NARINE]

Friday, May 09, 2003

50 electoral areas; in nine electoral districts; and the creation of two electoral areas; one in Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation and the other in Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation. It simply means that there are two additional electoral districts; one in Tunapuna and one in Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, which will now move the numbers from 124 seats to 126 seats.

It is noteworthy that a similar situation occurred in 1999, when the Commission's Report was submitted late, and the previous administration introduced to the Parliament, a Bill to validate the Third Report of the Election and Boundaries Commission under the Municipal Corporations Act. Mr. Speaker, that was Act No. 4 of 1999, and the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50 for the purpose of local government election.

The Commission has stated that the late submission of its 2002 report was due to the consideration of the updated relevant topographical data obtained from the May—November 2001, house to house survey.

Mr. Speaker, being prudent and responsible, the Government understands and appreciates the reason advanced by the Commission for the late submission of the Fourth Report. I, therefore, ask Members to support this legislation.

Finally, I wish to remind hon. Members of this House that the chief aim of this Bill is to validate the late submission of the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission under the Municipal Corporations Act 1990, and the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, which was deemed to have been submitted to the Minister in accordance with section 4(2)(b) of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Mr. Ganga Singh (Caroni East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate on a Bill to validate the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission under the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50 for the purpose of the local government election.

Mr. Speaker, I would read for purposes of acknowledgement the Explanatory Note which says:

“This Bill seeks to validate the late submission of the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission under the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50 for the purpose of Local government election by deeming the said Report to have been submitted to the

Minister in accordance with section 4(2)(b) of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act.”

Mr. Speaker, further explanation for the submission of this report, and the validation that is necessary for us to participate today, is found in the preamble to the Bill and it says:

“WHEREAS it is provided by subsection (1) of section 4 of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act that the Elections and Boundaries Commission (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Commission’) shall define and review the boundaries of the electoral districts into which an electoral area is, or is to be, divided and shall submit to the Minister reports thereon:

“And whereas it is provided by subsection (2) of the said section 4 that reports under subsection (1) shall be submitted by the Commission, *inter alia*, not less than two nor more than three years from the date of the submission of its last report:”

As the hon. Minister indicated, this report is some time beyond that period. I continue to quote:

“And whereas the Third Report of the Commission was submitted on the 2nd November, 1998:

And whereas the Fourth Report of the Commission under the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50 for the purpose of local government election was submitted to the Minister on the 8th day of July, 2002 that is to say, more than three years from the date of the submission of the Commission’s last report:

And whereas it is expedient that the submission out of time of the said Fourth Report of the Commission be validated for the purposes of the forthcoming local government election:”

This is the end of the quote in terms of the preamble.

Mr. Speaker, what is before us, therefore, is for us to validate this report and what is before us, really, is a validation statute. If one were to use the *Oxford Dictionary* to define “validate”, it is to make valid, to rectify and to confirm. So, therefore, we are in the process here this afternoon to rectify and to give confirmation on what was submitted to the hon. Minister of Local Government on July 08, 2002, so what is before us is a validation statute. In the *Black’s Law Dictionary Sixth Edition* 1990 it says a validating statute, a statute purpose of which is to cure past errors and omissions and thus make valid what was invalid but it grants no indulgence for the correction of future errors.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Mr. Speaker, so we have to make valid what was invalid by the late submission. However, the report having been submitted in July 2002, one would have thought that the hon. Minister would have given this honourable House, and the country at large, an explanation as to why in 2003, he is bringing this Validation Bill, what was placed before him in 2002. It seems to me that the hon. Minister, in his presentation, took a blind approach to the historical realities that took place during that period of July 2002, and in that sense, we now have to validate the omission of the hon. Minister.

We have done the validation with respect to past reports of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, both for the general election and local government election. For example, I was told that the Elections and Boundaries Local Government Reports were submitted in 1994 for the 1995 election and in 1998, for the 1999 election. However, this Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission was submitted in July 2002, but because of the extraordinary circumstances that existed in this country during that period, it could not be brought before the Parliament, and one would have thought that the hon. Minister would have acknowledged those extraordinary circumstances in this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, what were those extraordinary circumstances? When one looks at the *Hansard* for the purposes of a review of the history of the presentation of reports of this nature, we must give an explanation for the record sake, as to why the Minister did not present that report within the period. It is very clear, and that is why I found that the hon. Minister, in his presentation, did not make recognizance of that reality of the fact that, because of the 18/18 constitutional gridlock; and because of that 18/18 constitutional stalemate in the country, the Parliament during the period 2002 was not sitting, because of the non-election of a Speaker and, therefore, the constitutional gridlock that emerged, parliamentarians did not elect a Speaker.

The non-election of a Speaker meant that there was no sitting of Parliament and, therefore, the matter could not be brought before this honourable House. Mr. Speaker, that is, in a sense, history that makes the distinction between the previous reports of the Elections and Boundaries Commission on the local government arena and which makes that significant differentiation between the 1994 report and the 1998 report, but the Minister omitted to mention that.

Mr. Speaker, the life of the various councils was only recently extended to July 12, 2003, and one would have thought that the hon. Minister, in his presentation, would have pointed that out. What was required of his Ministry and his Government was to extend the life of the councils, prior to bringing this Validation Bill before this Parliament, and the Government was tardy in bringing that extension of the life of the various councils. Mr. Speaker, be that as it may,

the life of the councils extends to July 12, 2003, and, therefore, it means that there could be no further extension in the scheme of things for the local government bodies. So having regard to the nature of the law governing the holding of elections—and this Bill speaks about the holding of local government election with the July 12th deadline—it is clear to us, on this side, that the date for the local government election in 2003 is July 07, 2003. [*Desk thumping*] That is very clear to us.

Having regard to that announcement, it brings us then, therefore, to the rationale for this Bill. In this Bill, it states that the Fourth Report must be validated for purposes of the forthcoming local government election. So, therefore, recognizing that local government election is July 07—or we are working with that kind of date—this Bill is an integral part of the forthcoming local government election. In other words, it is a condition precedent for the holding of the local government election.

In a sense, this Bill heralds, it trumpets and it issues a clarion call to all political parties, persons and the citizenry at large, to get ready to go to the polls for local government election. That is what this Bill does. It tells us to get ready; it issues a clarion call; and it trumpets that there is a local government election in the near future.

The Minister once more omitted to mention and to advise this House and the citizenry at large, that in the aftermath of the validation of this Bill, the next step would be—in accordance with section 4(3) of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50—that a draft order would be laid for debate, and the contents of the Fourth Report could be debated at length. However, inconsistent with what the hon. Minister said, he had already gone into the contents of the Fourth Report, so that therefore, we could in a sense, “take two bites of the cherry” with respect to the contents of the Fourth Report; we could debate it today, and we could debate it subsequently, when the draft order is presented to this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, it has been the convention of the House that we debate the contents of the report at length, but we recognize the constitutional independence of the Elections and Boundaries Commission and, generally, it has been the convention from my reading, and my research in this matter that there has been no interference with the contents of the report of the constitutionally independent Elections and Boundaries Commission. I see the hon. Prime Minister nodding his head, and being the longest serving Member of this honourable House, he acknowledges that is the truth.

This Validation Bill, heralding the holding of local government election is a significant part of the electoral process, because as the hon. Minister indicated, it defines the boundaries; it establishes the number of constituents in each electoral district; it creates the parameters for each electoral district; and determines, by

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

extension, the number of electoral districts and the number of candidates that each political party could put up across the spectrum of Trinidad. It is, therefore, part of what was called by one author—this part of the electoral process—“The bedrock of democracy”, and I would read:

“The Electoral process is the bedrock of any Parliamentary Democracy. The will of the people is paramount and it is through General Elections that the people’s will is expressed and determined. The electoral process starts long before voting day with continuous voter registration and the maintenance of a List of Electors. ‘The electoral list is thus a crucial feature in the organization of free and fair elections...such a system must be designed to enable all qualified citizens to be included, to prevent electoral abuse and fraud...; and be widely acceptable as an authoritative and legitimate means of cataloguing the electoral population and settling disputes. It is vital therefore, to our Democracy that systems and procedures be put in place to ensure the free and fair statement of the will of the people on Election Day. Anything which hinders or prevents a voter from casting his vote is unacceptable and must be viewed with serious concern.”

Mr. Speaker, this is an excerpt from the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the functioning of the Elections and Boundaries Commission of Trinidad and Tobago entitled: *The Electoral Process—the bedrock of democracy*.

So it is clear that the institution upholding our democracy has authored this report. The institution substantiating the bedrock of the infrastructure of democracy, the Elections and Boundaries Commission, has authored this report. That institution has the responsibility of holding free and fair local government election and, in fact, general elections, and also Tobago House of Assembly elections. The Elections and Boundaries Commission is a constitutional entrenched, independent, politically neutral body, so it is this constitutionally entrenched; this politically neutral and independent body, whose report we are validating here today, and by virtue of the Minister’s engagement, whose contents, to some extent, we are also debating. So it is this report that we are validating.

Mr. Speaker, one would have thought that the Minister, being a long serving member of the ruling party today; that political party to which the hon. Minister belongs has engaged in vitriolic attacks on the independence, on the neutrality of the operations of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, but the hon. Minister in his presentation—

Mr. Imbert: I will do it again.

Mr. G. Singh: The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central said that he will do it again. In the Member’s presentation before the Deyalsingh Commission of

Enquiry, when he spoke about people like Vinool Sookram, being dead; about Hugh Lucy and Simon migrating, and not living in the area; and about Gail Debbie John Francis who also migrated. Mr. Speaker, when one reads the transcripts of the contribution of the hon. Member for Diego Martin East, and when he says that he would do it again, there are certain words that come to mind like pathological, congenital and pathetic. These are the words that come to my mind when the Member says that he will do it all again. I want to keep this debate at a certain level, because we are very honoured to have certain members of the CPA within our folia.

There was a situation where the Government engaged in the most vitriolic attacks on the Elections and Boundaries Commission, and the hon. Minister comes here today and brings this report before this House which was presented to him in July, 2002 at the very epitome of the attack on the independence of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, and he did not say anything as if that did not exist in July 2002. At that time, my good friend, the acting Leader of Government Business, was giving evidence before the Commission of Enquiry, but the hon. Minister did not say anything of the commission of enquiry.

The Minister comes here with a blindsided approach that the commission of enquiry did not exist and the attacks on the commissioners of the Elections and Boundaries Commission did not take place. So the Member comes here with the unmitigated gall and says to us, "validate this". This is the work of the commissioners. I am sure that the Minister recognized the commissioners' signatures when they sent this report to him. Mr. Speaker, I am reading from the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries commission submitted to the hon. Minister on July 08, 2002 and it is signed by Oswald Wilson, chairman; Lance Murray, member; Raoul John, member; and Mark Ramkerrysingh, member. These were the very persons upon whom the hon. Member and his party launched this vitriolic and vindictive attack, these very commissioners, but the Member has the unmitigated gall to come here and say validate the report of these authors and says nothing about the commission of enquiry. I want to know what has changed with respect to the Elections and Boundaries Commission. What has changed! Mr. Speaker, this is the first local government election after the Commission of Enquiry into the functioning of the Elections and Boundaries Commission but, you see, everything is nice now.

The hon. Minister, in seeking to bring this Validation Bill before us, says nothing about the 23 recommendations of the Deyalsingh Commission of Enquiry into the functioning of the Elections and Boundaries Commission. I want to find out from the hon. Minister, whether or not these recommendations impacted upon the holding of the local government election? Mr. Speaker, this report which was presented for us to validate here this afternoon was altered and completed before

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

the commission of enquiry completed its recommendations. So one would have thought that a competent Minister would have then said, “Okay, how are these recommendations going to impact upon the functioning of the local government election, whether or not it impacted?” But the Minister, once more, seeks to turn a blind eye towards the real history, and seeks to forget that commission of enquiry took place, but having regard to their performance and their allegations, when one reads the transcript of the report, one could understand why.

It is for purposes of the record—because in the Elections and Boundaries Commission continued path of being politically neutral and being constitutionally independent, it was forced to go into the public arena in order to protect the integrity of its organization against the onslaught that took place by Members on that side and their political party.

I read from an excerpt of the *Express* newspaper dated Monday February 12, 2001 which is a press advertisement issued by the Elections and Boundaries Commission and I quote: “It is time to stop the mischief, it is time for the truth”. That was a response to a news item which appeared in the *Sunday Express* on February 04, 2001,” and one would see about five indications where the EBC dismissed the allegations and said, “It is time to stop the mischief, it is time for the truth.”

In an article in the *Sunday Express* newspaper, dated February 04, 2001 entitled: “Voting ghosts”, the claim was made that a dead man, Mr. Hosein Mohammed Haniff; a disabled man, Mr. Sonny Lopez; and three persons who have migrated, Esmee Wallace, Merle Keizer and Imteaz Ali and several other persons, who never left their homes, voted in the San Juan/Barataria constituency in the 2000 elections. This information was given by Jameel Mustapha, campaign manager of the defeated PNM candidate, Nafeesa Mohammed, who supplied the *Sunday Express* with the list of names of people who voted as tallied by the PNM’s polling agents. Mr. Mustapha also said that the inaccuracies were endless.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Elections and Boundaries Commission whose constitutional mandate is to hold free and fair elections in this country, and it said, “It is time to stop the mischief and let us tell the truth.” I quote from the article which said:

“The facts are that Mr. Hosein Mohammed-Haniff, a deceased person and Mr. Sonny Lopez, a disabled man, did not vote on polling day on December 11, 2000. Of the three persons who were said to have migrated, Esmee Wallace, Merle Keizer did not vote and Imteaz Ali, who did vote, moved four houses away from his registered address, and is currently in Trinidad at that address.”

So Jameel Mustapha lied! *[Interruption]* There is no other way I can put it. He told an untruth. I am guided, Mr. Speaker. He went before the commission of enquiry and said this, and you know, Mr. Speaker, Jameel Mustapha was rewarded with a hefty CEPEP contract. So it pays to tell untruth under the PNM.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, another article in the *Sunday Express* of February 04, 2001 headlined: “EBC computers hacked”; a lot of misinformation was pervaded under the guise of factual reporting, and this is what the Elections and Boundaries Commission had to say:

“In the first instance the electoral list is an outgrowth of the unit register or binder which contains the registration records of all the electors. Changes to the electoral lists have to come from the registration officer authorizing the said changes, and when those changes are made they are double-checked at the office to ensure what appears on the list is what is contained in the unit register. The list reflects totally what is contained in the unit register.

The Elections and Boundaries Commission computers cannot be hacked into, as it is an offline system that stands alone and has stood alone ever since its introduction in 1985. Simply put, this system cannot be hacked into.”

Another allegation to mischief and it was dealt with, the truth. Mr. Speaker, I do not think time permits me to read this whole article but certainly for purposes of the record I want to read the end, and it says:

“The Commission wishes to re-emphasize that the electoral system, with its accompanying registration/election rules, coupled with the procedure in place, has been enough to ensure free and fair elections. Fabricated stories of electoral fraud serve only to tarnish the integrity of the Commission.”

You know the hon. Member for Diego Martin East continues; he does not understand his role as acting Leader of Government Business. He ought to establish the pattern of behaviour so that other hon. Members would follow. So by him saying that the Elections and Boundaries Commission—talk is cheap—he is, in fact, indicating that he does not believe what was said. Of course, I have already indicated what is his position on those matters. Mr. Speaker, it is, therefore, clear that there was a calculated and deliberate attempt to interfere and subvert the constitutional independence of the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

When you read the content of the Deyalsingh Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the functioning of the Elections and Boundaries Commission of

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Trinidad and Tobago, you are amazed at the recommendations made by the Deyalsingh commissioners, and it is no small wonder that having made recommendations that had no relation to the facts before it, that this matter is now being litigated. I would just read into the record that the Elections and Boundaries Commission saw it fit—having regard to the kind of frolic that the Deyalsingh Commission of Enquiry went into—to bring an action for judicial review against the findings of the commission.

Mr. Speaker, I would merely read into the record—the matter is sub judice before the court, but it is within the public domain for us to read into the record the relief sought by the Elections and Boundaries Commission in its quest to maintain its political neutrality, its independence and impartial approach to the conduct of free and fair elections. Mr. Speaker, as I look down to my extreme left, I see my good friend, the Member for Point Fortin. Mr. Speaker, you know the hon. Member participated in this process too—I am glad that I am able to wake him up.

In the EBC Report of November 13, 2001, under the rubric, “EBC takes action on lost registration records”, I quote from their press release:

“The Commission noted a report on the 7.00 o’clock news tonight, November 13, in which Mr. Larry Achong claimed that a UNC activist provided him with two registration record cards. He further claimed that the activist indicated that he obtained the cards at a meeting held by UNC activist, with certain employees of the EBC, at which meeting the activist claimed that he saw a batch of other such cards. Mr. Achong also claimed that he could not give the name of the activist as he feared for his life.

On seeing the Report the Chairman reported to the Commissioner of Police and requested his assistance in investigating the matter. The Chairman also requested that the police obtain the cards, which should not be out of the possession of the EBC or its employees or agents. Subsequently, the Commission, which had immediately launched its own investigation, was informed by the registration officer for the registration area of San Juan, that he was approached by Mr. Noel Garcia of the PNM earlier that evening, who handed him photocopies of the cards, stating that a person found the two registration record cards for the St. Joseph constituency in a garden in Aranguez, and had called the PNM office for the constituency and handed over the cards to that office. When the registration officer requested the originals, Mr. Garcia indicated that he could not supply them, as he was ‘operating under instructions’, and that the originals were in the possession of the PNM.

Our internal investigations have revealed that the cards were assigned to a temporary field officer for verification. The Commission views the loss of these two cards with the greatest concern and is continuing to investigate their loss.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the conspiracy widens, but I was at the point where I was indicating to this honourable House that the commissioners, in their attempt to maintain their neutrality, their constitutional independence, by virtue of the fact that they are entrenched within the Constitution, and in order to impartially conduct free and fair elections, thought it necessary to go to the courts to establish the independence and to find fault with the findings.

Mr. Speaker, in the matter of No. 2081 of 2002, in the High Court of Justice, Public Law Judicial Review, in the matter of the Judicial Review Act, No. 60 of 2000, and in the matter of an application by Oswald Wilson, Chairman of the EBC; Lance Murray, Commissioner of the EBC; Raoul John and Mark Ramkerrysingh, suing as Chairman and Members of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, for leave to apply for judicial review, and in the matter, the decision and/or findings, and/or recommendation of the Commission of Enquiry into the function of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, comprising Justice Lennox Deyalsingh, Dr. Noel Kallicharan, Mrs. Myrtle Pullasio, Prof. Karl Theodore, and Mr. Kyron Arthur contained in the report of the commission of enquiry, dated May 31, 2002, which was presented to His Excellency, the President of the Republic, on Monday June 03, 2002, and accepted by the Cabinet on Thursday June 06, 2002. Mr. Speaker, this is the relief that the EBC's Commission sought and I quote:

(a) A declaration that the Commission of Enquiry into the functioning of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Deyalsingh Commission—except Commissioner Dr. Noel Kallicharan in certain instances—acted illegally, or in breach of the Constitution, and/or in a manner unauthorized, and/or contrary to law, and/or in excess of jurisdiction, and/or ultra vires, and/or irrationally, and/or unreasonably, and/or irregularly, and/or by improperly exercising discretion, and/or in the abuse of power, and/or by taking into account irrelevant considerations, and/or no probative evidence on which the said decisions, and/or findings, and/or recommendations could reasonably be made, and/or by exercising power in a manner that is so unreasonable, that no reasonable tribunal could have so exercised the power, and/or without observing the principles of natural justice, and/or by denying the applicants and the Chief Elections Officer, their legitimate expectation, thereby causing a substantial wrong or miscarriage of justice, and/or null void.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

There are other areas of relief sought, Mr. Speaker. You see, in the face of this unrelenting bombardment the matter is before the court, and I would not say more on that matter. It tells you, for purposes of political gain and expediency, that those on that side are willing to subvert and interfere with hallowed institutions.

The attack on the EBC did not stop there. There was an unconstitutional attempt to remove one of the Commissioners. I would not bring the Office of the President into the debate in this honourable House, but there was an unconstitutional attempt to remove one of the Commissioners, and all Members are quite aware of that. To further add insult to injury in the attempt to interfere with the independence and neutrality of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, this Cabinet, under the hon. Member for San Fernando East, took a decision to implement one of the recommendations of the Deyalsingh Commission, notwithstanding that the matter was before the court.

Mr. Speaker, I would read into the record, a letter written by the Chairman of the EBC to the hon. Attorney General. It is important that we read this letter because it marks a watershed in the development of independent institutions in this country in the face of a rampaging executive. The letter of Mr. Oswald Wilson is an object lesson for all of us who have the responsibility of asserting the independence of institutions. I quote:

“Elections and Boundaries Commission
Friday 13th September, 2002.
Senator the Honourable Glenda Morean,
Attorney General,
Cabildo Chambers,
No. 23-27 St. Vincent Street,
Port of Spain,
Dear Madam,

Re: Proposed Employment of a Strategic Management Adviser in the
Elections and Boundaries Commission

As indicated to you in my letter of 26th August, 2002, the Elections and Boundaries Commission has taken legal advice on the contents of your letter dated 15th, August 2002.

I wish to inform you that the legal advice we received does not conform with or support your statements as to the law as it applies to the manner in

which the Commission ought to function, and in particular its role *vis a vis* the Government with respect to the provision of staff for the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

You will recall that the matter which gave rise to our letter to the Prime Minister dated 8th July, 2002 was a communication from the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister to the Chief Election Officer informing him of a Cabinet decision to employ on contract a Strategic Management Adviser in the Elections and Boundaries Commission. The said decision was arrived at without consultation with or reference to the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

While the Commission welcomes the assistance of and co-operation of the Government in ensuring that it is provided with staff adequate for the efficient discharge of its functions, the Commission is extremely uncomfortable with having a contract officer being imposed upon it at the level proposed and with the functions identified. Our legal advisers have confirmed what we said in our letter of 8th July, 2002, that such a person does not have the security of tenure and the immunities of a public officer and the protection of the Public Service Commission.

It is noted that the duties and responsibilities contained in the Job Description attached to the Cabinet Note which gave rise to the Cabinet Minute under consideration are not consistent with the limited description contained in your letter nor indeed with the Constitution. In particular, it is noted that the Strategic Management Adviser will *inter alia* participate in policy formulation that guides and directs the operations of the Commission and direct and co-ordinate the activities of staff.

The Elections and Boundaries Commission does not accept that Section 75 of the Constitution gives to the Cabinet the responsibility to direct and control its functions or to direct and co-ordinate the activities of its staff, nor in the light of the special status conferred upon it by law should the Elections and Boundaries Commission be regarded as a department of Government. Matters of policy guiding the Elections and Boundaries Commission in the exercise of its functions are for the Commission to the exclusion of any other person or authority.

Moreover, I am sure that you appreciate that having regard to the very sensitive nature of the functions conferred on the Elections and Boundaries Commission by the Constitution it is particularly important that it remains and be seen to be politically neutral and independent.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

In that context and having regard to the provisions of the Constitution, the unsolicited provision by the Government of the day of a Strategic Management Adviser to the Elections and Boundaries Commission to be appointed on contract by the Government and who may be hired and fired by the Government is in our view a threat to that neutrality and independence.

With regard to Section 71(9) of the Constitution, the Elections and Boundaries Commission is in the best position to determine what staff is adequate for the efficient discharge of its functions and has always been given the responsibility for and has always discharged the function of identifying staff requirements for the organization.

In the light of the importance of the constitutional issues raised in your letter, the Commission does not propose to diminish the importance of these issues by responding here to the several attacks you have made in your letter upon the performance and perceived attitude of the Commission and its Commissioners, unwarranted though we feel they are.

As you know, the date for the next general election has been announced and the Commission and its staff regard this as the single most important priority at this time on which we must direct our focus and energies. We wish to remind you of the Commission's several requests for additional staff which still remain unsatisfied. Provision of adequate staff will go a long way in assisting the Commission in performing its constitutional functions.

Please be assured that the Elections and Boundaries Commission takes its responsibilities very seriously and have every intention of carrying them out in accordance with the law by which we have always been and will continue to be guided.

With assurance of our highest regards we remain,

Yours faithfully,

Chairman

Elections and Boundaries Commission..."

Mr. Speaker, this is exemplary conduct in the face of that kind of unwarranted, vindictive and vitriolic attacks. This is exemplary conduct by asserting their right to be neutral and impartial and by rejecting the Strategic Management Adviser. They demonstrated, what they call in Venezuela, "cojones de acero". If one were to translate, it means "testicular fortitude", "balls of steel." This is what the EBC demonstrated, by asserting its independence—but it is in the

face. They told the Attorney General, we will not engage you in dealing with your attacks; we will deal with the major constitutional issues. That is the kind of approach that they take on that side, but the hon. Minister says nothing, as to whether or not adequate staff has been provided to the EBC, because the Commission is complaining that before the General Election of 2002, what was required from them was that they provide the necessary staff for them, but they were not doing that. He says nothing. Instead, what you have, you want to engage in subverting the institution in the face of righteous action and righteous conduct on the part of the Members of the EBC.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Caroni East has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. G. Singh: Mr. Speaker, in the face of that kind of approach taken by the EBC, maintaining its political neutrality, independence and impartiality, there is that kind of subversion and attempt to interfere with the functioning of that organization. Mr. Speaker, the Minister who is in charge of local government, and who has, under his portfolio for the time being, the URP —because I understand that a reshuffle is forthcoming, and, therefore, he may be emasculated, together with the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment. One would have thought that the hon. Minister, in seeking to create the conditions for the holding of free and fair elections, which this Bill speaks about, would have spoken about the role to ensure that the elections are free and fair and free from fear. Because we are in a very fortunate position, where, in the aftermath of general elections in 2000, 2001 and 2002, we can have a sense of what took place in that compact, crystallized period, and what would be the emerging trend in the coming of the local government election.

It is clear to us that the election must be free from fear and be free and fair. Therefore, the intimidatory element, which is used through the URP conduit and now the CEPEP conduit, we expect the hon. Minister to ensure that that is not utilized under his jurisdiction. You see, the EBC, in its media release of October 05, 2002—a mere two days before the last general election said, very briefly, and I quote:

“On the weekend immediately before the 2002 General Election, the EBC is concerned over the number of negative reports appearing in the media. The

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

pattern of these reports and allegations of incidents seem to suggest an orchestrated plan to destroy public confidence in the Elections and Boundaries Commission, the ability to conduct the elections in a fair and equitable manner. The Commission wishes to clear the air and assure electors that all measures are in place for polling day.

Outside of the EBC's purview, there are also reports of intimidatory acts allegedly levelled at supporters of candidates and the Commission is aware that some of these are being investigated by the police.

So intimidation has come into the mainstream of the political process, the organization which has the responsibility for the conduct of free and fair election is now expressing it so clearly—that reports of intimidation—and it is utilizing certain clear elements in the society. Terror tactics! The utilization of certain criminal elements.

Mr. Speaker, I find no solace in the fact that the police officers are now saying that they have earmarked 25 persons—and prior to the death of Mark Guerra, I understand that it was 26—upon whom they are targeting. I find no solace in that. You see, it is because of the link between the political directorate and the criminal element there is that measure of intimidation. Now, Mr. Speaker, we want to have this local government election, which this Bill seeks to validate the report in order to bring about that. We want to have that. We want to have it free and fair and free from fear.

Therefore, when there is a situation where the political directorate is now linked with certain criminal elements in the society and seeks to launder that criminal element by calling them “community leaders”, then there is the situation where the political elites and the criminal elites intertwine in intimate embrace, and then there are garrison constituencies being created. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, Mr. Manning has responsibility as Prime Minister. That is why ACP Allard can speak in this fashion, and I quote him, Mr. Speaker. It is page 3 of the *Newsday* of Tuesday, May 06, by Naline Seelal, under the banner headlined:

“It will be like Baghdad

The police and army will soon launch a ‘Baghdad’ invasion of the Laventille area to deal with gang related murders according to ACP Crime, Oswyn Allard.

‘It will be like Baghdad,’ said Allard who said that Government has also been asked to implement a limited state of emergency to facilitate the police/army action. While he would not divulge details of the planned action, Minister of National Security, Howard Chin Lee...confirmed that efforts were underway to rid Laventille of the criminals who are terrorising the area.”

The most important part of this article deals with what Allard had to say, and the quote continues:

“What I can say at this time is that the elected government is the only government, and no community leader or gang leader will be able to dictate what happens in the community of Laventille, ever again,” Allard stated.”

I want to repeat that, Mr. Speaker, because what this—

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order No. 36 (1), point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, hon. Members, Standing Order No. 36(1) speaks to relevance. The Minister is going a little off course, but I would allow him to continue but urge him to come back on track.

Mr. G. Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but I am still a Member, not a Minister as yet. Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat this—and I would make the connection.

“What I can say at this time is that the elected government is the only government, and no community leader or gang leader will be able to dictate what happens in the community of Laventille, ever again,” Allard stated.”

Mr. Speaker, I will demonstrate the relevance. You see, Mr. Speaker, in areas where there is a two-party competitive system in the election period there is a competitive environment. So there are those who regard certain communities as garrison communities, and that they can deliver the vote for those garrison communities. Therefore, they control those communities and they will determine who are going to those communities who can have meetings in those communities and how the people vote in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica and the areas like Beverley Hills and Tivoli Gardens in Kingston, Jamaica, are good examples of those—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Manning: Trench Town.

Mr. G. Singh: Mr. Speaker, you know the Prime Minister is studying in Jamaica, and I hope he is not applying that formula in Laventille in Trinidad. Mr. Speaker, in that kind of garrison constituency, the don exercises leverage, he determines how the vote goes. So when ACP Allard says “no community leader or gang leader—he uses it interchangeably—“will be able to dictate what happens in the community of Laventille, ever again”, he is saying that he is moving on to the dons, he is moving on to the gang lords, he is going to wipe out the kind of

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

intimate contact between the organized criminals in those communities and, therefore, that is what is required in order to free up the people of Laventille. Mr. Speaker, in that period these very criminals were part of the intimidation that the EBC speaks about that took place in the general election of 2002.

Mr. Ramsaran: That is the connection.

Mr. G. Singh: Very much so. So that element surprises me not, Mr. Speaker, that they have telegraphed already that they are coming, so they will scatter. And when the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant says that he supports a limited state of emergency in that area, I said, “My God, what will you do again for a ministerial position. How can you support the curtailment of the fundamental rights and freedoms of your constituents for a ministerial ‘wuk’? Mr. Speaker, you cannot support that! That is why I find it unbelievable.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the point is that the organized crime element participated, they provided the intimidation arm and we want that assurance, because you see the acting Commissioner of Police says, and I read from the *Newsday* editorial on May 07, 2003, which states:

“ Baghdad at Laventille”

What we suspected some time ago is now being confirmed by senior police officers who seem to believe that most of the murders in the Laventille area are related to jobs on NHA, URP and CEPEP schemes. The feeling is that several gangs are operating within these make-work programmes and are fighting for control and leadership.”

You understand? So you bring the intimidatory arm to unleash upon your political opponents and then you pay them back, because in this system of first-past-the-post, the victor takes the spoils, and you pay them back with NHA contracts, URP contracts and CEPEP contracts and then you unleash a reign of terror and violence in your society. Never before! The editorial goes on.

“Clearly this must be an area for thorough investigation by the Police. It is surprising to learn that two former Flying Squad members assigned to the programmes as a means of helping the Police obtain information had to curtail their mission when persons engaged in the schemes raised objections. Who exactly are running these projects...”

Mr. Minister, that question is directed to you.

“Who exactly are running these projects, a lawless breed or government appointed official?”.

That question is directed to the hon. Member for Arouca North.

The quote continues.

“The country is becoming ever more anxious and fearful about this rising tide of violent crime not only for individual citizens but also for the long-term stability of the society. Where will it all end? Will gang-style killings become a permanent feature of life in Trinidad and Tobago? Why, in a small country such as ours, this kind of brutal and murderous rivalry can become so rampant, with the authorities seemingly incapable of stopping it? Will the Laventille ‘invasion’ have any effect? We must wait and see.”

[*Interruption*]

Mr. Ramnath: That editorial writer is a hypocrite!

Mr. G. Singh: Mr. Speaker, the point that is being made is that here it is there is total control of the intimidation arm in the election process. And whilst we are passing and will support the Validation of this Fourth Report of the EBC, we should be creating the environment for democracy to flower; for free speech; for us to exercise in our campaign, what is happening in this country. Call by the police for a limited state of emergency for the curtailment of fundamental rights and freedoms. That is what is happening. Because in this current Westminster model the victor takes the spoils.

So when there is the intimidatory element; whether it be the Jamaat Al Muslimeen; whether it be Mark Guerra and his boys from Vegas or otherwise, who participated in the marginal constituencies—I am sure the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro knows that; I am sure the hon. Member for San Fernando East knows that; and I sure the hon. Member for Tunapuna knows that they participated and supported the PNM in these marginal constituencies, providing the intimidation and the enforcement arm in the election process. Today is payback time but the murders continue incessantly. So I am not surprised that it was telegraphed.

Mr. Speaker, they cannot touch any of these 25 members. They cannot touch! They are untouchable. You see, they cannot touch them because they provide the support base necessary to provide the intimidation. So when the hon. Minister responds I expect him to respond to those editorials, because we want to validate this Bill. We want the election to take place. We want to be able to go to the country and speak to this country of the subversion; of the political interference; of what is happening, the salary. There are so many issues, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are saying that we want to fashion a country that will not only meet the demands of today but to anticipate the requirements of the future. All they are doing is engaging in make-work and killing the programmes. Trinidad and

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SINGH]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Tobago and Laventille, in particular, have become a killing field because of the programmes of that Government.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, I will have a very brief intervention here. [*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Tell us why you lied!

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Hon. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the Member for Caroni East on this Bill, which is simply to validate the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, under the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act—all we are about today is the validation of a report that has been submitted out of time. As the Member for Caroni East himself pointed out, we still have the order relating to this local government matter to debate, so all of this hot air that emanated from the other side—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Hon. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the Member for Caroni East and I had certain thoughts of words like “tabanca” withdrawal symptoms, delirium tremens, and post election stress syndrome. Everything that the Member said is quite irrelevant. We do not share his views. We have said previously that we were not comfortable with what was happening in the Elections and Boundaries Commission. We have made that very clear and it is only because of the vigilance of the People’s National Movement, the scrutiny and the intense inspection of the situation relating to the conduct of elections in 2000, 2001 and 2002, that we were able to reverse a trend that had begun where there were a number of unacceptable irregularities within our electoral system. It is because of the scrutiny, the steadfastness of many, many PNM activists and workers that we are on this side and they are on that side. [*Interruption*] We will not be intimidated, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Please, hon. Member for Siparia, you are a seasoned campaigner, you know better than that.

Hon. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, we will not be intimidated. We were not intimidated in 2000; we were not intimidated in 2001 by the Members on the other side by statements coming out of the Elections and Boundaries Commission—as one of my colleagues said; essentially, please, who signed that letter? Who issued those statements? We do not put much store in everything that was read out there; we did not agree with it then and we do not agree with it now. And if we in the

PNM are of the view that the irregularities continue within the Elections and Boundaries Commission and that attempts at voter padding continue, and that attempts at manipulation of the voters list continue, we will continue to put that organization under intense scrutiny. [*Desk thumping*] That is our responsibility and our duty.

The Member for Caroni East, his leader, all the hon. Members opposite and all of their supporters, inside and outside of institutions such as the EBC, you could cry until you are blue in the face, we are not going to relax and we are not going to take our eyes off the EBC and we will continue to keep them under very close watch. [*Desk thumping*] That is all that is necessary to say about that. You could scream, you could cry, you could shout until you are blue in the face, but we are not taking our eyes off the EBC. The same individuals are still there, the same commissioners, the same senior officials still reside within that organization, and we believe that unless we keep our eyes on them they will do what has happened before. Yes, we will keep our eyes on them—[*Interruption*] We are not afraid of them.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member for Caroni East crying and bleating about the use of URP, CEPEP, gang leaders to intimidate persons for elections, *etcetera*, and you know that it was Members opposite who introduced the criminal elements into the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP). [*Desk thumping*] In the 1991 to 1995 period, the PNM was able to rid that programme of the criminal elements. But it was the advent of the UNC in 1995 that reintroduced criminal elements into the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) and has created much of what we see taking place in Trinidad and Tobago today. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I am overruling you, please continue.

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You see, they do not want to deal with the truth. We discovered what was going on in the EBC and we dealt with it and they cannot deal with that. And when we say that they reintroduced the criminal element into the URP it is the truth that they cannot deal with. The PNM regime got rid of them and the UNC brought them in. Mr. Speaker, there was even a situation where a known criminal was a local government candidate for the UNC in a local government election. [*Desk thumping*] A criminal was a candidate! [*Crosstalk*] Everybody in this country knows that. People are not stupid. It is the UNC that gave all these criminals the credibility, the authority and the positions within the system.

Mr. Speaker, I know the UNC would like Trinidad and Tobago to descend into the situation that now plagues certain other Caribbean countries such as Jamaica. I know that is what they want, but that is not what we want, and that is not what we would allow to happen in this country. There are no garrison constituencies in Trinidad and Tobago at this time. To make a statement like that is the height of foolishness.

To compare the situation in Jamaica, where there are constituencies where persons from opposing political parties cannot go, to the situation in Trinidad and Tobago where anybody from any political party, notwithstanding the attempts of the Member for Couva South, when he said, recently, “that Ministers were not allowed to go into Central Trinidad—Of course, we ignored him and the people of Central Trinidad also ignored him. Notwithstanding that little adventure on the part of the Member for Couva South, any Member of any political party in Trinidad and Tobago can go into any constituency in Trinidad and Tobago and carry out political work at this time. That is what Trinidad and Tobago is like. We are nothing like Jamaica and we shall never be like Jamaica. That is my view.

So that the Member for Caroni East can come here with his hyperbole, his exaggerations, his hysteria, and his wishes and so on, but, we on this side, are not going to encourage that kind of thing, and we would not be part of that kind of thing.

The report before this honourable House today is simply an administrative report. It is based on consideration by the Elections and Boundaries Commission of the movement of voters from one part of the country to the other and a re-adjustment of polling divisions and the electoral districts. That is all it is. It is an examination by the EBC of voter migration, population change, demographics and so on, and recommendations for the re-adjustment of boundaries for local government districts. That is all it is. We have looked at the report and we bring it before this honourable House today, and we asked that that report be validated. We do not offer any comment on it. It has not been the practice for this honourable House—and no matter what personal feelings we may have on the EBC—to seek to change the recommendations in any boundaries report coming out of the Elections and Boundaries Commission. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, could you—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, please. The hon. Member, who is on his legs, is asking for a little quiet while he makes his contribution. Any Members opposite to each other who wish to converse may, please, demit the Chamber. Please continue.

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Member for Couva South is having panic attacks you know, because he knows that the popularity of the United National Congress is diminishing. And he knows that the population of the People’s National Movement is growing; he knows we are rising and they are falling. He knows that. And he knows that in the next local government election the PNM would increase the number of seats that it currently holds and the UNC would lose a number of the seats that it currently holds, as the popularity of the political leader of the UNC is on the decline; so is the popularity of that party on the decline and that is what is bothering him.

As the hon. Member correctly pointed out, there was a piece of legislation, Act No. 13 of 2003, passed in this Parliament that amended the Municipal Corporations Act of 1990, allowing local government elections to be held within one year of the expiry of the terms of office of the councillors and aldermen. Since the term of office of the councillors and aldermen expired on July 12, 2002, the Member for Caroni East quite correctly said, “that the local government elections are due by July 12, 2003”. He is correct. The local government election must be held in accordance with this legislation by July 12, 2003.

So another day of reckoning draws near for the hon. Members opposite. They are going to suffer another defeat, Mr. Speaker. *[Interruption]*

Dr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order No. 39, I would like the question be now put. It reads; “After a question has been proposed”—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I have it here; I am considering it. I am very capable of understanding the English Language. *[Crosstalk]* Hon. Members, Standing Order No. 39 indicates that:

“(1) After a question has been proposed any Member may at any time during the course of debate rise in his place and claim to move ‘That the question be now put’ and unless it appears to the Chair that that Motion is an abuse of the rules of the House or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the question ‘That the question be now put’ shall be put forthwith. No debate on that motion shall be allowed, and if the motion is carried, the debate then before the House shall cease and the question before the House shall be put forthwith.”

There are two parts to be considered. I rule that it is an abuse of the rules of the House for this debate to be determined in accordance with Standing Order No. 39 and, in accordance, I ask the hon. Minister to continue.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you would guide us. Which rules are we looking at that are being infringed?

Mr. Speaker: The Speaker has ruled and that is the end of the matter. Please continue. *[Desk thumping]*

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was stating, before I was rudely interrupted, Mr. Speaker, the local government election will be held before July 12, 2003. What is bothering the hon. Members opposite is that for the second time, in a period of less than 12 months they will taste another defeat. That is what this carryings-on is all about, and as my colleague from Diego Martin West has said, “cut tail and behind do not agree.”

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[HON. C. IMBERT]

Friday, May 09, 2003

I have been listening to the radio and the television in the last couple of days and I heard a senior police officer come on air and correct the record, and I really think it is improper of a Member of this honourable House, after that has been done, to come here and repeat the inaccuracies that are in the public domain. On TV6, a couple of days ago, I heard a senior police officer call in and indicate that the comments attributed to him in certain newspaper articles were not accurate. That is what he said—I heard him with my own ears—and it has been published. The Member for Caroni East is very well aware that the Commissioner of Police and senior police officers have been at pains. The Police Commissioner even held a press conference and the Member for Caroni East cannot make me believe that he did not see that press conference on television, or hear it on the radio or see extracts of it published in the daily newspapers over the last couple of days.

I want to put on the record that the Commissioner and senior members of the police service have been at pains over the last couple of days, to indicate that some of the commentaries in the newspapers, from the weekend to now, and some of the statements are—such as “It will be like Baghdad” and that “there should be a limited state of emergency”, etc.—attributed to the police, are inaccurate. The police officers have stated categorically that they did not say these things and that they were misinterpreted. That is what they said: I heard it with my own ears, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid I would take the word of these senior police officers before I would take the word of the hon. Member for Caroni East any day of the week. I do not intend to continue much further on this matter.

3.30 p.m.

At this time I want to sound a warning to all supporters of the hon. Members opposite who feel that they would be permitted to continue with the misconduct that we saw in the 2000, 2001 and 2002 elections. If they feel that the People’s National Movement would sit idly by and allow them to engage in voter padding, manipulation of the voters lists—

Mr. Singh: Would the Member give way?

Hon. C. Imbert: Sure.

Mr. Singh: The hon. Member is familiar with the report of the Deyalsingh Commission of Enquiry. That commission of enquiry found no instances of voter padding. Are you still maintaining your position?

Hon. C. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I should not have given way. I am sounding a warning to all supporters of the UNC that we in the PNM would keep

our eyes on the Elections and Boundaries Commission, the electoral process and the UNC. We would make sure that the tricks they were up to in 2000, 2001 and 2002 would not occur in future elections. They would not be allowed to manipulate the electoral process again.

Thank you.

Dr. Fuad Khan (*Barataria/San Juan*): Mr. Speaker, I join this debate on the Validation of the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC). I want to clear one misconception of the Member for Diego Martin East. I would like to read into the record from the report of the Commission of Enquiry into the functioning of the Elections and Boundaries Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, Friday May 31, 2002. On allegations of voter padding, pages 37, 118 and 119 state:

“In these circumstances one would have expected the PNM to put up a strong case of ‘voter-padding’ before this Commission of Enquiry. Instead, we had a kind of tentative first effort to adduce evidence from only one witness on this issue. When the PNM finally decided to call this witness, it turned out that he was an important witness in a criminal charge of ‘Conspiracy to defraud the EBC’ now pending in the Criminal Court. The Director of Public Prosecutions took strong objection to the calling of this witness before this Commission on the ground that calling him here had the potential to seriously prejudice the pending criminal proceeding. After hearing all Attorneys, the Commission decided not to call the witness on the ground that the public interest required that pending criminal proceeding should not be prejudiced. The Ruling of the Commission on this issue is self-explanatory and is annexed hereto—Appendix 13.

The PNM had no other witness to call in the issue of ‘voter-padding’. The position therefore, is that there is no evidence before this Commission on the issue of ‘voter-padding’. Whatever question remains now rests with the Criminal Courts where the charge of ‘Conspiracy to Defraud the EBC’ as well as several other individual charges of alleged illegal ‘transfers’ are now pending.”

I want to clear up something that has been bothering me since the last election. In the marginal seat of Barataria/San Juan, we were subjected to intimidation by certain people who were witnesses at the Commission of Enquiry. I would read into the record something from the Representation of the People Act. Chap 2:01, 96(6) states:

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. KHAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

“A person is guilty of bribery who, after an election directly or indirectly by himself or by any other person on his behalf, receives any money or valuable consideration on account of any person having voted or refrained from voting or having induced any other person to vote or refrain from voting.”

That section epitomizes the illegality of what is happening today in our country. I feel sorry for what has happened after December 2001. Someone decided to use morality and spirituality to induce the movement of putting a government in place that had fewer votes than the incumbent government, although the seats were 18/18. This miscarriage of the Constitution caused a movement of intimidation that started with kidnapping the subsequent January and followed through to the election of October 2002, and has become worse ever since.

We on this side have decided to make public and continue to make public for as long as possible, to the population of Trinidad and Tobago the goings-on in our country so that they would understand how the country has now evolved into the mess that it is, as a result of the gerrymandering of the voter regulation activities and the intimidation of voters, coupled with conspiracy by a head of state at that time—who is no longer there—to put an illegal government in place, as compared with one that got the majority of votes. That is a vital point which everyone on that side seems to sweep under the carpet. Being in office and not being able to command a majority in the House, they called Parliament twice. Once, it was to try to elect a Speaker and the next time to call the election.

We have to look at the history of electoral processes so we would not be condemned to repeat our errors as we go forward. A local election is looming within the next couple of months. The People’s National Movement has decided to bring this report to Parliament for validation, so that they could get on with the business of the country. When you look at Trinidad and Tobago really what is the use of having elections when there is a dictatorship? What is the use when you travel down the road to fascism and communism? It makes no sense. This is just a smokescreen to say that we are observing a parliamentary procedure.

When we talk about bribery and corruption in the electoral process, Members on the other side laugh. They must understand that during the intimidatory process in the election of 2002, we were the recipients of the attacks. As a result of that, many of our members did not get to vote. They were thrown back and afraid to enter the polling stations, not only by the people who are now controlling the turfs and are the criminal elements today, but also by people appointed by those on that side in the marginal seats. There has never been a public word of

comfort to the Member for San Fernando West who was intimidated a couple months ago by the people who said that they helped with the last election. She was on national television indicating that she was issued a threat by people unknown who demanded \$10 million or she be kidnapped or passed out.

This is what occurs when you have committed electoral fraud as what has happened with that side. It is an illegally elected government. When you go back into the history of the PNM from 1956 and onwards, there has not been one election that the PNM has won fair and square. Look at the voting machines, the no vote campaign and now to this election of 2002. Sometimes I ask myself, is it because of the mentality of the people? Let us say if 49 per cent of the people voted for the UNC, 51 per cent voted for the PNM in the 2002 election. They got the two marginal seats of Ortoire/Mayaro and San Fernando West by a mere 600 votes. As a result of separating the two parties by 1200 votes overall, they ended up with the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) and their contractors who went to the Commission of Enquiry into the EBC, getting hefty contracts. They supported it and they would continue to do it for Ortoire/Mayaro, San Fernando West and Tunapuna.

It is imperative that we use this report as it is to show the ills of the system in the country. Such a system has to be thrown out the window. What is the use of it when we sit today in this honourable House with supposedly intelligent people and validate a report that does not show the blatant disregard for democracy? Democracy in this country was alive. What made democracy go was when the PNM realized that their stocks were dwindling. As a result of that, democracy took a back seat. Political patronage, discrimination and intimidation continued at the forefront in 2002. CEPEP is a clear example of that. I would not go into Malcolm Jones and Errol Grimes' salaries.

When you look at the CEPEP arrangement and those contractors, you see that they are now benefiting from their actions for the voting mechanisms—\$43 million paid out in three months. I have no objection to people enjoying money for movement. I have objections when it is not equitable. There were 400 contractors who applied to CEPEP, and 110 got contracts. When you delve into the contractors, you find that they were witnesses for the PNM at the EBC enquiry and they are under the names of different companies. I know for a fact that one is the uncle of the deputy political leader and another one was given a contract because of certain voting movements that occurred in my constituency and other constituencies.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. KHAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

The mechanism of the contract approach is contravening section 96(6) of the Representation of the People Act and that should be taken care of in some form or fashion. If the Prime Minister is listening—he hates when I start talking about CEPEP. That is his baby, he says. When questioned, it was reported that he said that it was better to have 110 people engaged in the corruption than three.

The system we are trying to validate is one that determines that candidates are being put forward to attract the voters for a political party. As a result of that our electoral boundaries—

Mr. Imbert: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(5). The hon. Member has imputed improper motives to the hon. Prime Minister. He should retract that statement.

Mr. Speaker: No. I have overruled. Please, continue.

Dr. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, if it pleases him I would retract the statement. The Prime Minister could give his view.

This system of representation and cutting and increasing the boundaries is good for the mechanics of electoral movement. There are representatives who put their names forward; walk the streets speaking to voters on issues, and go through the rigours of an election, and other people say that they will not participate in the electoral process. When the election is over and the elected member who walked the walk and fought to win his or her seat sits as junior Minister and the wife of the Prime Minister is given a plum post, that is what this process is doing.

This afternoon the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment came into this honourable House and was asked a question by this side about how many dead dogs have been picked up with this amount of money that has been spent. He said quite facetiously, and that is misleading the House, thousands. That is taking this House for a joke. You do not do that. If you feel so and want to make a joke outside the House, that is all well and good. This is the kind of representative that we have. They are non-elected Ministers.

This is the report that they want us to validate. We must validate a report to continue a system that would provide intimidation for the local government election, where gang lords and leaders can start to attack our voters. Some voters go to a polling station and decide which party they would vote for. However, people in my constituency were pushed back and intimidated because of their ethnic origin.

There is another election looming. The Member of Parliament for Diego Martin East carried on about voter padding and said that they would ensure that everything goes fine. Not once did they mention the house padding that is going

on in Ortoire/Mayaro, Tunapuna, Barataria/San Juan and San Fernando West. Our country has deteriorated to a sad state of affairs because of what? It is because of a system that depends on seats. They could scoff, jump or do whatever they want, but the facts would be there for history.

The mess started in our country when an incumbent government of 285,000 people was displaced because of “morality and spirituality” which is a preamble for a government that had 265,000 or fewer. They were put into place because at the end of the day, when leaving office, the man said, “Ah going back home.” That determines what we do. It does not determine who is working or developing or equity. Equity is just a word. Democracy is not even a word. We are worried about intimidation, crime, kidnapping and gun lords. The PNM is good at two things that we have to learn: propaganda when you do nothing, and insults. When you are on an important point in this House and you are trying to educate them, they attack you personally and tell you about your wife, angels or something. That is the legacy of the PNM.

We have to decide because we speak for the population of Trinidad and Tobago. We speak against discrimination. They would not implement equal opportunity legislation because they are afraid. We could take CEPEP and other things and beat them in court. They do not want to do it because they do not believe in equal opportunity. They come to validate a process and at the same time bring the smokescreen, the validation and then lick up the country for their personal gain. If they had the country at heart, they would not give out CEPEP contracts only to PNM supporters.

An elector is guilty of bribery when he accepts things to vote for a specific political party. The PNM has CEPEP, On the Job Training (OJT) and the Civilian Conservation Corps which are good programmes, if done well and would benefit this country. We have to understand that this House sits for the people of Trinidad and Tobago and not just for the PNM party. We would continue the struggle in such a manner as to end discrimination in this country.

I believe that 18/18 was the chance we could have ended this discriminatory process. You have the movement where political patronage, nepotism, intimidation and corruption of the electoral process take precedence over everything else. They come to Parliament to validate something to show that they are going through a process. But people are migrating in droves because they are saying that they cannot take the crime and jokes. Whether you like it or not, business has gone flat. Criminal activity has risen. They would continue to laugh, throw insults and asides. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? When you expose the wound, it bleeds.

Thank you.

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, I want to make an intervention in this debate, not for our sake but for the sake of the public for many years to come. As the House knows, the records of these debates are permanent records and those yet unborn would peruse them to try to get an understanding of what was happening while we were here; what contribution we made or did not make to the development, security and well being of our country while we were elected so to do and before being elected, while we offered ourselves to serve them.

The Member for Barataria/San Juan accessed and made reference to the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Function of the Elections and Boundaries Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, reported on Friday May 31, 2002. He made reference to paragraph 118 under the rubric “Allegations of Voter Padding.” He read scantily from it. He read into the record the element of it that dealt with the absence of the PNM’s witness at that enquiry. I do not want to repeat what he has read.

I want to remind the Member and place on the record that the witness of whom he spoke was a UNC party member who was involved in all the UNC’s plans and activities in the run-up to the elections of 2000 and 2001. He had come to the PNM telling those who had the responsibility to give evidence at the commission of enquiry, that he was involved in certain nefarious activities. I can describe it better and more potently, but because I am speaking from this honourable Chamber, I would confine myself to the adjective “nefarious.” They were activities that he and other persons in the UNC were involved in for the benefit of the UNC.

It was a fellow called Bickram. He was not with the PNM; he was a UNC activist who had volunteered information to the PNM and as a responsible political party, we felt that we should have passed it on to the commission of enquiry. So, we lined him up—so to speak, if I may be allowed a colloquialism—to give evidence at that enquiry. When the time came for such evidence to be given, the Commission held the view, perhaps quite properly—and the Director of Public Prosecutions intervened. I remember well. As a result of the law that he was aware of and practised, he said that the person we were offering to the Commission of Enquiry was a witness in a matter relating to the election process that was pending in the court.

In his view, if that person gave evidence in the Commission of Enquiry, which was merely engaged in a fact finding exercise, and in terms of status should not take precedence over a criminal charge that was before the court against operatives from

the UNC; it would not have been proper or sensible for him to give evidence at the Commission of Enquiry because it would prejudice his evidence in the matter that was before the criminal court. As a responsible party we accepted that. It is not that we had no evidence of voter padding. The PNM was unable because it recognized the procedure to offer it at the enquiry. I want to make that clear.

When we recall the terms of reference of the said Commission of Enquiry, it had nothing to do with voter padding per se. Paragraphs 116-118 from which the Member scantily read, pointed out that the question of voter padding was a serious concern for members of the national community and electors. It felt that the PNM should have offered evidence of alleged voter padding, but recognized in its comments that we were unable to do so for the reasons I have advanced.

I want to point out to the Member for Barataria/San Juan that if he would look at page 21 or paragraph 58 of the said report—I took time off after the report. I went around this country and visited two television stations, TTT and TV6, and several radio stations including Radio 90.5 and analyzed the contents of this report and succeeded in demonstrating that there was a tremendous amount of irregularity in the entire process. This deals with the constituency of Barataria/San Juan.

The report says at paragraph 51 that the PNM led evidence that 172 electors actually residing at their registered addresses were removed from the list of 2000 and 599 persons not residing at their registered addresses shown were added to the list. The PNM also showed by way of evidence that 153 persons registered as electors in polling division 1436 were not resident at their registered addresses. Responding to the first part of what I have just said, the EBC gave statistics about change of address and name and it accounted for 172 people. It gave evidence of the additions and renewals.

On page 58 the Commission concluded:

We conclude that the PNM's claim under (2) is substantially correct."

That was the constituency of Barataria/San Juan.

In respect of the 2001 General Election, the PNM led evidence that 19 persons who registered were not at their registered addresses. The Elections and Boundaries Commission responded as well. Paragraph 61 says:

"Assuming that the EBC's field check is accurate we conclude that at least 13 out of 19 persons stated by the PNM as not residing at their registered addresses were not in fact residing there and we conclude that to that extent at least, the PNM's claim was correct."

We are dealing with irregularities in the system. In the constituency of Diego Martin East, the PNM complained that Joseph Street in Paramin was a very short street with 11 houses. The preliminary list for 2001 recorded 170 persons living on the street. The PNM complained that 109 persons on the 2001 list were not resident at their registered addresses. Again, the EBC responded. In paragraph 68 the commission concluded:

“We conclude from the above that there was merit in the PNM’s claim at least to a fairly substantial degree.”

I can go through for Tunapuna, San Fernando West and Ortoire/Mayaro, but I will not detain this House. I simply pointed out with the two examples, that in both cases the PNM’s claim of irregularity was found to be real by the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

I bring our attention to paragraph 114:

“On the review of all of the evidence relative to PNM’s claim for Barataria/San Juan, Diego Martin East, San Fernando West and Tunapuna we conclude that the errors on the electoral lists were such as to affect the accuracy of the list. Further, the EBC’s responses were not always clear and even with the corrections it made, we cannot say that we are satisfied the final lists were accurate.”

That was the substance of the terms of reference of the enquiry. It was to determine in the main whether or not the lists were accurate. The Elections and Boundaries Commission was telling this country from every pillar, every podium it could and every opportunity it had, that the lists were correct and we had nothing to fear. We knew that we had a lot to fear. We still know that we have things to fear. The records are now properly adjusted for all those who would read them in the course of time.

Before I conclude, since the Member for Barataria/San Juan was allowed the latitude to make reference to the vexed question of race, I want to touch on it briefly in response to him. It has become quite commonplace, particularly since they became afflicted with the syndrome that we call PESS, (Post Election Stress Syndrome), they have been going on the various media outlets and crying. I feel sorry for their supporters. They are imposing on the minds of their supporters a very negative and burdensome psychology. All they do is cry. In addition to that, they file a million and one feeble questions. When I was a young man I used to get a little gun and sack for Christmas. I remember from time to time getting a popgun. You had to crack it and stick the cork in at the muzzle. There was a

string. When you pulled it went, pop! The cork would drop. That is the nature of the questions they are asking. The questions are going nowhere. It is just wasting precious parliamentary time.

I have also noticed that especially the Members for Couva South, Couva North and Barataria/San Juan and the Member for Chaguanas who is equally guilty, and others, are up and down the country inciting racial angst and hatred. I think that they are quite irresponsible. Everything they explain in terms of race. I remember hearing the word "alienation" used by the Member for Couva North every minute of the day when he was in Opposition. For the six years that they were in Government, I sat in this House and I never heard him use the word "alienation" once. As long as he was prime minister and the UNC was in government, not once! True to form about two weeks ago, I listened to the Member for Couva North and up comes that word again, "alienation". National unity, you do not hear about it any more!

I conclude by telling my Friend that years ago I read a book written by Frantz Fanon called *Wretched of The Earth*. Frantz Fanon spoke about his experience in Algeria, a country in North Africa that was colonized by the French. He was explaining the experience of those who were colonized and the relationship to the colonizer. It was a very lucid document from which I benefited greatly in my research. Frantz Fanon in essence made the point that the same line that you draw as the colonizing power to keep those who are colonized on the other side, it is that very line that causes you to be alienated from them in a very dangerous way.

I draw on that text to remind my Friends on the other side, that when they cry and raise this question of race and cleave to the tribal politics that they are now running hastily towards, with energy and enthusiasm, they are encircling themselves and defeating the false concept of national unity that they preach. They are painting themselves into a smaller and smaller corner. It may be good for them, but it would not be good for their followers and supporters who must live in peace and prosperity in Trinidad and Tobago and benefit from what the PNM Government offers all the citizens of this country.

Members opposite are hurting themselves, and to a greater extent, their supporters. If they cleave to tribal politics, they are setting up themselves. It is defeating their notion of national unity because they are saying to their supporters, "support us because they are they and we are we." I feel sorry for them. We have a storeroom in Balisier House with an ample supply of washrags and handkerchiefs. I would get some of those for all those Members opposite so that they may sap the tears off their faces.

Having warned my Friends in those terms, I am confident that they would not hear it because it is an instinctive reaction. Everything they explain in terms of race. I heard my Friend mention CEPEP, a programme that everyone all over Trinidad and Tobago assures us is working very well. This is not with any PNM bias although I accept that I am very biased when it comes to the PNM. I make no apology for my PNM bias.

I am telling you in all sincerity and you can come on a tour any time you want and I will guarantee your safety. You are citizens and you are free to walk where you want. I have never seen the constituency of Laventille East/Morvant look as clean, tidy and well kept as I see it now. Every day, as I thank God for all that he has given to my country and to me; everyday as I thank my family for the sustenance that they provide to give me strength; every day I thank God for the many things I must thank him for, I thank him for those who conjured the thoughts about CEPEP. We are getting work done and the place is a cleaner place in which to live.

I heard the Member for Couva North, the Leader of the Opposition; and the Member for Couva South talk about CEPEP. If there is one reason I want to retain a CEPEP group it is this: I want to give them the job to paint the tongues of Members opposite white. It may help them to speak more noble things. Until such time, I urge the people in CEPEP to continue to do the great work they are doing. We will continue to provide opportunities for all our citizens, while Members opposite continue to stay on that side and cry and paint themselves into a little tribal corner. One day we would send the CEPEP dead animal crew to pick up the carcasses of the United National Congress and dump them in a ravine somewhere in Couva South. That would be the end of them.

Thank you.

Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche*): Mr. Speaker, I am always puzzled when I sit and listen to the intensity of the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and his strong and loyal support to his party and to government. It seems that the harder he gets kicked, the more support he gives. It matters not whether it is by Minister Chin Lee, Minister Dumas or Minister Sahadeo; he would continue on that line giving that type of support. It is loyalty for him that led him to support the call for a state of emergency in his constituency.

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: What point of order?

Mr. Hinds: Standing Order 36(5).

Mr. Speaker: I overrule you.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, if he would not hear you, now you know why he is not Cabinet material. I will deal later with some substantial issues arising from this Bill. I need to respond quickly to a few statements made by the Members for Diego Martin East and Laventille East/Morvant. I do not know if to say that it is a tragedy or a joke that in a discussion on the EBC on elections and democracy, the Member for San Fernando East would speak about elections and the EBC. The Member for Diego Martin East went before an enquiry in which it became commonplace not by commissioners, but by every citizen in Trinidad and Tobago, that this Member would be a pedlar of untruths. A liar! It became clear on national TV. I would think that when this Member stands to read a Bill dealing with elections and the EBC, the Bill would burn in his hand. This is a debate on the EBC and democracy. The Member for Diego Martin East should have gone to Cuba and skipped this debate. He would show us boldness as they perpetuate the voter padding, rigging and “tiefing”. They would come to this House and stand with moral authority. Where did they get it from? We know about that history. The *TNT Mirror* dated Friday, April 04, 2003 states:

“ voter padder whistle-blower says, I am a political prisoner.”

This is Mr. Richard Bickram whom they have mentioned. That was the mystery witness, a man of integrity that taxpayers’ money was spent on to protect on some island. They are using his name and invoking that. I heard somebody say that he was a supporter of the UNC who came to them. They put him in line and had to accept it as a responsible party. Mr. Richard Bickram said that he is a prisoner of politics. He is now threatening to sue Prime Minister, Patrick Manning, Minister of Housing; Martin Joseph, and Minister of Public Administration and Information, Dr. Lenny Saith for breach of promise during the period shortly before the ruling People’s National Movement came into office in 2001.

“When I was giving the PNM information on the United National Congress (UNC)...these three men sat down in Balisier House and promised me \$100,000 US for my information.

Now that I have given it to them, I am treated like trash.”

They conned Richard Bickram. “

Besides not getting a cent of the \$100,000 US that was promised to me and a lot of run around, my stay as a State witness has been less than pleasurable.

When I was in TnT I was just left to hang with no sort of contact with the outside world...

I was shipped to Grenada and now to St. Vincent for my own safety,... but it has been more a nightmare.

The monies coming from TnT has been inconsistent, neither my rent nor other bills are paid up to date.

The TnT Police as far as I am concerned are doing racket with my money...

I exist on the good nature of friends I have made in St. Vincent.”

This is a tragedy. This is not a joke. They went to the country; held up his name and undertook a campaign to undermine the Elections and Boundaries Commission. This star witness was participating with the United National Congress to undermine our democratic process, they said. They used his name. They came to Parliament hoping that they would continue like this and none of us would remember. I do not want to get into the character of Richard Bickram. He is well known in south. He continues:

“I have no idea if it is the PNM wants me dead because they have finished with me. I am fed-up and frustrated...My life is in danger because of what I know.”

This is how they were treating an individual who came to them to con them. They accepted him. They used his name and all those allegations to undermine the EBC, our democracy and to carry on a campaign of conspiracy against the UNC. This is a very serious matter. It is easy for us to dismiss this and say that the election has gone. We do not know whether Mr. Bickram is now in Grenada, St. Vincent or Australia, or if he has food as promised to him by the PNM at Balisier House. Maybe if he comes back here, he would become a CEPEP contractor. We can dismiss this. In fact, he is probably entitled to become a contractor under CEPEP. This is how you get your qualification. You lie for the PNM and you would get the contract. We cannot dismiss this. This is a conspiracy to undermine our democracy. It was implemented by those with “moral and spiritual values”. This is how they conduct their business.

It is important for us in this debate that the acting Leader of Government Business would stand and threaten the EBC. We are looking at you and keeping an eye on you. They will continue with that campaign of intimidating and undermining the EBC. They are not keeping their eyes on the criminals. Keep your eyes on the Elections and Boundaries Commission. Mr. Bickram went on to say:

“When I try to contact the police or officials of Balisier House it is just games and a runaround. I am fed-up...”

They would kill you one way or another. Winston Ali, that name came to mind? The man killed himself. It is the only party that leads people to suicide. Bickram said that his life is now threatened. He cannot stay in Grenada because he owes rent and the people were complaining. They want their rent.

This is the star mystery witness that was meant to give evidence; attack the UNC and destroy the integrity of the UNC. That is the foundation. I would not go into the character of that gentleman. Everybody knows him in South. Everybody in the PNM knows him as well because they were involved in similar business. I am not sure about anybody else.

Another phenomenal revelation is that on TV6 a few weeks ago, every day they were running a small segment on community leaders, gangsters and criminal elements. Sometimes I would reach home late and put on the TV to get the last part of the news. Every time I looked at the television, they would be continuing that documentary on criminal gangs. I do not know why, if it was by accident or deliberately, I would see the leader of the PNM and the balisier at the front. Every time you looked at that segment, you would see members of the ruling party including their leader in the company of individuals that the television was portraying as criminal elements. That is a serious matter. You do not see any other political party being represented on a show about gangsters, terrorism and criminal elements.

They say that they want to keep an eye on the EBC and democracy. If truth be told, the PNM can write a manual on rigging elections and voter padding. They have copyright on that and they could patent it. Nobody else has the right to copy their methods. We know a bit of our history. I do not want to get into that history with Mr. Seukeran and others. We know about the voting machines where if you have 100 people to vote in a locality, 200 would vote for the PNM. We know about the build-up that led to a no-vote campaign in which the illustrious Member for San Fernando East was allowed to enter this Chamber. We know the history of gerrymandering. When they talk about corrupting the electoral process, they know what they are saying. They are the authority.

You do not have to go far in this debate to look at democracies and so-called democracies in the Third World, whether it be Asia or Africa. You can stay in the Caribbean and look at some of our neighbours such as Jamaica and Guyana and you would see what happens when you corrupt electoral processes. Nobody wins.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

There is a view that when you corrupt the process and engage in this electoral terrorism, you would win. The party got 20 seats and they won. Trinidad and Tobago would lose just as in Guyana. Nobody won there. This is not Mastana Bahar where everybody wins—nobody loses. In electoral gerrymandering, everybody would lose. They are presiding over that. It is new to Trinidad and Tobago but not to the politics of developing countries. In several countries of the world leaders recognized that they must maintain democracy because they would access Commonwealth funding, international agencies' aid and grants. They undermine the electoral process to get there.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, before we took the tea break, I was addressing, to me, a very critical matter that dealt with the undermining of our democratic system and institutions such as the Elections and Boundaries Commission. I then moved away to discuss what obtains in other developing countries that have been classified as failed states, and that term is now gaining currency. A failed state is really poverty-stricken and politically unstable with very low levels of development. It is crime-ridden, where citizens flee and those that remain, remain in a state of fear for their lives.

Those societies and economies, by themselves, have very little hope of economic and social recovery outside annual grant-aid by the multi-national financial institutions. Those failed states abound in the Third World. In the Caribbean we have two neighbours but there is one in particular that we could look at to see what happens when democracy is undermined. Processes for election are undermined by voter-padding, gerrymandering, by the use of terror, the use of paramilitary forces, gangs, the subversion of the protective services and so on. They lead to a situation where these countries suffer enormous social and economic damage and it is almost impossible to recover.

What has been happening in some areas is that as the world becomes more and more integrated and as the processes of globalization root themselves, many leaders throughout the developing world now realize that they must have elections; they must have democracy; they must convince the Commonwealth, the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union that they have a stable democracy. The fundamental pillar of any democracy is the holding of elections. Leaders, in many countries throughout the world would call elections; results would be declared and they would satisfy the external democratic credentials.

When you look at the electoral processes, however, you see that they are flawed; they are characterized by illegal activities; by terrorism; by criminal elements and so on, so much so that there are some leaders in the Third World who have won elections, which are still under question. The elections are still questioned although many leaders have declared themselves presidents and so on. Mr. Speaker, that is happening because of the evolving pattern of holding elections and undermining the electoral process at the same time.

I think this is an opportune moment to put on the table this warning; that we must come clean; we must declare our democratic credentials; we must affirm our confidence in the independent institutions that are there to conduct elections. Mr. Speaker, I thought the Member for Arouca North, our good Friend, would have used this opportunity, as well, to reaffirm the commitment of Government and his party to a free and fair election. I think the majority of the population has a concern about the democratic credentials of the Government. The Minister would be wise to declare to the Parliament and to the nation that his party believes in fair and free elections; that will not resist foreign observers coming into Trinidad and Tobago to witness the conduct of elections. A fundamental dimension to the holding of fair and free elections is that foreign observer teams would come and would scrutinize and look at the election and then report.

This has nothing to do with First World/Third World imperialist objectives that we want people from developed countries of another colour and class to come and tell us how to conduct the election. Members of this Parliament often go to other Commonwealth territories to be part of observer missions to oversee the election in South Africa, India and so on; that is very common within the family of the Commonwealth. We would also like to hear the Government commit itself to fair and free elections and tell us that it does not fear having foreign monitors for any election, whether it is the general election or local government elections. That is a fundamental issue.

Had the last election been conducted with foreign monitors and teams of observers, there may have been—I am not saying the results may have been dramatically different—more dialogue and debate on this matter. We would have had the benefit of reports. We would have had the benefit of getting a clearance from the international community. As it is now we have the allegations, the counter allegations and we have Mr. Bickram—well, I think, that is the last time they would raise Mr. Bickram's name here—we have the Commission of Enquiry into the EBC.

My colleague the Member for Caroni East, was at pains to plot the conspiracy, which started before the year 2000—when those on that side were in

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Opposition—the propaganda campaign that began. One fundamental element of that was to undermine, in the public domain, the Elections and Boundaries Commission. That was a fundamental pillar; to build in the minds of citizens that we could not trust the EBC; they would be up to no good. As I said, that was a fundamental part of that campaign so that in the event of losing they would have gone to another type of campaign that may have included violence; that may have included destroying our cities. It was part and parcel of a strategy. Mr. Speaker, you would notice that as long as there was the election and by the hook or the crook—and we are clear on what it is—the PNM was returned to office, the talk of EBC died.

Today the hon. Minister took 10 minutes or less to present this Validation Bill. He declared that this is really nothing more than a validation Bill, and there really was no need to debate elections, democracy and the EBC recommendations and so on. We are to just come here and stamp that they have fulfilled the requirements of the law and move on to the local government election where the same thing could happen again.

We would have liked the Minister to come and declare their position. What is the state of the EBC? Are they getting the equipment that they require? Are they getting the human resource support or the technical support? Are they getting the information technology support? What is happening with that situation? Did they manage to get the adviser to the EBC? Or, is that adviser a CEPEP contractor at the moment? *[Interruption]* If you are applying to become the adviser to the EBC, you have to send that application to Balisier House, Mr. Speaker; that is the situation!

This is a very serious and fundamental debate. It is not just a matter of coming here and putting a one-page Bill on the table and saying let us validate this, or that it happened before so let us just do it again and quickly move on. We have to discuss the events that went by, that campaign to destabilize the electoral process, that infamous commission of enquiry that would go down in history.

We have not done the research, I admit, but I suspect that in no other Commonwealth territory a minister caught lying at a commission of enquiry would still sit in the Cabinet. I suspect not, but we have to do the history on that to see if there is any other parallel. At the Commission of Enquiry we have already spoken about those persons who have presented themselves on behalf of the PNM, and what happened. We have looked at the recommendations coming out of that Commission of Enquiry on the EBC. We have looked at the minority position taken by one of the commissioners, who declared on the front page of a Sunday newspaper, in that period, that he could not understand how the final report would

look as it did, and that he had no part to play in that. He disassociated himself from several of the recommendations issued by the Chairman of that commission of enquiry.

These are very serious matters. There may be another institution out there waiting to be attacked, and who knows, another commission of enquiry may follow. The hon. Member for Caroni East also read from a court matter in which the EBC is claiming compensation for what took place in the commission. It may well be that another court matter will evolve from the Commission of Enquiry on the airport—the way that is going.

This Bill also deals with the holding of the local government election that is due in the very short term. We cannot hold a local government election without a debate; without airing our views on what transpired over the last two or three years, as it relates to the Elections and Boundaries Commission and as it relates to the role of the governing party in undermining an institution that is protected by the Constitution. We cannot go into another election without looking at that.

Local government election is a very important election. Citizens of this country are impacted upon immediately by local government and by the goods and services that would emanate from local government. Citizens could either benefit or not from local government, so local government is critical. How could we hold the local government election when the majority of citizens believe that the same thing that obtained in the last general election would come again; the thieving; the terrorism; the banditry; the hijacking of the polls? That same thing could happen in the local government election! There is no assurance; there is no guarantee that the local government election would be conducted with any degree of integrity.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know of the record of those on the other side with elections—San Fernando West. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am now really looking forward to the contribution of the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro. I think the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro should speak because he knows a lot about this matter. He is an authority on EBC and electoral politics and I look forward to hearing him. I know of him standing on platforms and speaking to the masses. He knows about giving out water tanks and taking them back, looking for votes. We have statements from citizens in Barrackpore about what obtained there, how they managed to get the 100 and 200 votes there. The same “conmanship” which obtained for Richard Bickram obtained for the people in Barrackpore, who are

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

still waiting to get back their water tanks. Mr. Speaker, to complete this debate; to crown it off, the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro should speak. That would be a final touch for me. Having benefited from this, he should speak.

We are picking up, as well, this tendency to undermine local government institutions. For over a year, local government institutions were there in theory. Those persons elected by the free will of the people were deemed advisers and they are paid, I think, the same amount that they were paid as councillors and so on. It is our understanding that decisions central to local government bodies were made by the Minister with responsibility and by the Permanent Secretary. The councillors, the aldermen and alderwomen who were elected and appointed by the people through the democratic process had no say in matters dealing with policy and spending. That by itself shows that practice of undermining local government. This debate has to do with local government election it has to do with giving back power to the councils and to the representatives.

There is also another interesting line. What obtained until recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was a situation where the councils would enlist and recruit labour—daily-paid workers or temporary workers—to go out in the communities and do maintenance projects; whether it is cleaning the pavilion; helping to build the fence of a school and so on. The local government body was responsible for enlisting labour, workers. The local government body, through the councillors, would recruit members of the community to participate in developing their community through some part-time work and so on. That is the process by which people help themselves; they participate in their community's development.

Now we have this situation where you have the CEPEP gangs that are everywhere. They would have workers coming in from anywhere in the world and working in a constituency. I was leaving my office in Oropouche a few weeks ago and on the way back to my home a few CEPEP workers who were there stopped me because they wanted to know what taxi to take; what road to take to go back to a next area, about 25 miles outside the constituency. They wanted to get directions, really, to go back to San Fernando from working in Oropouche, and this is what obtains. Whereas councils, members, through the local government system, were once empowered to recruit, from the community, suitably qualified persons for jobs and so on, at different levels, we now have this system—which is centrally imposed in localities—where people come in through CEPEP.

The principal of a school in my constituency called me once to raise a matter concerning the productivity of CEPEP workers on the school compound. I told the principal I do not know anything about that; I have no power to deal with that; I

really do not know who they are; I do not know where they came from and so on. What obtains as well, is when the Government uses URP and CEPEP for political campaigning. There are people who will get a “10-days” or whatever but that is not really to do any work; that is really to go and rally the troops for election. That is what they are paid for. So it is really the taxpayer financing the party and that is now a dominant practice that will also undermine our democracy. It is a very serious matter.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

No government in the world—this is very interesting—you do not get governments and leaders in the world who are willing to give up power. In fact, nobody wants to have power and give it up. Mr. Nelson Mandela, whom the world looks up to, has been one leader who had power and he gave it up. The leader of the then Soviet Union had power; he restructured the political system and then lost that power. The former President of South Africa had all the power then remodelled the political system and gave up the power.

Leaders do not want to preside over a system where there is devolution of power. They really want to preside over a system where they get more power; not give it up. So that giving power to the local government bodies may not be an option for the Government. If you give power to the local government bodies you are saying that you would not get involved in local communities by sending in gangs of labour from distant cities; you would not get involved in local communities by undermining the integrity of the council and by undermining the work of the council.

Mr. Speaker, no Prime Minister would be willing to devolve power like that. They would be eager to increase it and keep it. This dreaded practice of the “Cepepization” of the country is a critical development that spells doom. Any time we say this the Members on the other side are quick to castigate us; cast aspersions on us; to suggest that we do not support the poor, we do not like the poor man and woman so we do not support poverty-relief programmes.

If ever you needed an example of the UNC’s commitment to poverty reduction, job creation, skill development, you would just need to interview the Member for Nariva, the former Minister of Labour, Manpower Development and Industrial Relations in the UNC administration. He presided over the transformation of the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) into a training programme that gave, not only income to the needy, but one that also gave hope because it transferred skills.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

So needy persons were enlisted, not only to give them money but also to help them to develop skills so that they might help themselves. That was the system and that is the vision of the United National Congress.

When we do our planning and we write our manifesto, Mr. Speaker, we consider not just local social policies but the changing world as well. We look at issues of globalization, technology, the creation of a knowledge-based society. I do not want to continue talking about knowledge-based society; Members on the other side would fall asleep. *[Interruption]* They will fall asleep by hearing knowledge-based society and technology and so on.

This is the vision of the UNC. When the UNC was given the mandate by the people—not the mandate by another office holder—we reformed the local government system to give more and more functions to local government and Members would be aware of that. Local government was invited to take control over managing certain social centres, civic centres; working with schools through local education boards and so on. This is what we were about. We were not about undermining democracy; we were about promoting participation and promoting democracy. It is fundamentally different today, Mr. Speaker. It is not just a matter of transferring income, because that is not sustainable.

At a recent Caricom meeting in Guyana a very well-known economist, out of the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados, delivered a paper and spoke about public sector work programmes being unsustainable if they are not linked to skills training, and if they are not dealt with on the basis of equality. When we talk about equality we always hear murmurs and noises emanating from the other side. But, I am convinced that there are Members on the other side who support us and if they had the chance, the power, they would support the reform of those work programmes to include everybody. *[Interruption]* The Member for San Fernando has confirmed that there are Members on that side who support that. There are Members on the other side, who, when they go up and down the country and they reflect on the work force of CEPEP, they say no, this cannot happen; we have to change that. They do not have the power to change it.

As a new Member here, and as a young politician here, I do not think that everybody on the other side is hopeless. I think there may be some hope for a Member or two there, and they could see the discrimination—they may not be able to talk about it—and maybe in a quiet moment they would whisper something to the Prime Minister on that. I do not know. But as I said, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are Members on the other side who will support us in this call for equality.

The Government has always been publicly loud on issues of corruption, morality and integrity and so on. It comes across in its press statements and in its platform and parliamentary language. It is very interesting that it is very clear on white collar crime but we do not know where it stand on blue “colour” crime. It is very clear on matters of transparency and freedom of the press and so on. Recently, the United Nations convened a world conference on eliminating racism and discrimination in Paris and one of the few countries that were absent from that consultation—anybody wants to guess? Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also hon. Members of this House.

We know of the Government’s public statements on corruption and white-collar crime and transparency in the media but we really have not heard anything from this Government—we certainly have not seen any policy paper, but then we do not expect any; I think we are expecting a bit too much now—on its position as it relates to anti-discrimination policy, legislation practices and so on. The United Nations is now moving full steam ahead to deal with this matter. There is a big connection between democracy and equality. You cannot have democracy and no equality and by the same token you cannot have equality and no democracy; it is connected. The election process is not just about democracy and free and fair elections; it is about participation and equality of opportunity.

My friend, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant—well, it is after tea; he would not be here—is always uptight when we raise this issue about ethnicity discrimination. But he should not be uptight because this is an important global issue. Managing diversity is a fundamental challenge in the world today, whether it is in the United States, Europe, Africa, Asia or the Caribbean. We would like the Government to take note and position this country as a leader in the debate on anti-discriminatory legislation and policy and the initiatives by the United Nations to deal with eliminating discrimination and racism. That is the issue! We would like the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to take the lead. I am not holding my breath for that because you will not hear anything about anti-discriminatory legislation and equality. There are some things you know you will not hear about.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I have risen to tell you that I have given you great latitude but I would like you to get back to the Bill before us.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, let me reconnect to the EBC and democracy which is really linked to governance. I did not walk with the Constitution but every time I speak I like to refer to it and the role of the Legislature and law making. What is it? We know it by heart now—good governance. Whether we pass a Bill for validating the Elections and Boundaries Commission Report or we pass a Bill dealing with some social policy and so on, we are about good governance and the EBC is fundamental. Elections are fundamental for good governance. Any attempt to undermine the electoral process by unlawful and unethical means, undermines democracy and the society as a whole. Mr. Speaker, if you challenge anybody to find a country in the world where you have rigged elections and so on and you have democracy booming, you would not get it. You would never get a country in the world where you have rigged elections, thieving at elections, and have democracy too. You would not get it. So, Mr. Speaker, that is the critical point.

On this business of the EBC, there were several recommendations made by those commissioners. The Government owes the public a duty to inform them whether or not it has met and treated with the Elections and Boundaries Commission; whether it has provided the much needed resources to strengthen the institution, so that it would better effect, plan and implement the holding of elections. That is the commitment! The Government has to tell us! Or, is it that we just wait for elections and then they would start to sniff around when they believe that the UNC is strong and that the hon. Member for Couva North is on his way back to becoming the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago—*[Interruption]*—

Is it that the government would wait until it senses that the hon. Member for Couva North is on his way to Whitehall and then would raise its hands and shout that the EBC has UNC people there? Is that what the government is waiting for? Is it that it waits for six months before the general election when they sense that the polls could suggest that the UNC could form the Government or take the majority of the councils that they would suddenly zoom in on the EBC to undermine its integrity and then legitimize post-election instability and violence?

There are Members on the other side—Mr. Speaker, you know it is not my habit, to call names and so on; I never do that—who lack the authority to speak on election-related violence. I would not go further with that. There are very few Members on the other side who may have the authority to speak about the conduct

of elections and so on. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the matter with the EBC in the courts and so on, the recommendations include one to ensure security at the EBC; security of all their offices and data record banks and so on. Mr. Speaker, as we have heard before, it was a case of registration cards, or what was being passed as registration cards, showing up in a garden in St. Joseph. Tomorrow it could be in a lagoon in Oropouche. It depends on whom they want to set up.

The Government should face up to the responsibility of providing resources to the EBC for the conduct of elections; that is critical. Our friend, the Member for Arouca North, as the Minister with responsibility for local government, should also remind us of his commitment to ensuring that the local government institutions would function independently, without the undermining of democracy through CEPEP and URP. When we raised the issue of equality, our good Friend, the member for Arouca North, rose and recited in Hindi, and translated it to English to suggest to us that he knows of every culture and religion. But we reminded him that in the Hindu sacred text even the evil king spoke great Hindi when he was about to kidnap Sita. *[Interruption]* The evil king was the first kidnapper that they followed. The Member for Arouca North would know that you could recite beautiful poetry in Hindi and then go and commit a criminal act

Let me continue with the recommendations which dealt along two lines. The internal operation of EBC is one issue dealing with security for election officers, field investigators procedures and recruiting workers for the EBC. It is very interesting to them that the Member for Diego Martin West, the authority on the EBC—let us put it that way. *[Interruption]* Well, I lose track of all of them now. They introduced a new programme for the Member for Diego Martin West today. The Member for Diego Martin East, the authority on the EBC, spoke today in this Parliament—the records are public—and threatened the employees of the EBC. He said, “We in the PNM would keep our eyes on the Elections and Boundaries Commission, the electoral process and that the UNC...” That is what he said. That is the attitude. That is on public record. We are keeping an eye on those UNC people in the EBC. So whoever is UNC in the EBC—I do not know whether they are UNC, PNM or anything, but now you have those workers scared.

It is not surprising that the Member for Diego Martin East would do that because that is how he talks to the doctors as well. Today we have no San Fernando General Hospital because he is keeping an eye on the doctors. *[Interruption]* He has only one friend down there. Mr. Speaker, it is wrong for Ministers to threaten workers in any establishment—private or public. But threatening workers who are employed at the Elections and Boundaries Commission is beyond pardon.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

I am happy to hear the Member for Arouca North say that that was not a threat, so I am hoping that the Member would clarify that in the press, and apologize if he said it. The Member should not let the EBC workers feel that he stood here in the Parliament and threatened them because that same attitude is what has led to the eradication of the health sector—one-man demolition job—and now it is EBC. You could save Health tomorrow if you have a Cabinet reshuffle. Mr. Speaker, we cannot threaten workers in the state sector, particularly workers in such a sensitive institution as the EBC. This is what the Government has done today via the EBC expert, the Member for Diego Martin East. I am hoping he would clarify and apologize, if necessary, to those workers.

The first recommendation of the Commission was that the commissioners at the EBC tender their resignations to His Excellency the President forthwith. That was the subject of enormous controversy. The commissioners felt that there was no basis for that, and that it was part of a wider plot hatched at Balisier House, involving Members of the Government, to remove members of an independent institution so that they could steal their way into government. That was the conspiracy that came out. Someone has to take responsibility for all that has happened. We cannot move on and nobody takes responsibility for anything. All during election time, the workers there were UNC; cards in the garden; undermining; but once the election was out of the way and they have returned to office, the attitude is to leave the EBC until the next election.

Another recommendation of the EBC related to polling-day activities. This is another major issue, which I might not have time to go into but I am sure my other colleagues would continue with it. We have reports of polling-day activities, of the use of terror; criminal elements in several constituencies including Tunapuna, I understand. In San Fernando West we have information on undermining of democracy on election day. Mr. Speaker, these are serious issues. The Government may choose to laugh because they laugh at everything.

Mr. Speaker, you may be interested to know that there was a recent study in 2002 done by the State Department of the United States on Jamaica, highlighting the political link to violent crime there. It is only a matter of time before authorities outside Trinidad and Tobago would focus on that link in this country. That has implications for investment, aid, trade, economic development, immigration laws and so on. That is not the road along which we should be taking this country; a country that is so well blessed with natural resources; well educated citizens, who are exposed to cultures, that themselves are strong, cultures that help us to adapt.

It is a sad day when Trinidad and Tobago would become a country where businessmen and women are seeking to migrate. A few weeks ago in Gulf City, San Fernando, a couple there reported in the press that they were robbed for the sixth time, and that was the last time because they left. But, Mr. Speaker, that is just one. It is a very interesting dimension that what is happening in this country today—Mr. Speaker, do you know that local businessmen go abroad for a few months for freedom; to walk around the shopping malls; the streets; where another country could protect them and when they come back to Trinidad and Tobago they go back into their self-made jails at home, where at 6 o'clock in the evening, before it gets dark, if you call the businessman he has to stay at home.

So when you want to take a stroll in the park; a walk with your children and so on, you really have to go into somebody else's country for their country and their police and their laws to protect you. Here you have to conduct your business and stay in your jail and that is related to elections, because if elections are unfair; if elections are not free; you would have a situation where [*Interruption*] I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker, I am new in this business. They can walk safely in the Government quarters at Federation Park and Westmoorings but the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago do not all live in Government VIP quarters so they really have to walk on the streets with the danger of being kidnapped, murdered and robbed.

As I said, this is related to elections. Again, when we look at those countries in the world where you have electoral processes that are undermined, where are the citizens of those countries? They are not in the country. They could be found in London, New York, Miami, Toronto and doing well. Recently there was a huge fraternity of businessmen from the Caribbean who came to watch cricket. They are all doing well in North America but they are developing another society, not ours and that is because they are not safe here so they will not stay here.

What we are saying is that the economy is linked to the democratic process. If you have elections that are undermined and questionable then citizens lose faith in the electoral process. If you lose faith in the electoral process then you lose faith in the country. It is just a small distance between losing faith in the electoral process and losing faith in the country. There is a narrow line between loss of faith in elections and loss of faith in country; they go hand in hand. So it will not surprise anybody that a lot of our citizens and, generally, the ones with the expertise, experience, education and so on, would move abroad.

My friends on the other side should not take that lightly. There are known cases—I also have colleagues who are in the Cabinet of other governments in the

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Third World and so on. There are some countries where a Cabinet Minister would confess to you that all his family do not live in the country where they are Cabinet Ministers. Imagine that you are a Cabinet Minister; you are part of a government and your children cannot even live there.

I want to wind up now but just recapping briefly my contribution. I sought to dispel the myth that was being peddled all the time about the great mystery witness, Richard Bickram. I hope they never raise that name again, at least, not here, in the courthouse maybe or at Balisier House where they owe him US \$100,000. I am sure the Member for San Fernando East would find Mr. Bickram and honour his commitment to him, as he had been honouring his commitment in other areas. I am sure that the Member for San Fernando East would ensure this Mr. Bickram himself does not suffer a worse destiny.

Mr. Speaker, my other point related to the undermining of the democratic process. The most we can say is that we hope that there are a few Members on the other side who would take heed; who would listen and who would get an opportunity to whisper to their Leader.

With those words, I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Manohar Ramsaran (*Chaguanas*): Mr. Speaker, when I received this letter dated May 05 from the Parliament:

“Dear Member

The Validation of the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, Local Government Bill, 2003.

I have been directed by the Speaker to inform you that he has been advised by the Leader of the House that it is the intention of the Government to move the Validation of the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, Local Government Bill, 2003 and to be taken through all its stages at the next sitting of the House to be held on Friday, May 09, 2003 at 1.30 p.m., provided it is completed in the Senate by that time.”

I was really appalled and surprised. When I received this I said that this report was sent to the Minister in July 2002. Of course, we know that there was this time lapse until the election was held. But since then to now, Mr. Speaker, is it incompetence that after the election was held and this new Parliament convened the Minister now remembers, he gets “vaps” that he has to validate this report? This is five months after the new Government was sworn in. I think that this is incompetence to its highest degree. That is the reason that the Ministry of Local

Government is in a mess and it is being eroded day by day. I will elaborate as I go on. As election is in the air we should be debating the contents of the report, not just to come to validate. This shows that somebody is not working. If the Minister was doing his job and not negotiating with contractors for certain things, he would have concentrated on the work on his desk and ensured that this—

Mr. Narine: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Standing Order 36(5), the Member is imputing improper motives.

Hon. Members: But he did not say anything.

Mr. Narine: He said I am negotiating with contractors. I am not.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the words used by the Member do not imply that but we all know what he means. Perhaps you ought not to go down that road, Member.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but had he been doing his work and dusted this report he would have remembered that, at least, he should come to the Parliament to have the report validated. That was not done and this is incompetence.

The Prime Minister was on television yesterday speaking about URP and I have been in this House on numerous occasions talking about what is happening in URP, but every time I speak the Prime Minister would get up and explain what is happening in URP. Even the press conferences, the Minister is not invited and one cannot blame the hon. Prime Minister for that because of the incompetence. Today it shows that there is no inclination by the Minister himself to deal with local government. What would happen? CEPEP was created. Mr. Speaker, we talk about empowering our communities. I was invited to one such conference at the United Nations: “Government Partnering Communities to Serve Governments and to make Governments Better”. Mr. Speaker, what we have seen in this country is the eroding of local government, and it is happening more quickly than we imagine.

Do you know what is happening with CEPEP, Mr. Speaker? Let me put it on record that I have nothing against those people whom we see in their blue uniforms earning an honest livelihood. When the Minister comes to this Parliament so many months later to validate this Bill, it shows us the Government’s disregard for local government. Mr. Speaker, CEPEP was created—again, I want to put on the record that I have nothing against these people with their blue uniforms, who are working well. I do have a problem with the people who are hired as contractors. I spoke to the CEPEP workers, who told me that they receive \$1,400 per month. What could these people do with that?

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. RAMSARAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

The Government boasts about taking the people out of poverty and about having people in the East/West Corridor employed. We have a problem with that. But then you erode the authority of the Ministry of Local Government and hire these people to do the same work that workers at the Ministry of Local Government were destined to do. Who are the union representatives of these people? What are the workers' rights? Are these people protected by any law? They could be fired willy-nilly. Maybe if it is that they are aligned to the UNC, they could be fired.

When people are hired by the local government authorities in this country they have a permanent job; they have retirement benefits and so on. But when these people are kept in a hand-to-mouth situation, give them a little, have them eat and drink a little, it is okay with the Government I do not share that view. I feel that we must empower our people and empower them in a real way so that we could expand the workforce in the local bodies to ensure that the job that is done by CEPEP is done by the relevant authority.

In my humble opinion, the local government bodies in Trinidad and Tobago are irrelevant. I said it the last time; the Prime Minister should just get up and say: I have abandoned local government. There is nothing that these people could do. There are one or two gangs in each corporation with five members. If you investigate that, you would see that they are short-staffed but nobody could be hired. I do not know the reason for that. Our local government bodies are being eroded.

I would hate to be the Minister responsible for local government and to have it destroyed under my hand. If you look at the headline in today's newspaper it says: "URP goes CEPEP". This is another indication that a Minister is presiding over the death of local government and if he has any decency he would offer his resignation and make way for Christine Sahadeo, rather than sending Pundit Maniedeo Persad out of the Senate. That is another issue I would come to later, Mr. Speaker, because there is much more than meets the eye with the firing of Pundit Maniedeo Persad.

This is what is causing the social problems in this country. When we have leaders—I am not talking about the community leaders now, I am talking about the Prime Minister and Members of the Cabinet—sending messages to our communities, to the poor and to the people who depend on handouts for survival—I was speaking to senior police officers—of course, I cannot call their names here—and what they were telling me—I am sure people listen to one or two of the radio stations. This morning I was talking to Dr. Rambachan on a

programme and he told me certain things about the same thing I am going to speak about. Police officers are caught between a rock and a hard place.

A crime is committed, relating to drugs, violence and so on. Law enforcement officers do not know how to move because on one hand there is the Prime Minister with his friends and gang leaders meeting—and it is the perception that these are the people who are perpetrating violence against our people. How then could a police constable in Chaguanas or in Cunupia apprehend smaller criminals in the society? They feel constrained by what is happening in this country. So when the Minister comes to validate this Bill five months later, it shows the disregard, the contempt with which local government is treated in this country.

The election that is expected before July 12 is a farce. It is giving people—they are like scapegoats; put them in front and have them shot. Councillors would come to me and say: We have no power; we have no authority; we have nothing to work with. URP was taken away from the UNC-controlled corporations so you cannot even go to the URP for some assistance to clean some drains. And they are talking about governance and giving confidence to the people.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, when we respond to discrimination in the workplace; when we voice our disgust at what is happening, people like the Member for Laventille East/Morvant will jump to racism. This is quite unfortunate. We are not fighting for racism. The United National Congress is fighting against racism. Understand that! There is a difference. They have to be blind not to see that. They have to be totally void of any sense of duty and responsibility not to see that.

I have spoken to one or two senior members of the PNM—we still talk; do not feel that we do not talk. When people are talking about the problems facing Trinidad and Tobago, they treat the Indo-Trinidadians within the PNM as though they do not exist. The problems in the country are being swept under the carpet.

When you look at Chaguanas, Caroni East and Couva North—all these constituencies and we did not plan it that way—75 to 80 per cent of the people are of East Indian origin. When we say they are disregarded, we are deemed racist. I want to repeat that the UNC—the Members of the Opposition—are not fighting for racism; we are fighting against racism. It was the United National Congress, which brought to the House the Equal Opportunity Act. We put that in place. This was no accident. It was brought to deal with the problems in the country and to ensure equity in our society. “URP goes Community-Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP)”.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. RAMSARAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Every time the Prime Minister says something, he contradicts the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and vice versa. I remember the Member talking about supporting a limited state of emergency. The Prime Minister said no state of emergency. The Member for Laventille East/Morvant said today that CEPEP went well. Hear what the Prime Minister had to say: “The Prime Minister admitted that all did not go well with CEPEP in the beginning and errors were made.” He said that it was a hurried job, Mr. Speaker. I want to put it on record that no government can fritter away \$400 million and tell the nation that it was a hurried job. That money must be accounted for and he must tell the country what he means by a hurried job and how the money was spent.

That is why we have a Parliament. That is why we have you in the Chair, Mr. Speaker. That is why we have to bring our problems to the fore to be discussed. All those errors that have been made will create social upheaval and the quicker we understand what is happening, the less trouble we get into.

The passion in my heart is because the local government authorities are being destroyed. This is something we must never preside over. It is time to empower the local government authorities. An ocean of corruption will be opened. When you hire your CEPEP gangs, there is no accountability. When CEPEP is hired, there is a contractor with five gangs who chooses them based on recommendations by the PNM and Members of Parliament. Here, there is open corruption. Had these people competed with other persons in the regional corporations for the jobs, it might have been a different colour. It is clear discrimination. I call on the Minister today—it is not the first time that I am doing so—he is presiding over the death of local government. We have all the evidence.

Had he been doing his job negotiating and not continuing this fierce attack against the chairmen and mayors of the UNC-led corporations, he would have had the time to be in his office. There were some threats to the life of the Mayor of Chaguanas and he decided to buy a gun. The record shows that the gun was bought for the mayor as the property of the regional corporation. The Member knows this. If the mayor demits office, the gun will remain with the mayor’s office. Had he been doing his work, we would not have been in the trouble we are in today.

My contribution has to do with empowering of people and I feel that it is extremely sad that we have evidence that people are being sidelined and pushed aside and things appear to be normal. My colleague said that people are leaving

this country in droves. We heard reports of people going abroad, running from Trinidad and Tobago and yet there are people on the other side getting on as if it were untrue. Mr. Speaker, we cannot hide the facts; we cannot sweep them under the carpet.

We must discuss the expansion of CEPEP in Parliament. Money is being spent. The whole question of CEPEP and its replacing URP must be discussed—look at the importance of URP in the social sector but suddenly he gets up and says he is going to disband URP. Is it because now he has jobs for his friends and his friends will control URP gangs and call themselves small businessmen? We are heading down the road of bad governance. We have this report here and when the time comes, we will go into it and talk about the flagrant disrespect, for that is taking place in the country as far as resources are concerned. We will come to that when we debate the report.

You can look at the distribution of the pie. When the PNM was in Opposition, I remember listening to some of their problems and trying to correct them, but what is happening today is total disrespect for what is said on this side. This country is divided.

We had an 18/18 election result. The country could not be governed for one year and in that year everything that you can imagine took place. Now we are back into a more acceptable type of government with a 20/16 situation, with 1,000 votes dividing the parties, yet we have this disrespect for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We would cry to high heaven that we become part of an Opposition that participates in the death of local government.

I mentioned before the farce of these councillors being put in front. They will be shot down—not with guns, of course—as politicians, because they cannot give anybody any service. Anybody who is true in his mind will support that.

We look at the whole question of discrimination. A question was answered last week about self-help. When I read through this document, Mr. Speaker, I found seven to ten projects in the UNC areas, especially in the Siparia and Penal/Debe Corporations. We were talking to the Chairman of the corporation. The projects will be handled by seven of the PNM local government candidates. They are doing little projects in their area.

What does this tell the people, Mr. Speaker? There are hundreds of applications for self-help in these said areas, but only seven to ten were approved and we have that information in this document. This is what is happening in the country. How would the 300,000 people who voted for the UNC feel when this sort of discrimination takes place? We are putting the facts on the table. We are

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. RAMSARAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

crying out. We want fair distribution. We cannot allow the present state of affairs to continue. If it does, then all the validation you are talking about will come to nought.

When I get up to speak about empowering our people, to get them a better standard of living, if you look at—local government in its responsibility for sports in the communities, you would see a few clubs here and there trying to hold sports together. What is Government doing at the local government level to empower our youth and our people? We heard so much talk about the youth when we had our campaign. What is happening with the youth today? Where are the programmes? I remember the Member for Tunapuna bringing a big Motion on the youth camps—Youth Apprentice Development Centres—where are they? They have not reopened since PNM took office. They used to come here and cry for the youth. I remember the Member for Tunapuna almost shedding tears and throwing away his books and so on. What has happened since? Can the Member tell me what has happened with the youth camps? Nothing has happened!

They go about preaching and talking to people. I am pleading. This is not an attack on anybody. We must return to the days of equitable distribution of the wealth of Trinidad and Tobago. We cannot have our taxpayers—I was speaking to the Member for Caroni East this afternoon and the entire area has been without water for the last five days. When these things happen, how could a Bill to validate a report give the population a sense of security? Something is happening in this country and happening very quickly.

If the Government is not serious about governing this country and giving the people their just due, this country is headed for trouble. I am not the one to cry doom and gloom. We are talking about the reality. We are talking about people seeing the discrimination. We are talking about people defending what they do. The Member for Diego Martin East got up and threatened the EBC. We took it when we were in Opposition. We thought he was trying to make the dead walk and we forgave him because we thought he had some illusions of madness. Today, as Leader of Government Business, he gets up and says he is going to keep his eyes on the people at the EBC.

I think one cannot threaten independent institutions in this country. We are doing it piece by piece. You attack the integrity of the EBC; you destroy local government. What are we doing? Do you remember the last term, Mr. Speaker, 1991-1995, when they threatened all the commissions? They destroyed your predecessor—locked up the Speaker. These are dangerous messages to our country, hence a discussion I had with the police officers. Their hands are tied.

These are the people who advised the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Security.

I heard it said by the man himself that he stopped the kidnap of two children. What is happening? What message is he sending to our young people? Condoms in school. The whole society is being eroded by a careless Government. We have to understand the message that is being sent.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member for Chaguanas, if you can get back to the Bill, I would appreciate it.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Mr. Speaker, my whole purpose is to look at the destruction of the local government authorities that will lead to destruction across the social fabric of our society. Once you destroy the social fabric of any country, that country is in trouble. It can lead to communism or any other “ism”. When you destroy the independence of our people, when you make them feel that they are not worth anything, you know the answer. Anything can happen. Any amount of evil can happen. I am trying to link all these things together to show how various ministries and departments are eroding our society. They giggled when I mentioned condoms, Mr. Speaker. I read the newspaper and saw it there. What is happening? How could we preach to people and ask them to go one way, when they are practising the other?

The Minister of Local Government, if he is fair and honest, would say that local government is being eroded. What is right today should have been right yesterday. What was wrong yesterday could be and should be wrong today. I remember sitting in this Parliament and hearing the same Member for Arouca North criticizing the then Minister of Local Government for going into people’s areas and paving roads. That is happening in all the constituencies today. The chairmen and mayors of the corporations are not aware that roads are being paved in their area. I filed a question and I hope that the answer will be honest.

This is another erosion of our democratic system. When the institution of the Speaker is brought into disrepute and your rulings are not carried out, we have a problem. You ruled that certain Members do certain things to answer my question, which is question No. 1 on the Order Paper. I checked with the Library and up to last Friday that answer had not yet been lodged.

What are we telling the people of this country? Where is the democratic process? When we were in Opposition, blows were flying. There were newspaper headlines about corruption. What is happening today? The sum of \$18 billion last year, \$20 billion this year: where is the evidence of anything happening in this country? What is happening? People read the newspaper; they know the budget.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. RAMSARAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

What is happening? You open a few UNC projects, nothing happens in 18 months, and you come here talking about performance and a vision.

Mr. Speaker, the message to the young people is that the Government does not care about them. This comes across in such a manner that people do not feel secure. Over the last 18 months, I have not accepted or even looked for employment. I want to be on the trail talking to young people, getting the feel of them. There is a sense of hopelessness. There is no new employment. The business sector in this country has slowed to such a state that there is no employment. When the UNC was in office, the PSIP projects were there and people were employed. What is happening now? You have to be in such a way that if you are looking at employment CEPEP, URP is closed to half the population. It bleeds my heart to say this in this Parliament this evening, but I am asking the authorities—we have senior Cabinet members here—to give power back to local government.

I would have loved to read this article this afternoon, “CEPEP goes to Local Government.” Mr. Speaker, can you imagine yourself as a local government candidate asking someone to vote for you and someone in the crowd asking what you can do for him? You would have to say, “Nothing,” because that is the honest answer. If there are honest councillors, that is what the answer would be. How can they get people to come out to vote? I agree with my Friend. They are destroying the democratic processes in the country. People will not vote for them because “CEPEP is cleaning the stones and doing a better job than you; you have no power to do anything, why should I vote for you?”

This is the frightening situation we live in today when we have our people being put into war, so to speak, with rifles aimed at their heads. That is what it is.

I remember the Member for Laventille East/Morvant pleading with us about Laventille. Now the reverse is in Chaguanas and elsewhere and it is okay. That is the problem and it must not be like that. It is on record that this never happened to us. You talk about discrimination; that never happened under the UNC. Criminal behaviour in the URP never happened under the UNC. All the criminal activities—and the newspapers are there to prove that we are right. There were 78 murders in Laventille West and Laventille East. [*Interruption*] This is where I said a wrong yesterday could not be a right today.

You have to understand that our country is being destroyed, not slowly, but quickly. How can they tell their people that having 78 murders in five months are

okay? How can they tell them that kidnapping—a new phenomenon in our society—is okay? This is the attitude. We do not care for people's lives. We do not care for people's well-being. We care about our own and the faster we learn this, the better for Trinidad and Tobago. We have to appreciate the problems. We just cannot turn a blind eye. We cannot say that things will be okay. I do not know if they are hoping for a miracle, but miracles seldom happen when there are uncaring people dealing with social issues.

If you listen to some of the call-in programmes. People were promised a national insurance increase \$1,000 in the budget. Where is that increase? How do people survive in this country? The cost of living—CEPEP \$1,400 a month.

Mr. Speaker: Let me appeal again to you to speak to the question. Most Members who spoke before spoke about CEPEP. May I suggest you consider a Motion on CEPEP, but please, if you stick to the Bill before us, I would appreciate it.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Mr. Speaker, I repeat and you may accuse me of being repetitious. If the Government does not look at what is taking place with discrimination—they talk about discrimination in employment practices; they talk about the whole question of sending wrong signals to our community—our community could erupt. When there is no bread on the table, we can understand the seriousness of the problem.

There was a question today about the Dead Animal Retrieval Team. That again is another erosion—small but significant. That was the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government. That, too, has been taken away from local government. I might ask the question: What then is the responsibility of local government? *[Interruption]* That was the responsibility of local government, which was removed. Even that was removed from the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Local Government. The hopes of people are dwindling.

I am sure that despite the amount of money that is being spent to launch this Dead Animal Retrieval Team, the country is not aware of who would remove a dead animal. We all knew to call the local government authority to have these things removed. When you call them, they are at a loss. It happened with me, so I know.

Somebody reported that a cow was knocked down on the highway. People called me and we took about two days to find out which was the relevant authority. Now, it has gone to Solid Waste Management Company Limited. We have to treat these things seriously.

I call on the Prime Minister, as the leader of the Government and head of the

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. RAMSARAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Cabinet to return—if you do not have confidence in the Minister, do not destroy local government. He can appoint a Minister he likes—a Minister who is competent to run the Ministry of Local Government.

We know that CEPEP was created to do the work of local government. We cannot deny that Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE) is eroding local government. I want to warn this House that we can no longer sit by and allow the death of local government.

What manifesto can the PNM come up with for local government elections? What are they going to tell people they are going to do? They have eroded everything from local government—down to the removal of dead animals. I am calling on the Prime Minister once more to understand certain basic rules used to govern a society like ours. We have a society which, whether we like it or not, has been divided over time. They cannot govern Trinidad and Tobago only to win elections. They have to govern Trinidad and Tobago to avoid social problems and social upheaval. In the constituencies that we represent, there is every form of discrimination. Farm lands in Curepe—the best agricultural lands in the country—are being prepared for housing without notification to the people who plant these lands. What signals are they sending?

This country is sitting on a time bomb and the leadership must be blamed for this. We have to ask the Prime Minister, please to do something to give confidence back to our society. The people are asking hour by hour why they are not being given employment. Why are the taps dry? Why are roads not being paved? The whole country has shut down and this Bill for the validation of the Fourth Report of the EBC is making us feel that local government is so important, I cannot help feeling that this is another con job because no longer can we say that the local government body will give us any inspiration.

Although we had independence in 1962, up until maybe 1990 we had the confidence that even though we were not in a PNM constituency, at least there was the local government authority that would look at our daily needs—water trucking, cleaning drains and picking up garbage. What is happening now is that the anomalies that have existed over the last year have worsened the problem—if you can say that—when you have the Minister—and I can describe him in some terms which I do not want to do this evening—who is now in total control of the local government bodies and who would have to approve everything.

I understand that the Mayor of Chaguanas wanted an Eid programme costing about \$800 and the Minister refused to sign that. So there was no Eid programme. There were a Christmas programme and a Divali programme, but no Eid

programme. This is confusing us. The local government authority is an important authority. It is something you can look to for redress.

We do not cause the division. We inherited what we have. We did not choose to live in Caroni or Port of Spain. This is what happened to most of us and now that we are here, we should have some hope to share in the national pie. If the Central Government is only interested in winning elections—with which I have no problem as it is a political party and wants to do that—at least the local government authority, which we depend upon, should not be starved for funding. He should take note of that and ask his Minister how much labour is available to local government authorities. When he looks at CEPEP and URP, where they are hiring people to do the work of the local bodies, if these bodies are empowered, let us get these things working so that the people of Central Trinidad or from wherever they are could have confidence in the local government councillor.

Erosion of the powers of the local councillors could lead one day to the erosion of confidence in the Members of Parliament. We have the system set up where the Members of Parliament and all of us, whether Government or Opposition, depend on our councillors to carry out certain responsibilities. We call our mayors and our chairmen and ask them to do something for us and all they can tell us is that they do not have the resources and that we should talk to this one or that one. This lack of confidence in themselves could eventually lead to the collapse of democracy in our country. The Members of Parliament (MPs) will then be eroded. MPs, especially when they are as busy as the Minister of Health who, if he is not talking to Dr. Chatoorgoon, is in Cuba, have no time for their constituents and will need the councillors to do the work for them.

I heard a call-in programme about the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro where it was alleged that the MP said that he would give nothing to Barrackpore because Barrackpore people never voted for the PNM. These threats erode the whole system of democracy. This is what is happening. There is a classic example, which I would like the Member to know. This was corrected under the UNC. Chaguanas has always been Opposition territory. The Central Government would starve the Chaguanas Corporation of funding. They would apply for a certain amount of money and the councillors would put forward their case for each electoral district. When the money is released from Central Government, it would be cut by more than half at times.

The former chairman of the county council would neglect Enterprise North and South because they did not vote for the ULF or the DLP. What happened over time is that because the neglect starts in Port of Spain—the money comes there,

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. RAMSARAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

so, okay if you can do that from Port of Spain and give us half of what we ask for, we are five of the seven councillors representing the ULF, DLP or UNC, we will share the money because we are the majority. We do the same thing you do, who suffers? Supporters of the PNM; people who voted PNM all their lives—they suffer.

The undermining of local government caused the poverty and discrimination. When you practise it, somebody will suffer. These people voted PNM all their lives and when I went in—

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: When I went there to campaign in 1995, Mr. Speaker, there were dirt roads. There was no electricity in most of the areas. There was no water supply. I went there to campaign one day and I left. I told the people it does not make sense if the people live in these conditions and I offer them hope, to think that they would vote for me. Of course, they did not. However, during my term, with the help of the corporation and self-help, every road was given some attention; some were paved as modern roads in the Enterprise area. Anybody can see that. That was done under the UNC. The discrimination ended because the local government bodies were given their money and they could have shared it with Enterprise North and South. For the first time, pipe-borne water reached the area and people's lives were uplifted.

I am telling the Government, when it discriminates against people, it discriminates against people who voted for the PNM. Unlike UNC and ULF areas, people in the East/West Corridor will vote heavily against the ULF. In Central Trinidad, every time there is an election, at least 3,000 persons will vote for the PNM. When they suffer these people, they suffer their own. Do they not have any compassion for the people who live there? When we argue for them, we are not being racist, we are arguing against racism. We know every time he gets up he likes to evoke this racist talk. I want him to stop that. I want him to understand that for us to build Trinidad and Tobago, we have to give each one another due respect.

Another is confidence in the people in our institutions and local government, not the least of which is the Speaker. One has to be careful because when one does these things, one erode the confidence of people. One talks about racism;

one make statements that would impact negatively on the people of the country. This should stop immediately.

I am calling on the Government to let us forge partnerships. For example, the West Indies is playing cricket against Australia. When we look at the beating we suffered, I am sure that, across the board, everybody who knows about cricket felt depressed about that. So, too, when you govern the country you must make sure people feel comfortable and happy and not defile our country in everything.

Sometimes our politicians do such a good job in dividing us that it reflects on the sports field and all over the country. This is another institution that we have to look at. We talk about social delivery systems. You can talk about sport for an hour. How could we have confidence to build Trinidad and Tobago? I appeal to the Government to let us put our differences aside to move this country forward.

I want to warn the PNM about what people are saying. People are saying that everything the Government does, it does to win votes. It does nothing to empower the people. It does nothing to get the people a better quality of life. It just does things that sound good and, at the end of the day, nothing is delivered. I am sure you know that. Do not just let us come to Parliament and talk about racism and alienation.

When we look at the whole question of local government; when we look at the various institutions—National Commission for Self-Help and HYPE, I hear the Prime Minister mumble from time to time that, yes, we are going to give you. He is not giving us. This is the problem with the PNM. They give “us”. It is Trinidad and Tobago. When they want to have 400 CEPEP gangs across the country, let it be for the people. Let the people apply. Put the terms and conditions in the newspapers, so that they can apply to be contractors and give it to those who qualify, not party supporters. We have heard many stories coming from these programmes and the stories that you get are that that is there to divide our country; to put people against other people; to make people mistrust the people at ground level.

I was talking to some people this morning and I asked a young girl a question about what is happening in the country. Her reply was: “Politicians, Mr. Ramsaran, with due respect to you.”—She had told me before that she had never voted for us, but she said that she had no time for them. I told her that CEPEP might “mash-up”. This is the vexing question that I am facing. I again bring it to the table that the politicians are setting wrong examples. We have to lead so that others will follow us.

Were it not for the nature of politics in this country and the Speaker, this

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. RAMSARAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

debate would have been called off long ago and we would have lost the vote and gone home. This is to keep the institution alive and I congratulate you on, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that we must not disrespect the laws of the land. If we do this, we are in trouble. The Prime Minister cannot deny that his meeting with the so-called community leaders has resulted in the serious crimes we have today.

Mr. Speaker: There must come a time when forbearance ceases to be a virtue. I have patiently listened to you. I have given you wide latitude, but I am appealing to you. If you do not come back on track, I would have to ask you to take your seat.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: The track really is one that has been opened up, Mr. Speaker. I never intended to disrespect your ruling, but I am attempting to get the Government to think about local the government institution. Let us put personalities aside and respect the institution. Let us understand that there is a role for local government. Let us understand that we have 14 regional corporations and the framers and movers of our Constitution would have had certain things in mind for the local government authority. Let us not undermine these institutions. Let us give them the authority. Let us not have parallel institutions doing their work. Let us sit as a responsible Parliament and give them their due. Of course, they fall within the purview of the Auditor General. They have institutions that are well defined unlike the other programmes—you said do not talk about CEPEP, so I will not talk about CEPEP—where there are no unions set up for the people. When you have local government, you have to pay pension when they resign. When these workers resign, what will they get? Will they have to line up for old age pension again? Will they have worked their whole life without a saving?

Let us empower our local government authority. When we return, I will go into this further discrimination. Just to make an observation before I take my seat—I want to put this on record so that the Minister would think about it when he comes to debate the report itself. The population has shifted. In Appendix A, we have cities and boroughs. In the City of Port of Spain, 31,928 electors; in the City of San Fernando, 42,458 electors; in the Borough of Arima, 21,625; in the Borough of Point Fortin, 13,601; in the Borough of Chaguanas, 46,532—the largest borough in Trinidad and Tobago by a long shot. It is even larger than San Fernando and Port of Spain.

When you look at the moneys allocated to each of these Corporations, you will realize that Chaguanas is way behind Point Fortin and Arima; even that the URP is in Arima and Point Fortin and there is none in Chaguanas. This disparity and discrimination must end so that when people look at the allocations that are

given to them they would feel they have an equal share of the pie and that whichever government is in office, once there is that fair distribution of goods, services and opportunities; they would feel there is some hope.

If we continue to discriminate and split hairs—look to see who did not buy a gun; look to see who has a flat house with a car parked under it—the mayor had a flat house, Mr. Speaker, and the Member said he had a car under it—and when you could deal with this fairly, Trinidad and Tobago would be a better place. I ask the Minister, to take these problems back to his ministry and I am ask the hon. Prime Minister to let the Minister do some work.

Mr. Chandresh Sharma (*Fyzabad*): Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us to validate the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission under the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap. 25:50, for the purpose of the local government election, was moved by the Minister of Local Government, the Member for Arouca North.

In his presentation, the Minister identified a number of areas which I would like to treat with. Speaking later in the debate was the Member for Diego Martin East. One of the things he treated with was the EBC and his desire to monitor that institution. It is a very frightening development. The question is: Why does the Government want to monitor the EBC? He made reference to the fact that the same people are still there.

What does that comment mean, coming from a member of Government who is also a senior Cabinet Minister? What is the intention behind monitoring the EBC? Is it because, during the commission of enquiry into the EBC, it was documented that the Member for Diego Martin East lied? The answer is yes. He did not speak the truth and, having not spoken the truth, he now has to defend it and wants to scare them. He wants to tell them that he is now in government and that he can use muscle power for which this government is well known. We are in contact with the criminal gangs; we know about kidnappings. What is the message he is sending to those who work at the EBC? Be careful! We are the PNM. We are in Government. We can take care of you. We can lick you up. We can cause you to be kidnapped or murdered or destroyed. It must be something, because it is not a good message being sent. It is a very frightening message more so for people who are prepared to serve at that level.

I want to draw the Minister's attention and that of those opposite me to section 136 of the Constitution. It talks about the removal of the Commissioner of the EBC is a procedure. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that an attempt was made by an

Validation of the EBC Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

office holder to remove a commissioner. Did that removal come about from the meeting with the then Prime Minister and the then President? Why was an illegal attempt made at it? It appears that the Prime Minister, having met with the then President at his weekly meetings, they both instigated the removal of the EBC commissioner.

Section 136 is very clear. The framers of our Constitution designed it because they anticipated that people like the Member for San Fernando East may become Prime Minister one day. There was that degree of fear. The Constitution is to protect people in Trinidad and Tobago. It was not put there by accident. If you look at what obtains in the country today, you would see that the framers of the Constitution were extremely clear.

We are seeing where a sitting Prime Minister meets with criminal elements in the middle of the highest number of murders in any country in the Caribbean—the highest incidence of kidnapping, the highest incidence of rape and the highest incidence of even motor vehicle accidents. Why is this happening and why is the Member for Diego Martin East speaking in the debate today? He must have prepared notes. He must have discussed what he was going to say at Cabinet yesterday—that he will scare the EBC—which was sanctioned by the Cabinet of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. We will get them frightened and they will resign. But the United National Congress will stand in defence of all the people and of all the institutions of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall, during the EBC enquiry—the Member for Diego Martin East introduced the EBC—at no time were any allegations made against any commissioner, nor were any of the commissioners required by the enquiry to appear before it to answer any allegations. Why was an attempt made to remove a commissioner? I am advancing that it was the work of the Prime Minister then and now and was intended for a purpose. It was intended to signal to those who offer themselves for service to Trinidad and Tobago to follow the Government's instructions, dance to its drumbeat or get out. The PNM has said that. Remember the words of the first Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams? Not a dog bark. That is why we see [*Interruption*] playing an important role.

PNM is in Government and suddenly thousands of dogs and cats are dying every day for the first time in the history of the country. I understand that the society in Port of Spain is very concerned. The United Nations might have to get involved. That is what the PNM has reduced this country to.

Imagine a Cabinet that sits and talks about establishing an institute to remove dead dogs and cats. There are people dying; there is no medicine in the hospitals; the mortuary does not have space.

My Friend, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant—look at what they have reduced him to—removing dead dogs and cats. The only time he made the newspapers is when he removed dead dogs and cats.

A young man used to stutter so he went up to a lady and said: “Madam, I want a f-f-f-few grains of matches.” I would not say the second part. The commissioners of the EBC were given no opportunity to correct or contradict any statement made at the enquiry. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago established the commission of enquiry, appointed the commissioners and gave them their mandate. This cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

What was their mandate and given by whom? It was given by the Prime Minister of the country. It is the Prime Minister who appoints. Of course, he uses the office of the President.

Mr. Manning: What is the role of the Cabinet?

Mr. C. Sharma: I will tell you the role of the Cabinet. The role of the Cabinet is to appoint the chairman of the SRC, get the Ministers and the Prime Minister’s salary to be increased and treat differently two days later.

The commission of enquiry made 23 recommendations. Remember who sat on the commission of enquiry? There is no need to call their names. No opportunities were given to those who managed the EBC. Mr. Speaker, you must appreciate that the services of the officers of the EBC are used all over the world. I was in South Africa a couple of years ago and the EBC was assisting the government there. They assisted the Government in Nigeria, in Guyana and in other islands as well. So the EBC commissioners are well known for their work; very distinguished men of Trinidad and Tobago, but under tremendous attack by the PNM.

They made 23 recommendations and, of course, you know one person did not vote, but one of the recommendations was very instructive—that a suitably qualified person in management, with a knowledge of human resources and information systems be recruited on contract to be the Chief Election Officer. The Prime Minister made the exact recommendation before the Commission made its recommendation. You see the connection? The Prime Minister is writing the report of the enquiry or making recommendations. It cannot be that the Prime Minister, before this was made public, talked about an officer.

Mr. Manning: What kind of officer?

Mr. C. Sharma: I will come to it just now. We are here until about 10.00 tonight. We will have dinner and talk again. We will talk in the tearoom, too.

When the Prime Minister made the recommendation, it meant that he was acting in concert with. The same thing obtains with the Piarco enquiry. You see the crisis this country is facing. This is why this report is late. It is late because of the Government. The report was submitted on time.

Mr. Manning: We will put you under investigation.

Mr. C. Sharma: Who cares whether you investigate me or not. Do not threaten me, Sir! Do not threaten me at all! I am clean. I have four children—none outside. I have three bank accounts—all in the Integrity Commission report. I bat very carefully. I play wind ball cricket—not hardball. *[Interruption]* Do not try that! Hon. Prime Minister, I do not make duck. You know after duck is what? Luck. The Prime Minister, although he might be making a joke means it, you know. Next thing, I end up dead or somebody kidnaps me. Please do not have the Dead Animal Retrieval Team (DART) remove me. Call Dass.

I am asking whether the Fourth Report of the EBC dated July 8, 2000 has been in the possession of this Government since last year. Is it at fault for not bringing it earlier? Why choose to bring it at this time? There must be a reason. Local government election is due. The Prime Minister yesterday, at another place, said that he is going to convert URP similar to CEPEP. What is the relation with the EBC report today? He has identified candidates and they are being empowered with CEPEP contracts—URP handouts. That is why Government is bringing it here now. This is the pattern we have seen. This is why the Member for Diego Martin East is threatening to keep his eyes on the EBC.

7.00 p.m.:

The Chief Elections Officer may not be removed from office, save, in accordance with section 121 of the Constitution. The EBC and its officers are protected by the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, but the PNM is making every effort to remove them from office; by every means available to them, the use of muscle power included. It is a dangerous thing when a government is going that way.

The Prime Minister feels he can come and say: “I am going to give CEPEP \$400 million.” I want to tell the Prime Minister he will not be allowed to treat the people of Fyzabad the way he thinks he could. This Member of Parliament is

fearless and is not scared of his threats and the use of muscle power by him, the police, or any Member on that side. I stand very strong—ghee. He should not let the blue lights go on him. [*Interruption*] Blue food is creole food.

The Chief Elections Officer cannot be removed, except by the provisions of the Constitution. Why is the PNM so determined to destroy the EBC in its current manifestation? In the past, the PNM hoodwinked this country; they abused all the state agencies. It is very easy to relate it back to history. The Member for San Fernando East entered Parliament in 1971, when there was a no-vote campaign. No one had to vote for him to come here. He ran against himself. We know what happened in 1990. The PNM was involved in the acts of 1990 in some ways; it encouraged and promoted them. There was also an organization called SOPO. Also, for the first time, a sitting Prime Minister was removed and replaced by someone who did not win the election. Having done that, the Prime Minister went on a spending spree; he spent millions upon millions of dollars to win the election.

The Member for Arouca North spoke about 15,000 persons per electoral district. I want to relate that to something. Mr. Speaker, this PNM is a very frightening PNM. I have young children and I am extremely worried about their future under this PNM and so are thousands of parents. The Member—I have not finished with the Member for Diego Martin East, I will come back in a minute—for Arouca North spoke about 15,000 persons per electoral district, as the Fourth Report recommends. This House obtained an answer to a question some time ago, where it identified 295 projects implemented by the National Commission for Self-Help. The PNM, knowing that local government election is due, used the National Commission for Self Help and implemented 85 per cent of the projects in PNM areas. That would automatically go into the electoral districts where those 15,000 persons may reside.

In fact, in Laventille alone there are 50 projects out of 295. How is it that a Government can discriminate so much? How can that Government sit in Cabinet and say: “Listen, you see where UNC people are? Nothing or very little for them. We have 295 projects, we are the Government, let us do the majority.” How can the PNM Government—there were Prime Ministers Williams, George Chambers, ANR Robinson and Panday; this never obtained. What has happened Prime Minister and Member for San Fernando East? Why out of 295 projects—it does not stop there at all. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it does not stop there at all. Mr. Speaker, this is so frightening, soon some of us will not be able to live in this country.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Contracts awarded for the period January 01, 2002—December 31, 2002, this is in response to question No. 66 answered in this House some time ago. Mr. Speaker, approximately \$50 million was spent in that year. Again, we are seeing how the PNM Government was able to use the electoral districts which have been in their possession since July 2002, from the Fourth Report of the EBC, to decide where their projects would be placed. I would identify a few. Mango Alley, Morvant—John Williams; Road Restoration—John Williams; Upper Wharton Street, Laventille—John Williams; Scorpion Road—John Williams; St. John Road, again same contractor; Santa Cruz, same contractor; Malick, construction and maintenance, plumbing, 1,500 m of 150 mm pipe; Santa Cruz, \$771,000 on June 14.

You are seeing the connection with the Fourth Report in the possession of the Government since July of last year and how it designed the system of using State money to go into PNM areas only. Palo Seco Industrial Systems Control Limited, 712 metres of 100 mm pipe for Point Fortin and Palo Seco, \$542,000; CME Services, 1,000 m of 100 mm pipe, Mahogany Drive, North East Settlement, \$668,000. Mr. Speaker, I hope you are seeing the connection with the Fourth Report and the abuse of State resources. Guayaguayare, 715 metres, \$434,000; Arima, \$857,000, 1,440 metres of pipe; Santa Flora, constituency of La Brea. What a shame! How can I show this to my children?

I ask the Prime Minister, think of it; \$50 million and the majority in PNM constituencies. The Prime Minister has to be serious; he cannot practise this level of discrimination. [*Interruption*] Forget TITI, think about the discrimination and racism practised by the Government. There must be some facility in this House when these matters come to the attention of this House. Those matters should be treated in a particular way. We cannot come here week after week simply showing the discrimination. The Prime Minister cannot use hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars. It is not money left by his father: it is money my father and mother worked for as well. I am a taxpayer and so are the constituents of Fyzabad. Cap-de-Ville, Point Fortin—my good Friend Larry, the Member for Point Fortin—got \$345,000. They are treating you bad boy, you are out. PACE Construction, Siparia, not the constituency of Siparia because I will check it, 750mm of pipe, \$381,000. It cannot be by accident. Let us get serious; it cannot be by accident.

The Prime Minister must not want to win the elections this way; he is the longest serving Member of Parliament in this part of the Caribbean. He should not go out like this; this is worse than a dead dog. If he goes out they will “lick” him

up. You would get lick. Do not trust short people. I continue Sangre Grande, Toco/Manzanilla, \$739,000; Paramin—Member for Diego Martin East—\$709,000—pipe [*Interruption*] Do you know about this? Is this a deal? This is how the PNM got election money. Even the Member for Diego Martin East is not aware of this. This is an answer that came from the Cabinet. It was approved in the Cabinet and one of their Members is not aware. These are kickbacks, election money. It is coming out now. The truth shall set us free, you too.

I wonder how they connect this one? Eleven hundred metres of pipe for Diego Martin and Tunapuna, \$704,000; Guayaguayare, Ortoire/Mayaro, \$456,000; Point Fortin, \$446,000; Palo Seco and Mayaro Road, Ronald's Maintenance—when we talk about pipe up the islands, the “fellas” got confused—Palo Seco and Mayaro Road, same contract, \$446,000. Mr. Prime Minister, something is wrong. I am begging you to check this. Tender for the supply and delivery of 100 personal computers given by Digi-Data Limited to WASA, St. Joseph, \$614,000. That means everyone there—personal computers have to go to people at a particular level—\$614,000. They did not buy this wholesale. Six hundred metres of 100mm pipe for Vessigny in the constituency of La Brea, \$337,000.

This is very frightening. Do you see why we cannot have fair and square elections in this country? The validation of this report in this House serves no real purpose. We come to the Parliament with a report to hoodwink the country. With this kind of money, the PNM knows what the results are going to be. Tender for the supply and delivery of pipes and fittings from STIP, hear the money—\$2,167,748. This is an approximation of the figures. This is very frightening. Moruga, road restoration, \$289,000. Moruga is getting CEPEP, URP, road restoration and water lines. Do you see the quantum of money being spent amounting to millions of dollars? Six hundred metres of 100mm pipes for Salibia, Toco, \$348,000; La Brea, 350mm of pipe, \$218,000; Point Fortin, \$80,000. Someone got robbed here. Imagine 150 metres costing \$80,000 and 350 metres costing \$18,000; the math does not work out well. Same size; 60 metres of 100mm pipe for La Savannah Road, Guayaguayare, \$45,000.

Mr. Speaker: I think you have made the point about the expenditure as given in that answer to local government elections. Is that the point you are making?

Mr. C. Sharma: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Could you move on, please.

Mr. C. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, I am guided by your ruling. The further point is that I am showing the spread and that it is largely, more than 90 per cent, in

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

PNM-controlled constituencies. I am showing the level of discrimination and racism. As a Member of Parliament, a concerned citizen, parent, son, father and friend I see this as a frightening development. I cannot contain the constituents of Fyzabad when they see this level of discrimination and racism. I cannot and maybe I should not. What would I say to them, that the budget voted is only for PNM people? How could I tell them that CEPEP is going to get \$400 million and we are going to get very little? Out of 295 projects with the National Commission for Self-Help, nothing for us. Again, out of \$15 million, nothing for us.

Very interestingly, during my contribution, we heard the Member for Diego Martin East was amazed at the expenses. He was not familiar with the expenses in his own constituency. We have made the point that there have been heavy kickbacks. This is how the PNM obtained money for campaigning. There is no secret about it. I know the Prime Minister is concerned about campaign money in his election. He has a right to be concerned. Manzanilla, \$383,000; Tunapuna, \$245,000; Point Fortin, \$110,000; La Brea, \$413,000; La Brea \$119,000; Salibia, Toco, \$347,000. If Members are not aware of what I am talking about, they can get the answer to question No. 66, given in this House under “Written Answers”. You know, if we asked for this answer during “Answers to Oral Questions”, you know what we would have got Manzanilla, \$197,000; Moruga, \$258,000; Point Fortin, \$110,000; Carenage, \$287,000; Lula Trace, Moruga, \$256,000; Saunders Road, Moruga, \$295,000; Bunion Trace, Moruga, \$257,000. Mr. Speaker, how can we validate this report? What is the purpose?

Suddenly only PNM areas did not have water. [*Interruption*] Do you hear the response? It is very frightening. Again, in keeping with the validation of this Fourth Report, we are seeing the connection with the moneys paid to contractors. How can anyone form a company costing \$2,500, aided by the same company they are going to bid for contracts and get contracts worth \$300,000—\$628,000? How is it that the majority of persons can clearly be identified with the PNM: those who gave evidence on behalf of the PNM at the EBC, those who worked in the offices of the Members of Parliament from San Fernando West to Diego Martin, sitting councillors and those who campaigned in Barataria?

How can they all receive contracts; is it an accident again? Whom is the PNM trying to fool? That is why the Prime Minister said he has to do an investigation. The truth hurts, but thousands of people are suffering. The 15,000 persons per electoral district whom the Member for Arouca North identified are suffering and some of them are in my constituency and constituencies represented on this side. If we do not come here and raise it or if I have to be worried that the Prime

Minister is going to threaten me to investigate whatever he cares to do, then I would not be able to report and represent the people who elected me on five occasions; fair and square with no kickback money to do any campaigns.

When I first contested the seat in Fyzabad—I remember the Member for San Fernando East came to Fyzabad and said: “Do not worry with Sharma”. He also ran. It was the first time after thirty years we won the seat and we continue to retain it. I am going to serve notice today: I am going to write to the Canadian High Commission and the American Embassy and suggest that both embassies—I hope the media are here and they report it—consider seriously offering visas to nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, their spouses and children who are now scared for their lives and who are threatened with investigations. I think we have reached that point.

Mr. Speaker, I will send you a copy of that letter. I suggest that the *Hansard* be made available to accompany such a letter. That is the way we are going now. What the Member for San Fernando East has said is not by accident; it happened in Jamaica, Guyana, Haiti, Grenada and neighbouring Venezuela. Any time a government employs muscle power, this is the way we have to go: how you win, so will you rule. The kidnappings and murders are not by accident. The Government cannot and will not be allowed to hoodwink this Parliament and abuse taxpayers’ money.

With respect to the Fourth Report, immediately after this the Member for San Fernando East—in his capacity as political leader of the party that is in Government—said that local government election is close and as a result the campaigning has started. He is campaigning only with taxpayers’ money: hundreds of millions of dollars.

Another question was asked in this Parliament: question No. 95. Mr. Speaker, you cannot see from where you are because the print is so fine; the Government wants to hide. Maybe we should have a standard when answers are to be given, the print must be readable. The Government cannot put so much information on a small piece of paper; that is hoodwinking people. I have seen in this, moneys borrowed that were not reported to the Parliament: hundreds of millions of dollars. For example, the Solid Waste Management Company Limited, \$76 million; the PNM is not repaying that money; it is you, I and our children to come. We are going to pay back this money for the next 20 years. *[Interruption]* The Speaker warned you the other day; keep quiet. The \$76 million that you and I are going to pay is being used in treating with the Fourth Report for the election process. That \$76 million does not include interest.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

What is very interesting is something called “arrangements fee.” This is a kind of prostitution. Whom is this money going to and how do we know that this is the best arrangement? I saw in one instance—it is so fine I have to work hard on it—VMCOTT borrowed US \$9,523,000. The interest on that is US \$3.2 million. That is over 30 per cent. That is very frightening. The arrangement fee—which is a kickback—for want of a better word—a bribe, in this transaction is US \$63,000. That is a lot of money that you and I have to pay. We are called to pay all this money, hundreds of millions of dollars, and the Government is using it against us. They are employing criminals and paying them large sums of money.

When the Prime Minister talks about going to URP the CEPEP way, why is that so on the eve of local government elections? Contracts for the boys, “Come and vote and campaign for me. Frighten them people like you did in Tunapuna.” Here we have members of a Cabinet lying at the EBC enquiry and another one in court for something. Another Minister sitting in the other place was also telling stories. I will come to that to amplify what I am saying; but we have to spend millions of dollars. If I raise it in Parliament: the only place I am allowed to—to which I have been elected five times by 50,000 people—I am threatened. I am prepared to go, not home, the full fight.

I was very fortunate to meet Nelson Mandela in 1994. He is a tremendous human being. He said to me and those who were in our party, that for 27 years he kept the story alive with simplicity, sincerity and the truth. He said equality is God's desire for mankind. Question No. 81, \$30 million was given to the National Carnival Commission; \$90,000 for Soca Chutney, the rest for pan. You heard how much for Ramleela today?—\$60,000. That is discrimination and racism; call it by any other name. I cannot and will not support that. If I am part of a government doing that, I would leave. If I were part of a government that displayed this level of racism and discrimination I would have been gone a long time ago. I cannot and Members on both sides must not. What is wrong with Ramleela, Phagwa or Hosay? Do you have a carnival mentality only? The Government is trying to fool people to win votes and now it wants to validate the Fourth Report. This is costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Can we encourage or tolerate this?

You saw in the other place, Mr. Speaker, the reported votes in the print and electronic media. The Member for Arouca North, in presenting this similar matter, spoke about the mayor: an elected official. On one hand the Government wants to raid a particular area to rid it of guns but the Minister is pointing out who has a gun; threatening the life of an elected representative. The Mayors of Arima, Port

of Spain and Point Fortin have access to a gun and wherever they go, they go with armed security.

The Mayor of Chaguanas does not move with security but the Member demonstrates, in a very visible way, to all of Trinidad and Tobago, that the mayor bought a gun. Every mayor's office has a gun. There is a police service attached to some of them, Chaguanas being one of them. What is wrong if the mayor has a firearm user's licence? It is a legal requirement. He is doing what is legally required. He has to be all over the place but the Minister, in exposing him, is doing it out of a kind of bad mind. It is the PNM's way of treating with people.

In Chaguanas, the Minister exposes the mayor; the PNM has identified candidates in the borough of Chaguanas, in keeping with the Fourth Report which was in its possession since July 2002. It has identified candidates to work in those areas using CEPEP, URP and other state agencies, social services and all their training programmes which are only for PNM people. In the UNC-controlled constituencies, you cannot access anything, but in the PNM constituencies you are getting everything. MTS, Airports Authority and NEDCO employed persons who had letters from the PNM Members of Parliament. Mr. Speaker, you see the direct connection with the Fourth Report is simply for election purposes.

I want to go back to the Member for Diego Martin East and his threat. I want to suggest that all of us take this threat very seriously. I want to read from a newspaper article:

“Attorney for the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC), Russell Martineau said yesterday: ‘If the first two recommendations of the commission of enquiry report were true then it could not be the same enquiry he attended.’”

This is a distinguished Senior Counsel, former Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago. It had to be another enquiry, he said. He also said the recommendations stated were far different from anything he had heard. A senior counsel, former Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago, expresses concern.

I want to continue to make the connection with the Fourth Report as I hope to further amplify this at a later time when candidates are identified. The first witness for the PNM was its election officer, Mr. Mendes. Mr. Prime Minister, wake up. Mr. Mendes is a candidate in the borough of Chaguanas who is campaigning at this time—while you and I do the people's business—using state resources and identifying projects and bringing the resources—not an elected member, the PNM's election officer. He has access to anything in the ministry. He has a direct phone. He takes up the telephone and instructs persons to do things

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

such as building box drains or paving stretches of roads. That is how the Government is operating. Shame on you!

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is only interested in the lands belonging to Caroni (1975) Limited. He “tief” the lands belonging to Caroni (1975) Limited. If the first witness for the PNM at the enquiry—as Mr. Russell Martineau said—differed on many things, and is now campaigning in Chaguanas, what is the relevance of his campaigning and the Fourth Report? He is campaigning for the PNM using state resources, moneys you and I are contributing as taxpayers. It cannot be! The PNM must get up now and say it is a fact that he is a candidate, he is campaigning and getting things done. How is getting things done and there are still persons who are elected and not yet removed from office such as the advisers? That is no fault of theirs; it is due to the PNM not calling elections in due time. I quote:

“By the time he was finished, Russell Martineau, Senior Counsel and lead attorney for the EBC said Mendes theories and assumptions about the 2000 general election had amounted to nothing.”

That is very typical of the PNM: hoodwink the whole country and spend millions of dollars. The PNM has made us laughing fools. This can be seen all over the world through the Internet and other technologies. The PNM is reducing this country to this.

Look at the way the PNM is treating the doctors. The Minister said that the UNC was responsible for the doctors. Do you know why he said it was the UNC? For only one reason: they look like the Member for Point Fortin and me. I continue:

“On March 25, Mendes admitted that he had no evidence to prove several PNM theories about election fraud.”

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

Motion made, That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. G. Singh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. C. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, you and I were elected when you first became a Member of Parliament in 1991. I think all of us on both sides of this House are very proud that you are now the Speaker. I think the time has come—I am not to advise how you should conduct your office—for me to suggest that you call in the

Prime Minister, as head of the Government, and indicate to him if it is true, that the information that is going to be recorded in *Hansard*—coming from Members: it does not matter which side—is accurate. This level of discrimination and racism must not continue.

If it is that the information I read into *Hansard* about the 295 projects implemented by the National Commission for Self-Help, under the PNM's watch in 2002, where I said that 85 per cent was in PNM-controlled constituencies, is accurate, that must not be allowed to continue. If I am saying, that of the millions of dollars spent by WASA, were for projects done in PNM constituencies, that too must not be allowed. If, I am saying the hundreds of millions of dollars spent in CEPEP, the contractors are PNM associates, councillors and officers who worked in the offices of Members of Parliament and persons who gave evidence at the commission of enquiry and are now receiving contracts, that is not—

Mr. Speaker: I think you are belabouring a point made by previous speakers. I suggested to the Member for Chaguanas, perhaps you may consider a Motion on unfair unemployment practices, but please let us get back to the Bill before us.

Mr. C. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, I just identified that an elections officer of the PNM, who gave evidence at the EBC, is now a candidate for the PNM using state resources. I want to bolster it with a second example.

The next witness was Jameel Mustapha, who campaigned for his niece, Nafeesa Mohammed, the defeated PNM candidate in the Barataria/San Juan constituency in the 2001 election. It is very clear that Jameel Mustapha obtained a CEPEP contract worth \$300,000—\$400,000. We are seeing the direct link; here he gives evidence for the PNM, the next time he obtains a CEPEP contract and now the Fourth Report is presented to this House to be validated and he is again on the campaign trail for the PNM. He is using taxpayers' money for campaigning.

The Member for Port of Spain North is asking what is wrong with that. The PNM does not care; it is using taxpayers' money for anything. That Member has a list of persons who are going to receive Caroni (1975) Limited lands. That list has not come to this House. The idea to get rid of Caroni (1975) Limited is for political purposes, again.

“He said that there was voter-padding in the seat by the UNC and because of this Mohammed lost.”

Hear the person who is chairing the commission of enquiry into the EBC; Justice Deyalsingh:

“Justice Deyalsingh said a lot of Mustapha's evidence was hearsay.”

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

The PNM hoodwinked the country, used taxpayers' money to show the EBC in a bad light. They tried to remove commissioners, they tried to destroy them, they also tried to plant persons to seek their interest and appointed a commission of enquiry. History will show that since 1962, 50 commissions of enquiry were appointed and all amounted to nearly zero.

We saw the chairman of a state corporation appointed Minister of Finance.

“Dr. Anthony Elias; a defeated PNM candidate also came to talk about voter-padding, this time in San Fernando West. However Justice Deyalsingh refused to allow it because the PNM had not given any notice of this.”

You see the approach they had: “We are from the PNM, you just go; we do not have to listen to you.” Justice Deyalsingh said no. Again, very interesting also:

“Mohammed said she received poll cards for a dead uncle and a relative who migrated ten years ago.”

We know what the truth of that is. She said it was not her duty to tell the EBC about this; she said she had reported it to the police. She said she could not stick her neck out that they did not live at 6A Mohammedville, El Socorro where she grew up. The EBC produced witnesses who said they had been living there for as many as 21 years. Again, we are seeing a former Senator with the PNM, now Adviser to the office of the Attorney General, lying. The PNM Government come here today to validate this report? That is why they are attacking the EBC.

“Diego Martin East Member of Parliament, Colm Imbert, yesterday maintained his objection to certain names on the electoral list such as one whom he insisted had died since 1995. He did so under cross-examination by the EBC attorney, Russell Martineau, during the proceedings of the commission of enquiry. Imbert was asked about the fact that the EBC yesterday presented Diego Martin gardener Vinool Sookram.”

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Standing Order 43 speaks of persistence in irrelevance, or tedious repetition either of our own arguments or the arguments of other Members in a debate. I think you are transgressing that Standing Order.

Mr. C. Sharma: I am guided, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. George Dhanny, a constitutional expert, said that the EBC was the cornerstone of democracy. He made a very interesting observation and went back to 1962 and 1976 when he referred to a conference held at the Queen's Hall under the committed and visionary leadership of Dr. Eric Williams and Dr. Rudranath Capildeo.

“There was demonstrated the determination to preserve the democratic ideal and process in a plural society that was threatened.”

That was very interesting. In 1962, the then Prime Minister Dr. Eric Williams and the then Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Rudranath Capildeo made sure they placed safeguards against what obtains today. When the Member for Arouca North comes here to validate this Fourth Report, he has to be crystal clear in making sure that the State starts immediately to protect citizens from abuse and that citizens are treated fair and square.

The Bill states:

“Whereas it is provided by subsection (1) of section 4 of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act that the Elections and Boundaries Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission), shall define and review the boundaries of the electoral districts into which an electoral area is, or is to be, divided and shall submit to the Minister reports thereon:”

That is very interesting. The EBC has a responsibility to assist or define and review the boundaries. What is the purpose of doing that? It is to make sure that the citizens of the country are represented at the electoral district, for the local government elections. And it must and in another place, at the general election to be so designed, make sure that the electorate: the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago obtain the goods and services that are to be provided by the State.

When a government comes into office, it does so for the purpose of providing goods and services. In presenting the Fourth Report here today, the Minister has not demonstrated fairness and equality in the distribution of how things are going. I have brought to the attention of this House what obtains in the national community at this time which is: the PNM Government is using state resources for campaign purposes, as I speak.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you made that point before, please move on.

Mr. C. Sharma: The Bill further goes on to say:

“And whereas it is provided by subsection (2) of the said section 4 that reports under subsection (1) shall be submitted by the Commission, inter alia, not less than two nor more than three years from the date of the submission of its last report:”

The Member for Arouca North did not indicate to us that this report has been in the possession of the Government since July 2002, but he went on to say that the report is late; making it appear that it is late because of the EBC, which is not the truth. It is late in presentation in this House because of the Government. I continue:

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

“And whereas the Third Report of the Commission was submitted on the 2nd November, 1998:

And whereas the Fourth Report of the Commission under the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, Chap.25:50 for the purpose of local government elections was submitted to the Minister on the 8th day of July, 2002...”

One cannot help, and I cannot help, showing the connection with the late report and the use of state resources in the campaign to the disadvantage of those candidates who are not representing the party in Government. There is a direct connection.

The Government has the report in its possession and what does it do? Rather than bring it to the Parliament—this is the fifth month in the year and election is due, some pundits say, July 07—the Government takes this period to campaign. When it comes here it would be five weeks, give or take 35 days, the election would be announced and the other parties or independent candidates who are contesting are now up against PNM candidates who have had this report in their possession since July and using state resources. I have illustrated very clearly that hundreds of millions of dollars in every segment and under various ministries were spent.

“And whereas it is expedient that the submission out of time of the said Fourth Report of the Commission be validated for the purposes of the forthcoming local government election.”

This is an abuse of process. The Government is taking advantage of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago by choosing to bring this report late to its own convenience and advantage. It begs the question: Why did this report not come earlier in January, February, March or April? [*Interruption*] The Member for Diego Martin West wants us to record him as entering the Parliament. You are recognized, Sir.

“This Act may be cited as the Validation of the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act...”

I submit that having brought the report at this time, it is the concern of us collectively, both sides of this House, that the Government is abusing its power, taking advantage of state resource, and it cannot and must not be permitted or encouraged to continue acting in this way.

With respect to the 15,000 persons per electoral district whom the Member for Arouca North identified, evidence that comes to hand at this point shows that certain areas are treated differently, in the context that state resources are given to persons who have been identified as PNM candidates in the upcoming local government elections and have access to state resources. Is this an abuse of state

resources? What protection do I have as a Member of Parliament when it comes to my attention? I want to read, for the purpose of making the point, from Chap. 2:01 of the Representation of the People Act, Laws of Trinidad and Tobago. Section 98 states:

- “(1) A person is guilty of a corrupt practice who is guilty of undue influence.
- (2) A person is guilty of undue influence who—
 - (a) directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf, makes use of or threatens to make use of any force, violence or restraint, inflicts or threatens to inflict...”

As the Member for San Fernando East did and as the PNM is doing.

“by himself or by any other person, any...damage, harm or loss upon or against any person in order to induce or compel that person to vote or refrain from voting...”

We saw that obtain in the last general election when the PNM used muscle power in areas such as Tunapuna, San Fernando West, Ortoire/Mayaro and elsewhere. We saw where innocent citizens—young women and girls—were handcuffed for simple alleged offences where handcuffs were not required. There were other provisions in the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

Section 99(1) states:

“A person is guilty of a corrupt practice if he commits, or aids... procures the commission of, the offence of personation.”

Again, Mr. Speaker, we have seen very clearly that the PNM is not keeping to the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Interruption*] I will read it for 20 years.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House continue sitting until the completion of this matter before it and also the Civil Aviation Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

VALIDATION OF THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION (LOCAL GOVERNMENT) BILL

Mr. C. Sharma: How much more time do I have, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: Twelve minutes more.

Mr. C. Sharma: The EBC takes action on lost registration records. The Minister, presenting this Validation Bill said this is moving towards local government elections. I want to read something that is very significant. This is dated November 2002.

“The commission noted a report in which Mr. Larry Achong claimed that a UNC activist provided him with two registration record cards. He further claimed that the activist indicated that he obtained the cards at a meeting held by UNC activists with certain employees of the EBC at which meeting the activist claimed that he saw a batch of other such cards.

On seeing that report, the chairman of the commission reported it to the Commissioner of Police and requested his assistance in investigating the matter. The chairman also requested that the police obtain the cards which should not be out of the possession of the EBC or its employees or its agents. Subsequently, the commission which had immediately launched its own investigation was informed by the registration officer for the registration area of San Juan, that he was approached by a Mr. Garcia...”

Do you know Mr. Garcia, Mr. Speaker?

“of the PNM earlier that evening, who handed him photostat copies of the cards stating that a person found two registration record cards for the St. Joseph constituency in a garden in Aranguéz and had called the PNM office...”

Mr. Speaker: Please, the arguments that you are putting forward were put forward by the Member for Baratária/San Juan. *[Interruption]* That does not solve the problem.

Mr. C. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, I was making a connection which is, the office of my colleague the Member for Baratária/San Juan obtained some letters. However they came is not important. What is very significant, in the case of Larry Achong having two identification cards in his possession, is very little police action, no front page coverage, but a Member of the Opposition—in whose office letters were obtained—immediately obtains the attention of the police. We are seeing the inequality of treatment.

Under the PNM, you could receive anything; no big thing. Under the PNM you could get poll cards, collect moneys, kidnap, cause murder or meet gang leaders—no police intervention. A humble, highly qualified professional Member of Parliament who offers free service at his office obtains letters from whoever

cares to bring them and the police is on his back; instructed by the PNM, not by accident. The Minister of National Security is in charge of the police. What is his intention? The intention is to scare citizens of Trinidad and Tobago from taking any kind of action. If you see anything and it is wrong, PNM in Government, turn a blind eye. That is the moral of the story. That is the connection I was making.

We talk about racism. When we talk about racism the PNM are quick to come and say “alyuh racist on that side.” I would like to read something here:

Over the past few days there been a number of reports appearing in the media which alleged attempts by persons to subvert the electoral process. The Elections and Boundaries Commission investigated all of these reports and wishes to assure the public that these reports are without foundation and that the electoral process has not been compromised in any way.

The Commission wishes to clear the air on some of the issues and let the population know the facts.”

This is very instructive: allegation of ghost voters. [*Interruption*] Diego Martin West, behave yourself.

“One newspaper reported a plot to pad the electoral list in a marginal constituency with ghost voters from Guyana...”

Racist! Why Guyana, why not St. Vincent? That is how the PNM operates. They do not talk about Grenada in the same context. In fact, it is much cheaper to come from Grenada than it is to come from Guyana, but they make the link with Guyana. It is the racist approach of the PNM. That is the truth; it has been so for 20-30 years under PNM. It seems that they do not want to change.

“One newspaper reported a plot to Part the electoral list in a marginal constituency with ghost voters from Guyana. This was confirmed by the police. The Elections and Boundaries Commission has contacted senior officers in the police service to ascertain whether there is any truth in this story. The police have denied any such plot.”

What does the PNM have against the people of Guyana? Why is the PNM so racial? Why does the PNM discriminate so much? Shame! The Elections and Boundaries Commission also contacted the newspapers. You hear the Member for Arouca South? If there are only Indians in Guyana. Why does the Member for Arouca South—why the outburst? Are there only Indians in Guyana?

“The Elections and Boundaries Commission also contacted the newspaper and asked it to provide information to support allegations so that the matter could be investigated. No such information was forthcoming.”

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

You would have seen during that same time, the EBC was accused by the Member for Diego Martin East of mixing the ink. They indicated that the ink that was used was from previous elections and was top of line quality. The short point, as I conclude, is that it is time to stop this mischief by the PNM. The truth must come out and it is coming out. The PNM continues to divide this society in presenting this Fourth Report for validation. This report has been in its possession since July 2002. It has used state resources.

The elections are due, give or take, July 07 and the PNM is at an advantage because it is using state resources, as it did in the general election of 2002. It has used muscle power, the criminal element, the police and everything the state has, to discriminate. We have to put an end to this. In so doing, we can have free and fair elections. In so doing, the report will have meaning and significance as the framers of our Constitution, Drs. Eric Williams and Rudranath Capildeo, had in mind, that this country must be a fair and just place for all our people.

I thank you very much.

8.00 p.m.

The Minister of Local Government (Hon. Jarrette Narine): Mr. Speaker, when we came here earlier today we came here to validate the Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission which was sent to the ministry on July 08, 2002. The Third Report, came on November 02, 1998. According to the law it is supposed to come not less than two years and not more than three years. So, it is very wrong to say that the report came on time. The report was over three years and it had to come to be validated in the Parliament.

I have heard much talk this evening from the Opposition about the validation of the 18/18 situation last year; the validation of the Crowne Plaza Accord; and the validation of everything else, except the Elections and Boundaries Commission Report. Much has been said this evening about the Elections and Boundaries Commission not being ready for elections, because I should have found out if the Elections and Boundaries Commission had completed the exercise and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that if we are saying that the Elections and Boundaries Commission is an autonomous body, and it must be left like that without interference, the Ministry of Local Government has to wait until the EBC has that report on local government. The reason for sending it late was stated earlier: the Elections and Boundaries Commission was conducting a house-to-house survey at that time, which kept back the report.

I have heard a lot about voter padding and other matters, and I could attest to the fact—it may not have been in the Commission of Enquiry—that every Member of Parliament received poll cards in excess of his or her number and one could not find those persons.

Hon. Member: You are absolutely right.

Hon. J. Narine: One day I went into Casselton and I found that there was one person living in a home and there were 10 poll cards in the postbox. This is a fact! The problems with respect to elections, such as registration and so forth—what they are trying to defend is a fact. But we also know that with the amount of work to be done for persons to be registered there must be problems.

Mr. Speaker, I remember persons in high places in the UNC were registered in South Trinidad and Valsayn, and did not know where to vote and they had problems. The Member for St. Joseph was voting in Maraval and living in Port of Spain South, trying to see that Ato Boldon did not live in the “high towers” with him. This is a fact! The Member admitted that! We know that in Tunapuna a certain pundit went into a mandir in Campo—three years before—and when a person reached the age of 17 and had to be registered that person was registered in Tunapuna.

Years ago people in Laventille boasted that they had the largest population in Trinidad; it is no longer so today. The largest population according to the last census, belongs to Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation—thanks to somebody in the other place, who moved all the voters from everywhere else and put them there.

During the last election, 2002, I found an area in the Arouca North constituency where there are approximately 250 squatters, and do you know what they did at that time? Mr. Speaker, these people were involved. They are masters with respect to this situation at the EBC. They took the voters from South Trinidad, rested them in the Arima, Arouca North and Arouca South constituencies and then transferred them to Tunapuna. So when one looked at the transfers, one would have been skeptical and said, “How could this person come from Tabaquite last month, and register in Tunapuna?” They were registered the year before in Arouca North. About four Members who were Ministers in the UNC Government at the time, went into that squatters’ area and made promises to people and started to do road works and so forth. I realized what happened last year is what had taken place a year or two years before.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[HON. J. NARINE]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Last year, when people had to register for employment, they had their addresses in Tunapuna, but they were living in the Arouca North constituency. This is how I picked up about 300 persons who were resting there to go and vote in Tunapuna. Of course, what happened is that these persons had to go to the Elections and Boundaries Commission in Arima and register for that Arima district. So that is how we got those 300 votes out. I mean they are hiding their heads in the sand when they said that the Commission did not find this; the Commission did not find that; the witness did not appear; and somebody said something contrary.

We all know that there are lacunas in the law, and the lawyers would tell you that. People get off charges because there are bright lawyers in Trinidad, but that does not say that their banking account is not the same as it was before. But because of some loophole in the law, these persons got away.

The other matter is with respect to the Commission of Enquiry into the Elections and Boundaries Commission. At that time the election was over, and most of the people who wanted to say something decided that it was a waste of time going now to say anything since the election was over, and they had lost the election—especially due to the advocates of one party or the other.

As a matter of fact, Dr. Fuad Khan, the Member for Barataria/San Juan was quoting certain parts of the Representation of the People Act. I am certain that in that Act it is stated that if I have removed myself from one place to another place, after two months I have lost my vote there and I am to register here. That is the law and people have been moving all over the place. Why is it that the law is good for one and not for the other? Do you understand?

It is a fact that in the Barataria/San Juan constituency, I have relatives who live in Aranguez and were registered in Barataria/San Juan. My nephew and niece voted in the Member's constituency, but they are living in St. Joseph. [*Interruption*] They are UNC and they told me that they voted there because they took them and registered them there. I could take the Member there and show him the people. They are related to me. So for the Member to come here and say that it did not happen—it happened! Mr. Speaker, what is happening is the Member of Parliament for Arouca North or Arouca South [*Interruption*] I have a lot of relatives so I do not know which one you would prosecute. Send the Guardian Angels; send your Gestapo gang. Do you understand! I have a lot of relatives in Aranguez.

While we in the PNM are for democracy and free and fair elections—and the PNM was always for that—we won all the seats in an election and this country prospered during that period under the PNM. So for the Member to come here and

say that we are not for free and fair elections, is very untrue. Our party is 47 years old and we are not “now come” PNM. The PNM is 47 years old, and there are people in the PNM who have the experience. So while they are speaking on one hand, we are making sure that we get every voter out, and this is why Arouca South could boast of over 15,000 votes. Mr. Speaker, my Prime Minister and political leader never went into Arouca South and fool the people, “Hello, if I get 15,000 votes here, it is only one seat I could win so you must go and help out in Tunapuna.” That is a fact!

The Member went to the Caroni East constituency and told his constituents that if he wins Caroni East by 14,000 votes it would not help them because it is one seat, and they would have to help him out in Tunapuna. What that meant is that the people knew what they had to do. They had to find some family in Tunapuna and get registered. The person in Tacarigua made sure that every name that he placed to vote in Tunapuna, was aligned with the same name in Tacarigua. Am I wrong? That is a fact! We are now educated because of the UNC. The PNM is now educated and that will never happen again.

All the time, the *TNT Mirror* newspaper was the worst newspaper in Trinidad and Tobago, and now the Member for Oropouche loves the *TNT Mirror* newspaper, and he is even quoting the *TNT Mirror*. The Member is no longer quoting *The Probe*. The Member should look at the headline of *The Probe* last week. [Interruption] I saw *The Probe* newspaper hung up somewhere, but I saw one of their chairmen’s pictures on the front page, and it is not a PNM chairman.

I would like to put to rest today—and this matter was raised on many occasions—the purchase of a gun by the Mayor of Chaguanas. The Member for Fyzabad raised this matter and the Member said that placed the life of the Mayor of Chaguanas on the line. May I say that this matter came to my attention last year and I launched an investigation within the ministry, and the mayor got wind of it. The Prime Minister was turning the sod for the Unit Trust building in Chaguanas, when the mayor made the announcement. That was the first time anyone heard that the Mayor of Chaguanas bought a gun with the corporation’s funds.

I have a copy of the *Express* newspaper dated August 04, 2002 headlined, “Welcome to the Wild West.” The Mayor of Chaguanas was interviewed by Mr. Cleveon Raphael, and I would like to read just that part of the question put to the mayor which says:

“Mr. Mayor, do you have a gun?”

[Pause]: I am entitled to a gun as the mayor of Chaguanas, and yes, I have one.”

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[HON. J. NARINE]

Friday, May 09, 2003

The point is that since August last year, the mayor told the public of Trinidad and Tobago twice that he has a gun, before I could have said anything.

The Mayor of Chaguanas and I had an interview with Mr. Sunil Ramdeen on the TV6 Sunday Morning programme. When I met the mayor there, I told him that I have papers here with respect to the matter of the gun, and do not raise that matter about the gun, to leave that matter alone. The mayor came on the programme with a copy of *Hansard* saying that I said he was in Tunapuna with the gun at the Elections and Boundaries Commission. Of course, if the mayor has the gun strapped on his leg [*Interruption*] I do not know, but the Chief Executive Officer never saw the gun. I have the facts here. I do not go around making allegations like the Members opposite.

I would record the sequence in *Hansard* with respect to the gun. On December 14, 1999, there was an application by the Mayor of Chaguanas for a firearm user's licence—and no minutes were recorded of that. This is what the Commissioner of Police sent to the mayor two months after. The mayor got a firearm user's licence within two months—and I know that during the Christmas period in Trinidad people do not work, so take two weeks out of that; but the mayor probably had possession of the gun in six weeks. I read the letter:

Commissioner of Police Office
Police Administration Building
Cor. Edward and Sackville Streets
Port of Spain
February 14, 2000

I refer to your application dated 14 December, 1999, for the acquisition of a firearm user's license. Be informed that your application has been approved for a firearm user's license. No. 360/99 has since been issued in your name.

In order to complete the document of the issuance of your licence, you are required to call at the Chaguanas Police Station with the notification, together with the full particulars of the firearm to be acquired.

Please note that your licence is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Payment of the appropriate licence and fees prior to the receipt of the firearm user's license.
2. If for some reason you are unable to acquire the firearm within two months of receipt of this notification, you are to inform the Commissioner of Police in writing stating the reasons."

Mr. Speaker, this is a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the corporation dated Tuesday February 08, 2000 at 9.00 a.m. at the Borough Hall, Chaguanas and within the minutes—and I am quoting here Nos. 5 and 6: No. 5 states that Councillor Boodram seconded the resolution and so on, and at No. 6 on this page, it is stated that arrangements should be made for the Mayor to be given a firearm. That was a resolution of the corporation, but the licence should have been in the Chief Executive Officer's name and not the Mayor's name, and that is the point. The mayor should get permission to use the gun if it is that the gun belongs to the Chaguanas Borough Corporation. If it is the mayor's user's licence the mayor should buy his own gun. There is no other mayor or chairman in Trinidad who bought any firearm with taxpayers' money. Not one! The mayor cannot do that!

I put into the *Hansard* the next meeting which was the tenth meeting of the Finance Planning and Allocation of Resources Committee of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation dated Tuesday April 11, 2000 at 9.00 a.m. At Item 3, the mayor said that he was advised to procure a piece of tool (firearm) and the documents have been approved and he wants to know whether he has to pursue, or someone of the corporation would undertake to do so. Mr. Speaker, the Chief Executive Officer said that if the firearm was purchased with the corporation's funds it would be the property of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation. Councillor Mohammed stated that the firearm is for the mayor's private use and should belong to him. That was recorded in the minutes.

The Firearm Institute which issued the invoice in the sum of \$10,407.50 on the same day the mayor went for training—I do not know if it was for one day, one hour, or half an hour, but the mayor was issued a certificate that he had successfully completed a training course. That is the training part of it. Mr. Speaker, this was the invoice order and I could tell you that the invoice order—let me go back to the sequence of how this thing happened.

There was an approval letter for acquisition of a firearm user's license on the 14th; there was a motion on the ninth Finance and Planning meeting; the mayor himself proposed the motion to procure the tool, or the firearm, in spite of the advice of the Chief Executive Officer that if the firearm was purchased with the corporation's funds it would be the property of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation; but Councillor Mohammed insisted that the firearm was for the mayor's private use and it should belong to him.

On May 26, a Smith and Wesson revolver .38 SP—I am not a firearm user so I do not know what SP means—but it is a special type of gun, serial No. CVR 9967, including 25 rounds of ammunition, one cleaning kit and one ankle holster.

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[HON. J. NARINE]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Details of invoice No. 5757 of the Firearm Training Institute Limited issued against the firearm user's licence were delivered to Mr. Orlando Nagessar. On May 26, certificate No. 2699, Successful Completion of Training, was issued to Mr. Nagessar. On June 15, the former Minister of Local Government approved the invoice after they got the gun.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Which former Minister?

Hon. J. Narine: Former Minister Dhanraj Singh; and his signature is here where it was approved on June 15.

Hon. Member: Where is Mr. Dhanraj Singh now?

Hon. J. Narine: You should ask his colleagues.

Mr. Manning: He is in Arouca North.

Hon. J. Narine: He is in Arouca North. He is enjoying part of the Arouca North constituency at this time. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, on June 15, Other Charges payment voucher was prepared in favour of the Firearm Training Institute Limited. With the supplier pressing, payment was effected as soon as the Minister approved it on June 15. On June 28, funds were available; releases were received from the finance monthly releases, so funds were available. On June 30, the cheque was made out and the transaction was concluded. The Chief Executive Officer stated that he has never seen the physical item, neither independently nor on the person of the mayor.

I would like to draw to Members' attention that when a licence is issued, one must register the gun within two months and one has to go to the Commissioner of Police, and at the back of that certificate, they would register your gun under your name, so that gun is not the corporation's gun. The gun is registered here on the same certificate for Mayor. The make of the gun is a Smith and Wesson revolver .38 SP, serial number—which is the same as the invoice order for the purchase by the corporation—CDR 9967 and the dealer's name and address. Mr. Speaker, I feel that this matter must be put to rest today. The mayor has a gun, which was purchased with taxpayers' funds on his name, and nobody else could use that gun.

Normally, if the Chief Executive Officer is applying to get the user's licence for the corporation, when the workers go to work on mornings—for example, the municipal police—they would sign for the gun and when they are finished working, they would have to put back the gun for safe keeping, but not the mayor. The mayor has a gun, which was bought by the corporation, under his name.

I would like to read that part of the invoice, because that is very important. A Government invoice is like a cheque. Years ago I did purchasing stores for the Ministry of Agriculture. Now Goods and Services, under the subhead 001GA18-expenses, Firearm Training Institute Limited, and it is stated here the amount due as payment to the Firearm Training Institute Limited for purchasing a revolver for the Chaguanas Borough Corporation (Mr. Orlando Nagessar, Mayor). It is written here on the invoice order; IHO5757 May 26 approval letter is attached and firearm licence is attached.

I would like that this matter be now put to rest. I have asked that the mayor put the gun back on the corporation's compound and that the Chief Executive Officer apply for a firearm user's licence, on behalf of his corporation, for the use of that gun, because nobody else could use it since it was bought for the mayor. The Ministry cannot get the mayor to place the gun back there, because the gun is the mayor's gun. Actually, the licence is on his name; the gun is registered with the Commissioner of Police on his name, and I do not know what to do. The point is that the mayor is saying that if anything should happen to him [*Interruption*] The Member spoke for one hour and a half and everyone else spoke for an hour and a half, and I had no problem with that. I sat here and I listened.

I will go back and tell the Member what happened. The cheque was made out in the year 2000, and upon investigation in the year 2002, the same persons who sold the gun to the mayor were asked to give an invoice reading of the same weapon, and the cost. So two years after a Smith and Wesson .38 SP revolver, lightweight, cost \$7,000; the new invoice order had \$7,500. So that two years before, the corporation paid \$500 more for the gun. The corporation bought 25 rounds of ammunition at \$2.50 each, which is on the invoice as \$62.50, and the corporation paid \$500 for the 25 rounds of ammunition. So for the ammunition which was supposed to cost \$62.50, the corporation paid \$500; the cleaning kit which was \$150, two years after, the corporation paid \$250 for it; and for the ankle holster, which was supposed to be \$250, the corporation paid \$800 and that was procured by the Mayor of Chaguanas. I rest my case.

I feel that I have said enough and I have proved beyond reasonable doubt that the mayor did an illegal act, and the councillors of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation passed an illegal resolution to buy a gun for the mayor from taxpayers' funds. If the gun was bought for the corporation, I have no problem with that. The Member for Chaguanas would always have a problem with me, because I have worked with the Government for 28 years. I did not "now come" or "now happen to come." The point is that once someone is not following the

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[HON. J. NARINE]

Friday, May 09, 2003

financial regulations of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and there are unlawful resolutions of the councils, I would stop everything at every turn. So that they would not like this Minister.

The Member for Chaguanas talked about Eid ul-Fitr and Divali celebrations, and I would add the parang celebrations. Mr. Holly B went to Chaguanas to put on or keep a parang show and they put Holly B in front of Renaissance Park. The bar next to the park paid for the whole function, but the mayor took \$9,000 from the corporation, signed a cheque for it and gone with it. How could I allow that? So when I stop these things they must have a problem.

The Member for Barataria/San Juan is an honest, decent man—would you allow that? Do you think that I should sit in the Ministry as the Minister of Local Government and allow that, Member for Oropouche? For most of the functions that took place in Chaguanas, the Mayor contracted the people and made a cheque in his name; then went to the bank and changed it and paid cash from his pocket. Mr. Speaker, that was reported to me. I stopped that practice and it will never happen again.

The Ministry of Works and Transport has a building at Chaguanas, and when the people in the market had problems, they asked the Ministry of Works and Transport for the car park to put their haberdashery in. The Ministry of Works and Transport paid for the car park and handed it over to the corporation. The corporation rented it out to the Hindu Credit Union, and the money is passing through the mayor's funds. Could you believe that?

Hon. Member: I do not believe that.

Hon. J. Narine: Who is renting the car park? Is the Hindu Credit Union not renting a car park in Chaguanas? The Member cannot believe that because they are beyond reproach. The Hindu Credit Union rents the car park from the corporation, and where are the funds going? The funds are supposed to go to the Consolidated Fund. I am going to stop that every time.

The Member for Chaguanas upgraded Munroe Road Recreation Ground. It is a ground that belongs to the Chaguanas Borough Corporation, and it is supposed to be open to the public. The corporation fenced the ground and put a gate with a chain and lock on it. One club is using that ground now, but the Member was talking about recreational facilities, and giving local government autonomy. But the person is a councillor; he is not a Member of Parliament. Who fence around a council ground and put a chain and lock on it just for the use of one club? But the Member is the best Member of Parliament; he is beyond reproach; and he is the

honest man who used to open containers all about before he became a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(5), the Member is imputing improper motives.

Mr. Speaker: No. Please continue.

Hon. J. Narine: The Member knows what I mean and that is why he got up. The Member understands very well. There is one more matter that I would like to deal with here. The Member spoke about funding for corporations. Mr. Speaker, last year, we signed 10 out of 14 permanent lists for workers in 10 corporations', and next week I am going to sign another list. There are some problems with the union to get the other list signed. The Ministry of Local Government with the 14 corporations has over 10,000 workers in Trinidad that are permanent workers. There are also casual workers and regular workers. Casual workers are persons who have worked for two effective years and keep working on a regular basis, but they do not have the kind of job security that a permanent worker would have.

There is a task force in the ministry which reported to me last week, and we are to sit with the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) and then get the trade union movement to sit with us and agree that certain things must be put in place, because if you are living in an area and the workers come and leave in half an hour's time—it is local government workers. I have a problem when I have to ask my colleagues to support workers in the Ministry of Local Government.

I live at Samaroo Village, a poor and humble area and when the workers from the corporation come there and work for half an hour and leave, for a day's pay, there must be a problem with that. There must be a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. There are local government workers who are working for \$150 to \$160 per day. A (FOS) foreman or a (CME) foreman will work for that. Do you understand? I was part of the planning of that agreement so I understand what is taking place; and PNM took those agreements from 1956, where people were working for \$2.12 a day. So in 47 years the PNM has brought the local government workers and all the other workers of this country, dignity. The PNM has dignity, because workers are receiving a proper salary and they are better able to send their children to school and so forth.

I was amazed that the Member for Chaguanas, who is supposed to be a Member of Parliament, and was a member of the Cabinet of the last administration, would come here and give the nation wrong information. Every year we come here to Parliament and pass a budget, and within that budget are

Validation of EBC Report Bill
[HON. J. NARINE]

Friday, May 09, 2003

allocations to each corporation. When the Member says that the Minister is stifling the corporations, the truth is that the corporations are stifling themselves if they do not apply for the money from the Ministry of Finance. That is one of the corporations' problems. The corporations wait until it is too late to do so. I have no problem with the recurrent vote because that vote is to pay workers and for goods and services and so forth. I have an interest in that development fund and today I am going to put to rest this situation with respect to development funds.

In 2001, when the UNC budget was passed, the development funds for local government were \$6,522,000. The last budget, which was passed by the People's National Movement, was \$28,775,000, and the Member comes here this evening and says that we are starving the corporations of funds and all kinds of things. I will tell the Member who got what and the Member would be surprised. The Member talked about discrimination, and PNM this and PNM that, but the facts would come out. The Member should bring a Motion here on a Private Members' Day and talk about discrimination, and every single Minister would get up here and tell you how fairly the people of Trinidad and Tobago are treated.

I would indicate how that money was spent. In the 2001 budget, the Port of Spain City Corporation got \$279,542; last year, in the PNM budget, the Port of Spain City Corporation got \$2,065,000. In 2001, the Arima Borough Corporation got \$466,267, and this year they got \$1.520 million. San Fernando City Corporation got no money for development in 2001—zero. The San Fernando City Corporation, the second largest city in Trinidad and they got nothing—zero—but they got \$1.925 million this year. And the Member comes here today and talks about discrimination. It is the UNC who had discriminated against us! The San Fernando City Corporation got no funds from the RIF and development funds. In 2001, the Point Fortin Borough Corporation, got \$446,000—

Hon. Member: Where did the Member get those figures?

Hon. J. Narine: These are in your figures that were given to you in the last budget, and the Member just has to go and look for the book, but it seems as though the Member cannot read properly, so I do not expect anything else from him. [*Laughter*] The Point Fortin Borough Corporation got \$1.575 million. I am going to stop at this point because I feel that I have made my point. In 2001, under the UNC, the Chaguanas Borough Corporation got \$767,000; Mr. Speaker, this year, the Chaguanas Borough Corporation got \$2,390,000, and the Member comes here today and talks about discrimination.

Hon. Member: That is on paper.

Hon. J. Narine: Mr. Speaker, last week, before I went on the TV6 *Morning Edition* programme, I went to my financial director and he stated—and I told the Mayor this—that every single cent of this development programme has been drawn down already before the end of the dry season. That fund is used for roads, bridges and so on. So when I sit here for six hours and listen to Members on the other side talking about discrimination, I have a problem with that. The Ministry of Local Government has supplemental funds for water and so forth, and I am certain that by the end of this month it would begin to rain.

Mr. Speaker, it is already late; I would have liked to put the other matters in place, but I feel that I have said enough and I am certain that the Members' problems are as a result of the upcoming local government election; they are afraid of the local government election. If we had validated this report the Members could have been out of here campaigning. I have started my campaigning already. I do not make joke. I do not have to voter pad. I have to work hard to win my elections. My councillors have to win the elections. And they have always won. If the Member does not help his workers and councillors—well I do not know—but we in the PNM go with our councillors.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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.

CIVIL AVIATION (AMDT.) BILL

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [April 4, 2003]:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Diego Martin East was speaking at the time of the adjournment. The Member spoke for 17 minutes and has a balance of 28 minutes of normal speaking time.

The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that I will not utilize all the time available to me.

On the last occasion, the Member for Caroni East raised the question of the implications of air travel for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and before I go into some of the amendments that we on this side intend to move at the committee stage, I just thought I should advise Members on SARS and its effect on air travel. There is a lot of misinformation about this disease, and for the benefit of Members, I would put some things into the record so that people would understand, because this is something that I do not think should involve politics. This is a serious and dangerous disease and, fortunately, there have been no cases of SARS in Trinidad and Tobago to date, and let us hope that we could keep it that way.

Let me just give the Members some information on what we know about SARS at this time. I am reading from a document that I received today from the Pan American World Health Organization, and I would give Members some key information about SARS, because there is a belief that if one sits on a plane this disease could be contracted easily; if one sneezes one could contract the disease and so on, but let me give Members the current learning:

“Disease

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is an acute infectious disease. The main symptoms are sudden high fever (38°C), dry cough, shortness of breath and/or breathing difficulties...SARS may be associated with other symptoms, including headache, muscular stiffness, loss of appetite, malaise, confusion, rash and diarrhoea.

Infectious agent

The cause of SARS appears to be a virus of the coronavirus group that had not been previously isolated. Other types of this virus are known to cause the common cold.

Occurrence

The outbreak of SARS appeared to have started in Guangdong province, China, during November 2002. International spread of the disease took place in February this year.

Mode of transmission

SARS commonly spreads by close person-to-person contact, such as intimate contact, providing care, same household, having direct contact with respiratory secretions (saliva droplets...), body fluids and/or excretions (e.g. faeces) of suspected or probable cases of SARS.

Incubation period

The incubation period (the time from contact with an infected person until development of the disease) is normally two to seven days, but can be as much as 10 days.”

I would also give some advice on the recent advisory we received from the World Health Organization SARS technical team.

Mr. Sharma: What is the date?

Hon. C. Imbert: I received it today and I said that when I started. *[Interruption]* The advisory is dated May 08, 2003. I received it today, May 9, 2003. Now, let me deal with travel and travel restrictions, because this is where the relevance to this legislation comes in.

Persons arriving from areas with recent local transmission: A person who has in the last 10 days been in close contact with a SARS case, has worked in or visited hospitals handling SARS cases, should not travel within or outside the country of exposure until a 10-day period when the exposure has passed. The person during this time should remain under surveillance of health authorities.

What this means is that if someone comes into Trinidad and Tobago, who has had close contact with a SARS case, or has worked in a hospital, in particular treating a patient who has SARS, that person should essentially be isolated and quarantined if necessary.

Those who are symptom free and have not been in close contact with a diagnosed or suspected SARS patient, or worked in hospitals or visited hospitals handling SARS patients, should look out for symptoms during the 10-day period of incubation and those, of course, who have symptoms, should avoid contact with other people and get in touch with their local doctor.

It is necessary for this honourable House to be aware that since the WHO travel advisory for Canada, the WHO has concluded that there is no longer a risk for persons travelling from Canada. In fact, I have the WHO advisory dated April 30, 2003 which states that WHO lifted the Toronto travel advisory, but it has maintained it for areas of China, and I would just read it into the record.

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. C. IMBERT]

Friday, May 09, 2003

“Effective today, the World Health Organization (WHO) is lifting the travel advisory for Toronto, Canada. The advisory recommended considering postponing non-essential travel to Toronto, and was issued as a precautionary measure...in order to minimize the international spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). WHO is lifting this advisory as the situation in Toronto has now improved.

Travel advisories are issued following consideration of several factors, including the magnitude of probable SARS cases, the last dates of cases of community transmission, and the last dates of export of cases.

In Toronto, the magnitude of probable SARS cases has decreased; twenty days has now passed since the last cases of community transmission; and, no new confirmed exportation of cases has occurred.”

As a consequence, the WHO lifted its travel advisory for Canada, but travel advisories remain in place for areas of China, including Beijing, Guangdong province, Shanxi province and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The WHO is continuing its advice to people that they should postpone or avoid travel to these areas in the Far East, so that is the current situation in terms of SARS.

In terms of what is happening at our airport, there is a national plan and it is being implemented at this time, and we are constantly upgrading it as we learn more and more about this disease. The mortality rate has risen in the last week or so. It was 3 per cent, it went to 6 per cent, and it is now in excess of 10 per cent, 12 per cent and 14 per cent in China, in particular. So it is a very dangerous disease.

What we have decided to do in Trinidad and Tobago is to acquire thermal scanners, because this is one way of detecting whether someone is a suspected or probable SARS case. These thermal scanners would do a complete body temperature read out, and determine whether any traveller is suffering or has an unusual high temperature. What else could a country like Trinidad and Tobago do? We have to be serious about this matter. Even though each one of these scanners may cost as much as US \$38,000 to US \$40,000, we think it is a small price to, at least, protect our people from the incidence of SARS.

At the present time, all airlines are supposed to be giving out travel forms. Of course, there would be the case—it is human beings that we are dealing with—and some of the airlines are still reluctant, and some of the airlines’ staff are resisting these procedures because they find them to be a hindrance and very cumbersome. There was a report in the newspaper that an American Airline flight came in and escaped the surveillance system, and we in the Ministry of Health are

now seeking to track down all those passengers to see if any of them had travelled to one of these regions where there is a mode of transmission of SARS. But I am happy to say—I would not say an isolated instance—that the cases where airlines and airport personnel are not following procedure are in the minority, and we are continuing to sensitize and train personnel.

Dr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, just one question for the Minister. After the thermal scanners have determined the temperature levels, are there any diagnostic tests that we are using on the population to determine whether it is SARS or not?

Hon. C. Imbert: Well, as I indicated, the symptoms are usually a high fever, which is 38°C and respiratory problems. The person has to fit a profile. If the person has a high temperature and serious respiratory problems and has come from an area where there is a transmission of SARS that person would have to be isolated.

Dr. Khan: I was wondering—

Hon. C. Imbert: I am coming to that. We are doing two types of tests, a simple blood culture test, using the WHO blood profile that we have for probable and suspected SARS cases, and then we would take swabs and send them to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. However, the results are not back until about seven to eight days, so that is why the person has to be isolated for that period to see if the person develops the symptoms, and also to wait for the test results coming out from the CDC.

Dr. Rafeeq: Is there an incubation period for the disease during which the patient may not have any symptoms but has the virus?

Hon. C. Imbert: As I indicated earlier, it is 10 days. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, could I get some protection from the Member for Diego Martin West. *[Laughter]* As I had indicated earlier in my presentation, the incubation period is 10 days. The current learning is that if one does not develop the symptoms within a 10-day period, one should be SARS free. So the period is 10 days where you could have it, and you are not developing any of the major symptoms of the disease. I do not know if that answers the Member's question.

Dr. Rafeeq: The simple point that I was making is that while you would be able to capture those who have the active disease through the equipment, a lot of people who do not have the active disease and who are in the incubation period may still be “slipping through the net”. That is the point that I was making.

Hon. C. Imbert: Precisely. Mr. Speaker, could you speak to the Member for Diego Martin West? I am having a conversation with the hon. Member opposite, and I am being disturbed. Mr. Speaker, the only way to deal with that category of person who has no symptoms—no high temperature and no respiratory problem—is to look at travel. One of the criteria is that the person must come from a country where there is a local mode of transmission of the disease, so that persons coming from areas such as Guangdong province—and I hear Taiwan is now listed as a critical place and so on—one would have to track down these people and monitor them.

9.00 p.m.

Unless you can detect that the person has a high temperature and a respiratory problem, it is really going to be a hit-and-miss thing. At least there is the travel history of the person so at least you could keep your eye on the person. That is the whole purpose of the forms—that you determine whether the person has visited a country where this Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is prevalent, so you monitor these persons during that ten-day period. So that is where we are right now. There is a lot of confusion and misinformation.

I went through the airport twice in the last month or so, and there is a lot of anxiety on the part of the airport workers—it is quite understandable—among customs workers, immigration workers, airports security, persons at the departure tax desk and at the scanner and so on. There is not enough information about SARS. Persons believe that if someone is suffering from SARS and they sneeze on you, you will catch it right away. But at this time you need to be in contact with someone for a period.

That is the information we have right now. Of course, it is quite possible that you could catch SARS from someone just after being in contact with that person for a short period but we have to keep sensitizing, training, educating all the staff at the airport, in particular. The airlines flight attendants staff have called me because they are worried. When the travel advisory was issued for Toronto, a number of BWIA flight attendants that I know called me and asked if they should go on the flight.

In this situation it is something where we have to keep developing the local capability to deal with it, and also educating and training. In our hospitals we have had quite a few situations in the last months where even medical practitioners were not familiar with the symptoms of the disease, and identified persons as being suspected SARS cases when clearly they were not.

Quite a few pneumonia cases have been wrongly diagnosed as SARS by medical practitioners, such as nurses and other medical professionals. In fact, it has led to a lot of sensational front-page stories about this disease. So that this is the current situation. The acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Parasram, is the lead person in all of this—because this is a technical thing, and the technical persons are the ones best equipped to handle something as serious as this. From the Government’s perspective we would not just give them necessary support, such as providing the funding for the scanners which are going to be put: we are going to put one at Piarco, we are going to put one at Crown Point—we are going to put one at the Cruise Ship Complex in Port of Spain; and one at the Cruise Ship Port in Tobago. Eventually we would have to get four, but we are requiring two infrared scanners immediately in the first instance. Any other issues that persons may wish to raise I would be most happy to deal with them at a later stage.

Let me deal now with the amendments that the hon. Minister of Works and Transport would move at the committee stage. These amendments were previously circulated to hon. Members so they have had sight of them. The most important amendment is to clause 5 which deals with successorship. This is a successorship provision. This is based on requests that we got from the workers in the Civil Aviation Division and also from the trade union that they wanted the principle of successorship to allow an orderly transfer of workers.

Now, this is very important. If there were not an orderly transfer of workers from the Civil Aviation Division to the new Civil Aviation Authority it would then interfere with the whole administration of civil aviation and would affect the country’s ability to regain Category 1 status. So this amendment that has been tabled here is based on extensive consultation between the Public Services Association, the Ministry of Works and Transport, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The final form that you are seeing here does not take away anybody’s rights because it is subject to the Industrial Relations Act. If you look carefully at section 26A, you will see where it says, “Subject to the Industrial Relations Act.” I should like the hon. Member for Siparia to note that this means that the Industrial Relations Act would have precedence over these provisions. *[Interruption]* The advice we have is that this does not offend the Constitution because, in particular, are the words “Subject to the Industrial Relations Act”.

With respect to section 26B—for hon. Members who may not know—the amendment to clause 5 is lifted straight out of the Industrial Relations Act. If you care to look at section 38(2) and (3) of the Industrial Relations Act, this is almost

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. C. IMBERT]

Friday, May 09, 2003

a word for word recital of what already exists within the Industrial Relations Act. We have worked on this for a long time and the question of constitutional rights and freedoms came up. Of course, it must come up in something like this where persons have freedom of association and all that sort of thing. This took us a long time; this is about the seventh or eighth formulation of this, and we believe that this would work. It does not offend the Constitution. It would give the Public Services Association the right of successorship and does not take away from the right of anybody else to seek recognition as a bargaining agent for the workers who would be transferred from the Civil Aviation Division to the new Civil Aviation Authority.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

9.10 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

9.45 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (*Siparia*): Mr. Speaker, I join this debate on a limited point which I think is a very important one that has now been introduced into the debate by of the amendments proposed by the Member for Diego Martin East, on behalf of the Government. If we look at the existing clause 5 in the Bill, it asked for a continuation of association representation, and I read the proposed 26A which is contained in this clause 5.

“Subject to any written law, employees of the Authority who have transferred from the public service shall, for the purpose of collective bargaining, continue to be represented by the relevant representative association that formerly represented them.”

This was saying that whichever trade union represented you when you were in the public service, now that you are moving over as an employee of the Authority that you can continue to be represented by whatever was your relevant association. A new section 26(B) says:

“Any agreement applicable to former officers in the public service or a statutory authority who have transferred to the service of the Authority shall be valid and binding on the relevant representative association and the Authority and shall be deemed to be registered upon the Industrial Relations Act.”

So that if you had a collective agreement with your former union, that would also be transferred with you when you transfer into the service of the Authority.

New section 26(C) says:

“Upon the commencement of this Act and subject to any written law, a collective agreement or other agreement that immediately prior to the commencement of this Act affected employees who were employed in the public service or a statutory authority shall continue to have effect in relation to such employees.”

Again, this clause is talking about any collective agreement prior to the coming into force of this proposed Act. That was what 26A, 26B and 26C in clause 5 stated.

The amendment that is now being introduced is to delete 26A, B and C and substitute the following. In the marginal note, instead of “Continuation of association representation” we now have “Association deemed to be certified recognized majority union...,” And it reads:

“Subject to the Industrial Relations Act, the Public Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago shall be deemed to be the certified recognized majority union under Part III of the Industrial Relations Act for the bargaining unit comprising the monthly paid/monthly rated employees of the Authority.”

So what this has done is to name the particular trade union that is to represent the employees of the Authority. And that particular union, as mentioned here, is the Public Services Association. That, in itself, is bad enough. But then when we go to the new section 26B in the amendment, we see that it reads:

“An application for certification of recognition under Part III of the Industrial Relations Act shall not be entertained or proceeded with where the application is made earlier than two years from the date on which this amendment comes into force...”

So you are saying to these employees—whether you like it or not—that for two years the association to represent you will be the Public Services Association. Then the amendment says, “Renumber section 26D as section 26C”, and 26D which now becomes 26C reads:

“Employees may form an association which may be registered as a trade union or may join a trade union.”

It is totally ridiculous! You are saying that you are allowing the employees to join a union but, on the other hand, you are saying that for two years that union cannot be the recognized union. You cannot apply for recognition. Mr. Speaker, I strongly disagree with the Member for Diego Martin East when he says that this does not take away from workers any right to join any trade union and seek recognition.

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[MRS. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

Friday, May 09, 2003

In constitutional law there are direct restraints on abrogation, or detractions from entrenched rights in the Constitution. For example, to say you cannot join a trade union, if you are to put that within the written law then, of course, you would come back, and you are caught by section 54 of the Constitution; you are caught by section 4 of the Constitution, and you have to get the representative majority in the Parliament.

But there are also what is known in law—and I speak on this, not just from what I learned as a student; I wrote a thesis on this at the Faculty of Law at Cave Hill. I note that some hon. Members have been speaking of some of the things they have done. I wrote a thesis on the whole business of the Bill of Rights, not just on the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, but also on the constitutions of the Commonwealth Caribbean, which are all basically similar. The Bills of Rights—all recite, every one of them including ours—in section 4 says:

“It is hereby recognised and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms, namely— (a) to (k) are listed and paragraph (j) says: “freedom of association and assembly;”

It has been settled in the common law that freedom of association includes the right to join a trade union. So we do not have to speculate as to what freedom of association means. The case law defines very clearly for us that freedom of association includes the right to join a trade union. So here we are clearly talking about a fundamental right that is entrenched in the Constitution.

We look at section 5 of the Constitution which says:

“Except as is otherwise expressly provided in this Chapter and in section 54, no law may abrogate, abridge or infringe or authorise the abrogation, abridgement or infringement of any of the rights and freedoms hereinbefore recognised and declared.”

Mr. Speaker, I believe you, as well as the hon. Member for Arouca South, and the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant, and I am not so sure for our Friend who likes to spout the law and has also now become a medical expert. I cannot say the same for the Member for Diego Martin East, but I am sure the hon. Members for Laventille East/Morvant and Arouca South know what the exceptions are. The exceptions for existing legislation in the Constitution are very clear. Exceptions for—and the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant knows a

lot about this—states of emergency and exceptions for certain pieces of legislation; and those call for a particular kind of procedure that must be followed.

We move to section 13 of the Constitution. Prior to that, of course, Chapt. I of the Constitution deals with the Bill of Rights and the protection of those rights. Section 6 deals with the exceptions for existing law and exceptions for emergencies, and section 7 deals with the exceptions for certain legislation which reads:

“An Act to which this section applies may expressly declare that it shall have effect even though inconsistent with sections 4 and 5...”

If you are attempting to abridge, abrogate or infringe any of the existing rights in section 4, the first requirement is that particular piece of legislation must first expressly declare that it is inconsistent. And we would have seen another piece of legislation coming here, where, at the very start of it in the preamble, it sets out that even though the Bill is abridgeing or infringing sections 4 and 5, it would have effect upon the requisite majority. So there is nothing like that in requirement number one.

The second requirement is found in section 54, which tells us that while Parliament has the right to make law for the peace, order and good governance of the country, whilst Parliament has the right to alter any of the provisions of the Constitution including the entrenched provisions such as the Bill of Rights—

Section 54 also says:

“Subject to the provisions of this section, Parliament may alter any of the provisions of this Constitution...”

It has been said as you may have heard, Mr. Speaker, that apart from Dr. Fuad Khan, the only place that you change a man into a woman is by an Act of Parliament. So the Parliament can alter any of the provisions of the Constitution, but it must follow the laid down procedure.

Then in section 54(2), again, the provision is very clear. If you are seeking to alter sections 4 to 14, then a Bill for an Act, under this section, shall not be passed by Parliament unless at the final vote thereon in each House it is supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the Members of each House.

That is the procedure. Firstly, you must expressly declare that you are altering or derogating from the fundamental rights and, secondly, you must obtain the two-thirds majority in the Parliament. Does this provision abridge, infringe or in

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[MRS. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

Friday, May 09, 2003

any way detract from the right of the proposed employees, who would be transferred to the Civil Aviation Authority, to join the trade union of their choice? It is my respectful view that it clearly does that.

I started speaking about where there are direct and indirect restraints on freedoms and the Bill of Rights. The case law is replete with examples where the courts have held that where there is a prior restraint—in the sense that you may have to get a licence before you can exercise the right to march on the streets. It is your right to freedom of movement. You may have to get licence to do but many other things that the Bill of Rights gives you a fundamental right so to do. We have always talked about the Constitution allowing for that balancing of rights. What is the individual right? The individual freedom? The individual human rights versus what is in the public good and in the public interest?

So there would be restraints to allow all of us to co-exist harmoniously and enjoy our rights and freedoms without interfering with those of others. But where there is a direct restraint that is very obvious to see—for example, the courts have held that where there is a newspaper exercising freedom of expression and printing newspapers, and the Government imposes the requirement that the newspaper would only be entitled to X amount of newsprint, or it would have to pay in excess of a certain amount for that newsprint, it is interference with—I see the hon. Member nods his head; it seems he is very familiar with the *Times* newspaper. That has been held to be interfering with rights.

So when you say that for two years no application for certification of recognition can be entertained or proceeded with, you are in effect saying to the employees—even though you gratuitously renumber clause 26 which says, “join any trade union” and you are free to join a trade union, on the other hand you are saying that you are not going to be recognized for two years. If that is the case then you are, in fact, interfering with the right to freedom of association.

The Member for Diego Martin East said all of this is about successorship, which is to allow for an orderly transfer of the employees. I think perhaps he is suffering from a similar kind of provision that had been made with respect to the RHAs. When those persons were transferred to the RHAs, the Public Services Association could not represent them, and many of his problems had been with respect to that, where the doctors did not want to recognize the PSA and so on. So what do you do? You come to the Parliament with this and you say, “Listen, those employees of the Civil Aviation Authority who were transferred, I am sorry.” I do not care whom you choose as your trade union, for two years, whether you like

it or not, it is going to be the PSA. How can that not be an interference with the right to freedom of association? How can it not be? You are hamstringing them and forcing them and then you say, "I am doing this because we have had extensive consultations and the union wants it." Well, I have no doubt that the union wants it.

I saw the meeting with the President of the PSA and the Prime Minister which was carried on the television station. So I have no doubt that the President of the PSA spoke with the Prime Minister and he is very happy with the result of the discussions, which is that the PSA would be entrenched by virtue of this amendment. I have no doubt about that. But then you also tell me that the employees want it. Again, I do not know what the employees have said to you. I do not know which employees you have met with; and I do not know if the employees have told you, "Well, look, we want this thing so bad—put it in the law and force us for two years to stay with this union, whether we want it or not." I am saying, Mr. Speaker, if the employees wanted it so much, the hon. Member did not have to come and put it into this—because they would have voluntarily gone into the PSA for as long as two years, 10 years or 20 years. What you are now doing is that you are telling them, whether they like or not, they are going to have it for two years longer. What is going to happen with these people?

In the Minister's, winding up, I should like him to tell us if that is what they have said to him. "Well, yes, we want this and force us for two years, so we cannot change our minds for two years". Is it this what they have asked for? I do not know. I find it very hard to believe that they are saying, "Yes, we want it and therefore, put it in the law and force us to stay with it for two years." I cannot see that being the case. If the employees and the unions really want this there is no need for it in this Bill. You do not need it in the Act, because what persons want to do they would go and do. You do not have to put in a law to force them to go and do it. In fact, usually what you put in law is to force persons to do things that they do not normally want to do.

So I am saying, I am not convinced that this is what the employees wanted. I do not know to what extent it has been explained to them as to what you are doing. They might have said, "Well, yes, we are willing to continue with the PSA." But I do not know if this has been explained to them because this means that for two years, jump high, jump low, like it or not, they are going to be staying with the PSA.

The Member for Diego Martin East, again, in explaining the extent of the amendments, talked about not taking away from the rights of workers. As I have

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[MRS. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

Friday, May 09, 2003

said before, I am not convinced that this does not affect the rights of workers. Indeed, I have seen other pieces of legislation come to this Parliament from the other side, containing provisions that clearly were infringements, and then when we on this side got up and talked about it, the same Member for Diego Martin East—I remember very recently—stood up and said, “We are taking that whole thing out of it; we are not putting it again. We do not need your support; do not vote for it; we would vote for it with a simple majority”.

Mr. Speaker, I remember last when we debated the Kidnapping Bill and the Summary Courts (Amdt.) Bill, whilst the Member for Laventille East/Morvant was busy defending the provisions, the hon. Member for Diego Martin East and the Attorney General were circulating the amendment to take the same clause that infringed rights out of the Bill. It needed a special majority and it needed that recital at the start in the preamble to say that it was expressly infringing rights and so on.

So there are two hurdles across here: one is that the format of this whole thing cannot work for this, and assuming, but not admitting, that you can get that format into place—because I do not see your drafters and the Attorney General. Mr. Speaker, in any case, you remember when we last spoke to the hon. Attorney General—I do not even know if she looked at this—because if she did she should have seen it. But then this is an Attorney General who looks at the Explanatory Note to a Bill and then says, “That is why what is in the Bill is in the Bill.”

You need to look at this again, and if you do not, you would be challenged in the courts. I do not think that is what the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro may want. He is very busy to get this thing passed; that is why we are here 10 o’clock in the night; he wants to upgrade from Category 1, 2, 3 or 4. I am not too sure which one he wants to upgrade. In fact, I saw a huge advertisement in the newspaper, a joint advertisement, put out by BWIA and the Government saying, that they would be taking the legislation to Parliament to pass it so that they could get the upgrade. I wish the hon. Member good luck in getting the upgrade.

There is another point I would like to raise and it has to do with travel, civil aviation, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). I remember not too long ago when there was a big hullabaloo in the country about the travel advisories put out by the United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia and Canada talking about Trinidad and Tobago being such an unsafe destination: crime ridden, kidnapping, murders, banditry; and none of that has changed. When that happened, the hon. Prime Minister stood in the Parliament and announced that high-powered delegations were being sent off to one place, and others were being

sent to other places; spending up to now, I do not know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars and they all went off.

Mr. Manning: Less than the airport.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar: Less than the airport. Very well. They were all sent off—but they had to pass through that same airport and so they flew all over the world; they were in the headlines and so on, and you know, Mr. Speaker, if you check the travel advisory today you will see that every one of those travel advisories remained in place [*Interruption*] Should I really give way?

Mr. Manning: Be a lady.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar: Well, I will try.

Mr. Manning: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for Siparia for being so kind and generous as to give way. Just for the record, the travel advisory coming out of Britain was, in fact, amended following the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to that country.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. Speaker, having given way I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister—he probably has information that I do not—when did this happen?

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, I do not remember the exact day but it happened within two months of the delegation leaving the United Kingdom.

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for me to doubt the word of the hon. Prime Minister, but, I would be very grateful if at our next sitting the hon. Prime Minister would bring the previous travel advisory and the changed one for this honourable House. Let us see it. So I would be very happy—I have given way as a lady, and as a gentleman, I am sure, with honour, the hon. Prime Minister would, at the next sitting, bring both travel advisories. So the travel advisory is to the best of my knowledge and if you can convince me otherwise—I am not talking about the World Health Organization, (WHO) SARS; that is okay, you keep that one. [*Interruption*] You have had your time. So I would like to see that because, from my information and knowledge, the travel advisories have remained the same; the high-powered delegations went, came back and nothing has changed. Even if those advisories have changed I am saying that the state and the condition with respect to crime has not changed.

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[MRS. K. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

Friday, May 09, 2003

So I welcome, Mr. Speaker, the news I am reading—and I hope it is good news—that the Minister of National Security is to be removed and a new one is to be appointed. I would be very happy if that news is true. And I trust that the day when you pull the date of the general election out of your back pocket you would also pull that out with it, because that could certainly help you to deal with the poor administration of the Ministry of National Security. *[Interruption]* I heard it twice for the evening. That is why Sen. The Hon. Howard Chin Lee is the Minister of National Security. That is all the basket the Member for San Fernando East took. Mr. Speaker, I said that I rose on two simple points; the first is that I believe that this amendment would now require a two-thirds majority, and it would also require changes, alterations, amendments to the format in which the Bill is being presented. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few points on two matters. The first is the very serious matter raised by the Minister of Health concerning the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic and scare that threatens the entire globe emanating from Asia. I just want to—certainly, not to politicize such a very serious matter—raise a concern that I want to share with the Minister of Health and the authorities.

Just today I returned to Trinidad from another Caricom territory and when one lands in Guyana there is the very frightening appearance of eight or ten Immigration Officers with mask waiting to interrogate you. There is a desk in the airport, where there were a couple of Immigration Officers plus someone who was identified to me as a medical doctor and had to speak to each passenger for a minute or two to get some information. The doctor in this case spoke to me and asked where I was coming from, my travel history and so on, and then I proceeded to the normal immigration and customs desks.

That is a very frightening prospect to land at airports and be confronted by that. But, to a certain extent it also gave a bit of confidence that the Guyanese authorities appeared to be serious in this matter. While I have no doubt about the competence of persons and professionals in the Ministry of Health, communication is also important.

On boarding the aircraft to return to Trinidad, the flight attendant would bring to you two forms: a pink form you would fill some basic information. More or less it is the same information that the medical doctor asks for when you enter Guyana. I was very concerned with this—because it was the first time I was undergoing this type of interfacing with the threat. You complete the form. It is very interesting. It remains with you and when you reach to Trinidad, the flight

attendant collects the form from you and gives it to an officer—who looked like an officer from the Airports Authority, not a medical worker as such—who collected about 50 forms, as if he was at the door of a fete or a cinema—held it in his hand and then the passengers left the airport. I did not get the impression that the person read it, or there was any urgency with it, and I left the airport and came directly to the Parliament.

Hon. Member: Good Lord!

Dr. R. Moonilal: “Good Lord” is right. Many, many years ago, before I matured like this, I would have been tempted to write on that form that I just came from China through London and I had a cough for the last ten days. So what would they do? Go and seek me out in San Fernando East; if I would have put San Fernando East as my address. I am underlining what appeared to me to be something not treated procedurally with any measure of seriousness. That was my impression. Not that you need a specialist doctor by the gate when you come off the aircraft to quickly examine you and so on, but the impression you get is that this thing was not taken all that seriously. It is really a strong concern and I am happy that on the same day I came from the airport to the Parliament and raised the matter and the hon. Minister would take a note of that. [*Interruption*] Not just me, but all of you could have been victims.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for giving way and I thank him for telling me this. What is supposed to happen is that the health control officer would look at the forms and determine whether any of the passengers fit the criteria and then pull that passenger aside. Of course, it is human beings you are dealing with, and that is why I am grateful that you have given me this anecdote so that we can determine—Was this a flight coming from Guyana?

Dr. R. Moonilal: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Because what we have found out is that not in every case are they following the procedures. Clearly, from what you have said, they did not follow the procedures in this case. We just have to keep at it until they start complying with the procedures

Dr. R. Moonilal: Fine. Maybe one way is to do some type of random sampling of passengers or something like that, but something needs to be done, otherwise matters such as these would remain a sort of mundane, ritual procedure at the airport. A different officer just stands and collects these forms and keeps

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

them as if they are fete tickets and you do not know. Albeit it is not a flight emanating from a country that is listed, but still persons can be going through different countries over a period. So I thought I would share that experience.

Mr. Speaker, on the matter before us concerning the amendments—I am referring to the second column—my colleague, the Member for Siparia raised a few matters as they relate to the issue of the Constitution and the possibility here that we may be touching a matter that requires more than a simple majority. Section 4 deals with fundamental rights, and one is the right to freedom of expression. My colleague, the Member for Siparia, is much more trained and versed and has written on these matters professionally.

I would just like to raise a few matters from an industrial relations standpoint and seek to get some clarification from the hon. Minister piloting the Bill or any other hon. Minister that may be in a better position to answer matters of industrial relations. They relate to a few points. Maybe the Member for Point Fortin or the Minister of Health has been doing a very good job of managing industrial relations in the health sector. He would be in a better position to deal with matters of industrial relations, but he has spoken already. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, I believe he has been trained in that area. I mean, it is geologist, sociologist, industrial relations expert and economist—everything.

The Government is embarking upon a course of action of naming the trade union. There is an amendment to deal with successorship, and you are moving workers and the trade union is following. It wants to get successorship rights over the bargaining unit as you transfer. But you are naming the trade union, unlike what obtained not only before in the Bill but also what obtained in previous legislation dealing with these matters. In Act No. 23 of 2000 to amend the Regional Health Authorities Act, 1994 a similar issue has been dealt with and in this Act at section 3(3), the matter was dealt with as follows:

“Subject to the Industrial Relations Act, the majority trade union which immediately prior to January 1, 2000 represented the daily-rated workers who were employed in health care facilities and in respect of whom the Chief Personnel Officer was deemed to be the employer under the Industrial Relations Act, shall continue to represent such workers.”

So it was very clear here that the majority union—without calling the name of the union necessarily—that had those workers in its bargaining unit, that union would continue.

I am not very clear on why there is a need to put in legislation that the Public Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago would be deemed. Now, on the surface I ask: What is the big deal? Why would you want to put the Public Services Association in the “lordist” way to say, “This is the union”? Do not mistake it. It could be “the majority trade union which immediately prior to the transfer held the bargaining unit.” But, no, it is the Public Services Association. You are putting that in law. There are problems associated with that. For example, the trade union could change its name and become the “Public Services General Workers Association” and that may call for a further amendment. So you are naming this trade union. And we are asking: Why the need to move from what obtained before and what obtained in the initial Bill to name the trade union? You may not know actually. It appears that you do not know and you do not care, but we are asking why. We wish to get an answer—but you do not know and you do not care to know as to why the technical persons who were drafting the amendment decided that this is the course of action to take. It might be interesting to learn.

On the matter of 26B when we raised the issue of having a trade union with a sort of built-in buffer time of two years during which another union cannot gain certification of a bargaining unit and so on, the hon. Minister rightly pointed to the Industrial Relations Act, Section 38(1). Mr. Speaker, this section is enshrined in the IRA, notwithstanding the constitutional argument for unions that are at the moment getting a new certificate for a bargaining unit; not a movement, not a successorship. Because as it is now, the PSA in this case already is certified and it would have been certified, maybe, for many years. So it is not a new bargaining unit and the Industrial Relations Act pertains to a new certificate.

So effectively you are saying to the union: You have been there for many years and as a new certificate under the IRA, you have the benefit of a two-year period. But we would give you that anyway as you transfer; as you have this successorship. I do not know if hon. Members are following me. So you get two additional years. Why? We do not know. But that is the effect of this. The IRA pertains to when you are first issued with a certificate of recognition. You are transferring here. It is a successorship. Nothing is new. You are transferring and giving the trade union here two years.

At an interesting juncture, in those two years with the amendment of the Government, let us assume that in the two years, for one reason or another, there is cause for the trade union to be decertified, what happens then? Now, you can say, “Well, there is another procedure to get leave of the court and seek another

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[DR. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 09, 2003

process for recognition,” but of course that is time consuming. It involves resources, money and so on, for another worker organization. So there are workers on a two-year bind with the trade union, for if something goes wrong with that trade union they are unable to get representation by any other worker organization.

I am getting some music from the hon. Member for Port of Spain North//St. Ann’s West. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, this thing is not a joke. I am sorry I cannot make fun and keep this honourable House lively, it is a very serious matter. There is very little life I can put into this to make some jokes for everybody at 10.30 p.m. But that serious matter comes here, that, if for one reason or another this trade union is decertified and cannot represent those workers, they do not have any other course of action to get representation from another trade union, or another worker organization. That is a very serious concern.

I have raised two concerns: the naming of the trade union with regard to what we believe to be wrong in the sense of a misrepresentation of a provision in the Industrial Relations Act to put into this amendment. That is the second point. The third and final point I wish to make on this is that the Government is also removing 26B, which states:

“Any agreement applicable to former officers in the public service or a statutory authority who have transferred to the service of the Authority shall be valid and binding on relevant representative association and the Authority and shall be deemed to be registered under the Industrial Relations Act.”

You are removing 26B, as I said before, whereas in previous legislation that dealt with this similar problem. For example—I am quoting again from Act No. 23 of 2000 to amend the Regional Health Authorities Act and 34A(1) says:

“Subject to any written law, every registered collective agreement and registered memorandum of agreement within the meaning assigned to such agreements and memoranda under the Industrial Relations Act, in existence...to which the Chief Personnel Officer was a party...shall be binding.”

10. 30 p.m.

So the long and short of that clause is that you put in law that the terms and conditions of the workers would continue and they are binding. You cannot change that. The Government chose to remove that clause. We would like to get some explanation why the Government did so. The workers remain unprotected in terms of their bargained-for terms and conditions of work. They had terms and

conditions of work bargained for before; you transfer them and say that the terms and conditions of work do not come with them legally. They can lose those terms and conditions of work. They are left to the employer and there is the uncertainty of collective bargaining. This is an important point. There may have been different economic conditions when they first bargained to get terms and conditions of work. Suppose now the economic terms and conditions are not the same and they are worse. There may be new terms and conditions of work where the workers could be disadvantaged. That is one of my concerns.

Those are the three concerns we raise with you. Why would you want to enshrine in the law, the name the Public Services Association? I have tried to indicate some of the dangers associated with naming trade unions like this. You cannot carry section 38(1)(b) from the Industrial Relations Act into this amendment. That section is meant for when you first get certification of recognition; while you are now throwing out clause 26(B) which states clearly that the terms and conditions of the workers must remain as they were before.

Thank you.

Mr. Chandresh Sharma (*Fyzabad*): Mr. Speaker, you will appreciate from the contributions made by the Members for Caroni East, Siparia and Oropouche, that the submission of clause 5—26(A) and 26B—needs reconsideration. I wonder if the acting Leader of Government Business would give some reconsideration as it is a clear infringement of the constitutional provisions for citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

The question has been asked why these amendments have been presented to the House in the manner in which they have been. It seems very clear that it is political payback. There could not be any good reason why an association has been identified. This has never obtained in the past. During the last general election the relationship of this particular association and the Government was clear. This is an infringement of the provisions of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. We should be very careful. Though the Government wants to get the support of the Opposition, it has not demonstrated why a trade union has been named. It is sending the wrong signal.

The Member for Diego Martin East spoke about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). When legislation is presented to this House it must be seen in the context of what is correct. At this time the hospital cannot treat a common flu. My colleague, the Member for Oropouche, indicated his experience coming in an aircraft from a neighbouring country. The Government is aware that citizens of

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Trinidad and Tobago went to China to attend the trade fair. To date, many of those citizens have returned and not one of them has been met by health officials or persons representing the Ministry of Health. Saying that you have extracted some information from the Internet and making it Government policy, and what the learning is, fools no one. The Government demonstrates no willingness and ability.

The Member for Diego Martin East spoke about industrial relations. Two doctors have been sent on leave, and that is an infringement of their rights under the Constitution and under the better practices of industrial relations. I speak of Dr. Austin Trinidad, acting Medical Chief of Staff at the San Fernando General Hospital. No effort at this time has been made to correct that situation. Why has he been sent? Is it political victimization? The answer appears to be yes. There could not be any other reason. We saw a similar development at the Port of Spain General Hospital with Dr. Boysie Mahabir, Medical Chief of Staff. The Government is saying that it wants to treat with these things but it is sending home the leaders of the institutions. In San Fernando 60 doctors are protesting and rightly so. You are not treating with industrial relations and the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. In this piece of legislation you want to make a provision for a particular trade union.

The Minister identified some symptoms and indicated what might be obtained. I have seen it operate in flights to the Far East and elsewhere. I suggest that a prevention officer be placed on the high-risk flights where the assessment could be on the aircraft and as the passengers deplane, further examination could be done. I remember in the early days when there was heavy traffic out of New York and Miami for Carnival, you would have done immigration clearance over there, so when the passengers got to Port of Spain, they would have left the airport very quickly. A similar approach could be made. It is very cost effective. The Opposition is not only about criticizing, but also about making suggestions.

My other concern is about this pink form. Very often it is ignored because it is not related to entry into the country. The immigration arrival form has to be seen by an immigration officer. You have to fill in that form to be admitted into the country. Even if you are a returning resident, the pink form should be given that kind of consideration. It is a nuisance form. The Minister in identifying SARS indicated that it is similar to the flu and not enough public education has been issued in Trinidad and Tobago. Two days ago in Tobago, Virgin Atlantic brought in 500 passengers. My understanding is that no screening took place. The Member

for Tobago East may confirm that. The Member is saying that no screening took place. While it is good to bring tourists into the country—we need the exposure and the foreign exchange—one has to be careful that one does not bring SARS as well. One has to ensure that one does not put other citizens at risk.

Clause 2(b) states:

“by deleting the definition of ‘aviation document’ and substituting the following definition:

‘aviation document’ means—

- (a) any licence, certificate or other document issued by the Authority in respect of any person, aircraft, aerodrome or service related to aviation;”

I raise this in the context of charters. In the last month or so, the Minister of Works and Transport indicated that charters would be treated differently. It is a disservice to the citizens of this country. Without charters many of us would not be able to travel, and it comes so soon after the Secondary Entrance Examination (SEA) when children are often rewarded with a trip to Miami or Disney World. It is because of the availability of chartered flights that such promises were made. We have seen an attack on charters in relation to accommodating BWIA. What was not said then is that BWIA offers charters.

Chartered airlines can bring passengers to Port of Spain, take them to the major cities and, in some instances, for less than half the cost. I would like the Minister to reconsider, the provision he has in mind for those charters and make the national airline more competitive. Let them become responsible for running their affairs and finding ways of cutting costs.

On proposed sections 26A and 26B the Minister spoke about industrial relations. BWIA workers who were retrenched had to go on their knees begging for what was legally due to them. You saw little intervention by the Government. It makes stronger the point that the mentioning of the union is really a political payback.

This clause also speaks about employees and their transfer from one place to another. Persons who are qualified find it very difficult to obtain transfers. There are nationals from this country who have obtained qualifications from local and foreign universities in aviation and airport management. There is no system to move a person in the public service who is qualified in aviation or airport

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

management. Under the PNM administration, at the airport, they moved workers left, right and centre. There is a high level of discrimination. Some of these workers were thought by the PNM administration to be close to the UNC and that was their only fault. WASA is a classic example. The former Chief Executive Officer of WASA was replaced by the current one whose only additional qualification is the ability to speak German.

This Bill is to move the airport from one grouping to a higher one. The same airport that the PNM condemned they are trying to upgrade today. The Piarco International Airport—the cheapest per square foot in the world has been built by a UNC Government. Let the Government show differently. It is a very effective airport and was built intelligently. Under the PNM administration, we have had visitors from Singapore and the Caribbean looking at our airport as a model for airports. The advice of the Ministry of Works and Transport is being sought for similar expansions of airports in the Caribbean. In the dead of night the PNM appointed an airport authority to break up the airport for cheap politics. You cannot want to upgrade and do that. You would become a laughing stock.

The Government is prepared to play cheap politics. It said that the airport did not receive approval from the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation. I do not know. Hundreds of houses are being constructed or attempted to be constructed without any approval. It is good for the airport but not the other places. I hope that when the Minister replies he would indicate how these BWIA workers would be treated. The experience of the regional health authorities in an earlier PNM manifestation tells us that we must be careful about how we proceed in matters of this kind.

Clause 8 states:

“33A. The Director General may prescribe standards in respect of regulations made under this Act.”

In presenting the Bill, the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro did not indicate whether this is in keeping with the FAA or the regulations to be made under this Act and what they intended to achieve. When the Member for Diego Martin East spoke he said that there were numerous consultations. With whom? Nobody knows. When did they take place? Nobody knows. What were their submissions? Nobody knows. You cannot come to Parliament and say this or that took place. You say, “We met with these guys on five occasions and they indicated their concerns.” You are asking for collective support. We would have an appreciation for whom you met with. Did you meet with a PNM party group or supporters of the PNM? The Member for Diego Martin East is confirming it. Truth is the greatest healer.

Clause 8 continues:

“33B.(1) The Director General may make emergency regulations and emergency rules in circumstances where it is expedient to do so...”

This is a global approach to things. It is in a particular context. The PNM government declared a state of emergency and locked up the Speaker of the House. It means that if the Leader of the Opposition is coming through the airport, they could declare a state of emergency and lock him up. It must say the context in which it is to be done and the formula to be employed. If the Minister tells the Director General to close the airport we do not want Mr. Panday to land tonight, what would happen? The Director General would have to follow the instructions. The Government does not own the Parliament or the people of Trinidad and Tobago to say anything in a vacuum. Immediately, it should communicate such directions, instructions or regulations. Since 2002, there has been no publication. When it is convenient, the Government and BWIA would bring it to Parliament. I was not aware that BWIA could bring legislation to Parliament. Under the PNM anything is possible. The Member for Siparia referred to an advertisement that appeared in the print media.

Clause 8, 33B.(2) states:

“In furtherance of subsection (1), the emergency regulations and emergency rules shall be published in two daily newspapers within forty-eight hours of the making thereof.”

In the last 16 months no publication has appeared in any of the two daily newspapers. We had Grade I already, but you ran it down when you started to “mash up” the airport and put your friends on the Airports Authority to do political witch hunting, when you claimed that you had to fix the runway. The shelf life of any runway is between 12 and 18 months.

Clause 9 states:

“Section 34 of the Act is amended by—

(2) The Authority in considering the grant of a licence in relation to an aerodrome shall take into account, in addition to other things, the need to minimize so far as is reasonably practicable—

(a) any adverse effects on the environment;”

We have not been told about any reports or research done by the Environmental Management Authority or any other authority. Many things are done in a vacuum.

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[MR. SHARMA]

Friday, May 09, 2003

The Government has no legislative agenda. It has to call Parliament; we were on a break for two or three weeks. Come with anything. Let the country see we are in Parliament. There are no sensible regulations. This country is going down under the PNM. We are not advancing.

Clause 14 states:

“71 The Authority is hereby exempt from all taxes including value added tax and corporation tax, levies including the Green Fund Levy and customs and excise duties.”

Millions of dollars are collected there and this House has not been informed how the money is being spent. What quantum of money from the Government goes to maintain the airport? It is important to know that so we can lend support to it. We do not know the quantum of money being spent to promote the party in power and to treat with Ministers leaving and going. It is important to bring to the House how much is received at the airport in departure tax. Members on this side have been told that when the Prime Minister said that he was prepared for BWIA to go under, there was a mad rush for duty free shops by ministers and others. The Minister of Works and Transport indicated last year that we collected \$63 million in the RIF and this year it is anticipated to collect \$50 million. Parliament must be told what sums of money are being collected and if they are falling under how they would be made up.

Clause 16 states:

“The First Schedule of the Act is amended in clause 1(1) by—

- (a) inserting after the word ‘Board’, the words, ‘other than the Director General,’”

This requires that the House must be told what should be obtained from this amendment. You cannot want to have an amendment without advancing the reasons. Demonstrate that the management of the airport would be better and there would be continuity. When the Government changes, persons who are qualified to hold a post would not be moved because of the new political direction.

The Minister made the point with respect to SARS that there is a high level of concern in Trinidad and Tobago because we have a large number of passengers coming from Toronto. Many passengers to Toronto come from China and the Far East. We are not satisfied that the measures he has identified at the airport and the public health institutions are sufficient to treat with suspected cases. Any measure that would bring a degree of relief or comfort to us is important.

While the Member for Diego Martin East was making his contribution, the hon. Prime Minister intervened to indicate and the Minister confirmed that the death toll has increased from 3 to 4 per cent. We stand committed to lending any area of assistance. We have highly qualified doctors on this side. SARS does not choose its sex. I hope that the Minister would treat with the contributions from this side more so that of the Members for Siparia and Oropouche.

It appears that section 26 is not in keeping with the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. If we need to revisit it, do it another day, adjourn for a few minutes and agree to the procedure, or send it to a select committee; then we would be happy.

Thank you.

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Franklin Khan): Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up this debate we had some lively contributions and lifeless in some cases. Permit me to indicate that many of the issues that were raised in this segment of the debate focussed on one particular issue. It has to do with sections 26A and 26B as they relate to the successorship of PSA and union representation as we move into the Civil Aviation Authority. I will deal with that later on.

Permit me to deal with some of the earlier issues that were raised by the Member for Caroni East and those with regard to the SARS issue. The issue of civil aviation is under serious review internationally. We are making an effort to modernize the legislative infrastructure as we put the country on the path of developed country status by 2020. This will go a long way in assisting the civil aviation industry which is under extreme pressure. It is no fault of theirs. International circumstances have hit them a wicked blow. We have come out of the “September 11” issue that has hurt the civil aviation industry—international air transportation industry and, by extension, trade investment and tourism. This was followed by the war in Iraq. Like any other war it has its fallout, its effects that continue to impact on international issues.

Lately, we have had the issue of SARS. We are dealing with a disease that is new; not well understood at this time and in its most negative way, it can have a serious impact on life and civilization. We hope that would not happen and medical science would continue to do its part for mankind in coming to terms with some of these deadly contagious diseases. We have had a good track record in dealing with cholera and small pox. I feel confident that the medical fraternity will get this under control. I compliment and commend the Member for Diego Martin East on a very lucid contribution on the SARS issue. If I am permitted to quote the hon. Prime Minister, the best Ministers of health are not necessarily doctors. We have some good evidence.

Civil Aviation (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. F. KHAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

The real issue of the debate is that of successorship for the Public Services Association, as we move over from the Department of Civil Aviation into the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority. There are two issues that face us—when I listened to the Member for Siparia—a constitutional issue and an industrial relations one. There is also an issue about managing future developmental framework. We have taken the decision to modernize the work process in the country. We are largely constrained by antiquated public service regulations and a public service that we have inherited from the colonial period.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: If the Minister is saying that the regulations are outdated, why is he putting them under PSA?

Hon. F. Khan: The PSA is a union. It can change its name in the morning. The Public Services Association as a union is distinct from the Public Service Regulations which are under the Public Service Commission. We need to modernize the work process in the public sector. The avenue we have chosen in the first instance is to move the transition from mainstream public service to statutory authorities. If we have the support of the Opposition we can look at more meaningful constitutional changes as they relate to the police service, public service and statutory authorities. They do not want to go that route and we cannot sit idly by as a Government and not continue to plan the business of this country.

The first phase of that was the regional health authorities. They have stumbled along the way at times. One of the reasons is that we had not done this properly. That is why we have taken so long and gone into such intense deliberation and consultation with all parties involved. We are not anti-union or anti-anything. We are pro-Trinidad and Tobago and are seeking solutions and efficiency in the economy. We have tried to set a framework because this would be coming fast and furious.

The civil aviation transition is seen as the prototype of this Government for the future. We have a transition team that is currently working with the employees, PSA, Civil Aviation Authority, Ministry of Works and Transport, Federal Aviation Authority, Federal Department of Transportation in the United States and IKO. We are dealing with everybody and using this as a prototype. Once we get this right we would move to the roads authority and revenue authority. In five years' time when you come to Trinidad, you will not recognize the infrastructure. The administrative infrastructure would also be overhauled with more efficient work processes in place.

I will deal with some specific issues that were raised. Why did we name the Public Services Association? It was named in the provisions of section 26A

because we are trying to avoid the pitfalls of the relevant provisions of the Regional Health Authorities Act. This was recited by the Member for Oropouche. I repeat that subject to any written law every registered collective agreement and registered memorandum of agreement within the meaning assigned to such agreements and memoranda under the Industrial Relations Act, in existence before January 01, 2000, to which the CPO or party in relation to hourly, weekly and daily-rated employees in the health care facilities—This was deliberate. There was no mention of monthly-paid employees.

This is the genesis of the problem that we face today with the regional health authorities. This was no more and no less than pure spite against a union that was perceived to be not in favour of the party at the time.

Dr. Rafeeq: This provision was brought because it was left out of the original Regional Health Authorities Act. It dealt with the monthly-rated public servants. It did not deal with daily-rated workers.

Hon. F. Khan: Why are they not represented? The point I am making is that they attempted to give successorship and recognition to the National Union of Government and Federated Workers (NUGFW). They represented hourly, daily and weekly-rated workers. This language is flawed because it seems clear that hourly, weekly and daily-paid workers are represented by NUGFW with this type of language and not specifically stating NUGFW. That was the intent. This union still had to apply under the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board. We are making the regulations clear.

We are transforming the work process in the public service. We are doing it in a way that all parties are being involved. We know that the union has a role in a modern economy. We have to treat with labour. Nobody can accuse us of being anti-labour. We are demonstrating that we have no axe to grind. We are thinking through a process properly and taking the decisions that are needed to be taken.

Mr. Ramsaran: Since you are now putting the PSA to represent the monthly paid workers, are there any daily-paid workers that would be affected and would not be represented by the union?

Hon. F. Khan: The Civil Aviation Authority is a highly technical component of the Ministry of Works and Transport and there are no daily-paid workers involved.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Who are the employees of the Civil Aviation Authority? Would there be daily and hourly, or all monthly?

Hon. F. Khan: All monthly.

The final point is the issue of the constitutionality of the amendments. It is our understanding from counsel that section 26B does not offend the Constitution, since it provides for due process of law. The provisions are such that they do not debar the employees of the Civil Aviation Authority from joining a union. If they transfer tomorrow morning and more than 50 per cent of them decide that they do not want to be members of PSA, they do not want the PSA to be their collective bargaining union, they can seek leave of the court.

Section 38 of the Industrial Relations Act clearly states:

- “(2) Where a union desires to obtain the leave of the Court for the purpose of subsection (1)(b), it shall make an application to the Court for the purpose and, if the Court is satisfied that good reasons exist for the application to be made before the expiration of two years from the date when the recognised majority union obtained certification as such, it shall grant leave accordingly.
- (3) In determining whether good reasons exist under subsection (2), the question whether the union making the application before the Court has as members in good standing more than fifty per cent of the workers comprised in the bargaining unit for which the recognised majority union is certified, may be taken into account, but may not be the sole reason on which leave is to be granted.”

It is clear that based on legal counsel, we are making the right decision. We are pursuing a course of action that we think is in the interest of all. The Member for Diego Martin East is reminding me that the wording is “subject to the Industrial Relations Act.” I have understood from lawyers that there are always shades of differences in the interpretation of the law. We think that it is clear enough and we feel comfortable that we are doing the right thing.

We are giving successorship to the employees. If you do not have this you can have a transition where there would be no union. You could fire half of them. The Opposition should understand that we are not personalizing this matter. As we continue to move across from mainstream public service into the statutory authorities, we would adopt this procedure. We want to give successorship to unions that are there for the continued protection of workers. These unions can continue to negotiate for more enhanced collective agreements. We are going for the Civil Aviation Authority because civil aviation is a profession that does not fit naturally within the public service classification of employees. Air traffic controllers in Trinidad are the lowest paid in the world and especially in the

Caribbean. Some of the other controllers in the Caribbean are getting up to twice and three times as much as we pay ours. That is because they were locked in a classification system that was public service oriented in terms of its jurisdiction.

We have brought this amendment to catapult the whole civil aviation industry into a modern era. This is one small aspect of it. It is an amendment to the Act which was well put together in many respects, but there are some serious flaws. Some serious amendments were needed and we have brought these amendments in good faith. It is not only the technical issues of the civil aviation industry but also the human resource issues and the whole process of good governance.

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.

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2.

Question proposed, That clause 2 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Sharma: I had raised the issue about the agencies running chartered flights. Could the Minister indicate how charters would be treated?

Mr. Khan: They are not being treated under this Act.

Mr. Sharma: It says:

“...any licence, certificate or other document issued by the Authority in respect of any person, aircraft ...or service related to aviation;”

Mr. Khan: The Civil Aviation Authority will continue to provide journey licences. Some people, especially travel agents, are using that loophole and palming off charters as scheduled flights. If someone applies for a charter and says that he is flying three times a week from July to September, that is scheduled flight. If he is bringing students from Martinique on a charter flight, that is the true charter that Civil Aviation would authorize. Where there is the semblance of a scheduled flight and it is competing with the scheduled carriers, it has to go to the Air Transport Licensing Authority (ATLA) which will fix the schedule and authorize the rates.

Mr. Sharma: That same provision does not apply to BWIA because it offers charters on the similar basis.

Mr. Khan: Charters in the sense that they would have to get approval from ATLA.

Mr. Sharma: It is unfair.

Mr. Singh: The point by the Member for Fyzabad is a simple one. BWIA, whilst it is running on the scheduled flight is also selling charter blocks to airline travel agents at subsidized rates.

Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 3 and 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5.

Question proposed, That clause 5 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Khan: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that clause 5 be amended as follows:

First Column	Second Column
Clause	Extent of Amendments
5	A.
<p>Delete sections 26A, 26B and 26C and substitute the following sections:</p> <p>“Association deemed to be certified recognized majority union Chap. 88:01</p> <p>Application for certification of recognition</p>	<p>26A. Subject to the Industrial Relations Act, the Public Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago shall be deemed to be the certified recognized majority union under Part III of the Industrial Relations Act for the bargaining unit comprising the monthly paid-monthly rated employees of the Authority.</p> <p>26B. An application for certification of recognition under Part III of the Industrial Relations Act shall not be entertained or proceeded with where the application is made earlier than two</p>

years from the date on which this amendment comes into force, but an application may be made with leave of the Court although two years have not expired since the amendment came into force, in which event the procedures set out under section 38(2) and (3) of the Industrial Relations Act shall apply.”

B. Renumber proposed section 26D as section 26C.

Mr. Sharma: Clause 5—26A talks about employees of the Authority who have transferred but not about those in the public service. You are discriminating against one employee.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I am not convinced by the arguments of the Minister. The explanation is that due process of law is being followed. It does not say that you could abrogate any of those rights as long as you follow due process. I ask you again to reconsider this. You have the majority and you would send it through on a simple majority. When you get to the—you may do the same or have more difficulty. Once you are placing an obstacle in the way of the enjoyment of the right, that way is that application to the court. If it is within two years, it is my view that this requires a particular kind of formula and procedure which in the other place is not being followed. I cannot support the amended clause 5.

Mr. Imbert: We believe the words, “subject to the Industrial Relations Act” take care of the concerns raised by the Member for Siparia. However, we will always have an open mind. We will consider what you have to say.

Dr. Rafeeq: The Minister said he would give an explanation why 26B was left out and he did not.

Mr. Khan: It was left out because we are giving them the flexibility to negotiate superior terms and conditions with the Civil Aviation Authority. One of the fundamental reasons for this move is that the functionaries in this industry can now benchmark their terms and conditions with standards more akin to their training and profession.

Dr. Rafeeq: Under what terms and conditions are they transferring?

Mr. Khan: Under the current terms at the point of leaving the department and go into the Civil Aviation Authority.

Dr. Rafeeq: What piece of legislation says that?

Mr. Khan: It is not a legislative issue.

Dr. Rafeeq: There is no documentation that says under what terms and conditions.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 6 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 7.

Question proposed, That clause 7 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Khan: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that clause 7 be amended as follows:

7 Renumber paragraphs (a) and (b) as (b) and (c) respectively and insert the following paragraph:

“(a) in subsection (1), by deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following paragraph:

(b) a system for the national registration of aircraft;”.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 8.

Question proposed, That clause 8 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Sharma: With regard to 33B (1), can the Minister give an indication when this would be applied?

Mr. Khan: There are several instances. SARS is one; if there is a major crash at the airport and you need to shut it down or close off air space; in the case of a military attack on Trinidad and Tobago. There are several issues that could be relevant. We hope that none of them come to pass.

Mr. Sharma: When you go to the airport and a flight is delayed oftentimes the information is not available on the monitor. How do you propose to treat with electronic means?

Mr. Khan: The emergency regulations would be broadcast on radio and television and will be on the Internet.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 8 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

11.30 p.m.

Clauses 9 to 13 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 14.

Question proposed, That clause 14 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Sharma: Chairman, with respect to clause 14, could the Minister give an appreciation of the quantum of moneys the state would be denied?

Mr. Khan: I really do not have a figure at this time, Mr. Chairman, as to how much money is involved.

Mr. Sharma: Chairman, that is not an answer.

Mr. Chairman: That is the answer he has given. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: No, Chairman. What is the purpose of asking if there are objections, if to everything, the Minister says I do not know? What are we doing here, Mr. Chairman? Is it a courtesy? [*Interruption*] If a Member is asked a question there must be an effort to answer it in a meaningful way.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Minister has indicated that he does not have that information. I cannot do anything about that.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 14 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 15 and 16 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 17.

Question proposed, That clause 17 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, we have an amendment to clause 17, which has been circulated.

- A. Delete the word "former" wherever it occurs.
- B. Insert at the commencement of paragraph 1(i) of the Schedule, the word "Piarco".

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 17, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

New clause 10.

Insert after clause 10 the following clause.

Section 38 amended	10A Section 38 of the Act is amended by inserting the following subsection:
-----------------------	--

(1A.) The Authority shall be responsible for the national registration of aircraft and shall cause a register to be kept in the form and manner prescribed.

New clause 10A read the first time.

Question proposed, That the new clause be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to.

Question proposed, That the new clause be added to the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

New clause 10A added to the Bill.

Mr. Sharma: Chairman, before you go there, I was hoping, under the Fourth Schedule—

Mr. Manning: No, no, no, Mr. Chairman, one minute, please. When he is finished.

Mr. Sharma:—under the Fourth Schedule, if the Minister could identify what, between (a) and (s), represents the old terminal building?

Mr. Chairman: Could you repeat the question?

Mr. Sharma: I am asking, under the Fourth Schedule, between (a) and (s), what represents the old terminal building?

Mr. Khan: None of them. Civil Aviation is not the airport, you know. The new terminal building and the old terminal building are assets of the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. This is the Civil Aviation Authority, so these assets here are different.

Mr. Sharma: So none of it comes from—

Mr. Khan: No. [*Interruption*] That is specific assets.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Fyzabad insists on being disrespectful to the Chair. There is a convention, in Parliament, where the Speaker is referred to as Mr. Speaker and the Chairman is referred to as Mr. Chairman. The Member for Fyzabad knows that and insists on calling the Speaker by some name that is not acceptable in our parliamentary system. I wish he would desist from doing so.

Mr. Sharma: When was that, Sir? Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Chairman: No, no.

Mr. Sharma: I have on every occasion addressed the Chair correctly. The Member for San Fernando East is wrong. It is Mr. Speaker when you are there and the other place, Mr. Chairman. On every occasion I have done so.

Mr. Partap: And he was sleeping during the session.

Mr. Sharma: It is very unkind of him.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Question put That the Bill be reported to the House.

The committee divided: Ayes 18 Noes 10

AYES

Imbert, C.

Manning, P.

Rowley, Dr. K.

Robinson-Regis, Mrs. C.

Narine, J.

Williams, E.

Boynes, R.

Achong, L.

Khan, F.

Rahael, J.

Bereaux, H.

James, Mrs. E.

Hart, E.

Callendar, S.

Seukeran, Ms. D.

Roberts, A.

Job-Davis, Mrs. E.

Hinds, F.

NOES

Singh, G.

Persad-Bissessar, Mrs. K.

Ramsaran, M.

Khan, Dr. F.

Rafeeq, Dr. H.

Sharma, C.

Partap, H.

Nanan, Dr. A.

Panday, S.

Moonilal, Dr. R.

Question agreed to.

House resumed.

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

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the following Motion standing—

Mrs. Persad-Bessessar: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Motion that was moved for the continuation of business before this House by the acting Leader of Government Business, indicated at ten minutes to eight, that the House continue to sit until we complete the Validation of the Fourth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Bill, 2003 and the Civil Aviation Bill. It did not speak of any other matter.

Procedural Motion

Friday, May 09, 2003

The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House continue to deal with the Motion to adopt the Second Special Report—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: No, no, no, no. The Minister is entitled to move a further Motion if he wishes.

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House continue to sit so that we can deal with the Motion to adopt the Second Special Report of the Joint Select Committee, appointed to consider and report on the Constitutional (Amdt.) Bill, 2002; the Police Service Bill, 2002 and the Police Complaints Authority Bill, 2002. It is important that we deal with this now; we have a deadline of May 16, 2003.

Mr. Speaker: There is also Motion No. 1; are you moving for that?

Hon. C. Imbert: No, we do not need to deal with that Motion at this time.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Sharma: Mr. Speaker, may I have a clarification on that? My understanding is that the Minister could move the Procedural Motion before the completion of the business he had asked for. The Standing Order does not provide for him to move it after.

Mr. Speaker: But the Minister is entitled to move a further Motion and he has done so.

Mr. Sharma: Before.

Mr. Speaker: No, he can move the Motion he did.

POLICE SERVICE REFORM BILLS

Joint Select Committee Report

Adoption

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion,

Be it resolved that this House adopt the Second Special Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Bills entitled:

- i. The Constitutional (Amdt.) Bill, 2002;
- ii. The Police Service Bill, 2002;
- iii. The Police Complaints Authority Bill, 2002.

Police Service Reform Bills
[HON. C. ROBINSON-REGIS]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Members, I am sure, have received the Second Special Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider the Bills just mentioned. Members are aware that this Joint Select Committee held its first meeting on Wednesday, November 27, 2002. To date it has held a total of nine meetings as follows:

Wednesday, November 27, 2002;

Friday, January 17, 2003;

Friday, January 24, 2003;

Monday, February 03, 2003;

Wednesday, February 05, 2003;

Monday, February 10, 2003;

Wednesday, February 12, 2003;

Thursday, February 20, 2003; and

Tuesday, April 29, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, the meetings held between February 03—12, 2003 were all public meetings in that we adduced information—*[Interruption]*—from members of the public with regard to the three Bills that we were asked to consider. I would never say induced, please!

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I did not say you said that.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Oh! We did adduce it. Mr. Speaker, the committee, apart from the information that was adduced from members of the public—we induced 53 written submissions. Mr. Speaker, I am just joking. We received a total of 53 written submissions from various organizations and individuals and, in keeping with the committee's terms of reference, all written submissions were forwarded to the technical team that had been appointed previously and had worked on the three Bills before the joint select committee.

The committee wishes to advise that the technical team has not yet completed its assessment of the comments that were forwarded to it. The joint select committee has reported previously to this House that some of the written submissions received contained highly complex legal issues. After careful consideration of the written submissions received, it has become clear and necessary for the joint select committee to interview some of the individuals and organizations from whom submissions were received.

Mr. Speaker, arrangements for several interviews have already been put in place. I wish to remind this House that in submitting the First Special Report to this House, the committee sought an extension of time within which to report. This extension, which was granted, will expire on May 16, 2003. However, given the voluminous nature of the written submissions and also the technicalities involved and the fact that the technical team needs more time to consider the legal issues raised, we, in the Committee, are of the view that May 16, 2003 will not be enough time for us to complete our deliberations.

In the circumstances, the committee presents its Second Special Report to seek an extension of time to July 31, 2003 to complete our deliberations and to report back to Parliament.

May I point out that this report has been signed by all members of the Committee and, as a consequence, Mr. Speaker, I think it is incumbent on me to say that we are at one in the committee with regard to asking for this extension. As a consequence of our being *ad idem*, we are here, agreed, all of us, from all sides of the political divide, to ask for an extension of time to July 31, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question proposed

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Mr. Speaker, I have been able to deduce that no one on the other side would like to add anything to what I have said and, as a consequence of that, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Health (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, May 21, 2003 at 1.30 p.m.

On that day, Mr. Speaker, we would lay on the Table the order arising from the Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission on the Local Government Boundaries. Since we had such eloquent contributions “they already had their say” on the Local Government Report. I repeat, on Wednesday, May 21, 2003, and I am asking that that be a very short sitting.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, when will the draft order be circulated?

Adjournment

Friday, May 09, 2003

Hon. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to circulate it in accordance with the Standing Orders, which requires at least four days' notice. You should get it by Thursday of the coming week.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: There will be no sitting next Friday?

Hon. C. Imbert: No; we are going to Wednesday of the following week.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before I put the question there are two matters on the adjournment. I understand there is an agreement to defer one matter—*[Pause]* Sorry; you will proceed with the two Motions?

Mr. Singh: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I now call on the hon. Member for Caroni Central to move the first Motion on the Adjournment.

Flooding (Central Trinidad)

Dr. Hamza Rafeeq (*Caroni Central*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have deferred this Motion but it is really urgent and I would like to deal with it and get it out of the way seeing that we do not have a sitting until the following Wednesday.

Mr. Speaker, I raise tonight the issue of flooding, particularly in the areas of Central Trinidad and in the constituency that I represent. All of us are aware that many areas in Central Trinidad flood severely during the rainy season. Some of these areas are Caparo, Todd's Road, Mamoral, Palmiste, Longdenville, Montrose, Chaguanas, Edinburgh 500, Lange Park, St. Helena, Las Lomas, Kelly Village and Ravine Sable. When these areas flood millions of dollars are lost in food crops, livestock, household appliances, furniture, structural damage to some of the buildings and to vehicles. Mr. Speaker, the cost also involves people not being able to go to work and children not being able to go to school.

We know that over the years there has been little or no compensation to the people who have suffered these losses. May I just point out, Mr. Speaker, that during the last year when there was flooding, the Government did make a commitment to make some kind of allocation to persons who suffered damage. I want to say tonight, Mr. Speaker, that many of those persons, particularly in the constituency of Caroni Central, have not yet received the compensation or stipend, whatever you call it. I must also mention that there are certain people within the constituency who have been selected and given compensation; persons who are known supporters of the PNM, and the rest have not been given their compensation so far.

Earlier this year, in reply to a question from the Member for Caroni East, the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro did say that the solution to the problem, of course, is the building of the Mamoral Dam and that designs for this were completed. The issue of funds was raised but those funds had to be sourced to build the Mamoral Dam. Mr. Speaker, that is more a medium or long-term solution, but on the short-term solution—the dredging of the rivers and clearing of the waterways—very little or nothing has been done so far.

I would like to quote from page 12 of today's *Guardian*.

“Although repeated requests have been made to the Ministry to honour its responsibility, there has been no positive actions.”

This is a quotation from the Mayor. I continue:

“Officials at the Ministry admitted this week that not much has been done ahead of this year's rainy season, which is less than two weeks away.

This is despite an announcement by Works Minister Franklin Khan last November, that Government had decided to reallocate an additional \$50 million to its National Drainage Plan.

Khan had said additional resources were to be made available this year and in 2004.

However, officials said the Ministry experienced ‘major funding problems’ for the plan.

They said work outlined by Khan was based on the availability of funding.

However, it was unable to do anything because it was unable to secure any of the \$50 million.

Funding was only recently released and as a result, officials of the Ministry said that it was ‘unable to catch the major outflows’, especially in the Central area, this year.

The amount released by the Finance Ministry was also said to be ‘very embarrassing’ and nowhere near \$50 million.”

Mr. Speaker, the fiscal year, as you know, was changed from January to December to October to September to facilitate works being done in the dry season. In the past, in the central area, there was the clearing of the Honda River and the Caparo River and this alleviated flooding a great deal. There is a lot of work that needs to be done before the rains come and we fear that the residents of Central Trinidad are facing another bleak year as far as flooding is concerned. I hope that the Minister, who, in a recent survey was said to be the best Minister in

Flooding (Central Trinidad)
[DR. RAFEEQ]

Friday, May 09, 2003

the Government, would give the residents some hope tonight so that they would not experience the difficulties from the flooding which is sure to occur later this year.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Franklin Khan): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise this honourable House that considerable measures have been developed to prevent flooding in Central Trinidad during the upcoming rainy season. I hereby submit the following details:

In November 2002, the country experienced unusually heavy rainfall, which resulted in incidences of flooding in various areas of Central Trinidad. There were two main causes for the heavy flooding experienced. They are as follows;

- (1) Overflow from the Caroni River led to serious flooding of Frederick Settlement, Caroni Village, St. Helena and surrounding districts. This overflow was a direct result of the inadequacy of the Caroni River in certain areas and the absence of embankments at specific locations along the Caroni south bank. The Guayamare River was unable to deal with this overflow partially because of heavy siltation downstream of the Uriah Butler Highway. This resulted in a backwater effect and flooding of the villages. Three projects have been developed to reduce the severity of the flood problem:

- (a) Caroni River Improvement Works:

This project entails the improvement of the Caroni River from Kelly weir to St. Helena, a distance of 2.76km. Main aspects of the works involve the excavation from the edges of the existing section, construction of embankments 2m high by 3m top widths on both banks and construction of 15m wide berms on both sides. This project is estimated to cost \$14 million.

Tenders have been invited through the Central Tenders Board for the construction of this project. The evaluation has been completed and this award should be made at the next CTB meeting, which very likely would be next week.

- (b) Embankment Construction at El Carmen

The construction of embankments on the southern bank of the Caroni River from El Carmen going eastwards to Centeno is presently in progress; this is a 5km length. This work is being undertaken under

the ministry's recurrent programme. To date 3km out of these 5km has been completed and as we speak that work is in progress in the El Carmen area.

The Caroni River embankment is a major project. It involved some engineering designs and had to go to the Central Tenders Board. The application is there and the CTB is supposed to be awarding it at its next sitting.

- (c) Guayamare River Improvement Works downstream of the Uriah Butler Highway.

Tender documents have been prepared for this Project. Tenders will soon be invited by the Ministerial Tenders Committee, again, very likely within two weeks.

I just want to advise the House, that even though the rain may start in June—I admit I would have preferred to be about two months ahead of where I am at this time—it does not have an instantaneous effect of saturating the basin and causing the type of over-bank flow at the major rivers. So there is still some time.

- (2) Overflow from the Caparo River, which is what the Member for Caroni Central recently mentioned:

Overflow from the Caparo River resulted in heavy flooding of the Chaguanas built-up areas and the Caparo Main Road in several areas. That was a couple of years ago. The construction of a bifurcation structure on the Caparo/Honda Rivers was meant to divert a significant volume of the Caparo River peak flood into the Honda River and minimize the frequency of this flooding. This project, Mr. Speaker, is 85 per cent complete, and it should be completed well in advance of major risks for flooding as we hit the October/November period. This is 85 per cent complete and that would alleviate the problem they would have had in Chaguanas.

The flooding of the areas within the Caparo River basin would, however, only be substantially mitigated, that is upstream, with the construction of a flood detention dam in the upper areas of the catchment. It is expected that final designs on this project would be completed in the 2003/2004 financial year, and accordingly, this project has been included in the ministry's 2003/2004 Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

Flooding (Central Trinidad)
[HON. F. KHAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

Apart from the above, several desilting or improvement works have been completed and are under way and are planned for Central Trinidad. Some of the more significant ones are as follows. And if you are the Members of Parliament that you say you are, as I read this you should say yes, yes, yes, this is happening:

St. Helena/El Carmen watercourses:

Hon. Members: Yes.

Hon. F. Khan: Regrading, realignment, cleaning and desilting of these watercourses are currently under way. Approximately 2,100 metres have been completed. Works are continuing. Member for Caroni East.

Mr. Singh: Correct.

Hon. F. Khan: Madhosingh Ravine, Kelly Village: desilting/clearing works 1,322 metres have been completed.

Hon. Members: Yes, yes.

Hon. F. Khan: The Member for St. Joseph is not here.

Desilting, clearing works 1,060 metres has been completed. All these works involve major excavation and desilting, so you can actually see the excavators at work.

Deosaran Main Drain: Desilting, clearing works 700 metres have been completed.

Guayamare South Bank Channel: Desilting, clearing works 3,353 metres have been completed.

Bovell Canal: Desilting, clearing works under way. Approximately 3,000 metres have been completed and works are continuing.

Kelly Diversion: The question was asked for Central—that is yours—Desilting, clearing works 1,218 metres have been completed.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to these equipment works as I have defined them, the Drainage Division Central has 15 river control gangs of approximately 10 persons per gang, who undertake on a daily basis, routine maintenance work that includes cutlassing, clearing and minor desilting of minor watercourses in the area. The

Flooding (Central Trinidad)

Friday, May 09, 2003

Drainage Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport is also implementing a maintenance programme under its recurrent budget to address the cleaning of culverts and bridges throughout the country but with special emphasis on those located under the Eastern Main Road and Churchill-Roosevelt Highway, given the propensity for flash flooding during the coming rainy season.

In closing, I would be the first to admit that there is a genuine risk, as we have had a very intense dry season, and for whatever reasons, the country continues to see degradation of the slopes; bush fires, some natural, a lot of it man made. The agencies of the State have tried, continually, over the years to control the level of bush fires. We have had an intense period of bush fires and, as I said, a very intense dry season. So that while the Ministry of Works and Transport, Drainage Division continues to do its part by desilting, clearing and doing the major construction work, especially on the Caroni River, we are possibly more exposed in the coming rainy season, largely because of the prevalence of bush fires during the dry season of 2003.

We continue to hope and pray that the rains do not come torrentially too early; that it saturate the soil and that we get back some vegetative growth so that we are more balanced, basin/drainage system operated, so when we come to the really vulnerable months of October and November, when the whole river basin is saturated we may not be as flood prone as we may want to think today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Supply of Truck-Borne Water (Tabaquite)

Dr. Adesh Nanan (*Tabaquite*): Mr. Speaker, while I am aware that we are in the midst of a severe dry season and that the rainfall levels are low, I want to bring to the attention of this honourable House and to the Minister, particularly the peculiar situation that exists in terms of delivery of pipe-borne water to the residents of Corosal, Whiteland, Sankerlal Lands, Mappipire Road, Poonah Road, Sandstone and Mayo. These areas that I have called out are being supplied with water from a spring. Morichal spring supplies pipe-borne water to these areas. There is an underground tank that acts as a reservoir. The water collects in this concrete tank and then it is distributed by gravity through the various areas.

Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing right now, in terms of the security of that area, is that the area needs to be more secure because people are using the facilities to wash cars and clothes, and that water is being sent to the area for drinking. There are certain lock-off valves along the roadway that would channel

Truck-Borne Water (Tabaquite)
[DR. NANAN]

Friday, May 09, 2003

water to certain parts of the areas I have listed. What is happening because of the amount of water in this concrete tank is that at certain times of the day certain valves are locked off so certain parts of the constituency such as Poonah—I want to give an example because you have to understand the networking within these areas to understand the delivery of water. That is why I said in this matter on the adjournment that there is an almost non-existent pipe-borne supply of drinking water and there is the reliance on a woefully, inadequate truck-borne supply of drinking water.

When one valve is locked off water is shunted to, let us say, Corosal, and another valve is locked and Corosal gets no water, and the water it is getting is very limited. Another part like Sankerlal would get a small amount of water. In the constituency of Tabaquite there is the Navet Dam and under the United National Congress' Interim South Water Project, Navet Dam was upgraded and the plan for the area was to provide an adequate distribution of water via pipelines coming from the Navet Dam Reservoir.

I also want to mention that there are certain areas in this particular catchment area where water reaches to a certain level, and because of the height of certain parts in terms of the topography of the area a lot of the people do not receive any water in the pipes. In this 21st century, in the constituency of Tabaquite—and I know the Member for La Brea would be familiar with this particular situation—the villagers of Sansdtone Road have to rely on a spring. They are fortunate in this area because the composition of Whiteland is sand and a kind of clay soil and you have percolation of water. That is why there are these springs in this particular area. Residents have to use water from these springs because of the poor water supply via the main spring, the Morichal spring.

The woefully deficient truck-borne water supply could be visualized because of the large number of residents requiring water. I have been told that the trucks from WASA come into the area but they do a selective delivery system. There are people in that part of that constituency who are going without pipe-borne water for four and five months and, of course, the people of Sansdtone Road are not getting any delivery of water through their pipes because of their location.

I am bringing this to the attention of the Minister because these people are being—I would not say “victimized”—but because of the lack of proper networking in terms of delivery of pipe-borne water, they have to rely on spring water and some of them also have to go out of the constituency to fill water and bring it to their homes. We know the importance of drinking water, Mr. Speaker. So I wait to hear the response from the Minister in terms of the upgrade of the networking system in this particular area.

The Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas): Mr. Speaker, the areas identified are serviced by the Morichal spring. This is a surface water intake and its production is adversely affected annually by the dry season. Over the dry season, 2003, the production of this facility has declined from an average of 209,600 gallons daily during January 2003, to an average of 99,880 gallons daily during April 2003. This represents a decrease of approximately 53 per cent over the period. Coupled with the normal increase in demand which occurs during the dry season, this resulted in a significant shortfall in water available for distribution.

To address this imbalance, very rigid scheduling of the pipe-borne water service was put in place. Even with this measure, some customers experienced low pressure or no water during the scheduled times of supply. To provide an acceptable minimum level of service in such cases, a truck-borne service was instituted with a total volume of 630,000 gallons being delivered to the area over the period January-April 2003 at a cost of \$46,965. Details of truckloads of water supplied are as follows:

Mr. Singh: Excuse me; did I hear you say 630 gallons at a cost of \$46,000?

Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas: I said 630,000 gallons.

Mr. Singh: Thank you.

Hon. Members: You were not listening.

Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas: Details of the truck-borne supplies that were made are as follows:

Over 17 weeks, Mr. Speaker, Mayo—I think I shall just read the totals per week. 21 truckloads in the first week, 11 in the second week, 22 in the third week, 12 in the fourth week, eight in the fifth week, six in the sixth week, two in the seventh, five in the eighth week, 33 in the ninth week, 14 in the tenth week, 51 in the eleventh week, 79 in the twelfth week, 67 in the thirteenth week, 16 in the fourteenth week, 20 in the fifteenth week, 62 in the sixteenth week and 80 in the seventeenth week.

Information for Sanstone, which is a road off Poonah, is not given as we capture that supply in another distribution area. Each truckload of water comprises 1,200 gallons which are normally shared among three residents. Additionally, two communal tanks at Alley Street and Lower Morne Roche Quarry Road were supplied to service particularly hard-hit communities. As a first step towards implementing a long-term solution, the following works are proposed

Truck-Borne Water (Tabaquite)
[SEN. THE HON. R. DUMAS]

Friday, May 09, 2003

1. Installation of 4.8km of 200m pipe from Piparo Road to Whiteland Junction along Guaracara/Tabaquite and Mayo Roads at an estimated cost of \$3,374,652.74.
2. Construction of a booster station in the vicinity of Piparo Road, Lower Piparo at an estimated cost of \$850,000.

In the longer term, further works are required to provide reliability of service to the area as follows:

1. Installation of 6.2km of 400m pipe from the Navet Trunk Main to Guaracara/Tabaquite Road along Piparo Road via the Centre Mountain Tank. The estimated cost of that is \$11.7 million.
2. Reconstruction of the Central Mountain Tank at an estimated cost of \$4.6 million.

Implementation of these works would be subject to availability of funding.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 12.40 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CEPEP Vehicles (Providers)

The following question was asked by Mr. Chandresh Sharma (Fyzabad):

- 75.** Could the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment also provide a list of the names of the providers of all vehicles rented and/or bought by CEPEP in 2002, detailing the cost of each?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:

No vehicle was rented by CEPEP in Trinidad in 2002.

CEPEP purchased one Nissan twin-cab pickup from Neal and Massy Motors in 2002 at a cost of \$126,947.

WASA Booster Pumps (Location)

The following question was asked by Mr. Chandresh Sharma (Fyzabad):

- 88.** Would the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment state the locations where:

- (a) booster pumps were installed by the Water and Sewerage Authority in 2002 and advise whether they were installed by contractors?
- (b) If contractors were engaged could the Minister state the cost of each contract and the names of the contractors who installed the said pumps?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:

The Water and Sewerage Authority has advised that, fifteen booster- pumps were installed in 2002. The location of the installations, whether installed in house or by contractors and the cost of each contract in instances where contractors were used for installations are as follows:

Address of Booster Pump Installation	Installed In House or by Contractor	Contractors Name	Cost for Installation by Contractor
1. Upper sixth Avenue, Barataria	In House	Not applicable	Not applicable
2. Wharton, Laventille	In House	Not applicable	Not applicable
3. Paramin Level 3 Pump-station, Paramin	In House	Not applicable	Not applicable
4. St. John's Road, Tunapuna	Contractor		
5. Mendez Drive, Champ Fleur	Contractor	D. Rampersad & Co. Ltd.	2,134,115.49
6. La Hope, Laventille	Contractor		
7. Scorpion, Carenage	Contractor	Engineering Agencies Limited	1,350,243.00
8. Khandahar, Five Rivers	Contractor		

Address of Booster Pump Installation	Installed In House or by Contractor	Contractors Name	Cost for Installation by Contractor
9. Union Road, Diego Martin	Contractor	Rooks Oilfield & Engineering Supplies Limited	1,301,606.49
10. La Puerta, Diego Martin	Contractor		
11. Mason Hall, Tobago	Contractor		
12. Chateau, Tobago	Contractor	Engineering Agencies Limited	1,260,704.00
13. St. Mary's, Moruga	Contractor		
14. St. Julien, Princes Town	Contractor	Rooks Oilfield & Engineering Supplies Limited	1,961,063.84
15. Hermitage, Claxton Bay	Contractor		

**Phagwa and Hosay Groups
(Recipients of Funds)**

- 98.** (a) Would the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment list the names of all the individuals and groups who were recipients of funds for the hosting of Phagwa 2003, including addresses and amounts of moneys granted?
- (b) Would the Minister list the names of all the individuals and groups who were recipients of funds for the hosting of Hosay 2003, including addresses and amounts of moneys granted?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:

Phagwa Celebrations:

Individuals/Groups	Amount Granted
Amarjyoth Sabha Inc.	\$4,000.00
Hindu Seva Sangh Inc.	\$5,000.00
Kendra Phagwa Festival	\$30,000.00
National Phagwa Council	\$17,500.00
Helena Development Corporation	\$4,000.00
Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha	\$42,500.00
SWAHA	\$5,000.00

Hosay Celebrations 2003:

Individuals/Groups	Amount Granted
St. James/Cocorite Hosay Association	\$30,000.00
Madrassatul Imam Hussain	\$3,000.00

**Maintenance Training and Security
(Contracts)**

114. Would the hon. Minister of Works and Transport please submit the following information:

- (a) The total number of contracts issued by MTS from January 2002 to March 2003?
- (b) List of recipients of contracts and the dollar value of each?
- (c) Dates on and medium in which contracts were advertised?
- (e) Lists of contractors who submitted bids and the dollar value of each bid?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:

APPENDIX

- (a) The total number of contracts issued by MTS from January 2002 to March 2003 equals: Eighty-one (81)

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

(b)

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
2003 Mar			
1	Renewal of MTS's Firearm Users Licence	TT Police Service (Service Commission)	\$34,290.00
2	SEMP Phase 2 - Shiva Boys & Parvati Girls High Schools - (Geotechnological Investigations)	Trintoplan Consultants	\$42,550.00
		Geotech Associates Ltd.	
2003 Feb			
3	FUEC classification Training by MTS and for use by Armourer's office- Provision of Ammunition	HILTI Agostini's Fastening Systems	\$48,600.00
4	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Audio Visual equipment and Supplies	Edusystems/Media Ltd.	\$246,745.70
	(Lot1)	Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$3,278,394.00
		Stereo Electronics	(Invalid bid submission)
		Trinpad Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
5	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Music equipment and Supplies	Edusystems/Media Ltd.	
		Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$23,386.79

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
6	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Library equipment	Pereria & Co. Ltd	\$506,825.00
		Trinidad Systems Ltd	(Invalid bid submission)
		Mak's Services Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Memory Bank Computers Ltd	(Invalid bid submission)
		Illuminat Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Business equipment Interiors Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Trinpad Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
7	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Technology, Education and equipment Supplies	Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$28,980.00
		Mak's Services Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Trinpad Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
2003 Jan			
8	SEMP-Phase 2 - Shiva Boys and Parvati Girls High Schools- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	Eco-Engineering Consultants Ltd	\$31,840.00
		CARIRI	\$140,000.00
9	Purchase of 1 Colour Laser Printer	Commnett	\$23,339.13
		Trinidad Systems Ltd.	\$38,018.26

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Computers & Controls	\$31,478.26
		Illuminat Ltd.	\$25,560.87
		Mememory Bank	\$23,347.83
		Galt & Littlepage Ltd	\$26,630.43
2002 Dec			
10	Lot 2 - Supply, Delivery & Installation of Stationery Supplies to (9) Secondary Schools (SEMP Phase 11)	McEneaney Business Machines Ltd.	\$3,633.01
		Trinpad Ltd.	\$37,704.81
		Business Office Supplies Ltd.	\$32,145.04
		CMR & Company Ltd.	\$40,290.97
		Media Sales Ltd.	\$9,600.00
		Diamond Systems Ltd.	\$1,065.13
11	Supply, Delivery & Installation of Furniture to (9) Secondary Schools(SEMP 2)	Mc Eneaney Business Machines Ltd.	\$613,361.30
		CMR & Co. LTD	\$782,718.75
		Caribbean Sheet and Tubular Limited	\$721,637.00
		Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$1,307,405.07
		Metal Designs & Concepts	\$4,020,311.20
12	Supply & Delivery& Installation of Computer equipment to (9) Secondary Schools(SEMP 2)	Diamond Systems Ltd.	\$484,020.00
		Illuminat Limited	\$199,326.42

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Memory Bank Computers Ltd.	\$4,421,147.00
13	Geo-technical Investigations at Palo Seco High School (SEMP Phase 2)	Trinidad Engineering Research (1978) Ltd	\$30,445.00
		Geo-Tech Associates Ltd.	\$50,320.00
		Trintoplan Consultants Ltd.	\$32,580.00
14	Solomon Upgrade - Software Investment	Infotech Caribbean Ltd. (Sole Selective) USD\$66774.00	\$417,337.50
2002 Nov			
15	Consultancy Services for Project Management/Quantity Surveying @ Morvant New GPS & Russel Latapy High School for the Project Management Unit of the Ministry of Finance	Welch, Morris & Associates	\$172,000.00
		Ellis & Associates	\$175,000.00
		Campbell & Associates	\$220,000.00
		Skinner Joseph	\$230,250.00
2002 Oct			
16	Rental of (1) Photocopier - Projects Dept.	Trinidad Systems Ltd.	\$76,382.61
		Illuminat Trinidad Ltd.	\$112,320.00
		Office & Power Solutions Ltd.	\$97,020.00
		Pereria & Company Ltd.	\$70,200.00
17	Construction of Fence @ GORP	Thomas Construction Ltd.	\$268,860.00
		CME Services Ltd.	\$848,688.50
		CWA Limited	\$514,054.60
		Faith Construction Ltd.	\$560,151.20

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Fortunes Construction Co. Ltd.	\$644,825.90
		Techton Inc.	\$489,414.70
2002 Sept			
18	SIS Program- Perimeter Fencing at Malick Senior Comprehensive School	Uniform Building Contractors Ltd.	\$1,659,904.35
		Pioneer Construction 2000 Ltd.	\$944,849.57
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$992,000.00
		SRI Construction Ltd.	\$1,767,045.00
19	SIS Program - Security Lighting at Success/Lavantille Composite School	Thomas Construction Co. Ltd.	\$84,862.03
		Sidney's Electrical Ltd.	\$91,200.00
		P. Carter and Company	\$91,095.00
20	Construction of the El Socorro South GPS	Uniform Building Contractors Ltd.	\$7,798,723.64
		Hookmally Ali & Company Ltd.	\$8,373,398.25
		WE Whiteman and Co(1997) Ltd.	\$7,534,413.43
		PCCL Construction Ltd.	\$8,515,371.90
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$8,415,031.80
21	SIS Program - Security Lighting at the Malick Senior Comprehensive School	Coopers Electrical Services Ltd.	\$117,338.08

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		United Engineering Services Ltd.	\$146,950.00
22	SIS Program - Security Lighting at the San Juan Senior Comprehensive School	Tek Engineering Ltd.	\$106,521.74
		TEEM Electrical Services Ltd.	\$141,600.00
		VMW Engineering Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
23	Supply and Installation of 1 Thirty Ton Condenser coil - MTS Plaza	Cool Connection Ltd.	\$32,535.00
		Climate Control Ltd	\$35,236.56
24	SIS Program - Perimeter Fencing at the Success/Lavantille Composite School	SRI Construction Ltd.	\$1,481,895.00
		H. Lewis Construction Ltd.	\$1,559,692.80
		Uniform Building Contractors Ltd.	\$1,602,180.00
25	SIS Program - Security Lighting at Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School	Thomas Construction Company Ltd.	\$127,850.19
		Coopers Electrical Services Ltd.	\$137,238.00
		TEEM Electrical Services Ltd.	\$149,914.00
		DYNA Tech Company Ltd.	\$152,500.00
26	Tender for New Cooling Tower for 250 Ton Chiller at GORP	Comfort Engineering Ltd.	\$207,500.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Climate Control Ltd.	\$502,707.83
		Thomas Peake Ltd.	\$240,350.00
27	SIS - Security Lighting at Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School	Thomas Construction Company Ltd	\$127,850.19
		Coopers Electrical Services Ltd.	\$137,238.00
		TEEM Electrical Services Ltd.	\$149,914.00
		DYNA Tech Company Ltd.	\$152,500.00
28	Insurance for the Year(2002-2004)	MAIBROL Insurance Brokers Ltd.	\$891,650.00
		CIBL	\$822,389.31
		Consolidated Insurance Brokers	\$1,220,732.26
		Millenium Insurance Brokers	\$953,514.53
		Millenium Insurance Brokers (option 2)	\$939,859.09
		M&M Insurance Brokers	\$904,131.70
		Agostini Insurance Brokers	\$913,404.00
29	Construction of the Speyside High School	H. Lewis Construction Ltd.	\$16,000,000.00
		Raguhunath Singh Co. Ltd.	\$16,949,262.50
		Trinidad Contractors Ltd.	\$18,570,967.30
		NH International	\$18,989,134.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		RK Plummer & Associates	\$19,158,265.92
		Kee Chanona Ltd.	\$20,162,031.00
		Asta Engineering Ltd.	\$21,084,555.80
2002 Aug			
30	Supply and Installation of Computers to the Ministry of Finance	F1 Connect Limited	\$341,725.81
	Note: 2 Computers quoted on same equipment. However, Illuminat did not bid for (lab, super floppy disk & 1 laptop Computer		
31	Installation of Internet Software to ten (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP Phase 1 - (Sole Selective)	Illuminat	\$121,424.03
32	Tender for the supply, delivery and installation of equipment to (10) Secondary Schools under the SEMP Phase 1		
	Lot #1 - Audio Visual Equipment & Supplies	Western Scientific	\$752,226.85
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$68,551.87
		Business Office Supplies	\$82,915.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Lot #2 - Physical Education Equipment & Supplies	Trinpad Ltd	\$438,090.90
		Western Scientific	\$338,818.57
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$106,014.30
	Lot #3 - Library Supplies	Trinpad Ltd	\$10,798.70
		Media Sales Ltd	\$345.00
		Business Office Supplies	\$1,587.60
		Illuminat Ltd	\$950.00
	Lot #4 - Music Equipment	Audio Concepts /Trintrac Ltd	\$1,595,013.94
		Westen Scientific	\$455,467.46
		Edusystem/Media 21 Ltd	\$55,006.80
		Trinpad Ltd	\$110,650.00
	Lot #5 - Art & Craft Supplies	Media Sales Ltd	\$19,895.00
		Business Office Supplies	\$22,732.64
		Trinpad Ltd	\$52,301.80
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$180,647.47
	Lot #6 Humanities/Social Studies, Geography & History Equipment & Supplies	Western Scientific Ltd	\$69,431.83

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Lot #7 - Integrated Science Equipment & Supplies	Southern Systems Ltd	\$464,795.50
		Media Sales Ltd	\$6,900.00
		Scalar Scientific & Technical Ltd	\$381,859.30
		Western Scientific	\$1,161,514.66
		Edusystem/Media 21 Lt	\$121,605.86
		Trinpad Ltd	\$174,311.20
	Lot #8 - Technology Education Equipment & Supplies (All Schools except Waterloo)	Mc Enearney Business Machines	\$36,144.00
		Western Scientific Co Ltd	\$1,499,833.54
		Illuminat Ltd	\$567,476.25
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$414,590.37
		Computers & Controls Ltd	\$19,932.83
		Trinpad Ltd	\$308,796.21
	Lot #9 - Text & Teaching Aids (Engl. & Social Studies)	RIK Services Ltd	\$156,460.29
		Lexicon T'dad Ltd	\$59,576.40
		Trinpad Ltd	\$32,760.00
	Lot #10 - Safety Equipment		
		Trinpad Ltd	\$22,134.70
		Western Scientific Co. Ltd	\$8,573.80

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Lot #11 - Stationery Supplies	Media Sales Ltd	\$2,980.00
		Business Office Supplies Ltd	\$12,451.52
		Trinpad Ltd	\$35,982.40
	Lot #12 - Library Stationery Supplies	Business Office Supplies Ltd	\$1,019.00
		Trinpad Ltd	\$2,164.90
	Lot #13 - Library Equipment	3M Interamerica Ltd	\$870,895.00
	Lot #15 - Music Teaching Aids & Resources	Western Scientific	\$132,213.72
	Lot #16 - Library Books	RIK Services Ltd	\$233,450.44
		Lexicon Ltd	\$192,195.31
		Mallory International Ltd/Gurley & Associates (Joint Venture)	\$249,080.40
33	Perimeter Fencing - San Juan Senior Comprehensive School	ASSON & Sons Gen. Contractors & Wastewater Ltd	\$1,261,172.00
		SRI Construction Ltd.	\$1,025,243.74
		Fortunes Construction Co. Ltd.	\$1,601,814.78
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$1,508,895.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		CWA Limited	\$1,604,539.74
34	Perimeter Fencing - Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School	JB Contractors Company Ltd	\$1,466,873.20
		Anup Babwah Contractors	\$1,348,753.00
		Huntza Construction Company Ltd.	\$1,263,818.00
		Scalex Construction Company Limited	\$1,303,852.50
		Fortunes Construction Co. Ltd	\$1,982,992.00
		Civstruct Associates	\$1,426,718.66
		MSR Construction Ltd	\$1,155,400.00
35	Amendments to the Cafeteria of the Waterloo High School	Hunza Construction Co Ltd	\$19,700.00
36	Extention of Tender Contract for Janitorial Supplies to MTS		
	Toilet Paper	Jaikaransingh Trading	\$420,000.00
	Interfold Towels	Combined Marketing	\$78,125.00
	Hand Towels	Combined Marketing	\$4,670.00
	20oz Mops	Combined Marketing	\$11,250.00
	Air Freshner	Combined Marketing	\$4,790.00
	Gabage Bags - 30 x 36	Sun Delight Ltd	\$65,832.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Gabage Bags - 38 x 50	Sun Delight Ltd	\$99,666.00
	12" Split Hair Broom	Trinidad Brushware Ltd	\$14,683.20
	Cobweb Broom	Trinidad Brushware Ltd	\$6,577.50
	Kitchen Sponge	A Moses & Sons.	\$2,925.00
	Industrial Mop Bucket - 12litre	A Moses & Sons.	\$900.00
	Dust Mask (respirator)	A Moses & Sons.	\$1,204.00
	Telephone Cleaner	Langston Roach	\$3,060.00
	Corn Broom	Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$14,630.00
	Johnny Mops - 12"	Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$2,900.00
	Leather Gloves	Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$4,975.00
2002 July			
37	TSTT - Yellow Pages Advertising	TSTT	\$43,026.09
38	Purchase of Digital Camera	Trinpad Ltd	\$5,869.56
		Mc Enearney Business Machines	\$5,395.00
		Media 21 Ltd	\$8,750.00
39	Purchase of Monitor & CD Writer for MTS (Engineering Division)	Commnett	\$6,961.10
		Memory Bank Ltd	\$6,195.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
40	Purchase of Electronic Security Stock	Carisa	\$94,397.56
		Silmar	\$78,375.00
		International Security & Trading	\$143,994.06
2002 June			
41	Mechanical Design Reviews - SEMP Phase 2 (Sole Selective)	AdeB Consultants	\$61,150.00
42	Electrical Design Reviews - SEMP Phase 2	Latchman Bholasingh	\$46,000.00
		AdeB Consultants Ltd	(Invalid bid submission)
43	SIS - Security Lighting - Morvant/Lavantille Secondary School	TEK Engineering Ltd.	\$67,750.00
		Gobin's Electrical Contractors Ltd	\$73,395.65
		MAC. Electronics Limited	\$125,161.00
		VMW Engineering Ltd.	\$100,490.24
44	Manufacture of signage for five (5) High Schools - SEMP Phase 11	Sign Post	\$23,900.00
45	Installation of signage for five (5) High Schools - SEMP Phase 11	Trevor Henry	\$18,300.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
2002 May			
46	Perimeter Fencing - Morvant/Lavantille Secondary School	Civstruct Associates	\$1,154,500.00
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$1,307,245.12
		TEEM Engineering Systems Ltd	\$1,551,030.00
		RK Plummer and Associates	\$1,361,182.00
2002 April			
47	Construction of temporary Hoarding around the Tunapuna Administrative Center	Newco Construction	\$20,000.00
		All Weld Fabrication & Construction	\$21,950.00
		K-Built Contractors	\$27,000.00
48	Foundation Work for construction of a new stand at Shaw Park	SWIRL Engineering	\$106,277.00
		Thomas Construction Ltd.	\$277,900.00
		Dennis Holder	(Invalid bid submission)
49	Refurbishment of Wards 2 and 4 at Caura Substance Abuse, Treatment and Prevention Center Caura	Maintenance Systems Limited	\$1,051,649.50
		F& H Engineering Services Ltd.	\$1,236,114.00
		Construction Services & Supplies Ltd.	\$1,197,365.40

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		TEEM Engineering Sytems Ltd.	\$1,307,273.00
		MSR Construction	\$1,060,224.00
		Coatings and Services Ltd.	\$1,192,727.80
50	Refurbishment of Chairman's Office	Sparkles Janitorial & Construction Ltd	\$24,900.00
		Unicom Ltd	\$36,759.00
51	Construction of New Stand - Shaw Park Tobago	Thomas Consruction & Co Ltd	\$625,585.60
		Management Construction & Consultants Ltd	\$1,829,612.00
		Steel Structures T & T Ltd	\$829,772.17
		House of Steel Welding & Fabricating	\$1,563,948.70
52	Supply & Installation of Precast Concrete Slab - Shaw Park Tobago	Spancrete Ltd- Sole Selective	\$250,000.00
53	Installation of Toilet System & Misc Works- Refinery Training Centre Petrotrin	Construction Services & Supplies Ltd	\$24,690.00
		MSR Construction Ltd	\$30,000.00
54	Supply & Delivery of 9 Photocopiers 2001-2004 - MTS	Galt & Littlepage Ltd	\$351,540.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Trinidad Systems Ltd	\$322,591.30
		Office Power Solutions	\$345,130.43
		Pereira & Co Ltd	\$345,130.43
55	Construction of Guayaguayare High School	RK Plummer & Assoc Ltd	\$17,782,229.57
		Asta Engineering Ltd	\$19,508,733.90
		Trinidad Contractors Ltd	\$19,629,331.16
		KEE Chanona Ltd	\$20,125,227.49
56	Complimentary Design Service for Construction of the El Socorro South GPS	Vikab Engineering Consultants	\$336,189.32
		APR & Associates	Valid Tech Submission
		C.G.Murray Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
		Trintoplan Consultants Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
		Consulting Engineering Associates Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
		CEP Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
2002 March			
57	Upgrade of Chaguanas Police Station	Consulting Engineers Associates Ltd - Sole Selective	\$19,300.00
58	Refurbishment to the Projects & Construction Dept (Ceiling Works)	Sparkles Janitorial & Construction Co	\$15,000.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Coatings & Services Ltd	\$19,593.70
		Maintenance Systems	\$16,179.57
		Unicom Ltd	\$24,297.00
59	Miscellaneous Plumbing Works, Laboratory Services-Building North Area Petrotrin (Point-a-Pierre)	MSR Construction Ltd	\$20,000.00
		CSSL Construction & Services Ltd	\$23,000.00
60	Refurbishment work to Chairman's Office	Unicom Ltd	\$13,485.00
		MSR Construction Ltd	\$13,895.00
61	Repairs to Ladies' Toilet - shipping Building (Point-a-Pierre)	MSR Construction Ltd	\$16,000.00
		CSSL Construction & Services Ltd	\$16,800.00
2002 Feb			
2002 Jan			
62	Supply of Security Uniforms	Eagle Shirt Factory	\$695,000.00
		Savvy Traders	(Invalid bid submission)
63	Land Cleaning at El Socorro South Government Primary School	Nizam Sujet Ali Rentals - (Sole Selective)	\$47,000.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
64	Chemical Supplies -Pine Disinfectant	Trinidad Marketing Distributors -	\$95,875.00
		Icon Chemical Industries	\$111,657.50
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$125,375.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$249,275.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$227,813.75
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$154,875.00
		Alma Marketing	\$346,625.00
		Combined Marketing	\$332,612.50
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$234,082.50
	Chemical Supplies - Toilet Bowl Cleaner	Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$72,930.00
		Icon Chemical Industries	\$84,935.40
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$81,457.20
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$144,738.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$151,750.50
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$166,897.50
		Alma Marketing	\$325,380.00
		Combined Marketing	\$347,820.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$252,898.80
	Chemical Supplies - All purpose Cleaner	Icon Chemical Industries	\$56,775.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$63,750.00
		Chemical Specialists	\$83,550.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$119,250.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$116,250.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$111,750.00
		Alma Marketing	\$142,500.00
		Combined Marketing	\$267,375.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$125,062.50
	Chemical Supplies - Floor Polish	Icon Chemical Industries	\$269,451.60
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$337,020.00
		Chemical Specialties	\$369,900.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$328,800.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$349,350.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$271,260.00
		Alma Marketing	\$427,440.00
		Combined Marketing	\$434,838.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$374,338.80
		Inter Chemical Ltd	\$452,100.00
		Specialist Chemicals	\$254,820.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Chemical Supplies - Floor Sealer	Icon Chemical Industries	\$197,811.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$204,192.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$197,811.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$336,775.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$353,791.00
		Alma Marketing	\$194,975.00
		Combined Marketing	\$344,574.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$169,592.80
		Inter Chemical Ltd	\$319,050.00
		Specialist Chemicals	\$205,610.00
	Chemical Supplies - Floor Stripper	Icon Chemical Industries	\$67,900.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$143,778.28
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$61,110.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$152,775.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$128,331.00
		Alma Marketing	\$210,490.00
		Combined Marketing	\$255,983.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$146,799.80
		Inter Chemical Ltd	\$152,775.00
		Specialist Chemicals	\$108,640.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Chemical Supplies - Liquid Hand Soap	Alma Marketing	\$18,180.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$28,785.00
		Icon Chemicals Industries	\$30,300.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$54,540.00
		Chemical Specialties	\$34,845.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributor	\$56,055.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$75,447.00
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$43,935.00
		Combined Marketing	\$115,443.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$62,721.00
		Ekler Chemicals	\$23,028.00
	Chemical Supplies - Glass Cleaner	ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$18,750.00
		Ekler Chemicals	\$13,000.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$21,250.00
		Icon Chemicals Industries	\$22,000.00
		Alma Marketing	\$48,750.00
		Chemical Worldwide	\$65,500.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$24,750.00
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$36,250.00
		Combined Marketing	\$47,500.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$21,562.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$48,750.00
		Inter Chem Ltd	\$43,750.00
	Chemical Supplies - Deodorizer	Chemical Specialties Ltd.	\$46,338.24
		Kirvek Industries ltd.	\$21,250.00
		Icon Chemical Industries	\$25,000.00
		Ekler Chemical Company Ltd	\$25,000.00
		Savvy Traders	\$83,375.00
		Alma Marketing	\$120,000.00
		Langston Roach	\$28,750.00
		Kemical Worldwide	\$125,500.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$47,500.00
		Combined Marketing	\$88,500.00
		ER Fraites Limited	\$46,750.00
65	Refurbishment of the Penal Police Station	Construction Services and Supplies Ltd.	\$623,479.11
		Annup Babwah Constructors	\$713,596.00
		K-Built Contractors Ltd	\$589,566.00
		MSR Construction Ltd.	\$577,565.00
		SAISCON Ltd	\$701,222.40

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
66	NREP - Contract #P43 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George West District - (Sole Selective)	Asphalt Road Surfacing Ltd	\$100,850.40
67	NREP - Contract #P48 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Caroni & Victoria West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Aztec Asphalt Pavers Ltd	\$2,553,885.00
68	NREP - Contract #P53 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Caroni, St. Andrew/St David & St George East Districts - (Sole Selective)	Seereeram Brothers Ltd	\$8,618,742.00
69	NREP - Contract #P55 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George East District - (Sole Selective)	Bartholomew's Quarry Ltd	\$563,760.00
70	NREP - Contract #P56 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George West District - (Sole Selective)	Trinity Aphalt Pavers Ltd	\$2,063,727.00
71	NREP - Contract #P57 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Victoria East/ Nariva Mayaro Districts - (Sole Selective)	Lutchmeensingh's Transport Contractors Ltd	\$6,029,883.00
72	NREP - Contract #P59 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George East & St. George West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Motilal Moonan Engineering & Construction (T&) Ltd	\$421,254.00
73	NREP - Contract #P60 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West Districts & St. David Districts - (Sole Selective)	Dipcon Engineering Services Ltd	\$378,972.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
74	NREP - Contract #P62 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Victoria West & St. Patrick Districts - (Sole Selective)	Carib Asphalt Pavers Ltd	\$11,933,703.00
75	NREP - Contract #P63 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West District - (Sole Selective)	Trinity Asphalt Pavers Ltd	\$3,488,787.00
76	NREP - Contract #P64 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West District - (Sole Selective)	Motilal Moonan Engineering & Construction (T&) Ltd	\$1,119,168.00
77	NREP - Contract #P65 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George East & St. George West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Asphalt Road Surfacing Ltd	\$509,733.00
78	NREP - Contract #P66 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West District - (Sole Selective)	Ajay Enterprises Ltd	\$676,512.00
79	NREP - Contract #P67 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George East District - (Sole Selective)	Bartholomew's Quarry Ltd	\$290,493.00
80	NREP; Contract VWR 19/56 - De-silting works in the Victoria West & St. George West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Tatouk Investment Ltd	\$1,130,000.00
81	Renewal Fees - MTS's Firearm Users (Employee) Certificates	TT Police Service (Service Commission)	\$75,370.00

Total Number of Contracts: 81

114c

Date	Contract	Medium	Date Advertised
2003 Feb			
1	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Audio Visual equipment and Supplies Lot #1	Advertisement - Newspapers	23/08/02 - 06/09/02
2	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Music equipment and Supplies	Advertisement - Newspapers	23/08/02 - 06/09/02
3	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Library equipment	Advertisement - Newspapers	23/08/02 - 06/09/02
4	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Technology, Education and equipment Supplies	Advertisement - Newspapers	23/08/02 - 06/09/02
2002 Dec			
5	Lot 2 - Supply, Delivery & Installation of Stationery Supplies to (9) Secondary Schools (SEMP Phase 11)	Advertisement - Newspapers	04/10/02 - 18/10/02
6	Supply, Delivery & Installation of Furniture to (9) Secondary Schools(SEMP 2)	Advertisement - Newspapers	04/10/02 - 18/10/02

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Medium	Date Advertised
7	Supply & Delivery & Installation of Computer equipment to (9) Secondary Schools(SEMP 2)	Advertisement - Newspapers	04/10/02 - 18/10/02

114d

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
2003 Mar			
1	Renewal of MTS's Firearm Users Licence	TT Police Service (Service Commission)	\$34,290.00
2	SEMP Phase 2 - Shiva Boys & Parvati Girls High Schools - (Geotechnological Investigations)	Trintoplan Consultants	\$42,550.00
		Geotech Associates Ltd.	\$87,100.00
		Trinidad Engineering & Research (1978) Ltd	\$46,550.00
2003 Feb			
3	FUEC classification Training by MTS and for use by Armourer's office- Provision of Ammunition	HILTI Agostini's Fastening Systems	\$48,600.00
4	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Audio Visual equipment and Supplies	Edusystems/Media Ltd.	\$246,745.70
	(Lot1)	Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$3,278,394.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Stereo Electronics	(Invalid bid submission)
		Trinpad Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
5	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Music equipment and Supplies	Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$23,386.79
		Stereo Electronics	(Invalid bid submission)
		Trinpad Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
6	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Library equipment	Pereria & Co. Ltd	\$506,825.00
		Trinidad Systems Ltd	(Invalid bid submission)
		Mak's Services Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Memory Bank Computers Ltd	(Invalid bid submission)
		Illuminat Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Business equipment Interiors Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Trinpad Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
7	Supply, Delivery & Installation of equipment and Supplies to (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP-Technology, Education and equipment Supplies	Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$28,980.00
		Mak's Services Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
		Trinpad Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
2003 Jan			
8	SEMP-Phase 2 - Shiva Boys and Parvati Girls High Schools- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	Eco-Engineering Consultants Ltd	\$31,840.00
		CARIRI	\$140,000.00
9	Purchase of 1 Colour Laser Printer	Commnett	\$23,339.13
		Trinidad Systems Ltd.	\$38,018.26
		Computers & Controls	\$31,478.26
		Illuminat Ltd.	\$25,560.87
		Mememory Bank	\$23,347.83
		Galt & Littlepage Ltd	\$26,630.43
2002 Dec			
10	Lot 2 - Supply, Delivery & Installation of Stationery Supplies to (9) Secondary Schools (SEMP Phase 11)	McEneaney Business Machines Ltd.	\$3,633.01

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Trinpad Ltd.	\$37,704.81
		Business Office Supplies Ltd.	\$32,145.04
		CMR & Company Ltd.	\$40,290.97
		Media Sales Ltd.	\$9,600.00
		Diamond Systems Ltd.	\$1,065.13
11	Supply, Delivery & Installation of Furniture to (9) Secondary Schools(SEMP 2)	Mc Enearney Business Machines Ltd.	\$613,361.30
		CMR & Co. LTD	\$782,718.75
		Caribbean Sheet and Tubular Limited	\$721,637.00
		Western Scientific Co. Ltd.	\$1,307,405.07
		Metal Designs & Concepts	\$4,020,311.20
12	Supply & Delivery& Installation of Computer equipment to (9) Secondary Schools(SEMP 2)	Diamond Systems Ltd.	\$484,020.00
		Illuminat Limited	\$199,326.42
		Memory Bank Computers Ltd.	\$4,421,147.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
13	Geo-technical Investigations at Palo Seco High School (SEMP Phase 2)	Trinidad Engineering Research (1978) Ltd	\$30,445.00
		Geo-Tech Associates Ltd.	\$50,320.00
		Trintoplan Consultants Ltd.	\$32,580.00
14	Solomon Upgrade - Software Investment	Infotech Caribbean Ltd.	\$417,337.50
		(Sole Selective) USD\$66774.00	
2002 Nov			
15	Consultancy Services for Project Management/Quantity Surveying @ Morvant New GPS & Russel Latapy High School for the Project Management Unit of the Ministry of Finance	Welch, Morris & Associates	\$172,000.00
		Ellis & Associates	\$175,000.00
		Campbell & Associates	\$220,000.00
		Skinner Joseph	\$230,250.00
2002 Oct			
16	Rental of (1) Photocopier - Projects Dept.	Trinidad Systems Ltd.	\$76,382.61
		Illuminat Trinidad Ltd.	\$112,320.00
		Office & Power Solutions Ltd.	\$97,020.00
		Pereria & Company Ltd.	\$70,200.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
17	Construction of Fence @ GORP	Thomas Construction Ltd.	\$268,860.00
		CME Services Ltd.	\$848,688.50
		CWA Limited	\$514,054.60
		Faith Construction Ltd.	\$560,151.20
		Fortunes Construction Co. Ltd.	\$644,825.90
		Techton Inc.	\$489,414.70
2002 Sept			
18	SIS Program- Perimeter Fencing at Malik Senior Comprehensive School	Uniform Building Contractors Ltd.	\$1,659,904.35
		Pioneer Construction 2000 Ltd.	\$944,849.57
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$992,000.00
		SRI Construction Ltd.	\$1,767,045.00
19	SIS Program - Security Lighting at Success/Lavantille Composite School	Thomas Construction Co. Ltd.	\$84,862.03
		Sidney's Electrical Ltd.	\$91,200.00
		P. Carter and Company	\$91,095.00
20	Construction of the El Socorro South GPS	Uniform Building Contractors Ltd.	\$7,798,723.64

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Hookmally Ali & Company Ltd.	\$8,373,398.25
		WE Whiteman and Co(1997) Ltd.	\$7,534,413.43
		PCCL Construction Ltd.	\$8,515,371.90
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$8,415,031.80
21	SIS Program - Security Lighting at the Malick Senior Comprehensive School	Coopers Electrical Services Ltd.	\$117,338.08
		United Engineering Services Ltd.	\$146,950.00
22	SIS Program - Security Lighting at the San Juan Senior Comprehensive School	Tek Engineering Ltd.	\$106,521.74
		TEEM Electrical Services Ltd.	\$141,600.00
		VMW Engineering Ltd.	(Invalid bid submission)
23	Supply and Installation of 1 Thirty Ton Condenser coil - MTS Plaza	Cool Connection Ltd.	\$32,535.00
		Climate Control Ltd	\$35,236.56
24	SIS Program - Perimeter Fencing at the Success/Lavantille Composite School	SRI Construction Ltd.	\$1,481,895.00
		H. Lewis Construction Ltd.	\$1,559,692.80

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Uniform Building Contractors Ltd.	\$1,602,180.00
25	SIS Program - Security Lighting at Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School	Thomas Construction Company Ltd.	\$127,850.19
		Coopers Electrical Services Ltd.	\$137,238.00
		TEEM Electrical Services Ltd.	\$149,914.00
		DYNA Tech Company Ltd.	\$152,500.00
26	Tender for New Cooling Tower for 250 Ton Chiller at GORP	Comfort Engineering Ltd.	\$207,500.00
		Climate Control Ltd.	\$502,707.83
		Thomas Peake Ltd.	\$240,350.00
27	SIS - Security Lighting at Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School	Thomas Construction Company Ltd	\$127,850.19
		Coopers Electrical Services Ltd.	\$137,238.00
		TEEM Electrical Services Ltd.	\$149,914.00
		DYNA Tech Company Ltd.	\$152,500.00
28	Insurance for the Year(2002-2004)	MAIBROL Insurance Brokers Ltd.	\$891,650.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		CIBL	\$822,389.31
		Consolidated Insurance Brokers	\$1,220,732.26
		Millenium Insurance Brokers	\$953,514.53
		Millenium Insurance Brokers (option 2)	\$939,859.09
		M&M Insurance Brokers	\$904,131.70
		Agostini Insurance Brokers	\$913,404.00
29	Construction of the Speyside High School	H. Lewis Construction Ltd.	\$16,000,000.00
		Raguhunath Singh Co. Ltd.	\$16,949,262.50
		Trinidad Contractors Ltd.	\$18,570,967.30
		NH International	\$18,989,134.00
		RK Plummer & Associates	\$19,158,265.92
		Kee Chanona Ltd.	\$20,162,031.00
		Asta Engineering Ltd.	\$21,084,555.80
2002 Aug			
30	Supply and Installation of Computers to the Ministry of Finance	F1 Connect Limited	\$341,725.81

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Note: 2 Computers quoted on same equipment. However, Illuminat did not bid for (lab, super floppy disk & 1 laptop Computer	Illuminat	\$258,612.50
31	Installation of Internet Software to ten (10) Secondary Schools - SEMP Phase 1 - (Sole Selective)	Illuminat	\$121,424.03
32	Tender for the supply, delivery and installation of equipment to (10) Secondary Schools under the SEMP Phase 1		
	Lot #1 - Audio Visual Equipment & Supplies	Western Scientific	\$752,226.85
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$68,551.87
		Business Office Supplies	\$82,915.00
	Lot #2 - Physical Education Equipment & Supplies	Trinpad Ltd	\$438,090.90
		Western Scientific	\$338,818.57
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$106,014.30

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Lot #3 - Library Supplies	Trinpad Ltd	\$10,798.70
		Media Sales Ltd	\$345.00
		Business Office Supplies	\$1,587.60
		Illuminat Ltd	\$950.00
	Lot #4 - Music Equipment	Audio Concepts /Trintrac Ltd	\$1,595,013.94
		Westen Scientific	\$455,467.46
		Edusystem/Media 21 Ltd	\$55,006.80
		Trinpad Ltd	\$110,650.00
	Lot #5 - Art & Craft Supplies	Media Sales Ltd	\$19,895.00
		Business Office Supplies	\$22,732.64
		Trinpad Ltd	\$52,301.80
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$180,647.47
	Lot #6 Humanities/Social Studies, Geography & History Equipment & Supplies	Western Scientific Ltd	\$69,431.83
	Lot #7 - Integrated Science Equipment & Supplies	Southern Systems Ltd	\$464,795.50

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Media Sales Ltd	\$6,900.00
		Scalar Scientific & Technical Ltd	\$381,859.30
		Western Scientific	\$1,161,514.66
		Edusystem/Media 21 Lt	\$121,605.86
		Trinpad Ltd	\$174,311.20
	Lot #8 - Technology Education Equipment & Supplies (All Schools except Waterloo)	Mc Enearney Business Machines	\$36,144.00
		Western Scientific Co Ltd	\$1,499,833.54
		Illuminat Ltd	\$567,476.25
		Edusystems/Media 21 Ltd	\$414,590.37
		Computers & Controls Ltd	\$19,932.83
		Trinpad Ltd	\$308,796.21
	Lot #9 - Text & Teaching Aids (Engl. & Social Studies)	RIK Services Ltd	\$156,460.29
		Lexicon T'dad Ltd	\$59,576.40
		Trinpad Ltd	\$32,760.00
	Lot #10 - Safety Equipment		

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Trinpad Ltd	\$22,134.70
		Western Scientific Co. Ltd	\$8,573.80
	Lot #11 - Stationery Supplies	Media Sales Ltd	\$2,980.00
		Business Office Supplies Ltd	\$12,451.52
		Trinpad Ltd	\$35,982.40
	Lot #12 - Library Stationery Supplies	Business Office Supplies Ltd	\$1,019.00
		Trinpad Ltd	\$2,164.90
	Lot #13 - Library Equipment	3M Interamerica Ltd	\$870,895.00
	Lot #15 - Music Teaching Aids & Resources	Western Scientific	\$132,213.72
	Lot #16 - Library Books	RIK Services Ltd	\$233,450.44
		LexiconT'dad Ltd	\$192,195.31
		Mallory InternationalLtd/Gurley & Associates (Joint Venture)	\$249,080.40
33	Perimeter Fencing - San Juan Senior Comprehensive School	ASSON & Sons Gen. Contractors & Wastewater Ltd	\$1,261,172.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		SRI Construction Ltd.	\$1,025,243.74
		Fortunes Construction Co. Ltd.	\$1,601,814.78
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$1,508,895.00
		CWA Limited	\$1,604,539.74
34	Perimeter Fencing - Chaguanas Senior Comprehensive School	JB Contractors Company Ltd	\$1,466,873.20
		Anup Babwah Contractors	\$1,348,753.00
		Huntza Construction Company Ltd.	\$1,263,818.00
		Scalex Construction Company Limited	\$1,303,852.50
		Fortunes Construction Co. Ltd	\$1,982,992.00
		Civstruct Associates	\$1,426,718.66
		MSR Construction Ltd	\$1,155,400.00
35	Amendments to the Cafeteria of the Waterloo High School	Hunza Construction Co Ltd	\$19,700.00
36	Extention of Tender Contract for Janitorial Supplies to MTS		
	Toilet Paper	Jaikaransingh Trading	\$420,000.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Interfold Towels	Combined Marketing	\$78,125.00
	Hand Towels	Combined Marketing	\$4,670.00
	20oz Mops	Combined Marketing	\$11,250.00
	Furniture Polish	Combined Marketing	\$8,330.00
	20oz Mop Buckets	Combined Marketing	\$5,000.00
	Air Freshner	Combined Marketing	\$4,790.00
	Gabage Bags - 30 x 36	Sun Delight Ltd	\$65,832.00
	Gabage Bags - 38 x 50	Sun Delight Ltd	\$99,666.00
	12" Split Hair Broom	Trinidad Brushware Ltd	\$14,683.20
	Cobweb Broom	Trinidad Brushware Ltd	\$6,577.50
	Kitchen Sponge	A Moses & Sons.	\$2,925.00
	Industrial Mop Bucket - 12litre	A Moses & Sons.	\$900.00
	Dust Mask (respirator)	A Moses & Sons.	\$1,204.00
	Telephone Cleaner	Langston Roach	\$3,060.00
	Corn Broom	Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$14,630.00
	Johnny Mops - 12"	Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$2,900.00
	Leather Gloves	Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$4,975.00
2002 July			
37	TSTT - Yellow Pages Advertising	TSTT	\$43,026.09

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
38	Purchase of Digital Camera	Trinpad Ltd	\$5,869.56
		Mc Earneay Business Machines	\$5,395.00
		Media 21 Ltd	\$8,750.00
39	Purchase of Monitor & CD Writer for MTS (Engineering Division)	Commnett	\$6,961.10
		Memory Bank Ltd	\$6,195.00
40	Purchase of Electronic Security Stock	Carisa	\$94,397.56
		Silmar	\$78,375.00
		International Security & Trading	\$143,994.06
2002 June			
41	Mechanical Design Reviews - SEMP Phase 2 (Sole Selective)	AdeB Consultants	\$61,150.00
42	Electrical Design Reviews - SEMP Phase 2	Latchman Bholasingh	\$46,000.00
		AdeB Consultants Ltd	(Invalid bid submission)
43	SIS - Security Lighting - Morvant/Lavantille Secondary School	TEK Engineering Ltd.	\$67,750.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Gobin's Electrical Contractors Ltd	\$73,395.65
		MAC. Electronics Limited	\$125,161.00
		VMW Engineering Ltd.	\$100,490.24
44	Manufacture of signage for five (5) High Schools - SEMP Phase 11	Sign Post	\$23,900.00
45	Installation of signage for five (5) High Schools - SEMP Phase 11	Trevor Henry	\$18,300.00
2002 May			
46	Perimeter Fencing - Morvant/Lavantille Secondary School	Civstruct Associates	\$1,154,500.00
		PR Contracting Ltd.	\$1,307,245.12
		TEEM Engineering Systems Ltd	\$1,551,030.00
		RK Plummer and Associates	\$1,361,182.00
2002 April			
47	Construction of temporary Hoarding around the Tunapuna Administrative Center	Newco Construction	\$20,000.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		All Weld Fabrication & Construction	\$21,950.00
		K-Built Contractors	\$27,000.00
48	Foundation Work for construction of a new stand at Shaw Park	SWIRL Engineering	\$106,277.00
		Thomas Construction Ltd.	\$277,900.00
		Dennis Holder	(Invalid bid submission)
49	Refurbishment of Wards 2 and 4 at Caura Substance Abuse, Treatment and Prevention Center Caura	Maintenance Systems Limited	\$1,051,649.50
		F& H Engineering Services Ltd.	\$1,236,114.00
		Construction Services & Supplies Ltd.	\$1,197,365.40
		TEEM Engineering Sytems Ltd.	\$1,307,273.00
		MSR Construction	\$1,060,224.00
		Coatings and Services Ltd.	\$1,192,727.80
50	Refurbishment of Chairman's Office	Sparkles Janitorial & Construction Ltd	\$24,900.00
		Unicom Ltd	\$36,759.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
51	Construction of New Stand - Shaw Park Tobago	Thomas Construction & Co Ltd	\$625,585.60
		Management Construction & Consultants Ltd	\$1,829,612.00
		Steel Structures T & T Ltd	\$829,772.17
		House of Steel Welding & Fabricating	\$1,563,948.70
52	Supply & Installation of Precast Concrete Slab - Shaw Park Tobago	Spancrete Ltd- Sole Selective	\$250,000.00
53	Installation of Toilet System & Misc Works- Refinery Training Centre Petrotrin	Construction Services & Supplies Ltd	\$24,690.00
		MSR Construction Ltd	\$30,000.00
54	Supply & Delivery of 9 Photocopiers 2001-2004 - MTS	Galt & Littlepage Ltd	\$351,540.00
		Trinidad Systems Ltd	\$322,591.30
		Office Power Solutions	\$345,130.43
		Pereira & Co Ltd	\$345,130.43

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
55	Construction of Guayaguayare High School	RK Plummer & Assoc Ltd	\$17,782,229.57
		Asta Engineering Ltd	\$19,508,733.90
		Trinidad Contractors Ltd	\$19,629,331.16
		KEE Chanona Ltd	\$20,125,227.49
56	Complimentary Design Service for Construction of the El Socorro South GPS	Vikab Engineering Consultants	\$336,189.32
		APR & Associates	Valid Tech Submission
		C.G.Murray Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
		Trintoplan Consultants Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
		Consulting Engineering Associates Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
		CEP Ltd	Valid Tech Submission
2002 March			
57	Upgrade of Chaguanas Police Station	Consulting Engineers Associates Ltd - Sole Selective	\$19,300.00
58	Refurbishment to the Projects & Construction Dept (Ceiling Works)	Sparkles Janitorial & Construction Co	\$15,000.00
		Coatings & Services Ltd	\$19,593.70

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Maintenance Systems	\$16,179.57
		Unicom Ltd	\$24,297.00
59	Miscellaneous Plumbing Works, Laboratory Services- Building North Area Petrotrin (Point-a-Pierre)	MSR Construction Ltd	\$20,000.00
		CSSL Construction & Services Ltd	\$23,000.00
60	Refurbishment work to Chairman's Office	Unicom Ltd	\$13,485.00
		MSR Construction Ltd	\$13,895.00
61	Repairs to Ladies' Toilet - shipping Building (Point-a-Pierre)	MSR Construction Ltd	\$16,000.00
		CSSL Construction & Services Ltd	\$16,800.00
2002 Feb			
2002 Jan			
62	Supply of Security Uniforms	Eagle Shirt Factory	\$695,000.00
		Savvy Traders	(Invalid bid submission)

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
63	Land Cleaning at El Socorro South Government Primary School	Nizam Sujet Ali Rentals - (Sole Selective)	\$47,000.00
64	Chemical Supplies -Pine Disinfectant	Trinidad Marketing Distributors -	\$95,875.00
		Icon Chemical Industries	\$111,657.50
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$125,375.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$249,275.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$227,813.75
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$154,875.00
		Alma Marketing	\$346,625.00
		Combined Marketing	\$332,612.50
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$234,082.50
	Chemical Supplies - Toilet Bowl Cleaner	Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$72,930.00
		Icon Chemical Industries	\$84,935.40
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$81,457.20
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$144,738.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$151,750.50
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$166,897.50
		Alma Marketing	\$325,380.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Combined Marketing	\$347,820.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$252,898.80
	Chemical Supplies - All purpose Cleaner	Icon Chemical Industries	\$56,775.00
		ER Fraités Caribbean Ltd	\$63,750.00
		Chemical Specialists	\$83,550.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$119,250.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$116,250.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$111,750.00
		Alma Marketing	\$142,500.00
		Combined Marketing	\$267,375.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$125,062.50
	Chemical Supplies - Floor Polish	Icon Chemical Industries	\$269,451.60
		ER Fraités Caribbean Ltd	\$337,020.00
		Chemical Specialties	\$369,900.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$328,800.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$349,350.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$271,260.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Alma Marketing	\$427,440.00
		Combined Marketing	\$434,838.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$374,338.80
		Inter Chemical Ltd	\$452,100.00
		Specialist Chemicals	\$254,820.00
	Chemical Supplies - Floor Sealer	Icon Chemical Industries	\$197,811.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$204,192.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$197,811.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$336,775.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$353,791.00
		Alma Marketing	\$194,975.00
		Combined Marketing	\$344,574.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$169,592.80
		Inter Chemical Ltd	\$319,050.00
		Specialist Chemicals	\$205,610.00
	Chemical Supplies - Floor Stripper	Icon Chemical Industries	\$67,900.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$143,778.28
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$61,110.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$152,775.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$128,331.00
		Alma Marketing	\$210,490.00
		Combined Marketing	\$255,983.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$146,799.80
		Inter Chemical Ltd	\$152,775.00
		Specialist Chemicals	\$108,640.00
	Chemical Supplies - Liquid Hand Soap	Alma Marketing	\$18,180.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$28,785.00
		Icon Chemicals Industries	\$30,300.00
		ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$54,540.00
		Chemical Specialties	\$34,845.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributor	\$56,055.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$75,447.00
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$43,935.00
		Combined Marketing	\$115,443.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$62,721.00
		Ekler Chemicals	\$23,028.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
	Chemical Supplies - Glass Cleaner	ER Fraites Caribbean Ltd	\$18,750.00
		Ekler Chemicals	\$13,000.00
		Kirvek Industries Ltd	\$21,250.00
		Icon Chemicals Industries	\$22,000.00
		Alma Marketing	\$48,750.00
		Chemical Worldwide	\$65,500.00
		Langston Roach Industries Ltd	\$24,750.00
		Specialist Chemicals Ltd	\$36,250.00
		Combined Marketing	\$47,500.00
		Savvy Traders Ltd	\$21,562.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributors	\$48,750.00
		Inter Chem Ltd	\$43,750.00
	Chemical Supplies - Deodorizer	Chemical Specialties Ltd.	\$46,338.24
		Kirvek Industries Ltd.	\$21,250.00
		Icon Chemical Industries	\$25,000.00
		Ekler Chemical Company Ltd	\$25,000.00
		Savvy Traders	\$83,375.00
		Alma Marketing	\$120,000.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
		Langston Roach	\$28,750.00
		Kemical Worldwide	\$125,500.00
		Trinidad Marketing Distributers	\$47,500.00
		Combined Marketing	\$88,500.00
		ER Fraites Limited	\$46,750.00
65	Refurbishment of the Penal Police Station	Construction Services and Supplies Ltd.	\$623,479.11
		Annup Babwah Constructors	\$713,596.00
		K-Built Contractors Ltd	\$589,566.00
		MSR Construction Ltd.	\$577,565.00
		SAISCON Ltd	\$701,222.40
66	NREP - Contract #P43 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George West District - (Sole Selective)	Asphalt Road Surfacing Ltd	\$100,850.40
67	NREP - Contract #P48 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Caroni & Victoria West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Aztec Asphalt Pavers Ltd	\$2,553,885.00

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
68	NREP - Contract #P53 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Caroni, St. Andrew/St David & St George East Districts - (Sole Selective)	Seereeram Brothers Ltd	\$8,618,742.00
69	NREP - Contract #P55 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George East District - (Sole Selective)	Bartholomew's Quarry Ltd	\$563,760.00
70	NREP - Contract #P56 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George West District - (Sole Selective)	Trinity Asphalt Pavers Ltd	\$2,063,727.00
71	NREP - Contract #P57 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Victoria East/ Nariva Mayaro Districts - (Sole Selective)	Lutchmeensingh's Transport Contractors Ltd	\$6,029,883.00
72	NREP - Contract #P59 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George East & St. George West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Motilal Moonan Engineering & Construction (T&) Ltd	\$421,254.00
73	NREP - Contract #P60 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West Districts & St. David Districts - (Sole Selective)	Dipcon Engineering Services Ltd	\$378,972.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
74	NREP - Contract #P62 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the Victoria West & St. Patrick Districts - (Sole Selective)	Carib Asphalt Pavers Ltd	\$11,933,703.00
75	NREP - Contract #P63 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West District - (Sole Selective)	Trinity Asphalt Pavers Ltd	\$3,488,787.00
76	NREP - Contract #P64 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West District - (Sole Selective)	Motilal Moonan Engineering & Construction (T&) Ltd	\$1,119,168.00
77	NREP - Contract #P65 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St George East & St. George West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Asphalt Road Surfacing Ltd	\$509,733.00
78	NREP - Contract #P66 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George West District - (Sole Selective)	Ajay Enterprises Ltd	\$676,512.00
79	NREP - Contract #P67 - Rehabilitation of Roads in the St. George East District - (Sole Selective)	Bartholomew's Quarry Ltd	\$290,493.00

Date	Contract	Contractors	Value
80	NREP- Contract VWR 19/56 - De-silting works in the Victoria West & St. George West Districts - (Sole Selective)	Tatouk Investment Ltd	\$1,130,000.00
81	Renewal Fees - MTS's Firearm Users (Employee) Certificates	TT Police Service (Service Commission)	\$75,370.00
	Total Number of Contracts: 81		

The following question was asked by Mr. Adesh Nanan (Tabaquite):

**Certificates of Environmental Clearance
(Approval of)**

- 93.** Would the Minister provide a list of the Certificates of Environmental Clearance approved for the years 2002 and 2003 and also identify those pending for the said years?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:

Since the Certificates of Environmental Clearance (CEC) rules came into effect in 2001, a total of 450 applications were received up to 11th April 2003, by the Environmental Management Authority (EMA). In 2001, 88 applications for CEC's were received by the EMA of which 1 was categorised as not requiring a CEC, 77 were issued and 10 are still pending. In 2002, 266 applications were received, of which 4 were withdrawn, 17 were categorised as not requiring a CEC, 2 were refused, 166 were issued and 77 are still pending. For 2003, 96 applications have been received of which 2 were withdrawn, 3 were categorised as not requiring a CEC, 34 were issued and 57 are still pending. A detailed listing on

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

the status of the CEC applications received by the EMA is appended. It is to be noted that this information is publicly available via the National CEC Register located at EMA's Information Centre Office at 8 Elizabeth Street, St. Clair, Port of Spain.

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2001	1	BGTT	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	2	BGTT	Production	No	Offshore
2001	3	BGTT	Site survey	Yes	Offshore
2001	4	MHTL	Methanol plant	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2001	5	BPTT	Production	Yes	Guayaguayare
2001	6	PLIPDECO	Port expansion	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2001	7	EOG	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	8	ARCO/BPTT	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	9	Venture	Production	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2001	10	Pius Holdings	Quarry	Yes	Valencia
2001	11	Nitrogen 2000	Ammonia plant	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2001	12	Venture	Drilling	Yes	Offshore
2001	13	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Westmoorings
2001	14	BPTT	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	15	ALNG	Pipeline	No	Pt. Fortin
2001	16	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Chaguanas

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2001	17	Planviron	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2001	18	KS Holder	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2001	19	Lease Operators	Production	Yes	Palo Seco
2001	20	Atlas Methanol	Methanol plant	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2001	21	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	St. Augustine
2001	22	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Laventille
2001	23	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Carlsen Field
2001	24	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Arima
2001	25	UNIPET - Dr. Ari	Gas Station	Yes	Santa Cruz
2001	26	UNIPET - Salamat	Gas Station	Yes	Barrackpore
2001	27	UNIPET - Singh	Gas Station	Yes	Laventille
2001	28	UNIPET - Romany	Gas Station	Yes	Santa Cruz
2001	29	UNIPET - Palloo	Gas Station	Yes	Moruga
2001	30	UNIPET - Wight	Gas Station	Yes	Sangre Grande
2001	31	BGTT	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	32	Bachue Diptee	Sawmill	Yes	Penal
2001	33	EOG	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	34	Vintage	Pipeline	Yes	Catshill

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2001	35	BPTT	Exploration	No	Offshore
2001	36	Doodnath Gajadhar	Agricultural	Yes	Cunaripo
2001	37	BHP	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	38	BHP	Seismic	Yes	Offshore
2001	39	BHP	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	40	BHP	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	41	PPGPL	Pipeline	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2001	42	Yusuff Mohammed	Poultry Farm	Yes	Barrackpore
2001	43	BPTT	Pipeline	Yes	Guayaguayare
2001	44	Min. of Education	School	Yes	Tacarigua
2001	45	Min. of Education	School	Yes	La Romain
2001	46	Design Collaborative	Convention Center	No	POS
2001	47	Coral Sands	Residential	Yes	Tobago
2001	48	Param Balbissoon	Clay mining	Yes	Carlsen Field
2001	49	Rohit Balbissoon	Clay mining	Yes	Carlsen Field
2001	50	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	POS
2001	51	HCL	Golf Course	Yes	Trincity
2001	52	HCL	Mall	Yes	Trincity

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2001	53	SFC	Incinerator	Yes	Chaguanas
2001	54	Sean Leonard	Residential	Yes	Fort George
2001	55	BHP	Soil Borings	No CEC	Offshore
2001	56	EOG	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	57	George Allum	Resort	Yes	Tobago
2001	58	Trincan	Production	Yes	Siparia
2001	59	Hermitage limestone	Quarry	No	Guanapo
2001	60	Decker Petroleum	Asphalt plant	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2001	61	Unicell Paper Mills	Paper plant	Yes	Arima
2001	62	BPTT	Site survey	Yes	Offshore
2001	63	Venture	Production	Yes	Fyzabad
2001	64	MTS	School	Yes	Vessigny
2001	65	MTS	School	No	Penal
2001	66	EOG	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	67	Realgreen	Nature resort	No	Maraval
2001	68	Chemtrax	Detergents	Yes	POS
2001	69	Jenton	Automotive	Yes	Aranguez
2001	70	Ramroop	School	Yes	Sangre Grande

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2001	71	BPTT	Dredging	No	Galeota
2001	72	Arthur McKnight	Poultry Farm	Yes	Rio Claro
2001	73	Sean Ghouralal	Residential	Yes	Diego Martin
2001	74	Vikab Engineeing	School	Yes	Couva
2001	75	Waste Control Services	Wastewater	Yes	Carlsen Field
2001	76	ACFMG	Residential	Yes	Glencoe
2001	77	William Agard	Residential	Yes	Santa Cruz
2001	78	APR Associates	School	Yes	Mayaro
2001	79	Raymond Borell	Gas Station	Yes	Mayaro
2001	80	Ronnie Mohammed	Grain mill	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2001	81	Development Planning	Resort	No	Mayaro
2001	82	BHP	Production	Yes	Offshore
2001	83	Bharat Ramchan	Poultry Farm	Yes	Williamsville
2001	84	BPTT	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2001	85	Martin Schneider	Residential	Yes	Tobago
2001	86	Wimbally Badai	Automotive	Yes	Barrackpore
2001	87	Powergen	Water well	Yes	POS
2001	88	Thermal Impac	Manufacturing	No	Caroni
2002	89	Planviron	Road	Yes	Trincity

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	90	Planviron	Road	Yes	Trincity
2002	91	NLBA	Movie Town	No CEC	POS
2002	92	BRW	School	Yes	Tobago
2002	93	Ramdhanie Mahabir	Poultry Farm	Yes	Wallerfield
2002	94	Winston Ramcharan	Residential	No CEC	Arima
2002	95	Project Control	Residential	Yes	San Fernando
2002	96	THA	Jetty	Yes	Tobago
2002	97	Delta Logistics	Workshop	Yes	Carenage
2002	98	BHP	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2002	99	Vishnu Maharaj	Entertainment	Yes	San Fernando
2002	100	Hardar Kasmally	Poultry Farm	Yes	Cumuto
2002	101	Ganchan Pirmal	Residential	Yes	St. Augustine
2002	102	Jeanine Chow Leong	Poultry Farm	Yes	Brazil
2002	103	Universal projects	Mining	No	St. Joseph
2002	104	PPGPL	Industry	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	105	Reynold Associates	School	Yes	Penal
2002	106	ICE Connection	Manufacturing	Yes	Arouca
2002	107	UDECOTT	Reclamation	No	POS
2002	108	GGI	Manufacturing	Yes	Arima

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	109	Professional Contractors	Workshop	No	La Brea
2002	110	BBF	Reclamation	No	Tobago
2002	111	Stollmeyer Ltd	Quarry	Yes	Guapo
2002	112	Rawle Mitchell	Residential	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	113	ALNG	Jetty	No	Pt. Fortin
2002	114	ALNG	Train IV	No	Pt. Fortin
2002	115	Chaguaramas terminals	Dock	Yes	Chaguaramas
2002	116	NP	Gas Station	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	117	NP	Gas Station	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	118	Indar Ramdial	Agricultural	Yes	Tableland
2002	119	Z. Partap	Poultry Farm	Yes	Tableland
2002	120	Mohammed Hosein	Cemetery	Yes	La Romain
2002	121	BR&S Marketing	Cardboard plant	Yes	Debe
2002	122	Planviron	Road	Yes	Trincity
2002	123	TIDCO	Industrial Park	No	Wallerfield
2002	124	Nature Resorts	Resort	No	Tobago
2002	125	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Arima
2002	126	Mora Oil	Production	No	Galeota
2002	127	BGTT	Seabed survey	No CEC	Offshore

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	128	Dipcon	Quarry	No	Arima
2002	129	HCL	Residential	No	Arima
2002	130	Bregon Holdings	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2002	131	Vintage	Seismic	Yes	Barrackpore
2002	132	John Davis	Residential	Yes	Claxton Bay
2002	133	Maulton Fabien	Residential	No	Diego Martin
2002	134	Petrotrin	Production	Yes	Parrylands
2002	135	Vintage	Production	Yes	Moruga
2002	136	East Coast Drilling	Production	No	Palo Seco
2002	137	St. Albans	Quarry	No	Valencia
2002	138	Alison Grosberg	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2002	139	Specialised rentals	Residential	No	Maracas
2002	140	Esau M. Jan	Storage tank	Yes	Chaguaramas
2002	141	Petrotrin	Pipeline	Yes	Woodland
2002	142	Ashtec Ltd	Church	Yes	San Fernando
2002	143	Unicell Paper Mills	Water well	Yes	Arima
2002	144	Yvonne Boodoo	Gas Station	Yes	Arima
2002	145	Trintech Chrome	Electroplating	Yes	Gasparillo
2002	146	Raghunath Singh	Quarry	Yes	La Brea

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	147	BPTT	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2002	148	Talisman	Seismic	Yes	Mayaro
2002	149	Fitzgerald Melville	Residential	Yes	Freeport
2002	150	Irma Williams Orr	Quarry	No*	Tobago
2002	151	Sammy Soopaya	Residential	Yes	Arima
2002	152	Thirbawon Seegobin	Quarry	No	Erin
2002	153	ALNG	Heliport	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	154	LSA	Residential	No	Pt. Fortin
2002	155	LSA	Residential	No	Harmony Hall
2002	156	LSA	Residential	No	Chaguanas
2002	157	LSA	Residential	Yes	Caroni
2002	158	LSA	Residential	No	Wallerfield
2002	159	LSA	Residential	No	La Brea
2002	160	LSA	Residential	No	Valencia
2002	161	LSA	Residential	Yes	Guayaguayare
2002	162	LSA	Residential	Yes	Mayaro
2002	163	THA	Industrial Estate	No	Tobago
2002	164	Castillo & Hughes	Quarry	Yes	Valencia
2002	165	LSA	Residential	Yes	Sangre Grande

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	166	LSA	Residential	Yes	Sangre Grande
2002	167	S&D Williams	Residential	Yes	St. Anns
2002	168	NP	Gas Station	Yes	San Fernando
2002	169	TED	Exploration	Yes	Cedros
2002	170	Patrick Boocock	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2002	171	PACS	Residential	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	172	Sirikissoon Seegobin	Quarry	Yes	Buenos Ayres
2002	173	Darry Mahabir	Residential	Yes	St. Anns
2002	174	Snubbing Services	Port expansion	No	Guayaguayare
2002	175	SWRHA	Incinerator	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	176	Docs homes	Residential	Yes	Chaguanas
2002	177	Carib Glassworks	Quarry	No	Matura
2002	178	PSAEL	Agricultural	Yes	Quarry Village
2002	179	BHP	Seismic	Yes	Offshore
2002	180	Jeffrey Guillen	Residential	No CEC	Champ Fleurs
2002	181	Fitzgerald Melville	Residential	Yes	Chaguanas
2002	182	Pier 1	Water well	Yes	Chaguaramas
2002	183	LSA	Residential	No	Williamsville
2002	184	LSA	Residential	Yes	Debe

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	185	LSA	Residential	No	Tarouba south
2002	186	Laloo Mathura	Institutional	No CEC	Arima
2002	187	Gillespie & Steel	School	No	Palo Seco
2002	188	T & G Rooplal	Residential	No	Penal
2002	189	George Allum	Residential	Yes	Chaguanas
2002	190	Wilson Sand & Gravel	Quarry	No	Sangre Grande
2002	191	Moonsie Oil	Production	No	Palo Seco
2002	192	LSA	Residential	No	Diego Martin
2002	193	CNC	Ammonia Tanks	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2002	194	BPTT	Road	No CEC	Guayaguayare
2002	195	CIMS	Office	No CEC	La Romain
2002	196	Sammy Soopaya	Road	No CEC	St. Augustine
2002	197	Petrotrin	Production	Yes	Forest reserve
2002	198	P & D Ramsaroop	Poultry Farm	Yes	Talparo
2002	199	Moonesh Ramoutar	Poultry Farm	Yes	Whiteland
2002	200	ALNG	Site prep	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	201	TED	Road	Yes	Cedros
2002	202	Readymix	Quarry	No	Valencia
2002	203	BHP	Exploration	Yes	Offshore

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	204	B. Jugmohan	Automotive	Yes	Lengua Village
2002	205	Vintage	Production	Withdrawn	
2002	206	Chan Ramlal	Agricultural	No	Las Lomas
2002	207	Damus	Production	No	San Francique
2002	208	Rocky Point	Production	No	Palo Seco
2002	209	Planviron	Marina	No	Carenage
2002	210	Steve Persad	Poultry Farm	Yes	Couva
2002	211	Trintoplan	School	No CEC	Guayaguayare
2002	212	PSAEL	Agricultural	Yes	Palo Seco
2002	213	Bahadur Bhim	Sawmill	Yes	Freeport
2002	214	ALNG	Incinerator	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	215	TMC	Residential	No	Woodbrook
2002	216	Natasha Hudson	Agricultural	No CEC	Arima
2002	217	BPTT	Seawall	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	218	Primera	Exploration	Yes	Icacos
2002	219	TED	Production	Yes	Southwest Peninsula
2002	220	Petrotrin	Seismic	Yes	Offshore
2002	221	BHP	Site survey	No CEC	Offshore
2002	222	Keith Belgrove	Cemetery	Yes	Tacarigua

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	223	Herdina Figuera-Lopez	Residential	Yes	Santa Cruz
2002	224	BHP	Production	Yes	Guayaguayare
2002	225	ALNG	Batching Plant	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	226	Development Planning	Resort	No	Maracas
2002	227	Waste Disposals	Waste treatment	No CEC	POS
2002	228	Batchasingh Quarry	Quarry	No	Tabaquite
2002	229	MOWT	Highway	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	230	TED	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2002	231	Caroni Ltd	Residential	No	Debe
2002	232	TRINMAR	Well abandonment	Yes	Offshore
2002	233	TRINMAR	Production	Yes	Offshore
2002	234	TRINMAR	Production	No	Offshore
2002	235	TRINMAR	Pipeline	No	Offshore
2002	236	Talisman	Seismic	No*	Mayaro
2002	237	Green Tec	Residential	Yes	Siparia
2002	238	Southern Maintenance	Jetty	No	Vessigny
2002	239	Prechand Ramhit	Residential	No	Cunupia
2002	240	Peake's	Gas Station	Yes	Tobago
2002	241	Shayam Seereeram	Quarry	No	Santa Cruz

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	242	Aidoo International	Manufacturing	No	Tobago
2002	243	David Floyd	Poultry Farm	Yes	Caparo
2002	244	Emalia Williams	Crematorium	No	Tobago
2002	245	Hugh Wooding-Thomas	Resort	No	Maracas
2002	246	NGC	Pipeline	No	Guayaguayare
2002	247	M. Valley	Residential	No CEC	Maraval
2002	248	PACS	Residential	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	249	Alexander Joseph	Poultry Farm	Yes	Guapo
2002	250	Capital Signal	Workshop	Yes	Carenage
2002	251	Leo Mahadeosingh	Poultry Farm	Yes	Cunupia
2002	252	LABIDCO	Port expansion	No	La Brea
2002	253	Robert Amar	Residential	Yes	Chase Village
2002	254	Shivanand Seenath	Residential	Yes	Esperance Village
2002	255	Gulf City Ltd	Mall	Withdrawn	
2002	256	Leonard Holder	School	No CEC	Tobago
2002	257	MOWT	Dredging	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	258	Ashim Mohammed	Marina	No	Westmoorings
2002	259	Roger McKenzie	Marina	No	Westmoorings
2002	260	EOG	Production	No	Offshore

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	261	Primera O&G	Well abandonment	Yes	San Francique
2002	262	ALNG	Marine Terminal	No CEC	Offshore
2002	263	Lee Young & Partners	Marina	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2002	264	Arthur Chin Lee	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2002	265	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Arima
2002	266	Neil Bhagan	Residential	No	Curepe
2002	267	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Chaguanas
2002	268	Hindu Credit Union	Residential	No	Caroni
2002	269	BHP	Production	No	Offshore
2002	270	BHP	Production	No	Galeota
2002	271	William Tobias-James	Quarry	No	Tobago
2002	272	Laughlin & De Gannes	Automotive	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2002	273	Maulton Fabien	Residential	No	San Raphael
2002	274	Ivan Laughlin	Residential	Yes	Carenage
2002	275	BHP	Site survey	No	Offshore
2002	276	Allan Chong Tai	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2002	277	Ivan Laughlin	Residential	Yes	Carenage
2002	278	PACS	Residential	Yes	Caroni
2002	279	MOWT	Highway	Yes	Arima

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	280	Venture	Seismic	Yes	Point Ligoure
2002	281	NLBA	Hotel	Yes	POS
2002	282	Sammy Soopaya	Residential	Yes	Carapichaima
2002	283	Hybrid Farms	Poultry Farm	Yes	Wallerfield
2002	284	Brent Gonsalves	Residential	Yes	Maraval
2002	285	Trinidad Shell E&P	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2002	286	Arnim Ramsey	Waste treatment	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	287	Vermilion O&G	Exploration	Yes	Tableland
2002	288	Venture	Seismic	Yes	Tabaquite
2002	289	Malabar Farm	Residential	No	Mayaro
2002	290	MOWT	Dredging	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	291	Carasol	Manufacturing	Yes	San Juan
2002	292	HCL	Automotive	No	Trincity
2002	293	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Withdrawn	
2002	294	NP	LPG Facility	Yes	POS, Sea Lots
2002	295	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2002	296	Hummingbird Helicopter	Helipad	No	Cocorite
2002	297	PACS	Residential	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	298	Brian Ramjattan	Poultry Farm	No	Cumuto

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	299	Janet Ali	Residential	Yes	Santa Cruz
2002	300	John Cardenas	Quarry	Withdrawn	
2002	301	Michael Ramjattan	Poultry Farm	Yes	Cumuto
2002	302	Ramchand Holass	Gas Station	Yes	Pt. Fortin
2002	303	Fyzie Mohammed	Automotive	Yes	Fyzabad
2002	304	Edward Daniel	Residential	Yes	Tacarigua
2002	305	Urban Hudlin	Cemetery	Yes	Arima
2002	306	TRINMAR	Pipeyard	Yes	La Brea
2002	307	NP	Gas Station	No	Diego Martin
2002	308	National Quarries	Quarry	Yes	Pt. Coco, Granville
2002	309	Andre Sookram	Poultry Farm	Yes	Princess Town
2002	310	K. Allen & Sons	Incinerator	Yes	Arima
2002	311	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	POS
2002	312	ACLA	Residential	Yes	Carenage
2002	313	T. Driver	Residential	No	Cascade
2002	314	K.S. Holder	Resort	No	Balandra
2002	315	K.S. Holder	Resort	No	Balandra
2002	316	K.S. Holder	Resort	No	Toco
2002	317	Tubular Management	Pipeyard	Yes	Mayaro

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	318	MOWT	Road	Yes	St. Patrick
2002	319	MOWT	Wall	No CEC	Diego Martin
2002	320	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Melejo Forest Reserve
2002	321	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Erin Forest Reserve
2002	322	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Longdenville
2002	323	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Valencia
2002	324	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Tacarigua
2002	325	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Morne Diablo
2002	326	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Matura
2002	327	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Rochard Douglas FR
2002	328	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Cedros
2002	329	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Cap-de-Ville
2002	330	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Cumuto
2002	331	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Arima
2002	332	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	Central Range
2002	333	LABIDCO	Dredging	Yes	La Brea

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	334	Ivan Laughlin	Residential	Yes	Freeport
2002	335	Geoffrey McClean	Residential	No	Cascade
2002	336	Geoffrey McClean	Residential	No	Cascade
2002	337	Geoffrey McClean	Residential	Yes	Cascade
2002	338	Forestry Division	Agricultural	Yes	UM Reserve
2002	339	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Plaisance Park
2002	340	Ivan Laughlin	Nature Centre	No	Maracas, St. Joseph
2002	341	Ivan Laughlin	Residential	No	Maracas, St. Joseph
2002	342	TAP	Quarry	Yes	Longdenville
2002	343	LABIDCO	Dock	Yes	La Brea
2002	344	Gulf City Ltd	Land works	Yes	Tobago
2002	345	Petrotrin	Berth	Yes	Point a Pierre
2002	346	Geoffrey McClean	Residential	No	Champs Fleurs
2002	347	Geoffrey McClean	Residential	Yes	Diego Martin
2002	348	Richard Frederick	Residential	Yes	Maracas, St. Joseph
2002	349	Realtor Services	Tower	No CEC	Valencia

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2002	350	Ivan Laughlin	Residential	No	Santa Cruz
2002	351	Guide's Funeral Home	Crematorium	No	San Fernando
2002	352	Lee-Ann Moore	Automotive	Yes	Marabella
2002	353	BPTT	Seismic	Yes	Offshore
2002	354	Abdool Baksh	Poultry Farm	Yes	Cumuto
2003	355	Primera O&G	Well abandonment	Yes	Fyzabad
2003	356	QPCC	Public Stand	Yes	POS
2003	357	St. Andrews Golf Club	Residential	Withdrawn	
2003	358	Margaret Williams	Poultry Farm	Yes	Las Lomas
2003	359	MIM Producers	Agricultural	Yes	Fishing Pond
2003	360	Narissa Mohammed	Poultry Farm	Yes	Barrackpore
2003	361	John Jaggessar	Sawmill	Yes	Penal
2003	362	Gulf City Ltd	Mall	No	Tobago
2003	363	NEC	Dredging	Yes	Pt. Lisas
2003	364	Kamaldaye Ramcharan	Poultry Farm	Yes	Cumuto
2003	365	Maulton Fabien	Asphalt plant	No	Siparia
2003	366	Ada Aboud	Jetty	Yes	Carenage

Written Answers to Questions

Friday, May 09, 2003

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2003	367	Justin De Leon	Poultry Farm	Yes	Carlsen Field
2003	368	EOG	Seismic	Yes	Offshore
2003	369	Oil Mop	Waste treatment	No CEC	Point a Pierre
2003	370	NFM	Granary	Yes	POS
2003	371	Rambally Seeth	Poultry Farm	Yes	Penal
2003	372	Planviron	Residential	Yes	Arouca
2003	373	Ghandi Rohan Persad	Quarry	No	Las Lomas
2003	374	George Tempro	Marina	Yes	Westmoorings
2003	375	Tech Contract	Quarry	Withdrawn	
2003	376	Hafeez Karamath	Residential	Yes	Cunupia
2003	377	Ana Charbonne	Poultry Farm	Yes	Caroni
2003	378	Anwar Ali	Residential	No	Chaguanas
2003	379	BGTT	Exploration	Yes	Offshore
2003	380	Neal & Massy Energy	Production	No	Moruga
2003	381	Petrotrin	Cement storage	Yes	La Brea
2003	382	Petrotrin	Oil storage	Yes	Offshore

*Written Answers to Questions**Friday, May 09, 2003*

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2003	383	Lake Asphalt	Asphalt plant	No	La Brea
2003	384	Advance Oil	Exploration	No	Moruga
2003	385	Zalisha Haniff	Automotive	No CEC	Barrackpore
2003	386	Gideon Brown	Poultry Farm	Yes	New Grant
2003	387	Callistas Lopez	Poultry Farm	Yes	Talparo
2003	388	Interplan	Residential	No	Diego Martin
2003	389	Jagdeo Ramgoolie	Poultry Farm	Yes	Las Lomas
2003	390	Cyril Le Blanc	Poultry Farm	Yes	Cumuto
2003	391	Anand Mungroo	Mall	Yes	Penal
2003	392	Sookdeo Seegobin	Recreational area	No	Penal
2003	393	F.W. Hickson	Residential	No	Maracas, St. Joseph
2003	394	NGC	Industrial Estate	No	La Brea
2003	395	Latiff Mohammed	Poultry Farm	Yes	Barrackpore
2003	396	Bel Air	Hotel	Yes	Piarco
2003	397	Petrotrin	Exploration	No	Offshore
2003	398	Geoffrey McClean	Residential	No	Glencoe

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2003	399	LYP/AATT/THA	Airport	No	Tobago
2003	400	Marilyn Constantine	Recreational area	No	Tobago
2003	401	Gillespie & Steel	School	No	Palo Seco
2003	402	BPTT	Production	No	Offshore
2003	403	NP	Gas Station	No	Tobago
2003	404	NP	Gas Station	No	Tobago
2003	405	NP	Gas Station	No	Tobago
2003	406	Ana Charbonne	Poultry Farm	Yes	Las Lomas
2003	407	Norman Bishop	Residential	No	Tobago
2003	408	Petrotrin	Sewage treatment	No	Offshore
2003	409	APDSL	Residential	No	Tobago
2003	410	NGC	Pipeline	Yes	Arima
2003	411	LOL	Production	No	St. Patrick
2003	412	Well Services	Production	No	St. Patrick
2003	413	Gillespie & Steel	Workshop	No	Couva
2003	414	Mentor Company Ltd.	Residential Lots	No	Mayaro

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2003	415	Vermilion O&G	Exploration	No	Penal/Barrack/Moruga
2003	416	Terrance George	Poultry Farm	Yes	Wallerfield
2003	417	Utam & Glory Boodoosingh	Poultry Farm	Yes	Barrackpore
2003	418	ACLA Works	Establ. Medical lab	No	Chaguaramas
2003	419	EOG	Exploration	No	Offshore
2003	420	Petrotrin	Gasoline Proc.Facility	No	Point a Pierre
2003	421	Emily Seafood International Ltd	Fish proc. Operations	No	Sea Lots
2003	422	Curtis D'arbsie	Construction of home	Yes	Maraval
2003	423	Krishna Gajadhar	Poultry Farm	Yes	Barrackpore
2003	424	Glenn Goddard	Timber Plantation	No	San Rafael
2003	425	Sharon Rowley	Residential	No	Tobago
2003	426	Jameer Mohammed	Poultry Farm	No	Barrackpore
2003	427	Quality Aggregate Limited	Quarry	No	Sangre Grande
2003	428	Fisheries Division	Boat repair/Storage Fac.	No CEC	San Fernando
2003	429	Primera O&G	Eploration	No	Fyzabad
2003	430	Anthony's Rental Ltd	Concrete Batching Plant	No	Tobago

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2003	431	Ben & Dianne Magiure	Residential	No	Tobago
2003	432	Curtis Tobin	Poultry Farm	No	Talparo
2003	433	Primera O&G	Exploration	No	Offshore (E. Brighton)
2003	434	Vikab Engineeing	School	No	Caroni
2003	435	Vikab Engineeing	School	No	Charlieville
2003	436	Edwin A. Young	Block Factory	No	Studley Park
2003	437	Kitijah Mohammed	Poultry Farm	Yes	Barrackpore
2003	438	Chunilal Gunness	Helliport	No	Las Lomas
2003	439	Latchman Ramrattan	Poultry Farm	No	Arima
2003	440	Leonard J. Holder & Associates	School	No	Maloney
2003	441	Satnarine Singh	Poultry Farm	No	Carapichaima
2003	442	Rocky Point	Drilling	No	Palo Seco
2003	443	Fibcom Ltd	Resort/Residential	No	Cedros
2003	444	George Allum	Residential	No	Chaguanas
2003	445	Fadilah Mohammed	Poultry Farm	No	Valencia
2003	446	Port Authority of T&T	Reconstruction of Berth	No	Port of Spain

Year Rec'd	CEC #	Applicant	Activity	Issued	Location
2003	447	Carnaud Metalbox Trinidad Ltd	Coating/Printing Operattion	No	Laventille
2003	448	Joseph Grimshaw	Residential	No	Tobago
2003	449	Norman Bishop	Residential	No	Tobago
2003	450	Drainage Division	River Works	No	Caroni

STATUS SHEET SUMMARY

Year	2001	2002	2003
# Received	88	266	96
# Issued	77	166	34
# Withdrawn	0	4	2
No CEC	1	17	3
Not Issued	10	77	57
Refused	0	2	0

Year	2001	2002	2003
# Received	88	266	
# Issued	77	166	34

*Written Answers to Questions**Friday, May 09, 2003*

Year	2001	2002	2003
# Withdrawn	0	4	2
No CEC	1	17	3
Not Issued	10	77	57
Refused	0	2	0