

Leave of Absence

Wednesday, February 16, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2005

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Hon Members, I have received communication from the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre (Miss Gillian Lucky) and also the Member for Naparima (Mr. Nizam Baksh) requesting leave of absence from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the hon. Members seek is granted.

**OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON
(AMDT.) (HARASSMENT) BILL**

Bill to amend the Offences Against the Person Act, Chap. 11:08, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Barataria/San Juan is not with us. Did the Member ask anybody to depute for him?

Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. The hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan has not requested anybody to deputize for him with respect to these questions, so these two questions are deferred to next week Friday.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Dr. Fuad Khan (Barataria/San Juan):

Scarborough Hospital (Cost Overruns)

7. Could the hon. Minister of Health state whether there have been any cost overruns so far on the new Scarborough Hospital?

**Shortage of Pharmacists
(Recruitment from the Philippines)**

9. Could the hon. Minister of Health state:
 - (a) whether there is a shortage of pharmacists in Trinidad and Tobago;
 - (b) if so, in what areas;
 - (c) the reason(s) to recruit pharmacists from the Philippines at this late time?

Questions, by leave, deferred.

**CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) REGIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDS AND QUALITY BILL**

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to give effect to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) Agreement (“the Agreement”) between Member States of the CARICOM which establishes CROSQ, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to give legal effect to the provisions of the agreement establishing the Caricom Regional Organization for Standards and Quality, otherwise known as CROSQ, which was signed by Caricom Member states on February 04, 2002. From the date of the signing, you can see that the agreement was in fact negotiated by the government which preceded us. Again, this is really the work of the last government with which this Government agrees.

As you know, the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) came out of the Grand Anse Declaration of 1989. Of course, at that time, the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) was in government. The People’s National Movement (PNM) came into government in 1991; the United National Congress (UNC) in 1995; and, once more, the PNM. Our quest to be part of that CSME straddles all of those governments, especially at times when it appears that there was a bickering here and a bickering there. I think that we will do well as a country to take that fact into consideration. As far as the real substance is concerned, the governments of Trinidad and Tobago have steered a steady course for quite some time now and, by and large, this has placed us in this enviable position, as people throughout the Caribbean and further afield would say we are coming to our own, thank God, and may we continue in this vein.

The agreement was signed by our Minister of Foreign Affairs, and since the date of its signature, the agreement has really provisionally applied among 12 Member states of Caricom, including Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the requirement for CROSQ derived from the Treaty establishing the CSME, the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. At page 48, Article 67 says clearly that the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), which is the trade body—a fundamental part of Caricom:

“...shall, in collaboration with competent agencies, develop a standardisation programme in furtherance of the objective of this Chapter and consistent with the international obligations of the Member states.”

Article 67 continues:

- “2. In implementing the programme, the Member States shall not use standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures as barriers to trade.”

So if we are a single market, then we need to have standardized procedures. We cannot be accepting goods with certain particular technical requirements in Trinidad and Tobago, and then the same goods are accepted, but they are not the same, and similar goods are accepted in Jamaica with different standards. If we are a single market, the standards ought to be the same. At the same time, we ought not to use standards as barriers to trade.

We have heard quite a lot from countries when they talk about liberalizing trade, but as they liberalize trade, they put up non-tariff barriers. *[Interruption]* Wherever we see it we must say that it is not fair. The same way that we would protect our manufacturers against dumping, we would also protect our manufacturers and our consumers against inferior goods and so forth, but we would not use our Standards Bureau as a non-tariff barrier, in other words, to protect our manufacturers to stop goods from coming in even while as we lower tariffs and so forth.

Article 67 continues:

- “3. The programme shall have the following objectives:

- (a) trade facilitation;
- (b) enhanced efficiency in the production and delivery of goods and services;
- (c) improved quality of goods and services traded within the Community and with third States; and
- (d) consumer and environmental protection.”

These ought to be the objectives of CROSQ. It goes on to say:

- “4. The programme shall include the following elements:

- (a) harmonisation of standards and technical regulations, and transparency in the development and promulgation of standards and technical regulations;

- (b) recognition of conformity assessment procedures through mutual recognition agreements or other means;
- (c) facilitation of standards infrastructure development at the national and regional levels;”

Mr. Speaker, of course that takes into consideration—given some of our small states within Caricom—that a regional standards body would work to assist the standard bodies in these islands in building quality. As a matter of fact, our own Bureau of Standards has been doing quite a lot of that over the years. This is a very useful function.

- “(d) facilitation of metrology infrastructure development; and
- (e) arrangements for the exchange of information with respect to development and implementation of standards and technical regulations among the parties to this Treaty.”

That is sharing information that we are a single market and trying to bring everybody up to a particular level.

Mr. Speaker, extremely important, having a direct bearing on what we are doing here today is Article 67:

“5. The Community shall promote the establishment of a regional standards body which shall, inter alia:

- (a) facilitate implementation of the standardization programme;
- (b) assist the Member States in understanding and fulfilling their obligations under this Treaty and other international agreements;
- (c) promote the development of national standards bodies in the Member States; and
- (d) facilitate access to technical assistance available in the Member States and in third States.”

So this is the authority, especially Article 67, 5. of the Treaty of Chaguaramas as revised.

What therefore is CROSQ? It is nothing really but an intergovernmental organization. It consists of an executive council, the board, as it were, comprised of the heads of the national standards bodies in the region. At present, there are

some 11 bodies in the region: Antigua, Bermuda, Grenada, Barbados, Guyana, Belize, St. Lucia, Jamaica, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the executive director, for example our own Mr. Nandlal, who is the new CEO of the Bureau of Standards, would be a director, a member of the executive council of CROSQ. The function of the executive council is to recommend standards to COTED. They would recommend standards to COTED and COTED would either accept or reject. For some time now, whenever you go to a COTED meeting, you would expect to have some document coming from CROSQ. As I said, this has been provisionally implemented since the signing in 2002.

At the last COTED meeting, Item 7 on the agenda dealt with the approval of monetary standards for a number of subjects which are rather interesting; for example, Caricom specification for grading and quality refinements for table eggs. I thought an egg was an egg, but there is a standard for eggs. It also talks about action required and, of course, Trinidad and Tobago had a position with respect to that matter. The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources in Trinidad and Tobago supports the introduction for monetary standards for table eggs with input from the Food and Drug Administration in Trinidad and Tobago.

After consultation with the stakeholders in the Trinidad and Tobago market, the Chemistry Food and Drug Administration in Trinidad and Tobago proposed the following amendments to the trial draft “Caricom standards specification for table eggs”. It also talks about labelling and all of these things.

There is also a standard specification for poultry meats, poultry products and a number of others. I am simply making the point that CROSQ has in fact been operating, and the council has been making recommendations to COTED over the period.

Mr. Speaker, under the Executive Council of CROSQ, there is what is called a “special committee” and there is where the work is really being done. If at any time there is a proposal with respect to a new standard, it is the work of the special committee to do that technical work. That special committee comprised of officers for the Standard Bureau of Member States. They will work on a particular standard; they will take a decision—and the decision at the special committee is by consensus—and it will then be forwarded to the executive council, where decisions with respect to standards and so forth are based on a two-thirds

majority. So that while at the special committee the recommendation is based on consensus, at the executive council—remember at the executive council sit the heads of all the national standards body—decisions are based on a two-third majority; and based on that a recommendation goes to COTED.

There is the secretariat which in effect is a small office at the regional level. The purpose or the function of that secretariat is to assist Member states in building capacity. For example, they could use expertise from Trinidad and Tobago or Jamaica where the Bureau of Standards is much more developed to assist some of the small countries.

The mandate of CROSQ is to develop and implement the standards; facilitate international competitiveness; increase regional and international sustainable production of goods and services in the CSME; and the promotion of social and economic development.

Mr. Speaker, I draw Members' attention to the preamble of the agreement, which is attached to the Bill. This makes interesting reading. It says:

“The States Parties:

Recognizing that liberalisation and globalisation in the world economy have intensified international competitiveness in the production of goods and services;

Conscious that the Caribbean Community is extremely vulnerable to penetration by products of sub-standard quality and specifications which could have serious negative implementations for consumer welfare and the integrity of the regional environment;

Aware that the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy constitutes the measured institutional response to current developments present in the international economy as a means of safeguarding and promoting fundamental values of the peoples of the Caribbean Community;”

This one I think is extremely important:

“Acknowledging that the development and application of harmonised regional standards, technical regulations, conformity assessment procedures and metrology are essential for the efficient operation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and, in particular, the international competitiveness of goods and services produced or provided in the Caribbean Community;

Conscious also that the formulation and application of internationally accepted standards; technical regulations...international competitiveness of goods and services produced or provided in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy;”

Mr. Speaker, we are entering into this agreement. The point is that this is fundamental to the CSME as its whole purpose is to standardize the quality systems throughout the Caribbean. Of course, CROSQ has to be funded, and it is going to be funded by the participants. I should make the point that the agreement provides also for associate members. While a Caricom member would have full membership, any Association of Caribbean States (ACS) member, or an associate member of Caricom—such as some of the small islands like Bermuda and so forth—can be a member of CROSQ, as long as they abide by the standards and so forth.

In effect, therefore, this is required legislation to put the agreement negotiated by the previous government, which was signed by this Government in February 2002. If you look at the Bill, the whole purpose is simply to put the agreement in force. I shall refrain from going through the Explanatory Note. I know that all my colleagues are well aware of what is said there.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, with these few words, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche*): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, we meet today on Wednesday, outside of our regular meeting day on Friday, to discuss the matter of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Organization for Standards and Quality Bill.

I just want to go on record quickly to remind Members that on the last occasion when we met, we were informed by the Leader of Government Business that it was necessary to meet on Wednesday, outside of our regular meeting day, to discuss two important matters; namely, the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Organization for Standards and Quality Bill. Lo and behold, the Minister with responsibility for Trade and Industry explains that the Minister to pilot the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill is not present, and we will begin with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Organization for Standards and Quality Bill.

Mr. Valley: That was off the record.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, there are two issues there. This is not the

first time that we are meeting in the middle of the week to give legal effect to an outstanding matter related to Caricom and our obligations to the Caricom community, arising out of the CSME Treaty. We have met before in the middle of the week, because it was necessary for this Government to pass pieces of legislation and then report immediately after at a Caricom meeting on the action taken in the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, not coincidentally, there is also a Caricom meeting about to start in a few hours in Guyana. We would not be surprised at all if we are meeting this way because the Government needs to inform its Caricom partners that, indeed, they were good students and they went to the Parliament in a timely manner to pass the legislation. This strikes at the heart of our argument of the incompetence and lack of organization on the part of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, last Friday, we agreed that the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill would be the first item but it is not. It may be the second item or it may not be an item at all. That is the second matter.

Notwithstanding this, I want to address a few points emanating from this Bill. Firstly, I would like the Member for Diego Martin Central and his colleagues to take note that because a measure is before us at any time, and that measure has in its history, the participation and support of the UNC who was then in government—the measure may still have the support of the UNC even in Opposition—that in no way is an immunity to the Government that upon entry to the Parliament all will be well.

Mr. Valley: I was simply complementing the Members on the other side. If they do not need it, well then I take it back.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, the UNC spent enormous effort and participated in drafting this legislation and, indeed, participated in an enormous amount of work in the region to bring us to this stage, is one thing. The Government cannot believe that it can come now—three or four years into a term of office—and expect that when they come with these measures the Opposition would have nothing to say, and we would not be critical and just support these matters, because in some way the UNC government participated in these matters. Mr. Speaker, not at all.

As the Member for Diego Martin Central indicated earlier, this matter arises out of our commitment to the CSME, the Revised Treaty to developing the regional institutions to manage, monitor and supervise all aspects of Caribbean

business and trade and so forth. This is what this matter has to deal with. The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central also took the opportunity before to quote extensively from the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas that established the CSME, and put this Bill in the context of the Treaty.

On matters relating to measurements, standards and specifications and so forth, it must first be noted that Trinidad and Tobago, as a single state, one entity, has no comprehensive body of law dealing with metrology, the science of measurement. None! The business community has been calling for many years now for the Government to take note of that and introduce an updated comprehensive body of law dealing with metrology.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: We passed that Bill.

Dr. R. Moonilal: When we met last year to debate on a related matter that point was also raised. Whilst we are talking about standards, regulations and CROSQ and so forth, this is really part of the wider CSME picture. Quite rightly, the Member for Diego Martin Central made reference to the Treaty and in fact went on to quote at length from that Treaty. I would like to stay on that Treaty as well, as the Member led us earlier. It just happens that even at this moment, we have had the second cancellation of the inauguration of the CSME.

When we met last year, we were told that the CSME would be inaugurated in January. Members on the other side were banging the tables in support of the CSME coming into force. They were all excited and ready. When January came it was postponed. They said that the inauguration would be on February 19, 2005 to coincide with the opening of the new Caricom headquarters in Georgetown. Well, we are a few days away, and the Caricom Headquarters would be opened but, again, the CSME inauguration has been postponed. That really typifies and summarizes Caricom—forever planning and putting things in place and so forth; delaying and eventually something slips off the table. In a nutshell that is really the history of Caricom.

Mr. Speaker, the current suspension of the inaugural ceremony to introduce and establish the CSME has to do with another matter that is very pertinent to the CSME. The Government also told us that the CSME has as a critical dimension, the establishment of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). The CCJ is meant to be central to the CSME.

After this Government took ill-considered steps, based on incompetent advice, and suspended a debate on the CCJ pending the outcome of a matter at the Privy Council—that matter has since been ruled on—we now have a situation where

just yesterday the Jamaican government indicated that it may have no other alternative—this is after they went to the Privy Council and lost—than to go to a referendum. Prime Minister Patterson indicated that he will have discussions with the opposition in Jamaica, and then he will have to face a referendum on the matter and allow the people to decide on the CCJ. The suspension of the establishment of the CSME is also linked to this CCJ problem.

Mr. Speaker, while all of that is happening, every Monday morning we could look in the newspaper and find another judge being sworn in to serve on the CCJ. Now, are these persons being paid? What are these persons being paid for? There is no CCJ but every day judges are being sworn in, and there is no CCJ in existence. The CCJ may not be in existence for some time to come, pending the matters being resolved in Jamaica and the matters being resolved in Trinidad and Tobago.

There is some dubious legality about earlier legislation being passed in several Caricom territories vis-à-vis the CCJ and the CSME, as to whether the CCJ has final jurisdiction there as it relates to the CSME. That is a matter that is still being debated, and we are not sure of that. We are all meeting here in the middle of the week, outside of our normal meeting day, to discuss a matter which in its broader context has collapsed on us—this CSME. We do not know whether the CCJ is going or coming, but we know that persons are being paid—from president to judge are being paid—and every day judges are being sworn in to serve in that capacity.

Mr. Speaker, we are making these points with no pleasure. [*Interruption*] When we observe the Government's incompetence we do not feel proud. We are not proud of the Government's incompetence.

Mr. Ramnath: We are ashamed of you.

Dr. R. Moonilal: So when we make these observations we are not proud of them. They took ages before they came with the Metrology Bill. The matter involving Caricom and the establishment of CROSQ has been with us for some time now. It took ages before these matters came here. This is linked to the CSME; this is linked to Caricom; and it is ultimately linked to the conduct of foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, we are now hearing of the establishment of an institution within Caricom. How many citizens in the national community know anything about CSME—I do not want to get into the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), because the Member for Diego Martin Central is very sensitive on that matter. How many citizens know about CSME and CROSQ? This was the same issue with the Metrology Bill. They are putting standards and obliging the country,

business persons and trading community and so forth to participate in a regional institution of which the country as a whole may not know anything. A fundamental issue is, how much will this cost Trinidad and Tobago?

Every week, we hear of Trinidad and Tobago participating in a host of regional institutions and contributing—in some cases even becoming the headquarters and so forth. What is the final bill? Anyone cares to go on the cash register and tell us the final bill this is costing the taxpayer? We call for a full debate on foreign policy in the context of Caricom and the CSME, so that we will have an opportunity to discuss this matter so the Government can tell us whether we are paying for CROSQ, the CCJ or something else. [*Desk thumping*] How much money is this costing the taxpayer?

Mr. Valley: File a Motion.

Dr. R. Moonilal: At the end of the day, what is the dollar sign? What is this costing us? Because this Government has come onto some boon now it does not really care about the spending of the taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Singh: They may have to ask Gonzales that.

Dr. R. Moonilal: They will just spend and spend. This is the Government's approach. So, we heard about the Caricom Oil Facility which was established and a formula worked out where over a particular amount of money it goes back to a Caricom partner in need and so forth.

Mr. Ramnath: Valley does not know anything about it.

Dr. R. Moonilal: This was established for poverty reduction strategies, then half the money from the Caricom Oil Facility went to support LIAT, and we are told that it is their money; it is not ours. We should get the Minister with responsibility for trade to tell this House what is the cost of our full participation.

[*Mr. Valley on his feet*]

Dr. R. Moonilal: I am not ready for you as yet.

Mr. Valley: Tell me when you are ready.

Dr. R. Moonilal: We would like the Minister with the responsibility for trade to tell us what is the cost, at this time, of our full participation in Caricom and in the CSME.

Mr. Valley: It is a question of benefit.

Dr. R. Moonilal: And, of course, give us a cost benefit analysis. We are happy to hear that our technical persons from our Bureau of Standards would be participating at the regional level in matters dealing with quality issues, standards organization and so forth. We are happy about that, but beyond a trip to Guyana and Bridgetown and so forth, what does this mean for us? What education and training facility the Government has embarked upon to communicate to the significant sectors to be affected by this type of measure?

Mr. Singh: A full page ad with a Minister's face.

Dr. R. Moonilal: What do we get? Any time we ask this Government to address issues of public education on public awareness programme—

Mr. Ramnath: They leak it first to the *Newsday*.

Dr. R. Moonilal: They went and get a soca artiste to go on the television to tell us that Port of Spain is the best place for the FTAA. That is the Government's approach to public education—to ask a chutney star to tell everyone that Port of Spain is the best place for the FTAA headquarters. That is the Government's approach to public education. Not publishing in the newspaper or making a pull-out in a Sunday newspaper or going to the business community and speaking about these issues, and giving very simple handouts and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, many moons ago, the Member for St. Joseph asked the Government to produce a document that could be inserted in the newspaper to tell citizens of all the social programmes that are available through the Government, and job seekers who could avail themselves of opportunities for employment and training. Has that been done? I do not know. I did not see it. This is about three years now that we have been asking for that. These are not simple matters. This is another hallmark of underdevelopment. When significant sections of your national community do not know and maybe do not even care about matters like standardization and moving from the imperial system to the metric system and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, what happens is when a businessman out there—a rich person and it may be a very successful businessman—does not know anything of these matters, he then depends on third party and fourth party information from a partner who is working in customs, the airport or in the Ministry of Trade and Industry and so forth for simple queries. The Government should make information available to specific sectors of the national community, including the labour movement. The labour movement has a concern, not only with workers in Trinidad and Tobago, but in the Caribbean as a whole. This is the type of information that should go.

On the wider issue of foreign policy, there was an article in the *Guardian* dated Wednesday, February 02, 2005 entitled: “Coordinating foreign policy”. The newspaper observed that this Government appears to be taking this population for granted, and they cannot understand the importance of promoting education awareness and clarifying simple issues, as they relate to the CSME, the CCJ and the grand plan of the Member for San Fernando East vis-à-vis political union in the Caribbean—the pipeline to run up the islands and so forth.

We just get foreign policy falling from the sky. We get foreign policies from the Member for Diego Martin Central and then the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We get foreign policy from everyone. There is no comprehensive statement; no public awareness document. The Government’s attempt is through propaganda. They will put a few coloured photos in the newspaper to say what they are doing about the CSME and also some newspaper ads and so forth.

While we are speaking about standards and measurements, the conduct of business—as the Member for Diego Martin Central rightly pointed out—this matter has to do with businesses operating in the Caribbean region, and they are not being placed at a disadvantage in trade, because of quality issues, standards and measurements and so forth. They are in no disadvantaged position.

There is also a related issue and, sadly, persons who are interested in this area must really read from the newspapers and public documents from other countries that have reached Vision 2020 already. There are several countries in the world that have already reached Vision 2020; developed country status. If you follow these countries news; their public documents, consultation papers and their law and so forth, you will understand the challenges that we are faced with.

Mr. Speaker, one of these challenges that are linked to the issue of quantity and measurement and so forth is corporate conduct—policies both at the corporate level and at the public level through Parliament and policies that attempt to monitor the conduct of corporations operating across boundaries and across borders. Mr. Speaker, simply put, a company existing in Barbados, based in Jamaica, with an outlet in Trinidad and so forth, its corporate policy should have some measure of harmonization. So they cannot adopt one particular policy in one country and then ill-treat workers in another country. In one country they would have a huge social responsibility and no responsibility in another country.

2.15 p.m.

There is a global organization called Ethical Corporation that promotes these issues, corporate responsibility and that has been linked to all the debates on quantity and regulations, because this is a regulatory matter and one wonders whether the Government would consider, whether this is an issue at all for consideration, conduct of business. But the conduct of business is also linked to adjudication, arbitration, mediation issues. It is linked eventually to the CCJ; it is linked eventually to justice and to the rule of law.

In a region where Prime Ministers do not respect the rule of law and undermine the Judiciary, there can be no successful economic development, that is clear. I am not yet speaking about the Member for San Fernando East, but other Prime Ministers as well. Someone serving in the DPP department in another Caricom territory ran, when another Prime Minister called on the phone to ask him to take a particular line on matters before him. This is a Caricom experience, Prime Ministers do that; I am not yet on the Member for San Fernando East. That lack of respect for the rule of law; for the separation of powers; that inclination to undermine the Judiciary; that inclination to undermine the rule of law is critical to the conduct of business in a region.

Mr. Speaker, you would be interested to know that in the Southern African region of countries involving South Africa, Lesotho, Tanzania—in some cases—where they do have a common market and they have had a good record of the promotion of free trade and single market issues and so on, they are now most concerned with the legal dimension to that with establishing a proper procedure for resolving disputes arising out of trade within the Southern African region. A big issue that comes to mind in that context is respect for the rule of law. Because as you know, Zimbabwe is very close to that region and has almost polluted the region by undermining democracy and the rule of law.

So the rule of law is important to trade, otherwise we would go back to the 16th century of pirates, of conquering countries by raiding, if you do not have a framework of law, regulations, order and respect. When we hear in the national community of a Prime Minister mandating and deadlining the Chief Justice to respond to him—In this Parliament they cannot answer a question after 28 days, but they tell the Chief Justice to answer after seven days. Imagine they cannot answer a question after two months on the Order Paper, but they are telling the Chief Justice to reply in seven days. Madness. But anytime they are in office, that is their pattern and the Chief Justice should watch it, because people on the street are already saying, that he could be under house arrest.

In fact, anybody living on the street with the Chief Justice should stock up on coconut water and canned foods, because that was what they did last time with someone holding high office, who sat in this Chamber; when they could not resolve an issue peacefully, they placed her under house arrest, and people on the street are asking, is this also immediate to his future, is this going to happen as well? It took someone who is not a UNC, someone who holds no brief for the UNC, Prof. Selwyn Ryan writing on February 13, 2005 in the *Sunday Express*:

"The Prime Minister has however been known to have acted out of what seems to have been either political spite or whim in certain matters (e.g. the Marlene Coudray matter), and we cannot therefore be absolutely certain that principle informed his choice of options."

This is Prof. Ryan pointing out that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is not known for principle, but for spite and malice and today we have now a constitutional crisis involving the Chief Justice and that will involve the CCJ and the CSME. It is this very Chief Justice who swore in a few people on that CCJ and when faced with the confrontation, the Prime Minister said he would take it all the way to the Privy Council. That is what we face and another mandate and deadline to another High Court judge, to explain and give in writing. This is a very dangerous period in our history.

Incidentally, if you plot a graph of the PNM administration in 1991 to 1995, prematurely ending in 1995, and if you plot where the House Speaker was placed under house arrest and you plot a graph now, from 2001 to 2005, you would come on the exact point; it is something about them. In their operations on this matter we can have little faith. When we raised the matter of foreign policy—but first they come to the House thinking we should agree automatically—they have another response, they say we do not love Trinidad and Tobago.

A few months ago I spoke on a matter using research material on foreign policy and the FTAA, the Member for Diego Martin Central stood after to suggest that those of us on this side and the Member for Oropouche in particular, we do not love Trinidad and Tobago. I should stop referring to myself as the Member for Oropouche, because I am in fear that I would be compared with the Member for San Fernando East, who while addressing this nation for eight minutes referred to himself 18 times as the Prime Minister, ending with your Prime Minister. But that is the sign of that masochistic, megalomaniacal tendency, to refer to yourself in the third party that way, that was yesterday, I believe. In eight minutes, 18 times, the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister.

This Government in a short time has run down on trust. In terms of public trust, they have little: in terms of foreign policy, it is a mixture between ignorance on the part of the population and confusion on the part of the Government. That is the mixture in foreign policy. To this day, we have been meeting and discussing the entry of workers into Trinidad and Tobago, workers coming into this country to take different jobs, whether it is sports, artistes, musicians and so on, and we will continue that line later. Do we have an account of Trinidad and Tobago nationals or citizens who have applied and been successful to work within the Caricom territory? Do we have any analysis or any paper? This is another sign of under-development. When you look at ministries in Vision 2020 countries, they have position papers, policy, research, reports. When you look at these ministries before us, they do not have a website. You would expect to go on the Foreign Affairs ministry's website and find a report on the first two years of introduction of the freedom of movement for specific categories, how many persons came into Trinidad and Tobago, how many nationals of Trinidad and Tobago were successful in securing employment in the Caricom territories, and so on. You will expect that, but you will not find that. Everything is secret and when we come to Parliament and ask the questions, they go on the Order Paper, it takes forever in some cases, and when you ask questions, they have a way now, they are involved in—the decent word is misrepresentation.

When in another place, they asked the Attorney General, “Did you take steps to remove the Chief Justice”, he stood and said, “No, the Government cannot remove the Chief Justice”, not informing another place that they took steps and he had information on that, but he sort of wiggled himself out with a half-truth. When the Attorney General reported on the legal fees for the husband of a Government Minister, and the Opposition asked; “Is that the husband of a Government Minister”, he said, “That is irrelevant”. This is the approach, wiggle out of the issues.

I want to put on record that this country owes a debt to Sen. Wade Mark and the United National Congress for first bringing to the public domain this constitutional crisis involving an attempt to remove the Chief Justice. I am sorry it hurts, I am sorry they feel so pained about it, but Sen. Mark and the UNC brought it to the public and those who would like to believe the Opposition is not doing anything or is not raising issues and so on, would want to be thankful to Sen. Mark and the UNC. On the matter involving the metrology issues and establishing standards in the Caribbean, we also need to ask another pertinent question. To what extent is this CROSQ and the machinery involving the Caricom non-English speaking partners and territories—because we are involved now with territories in

the Caricom region where English is not their first language; it could be Dutch, it could be French, and we need to keep a focus on two matters; matters of security and matters of language.

Before, when we debated Caricom matters and so on, they were not; 10, 20 years ago, we never talked a lot about security and we never talk, of course, about language, because you automatically felt that when you spoke about Caricom, you meant the English-speaking commonwealth countries, today it is not so anymore. This is why, Mr. Speaker, bringing workers from other countries into Trinidad and Tobago, particularly if English is not their language, posed an enormous threat. There is an example in Barbados where workers come from other territories into Barbados to work in the construction sector. They cannot read a danger sign; they cannot read health and safety regulations; they cannot read signs at construction sites and they pose a danger to themselves and to others. It is a new challenge in this area now and when you talk about measurements and standards and establishing documentation, we must also think of business persons and corporations which may not be using English as their first or dominant language of trade, and that is another challenge that we look at in this matter.

A related challenge surrounds the issue of security. I had mentioned on a previous occasion that even the sub-committee of Caricom charged with the responsibility to draft policy as it relates to regional security and protection of boundaries, and so on, had indicated several months ago that the Caricom region and several specific countries were not prepared to open their borders, because they did not have the security regime in place. The Prime Minister of this country acknowledged a few months ago, that they did not have their security infrastructure in place to protect their boundaries and their borders, and by opening up the market in this way, you can open up the market and open up the boundaries to a situation where persons from outside the Caricom region can infiltrate these areas. That is related not just to trafficking in drugs and illicit substance, but to international terrorism. A matter that is also occupying our attention in the national community at this time.

The twin issue of security and language was not prominent a decade ago. But today it must be, and anytime we speak about Caricom now, we need to bear in mind those two issues. We also need to bear in mind—when we speak about Caricom—the role of Heads of Government, in determining policy, both at Caricom and at sub-institutions of Caricom, that is also a big issue being debated.

Throughout the Vision 2020 developed world, there is a pattern now of States seeking to reduce the power of executives and returning power to Parliament,

Prime Ministers, for example, and Heads of Government, Chancellor in Germany and so on. They are now faced with a situation where they are trying to reduce the power of the executive and return it to the people through Parliament. And we are faced with a situation where several of these institutions within the Caricom infrastructure are established where the Prime Minister and eventually the Cabinet—through ministers and so on—play a dominant role. But policy must be debated, if not completely determined by the Parliament. The Parliament is where you debate policy, of course you have a Cabinet and Executive in place and they control the Government. The Cabinet has to take decisions, but the Parliament is where you should lay these papers for policy issues and discussion.

Mr. Singh: Policy update.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Of course, this is another regional matter. LIAT took all the Caricom Oil Facility money; every Monday morning you hear about BWIA. The Member for Diego Martin Central shares FTAA and BWIA as his pet, and a few weeks ago the Member for Diego Martin Central—incidentally one must recall in the context of Caricom, the Prime Minister saying at some time, that heads will roll at BWIA if they did not submit a plan. They submitted no plan and he then deadlined the Chief Justice.

Our friend from Diego Martin Central, I think he attended a meeting of the Board of BWIA, and on that occasion, on Tuesday, January 11, 2005, he attended a meeting at BWIA, it was shown on television in the evening and it was the highest level—

Mr. Valley: Mr. Speaker, I did not.

Dr. R. Moonilal: You did not what?

Mr. Valley: I did not attend any meeting of the Board of BWIA in January.

Mr. Singh: The board came to meet you?

Mr. Valley: Neither.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, this is the approach of the Attorney General as well. On January 11, 2005, okay, let me tell you what it was, then you can deny it. There was a news clip on that day, of the Member for Diego Martin Central, Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance, meeting with the Chairman of the Board of BWIA, Tuesday, January 11, 2005. This is a newspaper clipping. You now say you did? Stand up and correct yourself.
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Valley: I did not meet with the board, I met with the chairman.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Let me get quickly to the real issue here. [*Interruption*] No, that is the Attorney General, too. Mr. Speaker, the Member met with the chairman of the board and I think the acting CEO. They first looked as if they were meeting at a place for recreation and in this television clip the chairman of the board, who did not have the courtesy to dress properly to meet the Minister, gave the Minister a plan and said: “This is the plan the Prime Minister wants, but do not take it to Cabinet, it is not ready to go yet, and incidentally, the board did not see the plan. We are just giving it to you, for you to take a glimpse.” They had an entire press conference to highlight that level of tomfoolery. Then the Minister says that—and I recall because I thought that they treated the Minister without the dignity that he deserved—he could not take this to Cabinet, they had to go and do something else and revise. But there was a press conference called. That is the level of respect the State sector has for the Minister involved in trade.

Now, I just want to ask, rhetorically, do you ever think Members, particularly on this side of the House, that the former Minister Mervyn Assam would have tolerated that? I cannot believe that former Minister of Trade and Industry, Mervyn Assam, would meet the chairman and the CEO of BWIA, both in their short sleeves without a necktie, coming to give him a paper and telling him: “This is for you to look at, but do not take it to Cabinet. In fact, give us back.” They had the Minister in an embarrassing position to say that he cannot take this to Cabinet, he has to come back on another day. That is the respect that members of the State institutions have for the Minister.

I just want to talk on this point for a minute again, because it is an important matter of governance. There is now almost a wildness among the State sector leadership, state enterprises and so on, in treating with the Government. The Parliament is where a Member of the Opposition will raise a question for a Minister to answer. The head of a state enterprise is not required to answer. There is a particular state enterprise which is responding to the Opposition. There is another one which is calling Opposition Members to correct them on issues. They are out of place. It is the job of a Minister to respond to issues raised in the Parliament, not a CEO and a chairman. I did not return the call of a chairman of a board who called for me to give me some information based on a statement I made in this House. I told the secretary to indicate to that chairman that he should give the information to the Minister. That is the level of respect and that is where these state enterprises are now, they have just run away, wild, without any sense

of direction and management; without the political leadership. That is why the Chairman and the acting CEO of BWIA could treat our Minister in that way.

Coming back to the issue of our metrology and leading from the issue of security and language to another regional issue, the airline industry we talked about as well. The airline industry is critical in this region and they have shown a commitment to LIAT. They have been talking a lot on BWIA. We do not know what is the plan; how much more money they would be pumping into BWIA; we do not know. But what we do know is that they continue with a naked and reckless level of nepotism. Just a few hours ago, it was learnt in the national community, that a glorified flight attendant became the chairman of the new NBN board. They fired a board by phone.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Oropouche 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 very much. Mr. Speaker, the point I was making is that the Minister with responsibility for information indicated to the nation that the NBN board would remain in place post-carnival. We learnt, arising out of a power struggle in the Cabinet, that the board was fired by phone. The new chairman with a CV—where everything is that he was scheduling pilots. A person who is scheduling pilots, that is like dispatching buses at the wharf, at the PTSC terminal, became the new chairman of NBN. He was working with BWIA, trying to send pilots on different planes. When they are late, he will schedule them. He became the chairman. That is the level of nepotism and hypocrisy. Who is this gentleman? What is he doing there? What is his role? Secondly, we must ask what is the role of this new channel? It has moved from culture to sport. These are the issues.

Mr. Speaker, let us go back to standards where the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro is so comfortable, being an expert on measurements and so on. The CROSQ that is to be established, we would like the Member for Diego Martin Central to tell us what the cost implications are; how it is structured; where it is headquartered. Is it part of the new facility in Guyana? What is the cost that the Trinidad and Tobago taxpayer will pay? We would like this Member, as well, to indicate to us our financial commitment to all the institutions in the Caricom structure. But we would also like the Minister with responsibility for trade to

communicate with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and indicate to him that we need to discuss foreign policy, and the cost involving that. We were told that an embassy, or a mission, or a building, or something, was acquired in South Africa. We do not know the cost; we do not know who is there; we do not know if the new ambassador is being paid. Where is she? We heard she is ill. We do not know if she is well, we wish her well; we do not know what is happening at that mission. In London, again the Opposition brought to the floor the controversy involving the building for the construction and expansion and refurbishment at the residence there.

On the matter of foreign policy as well, we also have the delicate issue of our relationship with China, and that has some relation to the business community in the Caribbean as a whole. The Prime Minister, in receiving a high level delegation from China recently, also received \$152 million by way of a soft loan.

Mr. Valley: Export credit.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Export credit. But it was said in this House that it was a loan. It turned to an export credit, where I think you need to get equipment out of China to use that loan. That is quite interesting. But I raised that for another important reason. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition on his return to Trinidad and Tobago, the first thing he said was, "I knew of that; you have to get equipment out of China," while the Government indicated to the population for about two months before, we are getting a soft loan at 2 per cent. They said they were getting a soft loan to take machinery out of China and that is an old—I do not want to call it a trick—it is an old strategy.

When you get a scholarship to study in Europe, for example, it is very interesting. All the money you get in a scholarship is to buy stuff in the country. You cannot take that money and leave. That is how governments help themselves, by helping others. We want to indicate to the Member for Diego Martin Central, to consider that strategy. All this money you have to give away to all these countries in the Caribbean, whether it is Haiti, Jamaica, Guyana, Grenada and so on, could you not devise strategies where, in giving money, you allow your domestic industrial sector to benefit, either by way of services or manufactured goods? That is what we should be establishing. And when you raise these issues, they tell you they were dealing with them before.

Everything they are dealing with before, but nobody knows. That is the problem. That is the strategy that Trinidad and Tobago should embark upon. Where you have resources to help others, use it to develop specific industrial

sectors within your own country. For example, [*Interruption*] no, but the Member for Diego Martin East, we want to keep him away from that. In fact, a “mas” collapsed on stage in the savannah, the rumour was that he built that as well. Mr. Speaker, we want to keep him away from construction. [*Laughter*]

2.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, on every issue whether it is the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) or the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the Government must affirm its commitment to the rule of law. They should not only tell us in their speeches that they uphold the rule of law, but should demonstrate it. I mean no disrespect to colleagues on the other side, because I believe the PNM is not a human being, but a culture. They boast about signing treaties and agreements and upholding international law, but they cannot manifest that in domestic legislation and in machinery to support rights.

For example, as part of our Caricom integration process, we should be talking about a Caribbean human rights bill. Before you talk about political union, you must talk about rights and justice; so we should have a Caribbean human rights bill that the individual Parliaments give legal sanction to. In Europe that has been their experience. I said before that justice trumps a concept of nationalism; justice first. There can be no peace without justice. We should be establishing and seeking to promote a Caribbean human rights bill that will get legal sanction in the domestic jurisdictions, where individuals’ rights can be protected throughout this small common market: the CSME, CCJ and so on. We should be promoting the human rights of our Caricom community. But they will not hear about that, because in that matter they do not score very well. If you get a report card and you put law and order, rule of law, they will not score.

In speaking the last evening, the Prime Minister issued a veiled threat, that he is looking at those religious leaders who talk about violence. While he was looking at the head of the Maha Sabha, bandits held up the head of the Inter-Religious Organization (IRO). This is the head of the IRO, not the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Mr. Ramnath: Probably the PNM is behind that.

Dr. R. Moonilal: They held up “de” man; stole moneys; beat him up. They may have stolen his Bible. That is where this country has descended to, because there is no respect for law and order. They promote a culture of lawlessness and you will see expressions of it in our society. You cannot have any successful economic development in a region without law and order.

Mr. Speaker, like other Members in this House, I sat in awe at the recent Panorama finals at the Queen's Park Savannah, when a band came on stage to play and the house master announced, "I would like you to know that this band is here illegally; a court judgment came out at 6 o'clock and they are not supposed to be here playing; they want to play," and they removed the microphones around them, but they played; that is law and order. [Laughter] While they were doing that, 13 members of the Tactical Unit were ensuring that no photographers came on stage. I say that to underline the crisis of lawlessness facing this society under the watch of the PNM. There will be no successful integration and economic development until they manifest their stated commitment to the rule of law; to the sanctity of the Judiciary.

They have already undermined the head of the Judiciary in this country; they have gone too far. If the statements made in the press by the Attorney General were wrong and incorrect, that Attorney General should resign forthwith. [Desk thumping]

Dr. Rowley: And if they are right?

Dr. R. Moonilal: They will investigate. [Crosstalk] It is interesting that the Attorney General has not denied the allegations on the front page of a newspaper yesterday. This is the same Attorney General who stood and said that he knew nothing about that when questioned in another place. These are the challenges we face on that matter.

As I said in the beginning, the Bill before us is one that the UNC had spent a lot of time and effort working on. It is something that we are also in support of. It is part of a wider initiative of regional integration, of support for economic development in the region that we support. Our problem is not supporting measures like this; our problem is that we cannot support them when they break the law. Our problem is that we cannot support them when they take all their party hacks and infiltrate the State sector. Our problem is that we cannot support them when they promote delinquency.

Mr. Valley: Next time we will put your party hacks.

Dr. R. Moonilal: And they do it without shame, without a cover; they do it in bright daylight. The health sector collapsed. The Minister of Education said recently that there was a quiet revolution in education. I think there is a revolution in education. We will have much more to say about the Minister of Education, but we prefer to wait when the Member for San Fernando East is present; he likes listening to that a lot.

With these words, I thank you.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, whenever I hear Members opposite, especially the Member for Oropouche, I wonder what is the point. The number of nonsensical statements he put on the parliamentary record today is a record.

I will start first with his very foolish comment that we should not be proceeding with the implementation of the Caribbean Community Regional Organization for Standards, because there is no metrology legislation in Trinidad and Tobago. I had to listen about three times. I wondered, “What on earth is the Member for Oropouche talking about?” I am certain that, not only was he present, but he contributed. In fact, he was the first Opposition speaker on Act No. 5 of 2004, an Act to reenact and revise the laws respecting weights and measures to give effect to the International System of Units, better known as the Metrology Bill 2004. He was in this Parliament. [*Desk thumping*] He participated in the debate, but he came here today and told us this foolishness, that there is no metrology legislation in Trinidad and Tobago. So that was foolish statement number one.

The other thing I am struggling with is: Why do the Members opposite have so much difficulty in dealing with performance? There was an adage, “Performance beats ol’ talk any time”. They are struggling with the fact that performance is being displayed in the implementation of the integration of the Caribbean movement.

When one looks at the European Community, the Europeans have been at it since 1960. For 45 years, the members of the European countries have been talking about political integration, creation of a trading bloc, creation of a common market and creation of a European community. For 45 years, since the Treaty of Rome and they are still ironing out some of the issues. There is an attempt, at the present time, to create a European constitution. The European currency, the implementation of the Euro was just a little while ago. After 40 years, they are now beginning to implement full political integration in Europe.

We have been at it for 36 years in the Caribbean. We have been talking about it since the beginning of discussions initiated by our first Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams, about 32 years ago. So in terms of the implementation, we are, in fact, either on par or ahead of the European Community. What is confusing Members opposite—I hear this nonsense that we should have a debate about foreign policy—utter foolishness! It was the UNC government that signed the Treaty leading to the Caribbean Single Market and the Economy. We are simply following them; it is a question of continuity. Governments come and governments go, but the foreign policy of Trinidad and Tobago remains.

They were at the forefront of the development of the conceptual planning and signing of the treaties leading toward the formation of the Caribbean Court of Justice and the CSME. The Member for Couva North signed both those treaties when they were in government. When they were in government, they were at the forefront of Caribbean integration, leading the way in signing all these landmark agreements, following on the work done by other governments from the 1970s coming up. They were running the country; they signed the CCJ agreement and the CSME. We are simply implementing it. What is bothering them is the pace of implementation; that is what they cannot handle. They just talked and signed the Treaty. We are putting the systems in place. Mr. Speaker, it boggles my mind.

The foreign policy of Trinidad and Tobago has been set by successive governments over the last several years. The whole question of creating this trading bloc was led by them. Now that we are putting it into place, what did the Member say? You should lay papers for discussion in Parliament before taking decisions. What are we supposed to lay? You signed the Treaty. Are we supposed to lay the Treaty, discuss it and then unsign it? They signed the CCJ Treaty. Are we supposed to lay that in Parliament, debate it and unsign it? What are the points being made by hon. Members opposite? The arguments are absurd, puerile, juvenile, trivial, obstructionist, pedantic nonsense! [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. C. Imbert: If I heard a contribution which said, “All right, we are going to implement the CSME; there are certain systems you have to put in place, certain protocols; there is a question of interpretation; there are certain aspects of how this thing would work, let us discuss the mechanisms for implementation,” I could understand. But “doh” come here and tell me nonsense, that we are going ahead with the CSME without the support of the national population and that we should have a referendum. You signed the Treaty and we agreed; that is enough national unity for me. The UNC administration signed the Treaty and we agreed so that is the end of that, as far as I am concerned. As we have said in previous debates, if they were in power, we would have been going to receptions toasting the inauguration of the launching of the CSME; toasting the judges in the Caribbean Court of Justice. The Member for Couva North would have been giving the opening address at the launching of the CCJ and so on. All that has changed is that we are here and they are there.

As totally innocuous a Bill as the one before us—all this legislation says is that there is an agreement to harmonize standards in the Caribbean; completely

innocuous. What is all this fuss about? If the previous administration was moving towards Caribbean integration, was at the forefront of it, successfully lobbied for the headquarters of the CCJ to be placed in Trinidad and Tobago, signed the headquarters agreement, how can a UNC Member of Parliament come four years later and argue against the headquarters of the CCJ being in Trinidad and Tobago? That is what I heard. We have to tell the taxpayers how much it costs to have the headquarters of these institutions in Trinidad and Tobago, when they signed the agreement for the headquarters to be in Trinidad and Tobago. Maybe they did not know then what it would cost the taxpayers; maybe they thought it was free. I do not know. I have to wonder what is going on in their minds.

The Member for Oropouche spoke for I do not know how many minutes and he did not refer to one clause in this Bill. He did not refer to a single clause in the Treaty, nothing. All he did was introduce irrelevancies about current events in Trinidad and Tobago, completely irrelevant to the implementation of this Bill. All this Bill is saying is that in your country there are various organizations that deal with standards. In Trinidad and Tobago we have the Bureau of Standards. All the agreement is saying is that every country will have a standards organization. So there will be a standards organization in Jamaica, St. Lucia and Barbados—we have one in Trinidad and Tobago already—and they will just harmonize, so that the standards for materials, for goods and so on, will be the same.

If you are going to have a trading bloc where goods will be manufactured in different countries within that bloc, where you have cross-border trading, where you have an integrated movement, you must have harmonization. For example, you cannot have one standard for the manufacture of galvanize metal sheeting in St. Lucia and a different standard in Trinidad and Tobago, once you are going to have free trade within the region; it is common sense. What is beating me is that they just simply see this totally innocuous debate as an opportunity to peddle their poison, talk their nonsense and put their “mauvais langue”, rumours and bad rake into the parliamentary record; that is all they are trying to do.

I do not want to anticipate, but the next one is even more innocuous. All we are doing is integrating and harmonizing the rules, procedures and practices within the territories of the Caribbean. I have to make a point about the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Every time the Member for Oropouche criticizes Trinidad and Tobago's bid for the headquarters of the FTAA, knocks or condemns Trinidad and Tobago or indicates that we should not be the headquarters, I have to wonder: Who is he working for? [*Crosstalk*] Whenever a

Member of the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament gets up here and says that we should not be the headquarters for these international organizations—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Singh: He never said that!

Hon. C. Imbert: That is what he said. Whenever a Member says that we are wasting our time, “we not going to get through”, “we going to lose the bid”, that Miami will win—because I have heard the Member for Oropouche say that several times, that Miami is going to beat us; that Trinidad and Tobago “doh have a chance”, “we not going to win; too much crime in Trinidad and Tobago”; all “kinda ting” wrong with Trinidad and Tobago—I have to wonder who he is working for, because he knows he is being unpatriotic. He knows that somebody in the international media will pick up the fact that a Trinidad and Tobago MP is opposed to the headquarters for the FTAA being in Trinidad and Tobago. I have to ask again, “Who is he working for?” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Singh: That is not true!

Hon. C. Imbert: I completely endorse the statements of my colleague from Diego Martin West, they are unpatriotic. I completely endorse the stand of my colleague from Diego Martin Central; “we on this side working for Trinidad and Tobago”; “we lobbying for Trinidad and Tobago”. [*Desk thumping*] We want every single headquarters for every international organization to come to Trinidad and Tobago. We are working for Trinidad and Tobago. I do not know who they are working for, Mr. Speaker.

There is nothing in the contribution from the Member for Oropouche that has any relevance to this standards Bill, which is totally straightforward. It simply seeks to harmonize standards in the region to allow proper interregional trade. Nothing he said referred to this Bill. He simply wanted to poison this debate with irrelevancy about current affairs.

I thank you.

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to say, “I beg to move,” especially given the fact that my friend from Oropouche seems to have gone home. [*Interruption*] He has not gone home? That is good to know.

Mr. Speaker, let me first of all thank my colleague from Diego Martin East for points raised in the debate, because I wondered what exactly was on the Member for Oropouche’s mind. The Member attempted to chastise the Government for

coming here midweek stating that we wanted to debate these matters, as they were required for the CSME, and that we had a deadline. I think it is well-known that we put on the table that we see Trinidad and Tobago as the leader in Caricom and that three countries had established February 19. First of all, it was in January and was postponed to February 19, not by Trinidad and Tobago. We said, "Fine, we want to meet the deadline; we want to have everything ready." I do not think anything is wrong with that. I thought that we ought to have been congratulated on taking that stand, showing leadership in Caricom; that is our quest. When we adjourned the House on Friday, that was still our position.

I think most Members would know, by now, that the filing of the three countries will not now occur on February 19, because of the setback experienced by Jamaica with respect to their CCJ legislation. The way upward is never smooth; it is never straight; there are ups and downs. My colleague spoke about the European Union. One can look at the Free Trade Area of the Americas; one can look at the World Trade Organization (WTO). We were in Cancun and the meeting had to be aborted. We are expecting to go to Hong Kong in December; nobody knows what is going to happen. One talks about the meeting in July in Geneva; I am saying, "Look, we now have a framework to go forward, but who knows." The FTAA was supposed to come on stream on January 01, 2005; today, we are not sure if it going to 2006, 2008 or 2020; that is the reality. It is never smooth upwards. As professor has told us often: It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive. That is what we are doing.

When we adjourned on Friday, the intention of the Government was to debate the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill as well as this one before us, not in any particular order; we were going to do both pieces of legislation. Because of the fact that February 19, 2005 is no longer a deadline, then one is more relaxed; if one has other priorities, then we meet those priorities. There is no big magic about it. The Minister who is responsible for piloting the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill has another extremely important engagement and because the constraint is now relaxed, we can do that Bill on Friday. I do not know what magic there is to that.

My colleague has already dealt with the whole issue of the Metrology Bill. I would simply want to add that, in fact, as you know, that Bill is coming into force by proclamation. We are putting things in place; the public relations campaign will start soon. I think that is a valid point. I will give the Member that—I think we need to communicate what we are doing in these areas, whether it is metrology, the CCJ and so on. We need to do more of that, but when we do it, we are criticized, because they say our pictures are in the newspapers. We will try to

communicate without the picture; that is no problem. I think that is a valid point and we will take that on board. I do not have a difficulty with that.

Postponement of the CSME—I have made the point that it happens from time to time; we have setbacks, but we have to travel hopefully. How much will it cost? The budget for CROSQ is estimated to cost \$170,000 annually and, of course, all eleven countries will contribute to that. I made the point that what is most important from where I sit is: What are the benefits to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago? First of all, one needs to see that Trinidad and Tobago, as one of the more advanced countries within Caricom, in terms of the Bureau of Standards and so on, can now advance standards already accepted here in Trinidad and Tobago for acceptance within Caricom by CROSQ. Given that these standards are accepted, then it means that manufacturers will have it easier to export their products to other Caricom Member States. That is one of the first obvious benefits.

Given that there are now eleven standards bureaus working in harmony, as it were, then the work can be shared. There are areas of specialization. For example, the Jamaica Bureau of Standards is very good in particular areas. It has developed expertise in managing and implementing food standards, so they will take the lead in that area. Whereas, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, we have developed some expertise in certification, we will take the lead in that area; a type of sharing of the work for the benefit of all of us.

Then, of course, there is the training aspect, to which I alluded to earlier on. Our Bureau of Standards has been doing quite a lot of work in that area. Last year, for example, in 2004, the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards ran a general programme and had some 22 participants from 11 member states, building capacity in the region. This year, already, we have had nine participants from seven members States and the course looked at systems and product certification. Of course, the Bureau of Standards would normally access external funding for these programmes.

As was said before, a common approach to the CSME is necessary in areas of exporting from outside regions, because you do not want a situation where a product from a Third State is rejected in Trinidad and Tobago, but is accepted, let us say, in Jamaica. There must be some kind of uniformity across the board.

There is the issue of external standardizing agencies such as the International Standards Organization (ISO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

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Since most of the smaller islands, because of financial constraints, cannot access resources from these organizations, CROSQ, as a body, can represent all of Caricom and associate members, thus making possible what would be impossible otherwise. There is, therefore, a clear benefit that as we move to the CSME, we have these institutions in place.

Mr. Speaker, the Member went on, of course, on other issues. For example, he thought that we ought to debate foreign policy. I attempted to counsel my younger colleague that if he feels debate is necessary in that area, as a Member opposite, all he needs to do is draft an appropriate motion for Private Members' Day. [*Crosstalk*] It qualifies after 12 days. We will be happy to engage him, or any Member on that side, on the issue of foreign policy.

Then he wanted to know the cost of all Caricom support programmes. Again, if the Member wants that information, all he needs to do is file a question and we will entertain it. He attempted to advise us, lastly, about using our programmes; in other words, tying trade to aid, the old colonial way. We came from that imperialist system into this new world, looking forward; we are now being counseled to go back to that imperialist way. We will have none of it. Genuinely, we want to build capacity within the region. We know that it is enlightened self-interest, to the extent that we build capacity without the direct tie of trade to aid. The trade is going to come, because if you build capacity, where Trinidad and Tobago already dominates Caricom trade, we must, of necessity, benefit. I do not think there were any other issues raised by the Member.

I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Clauses 1 to 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill

Schedule 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.

Adjournment

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ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now adjourned to Friday, February 19, 2005 at 1.30 p.m. I inform my colleagues that on that day the Government will continue debate on the Anti-Terrorism Bill, which we were debating last Friday, as well as do the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill, which was to be done today.

Mr. Speaker: There was a matter on the adjournment. Have you agreed on that? [*Interruption*] Okay.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 3.22 p.m.