HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 27, 2006

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 following Members requesting leave of absence from today's sitting of the House: Mr. Kelvin Ramnath, Member for Couva South; Mr. Subhas Panday, Member for Princes Town; Mr. Harry Partap, Member for Nariva, and Mr. Gerald Yetming, Member for St. Joseph. The leave which the hon. Members seek is granted.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation for the year ended September 30, 2003. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]

   To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

2. Report of the Public Service Commission for the period January 01, 2004 to December 31, 2004. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

Debe Health Centre
(Construction of)

6. Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

(a) Could the Minister indicate when construction of the new Debe Health Centre will commence and when the project is scheduled to be completed?

(b) Could the Minister also indicate the estimated cost and selected location for the new Debe Health Centre?

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Rahael): Mr. Speaker, in response to question No. 6 (a), the construction of the Debe Health Centre is scheduled to commence by the end of March 2006 and is expected to be completed by December 2006.

With respect to part (b), the construction of the Debe Health Centre is estimated at $3.140 million and the centre shall be constructed on the current site. At present, the contractors are preparing a facility located at SS Erin Road to accommodate a temporary Debe Health Centre during construction of the new one which began in February 2006.

Dr. Moonilal: As of today, March 27, 2006, there is absolutely no sign of activity at the Debe Health Centre.

Hon. J. Rahael: As I said, Mr. Speaker, it is by the end of this month construction is to start.

CONSTITUTION (AMDT.) BILL

[Second Day]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the House will now go into committee to continue the clause by clause examination of a Bill to amend the Constitution to reform the Police Service Commission, confer powers on the Commissioner of Police to control and manage the police service and for other related matters.

Hon. Members, you have all been circulated with the amendments to the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill.

The committee of the whole House resumed its deliberations on the Bill.

[Chairman: Mr. Sinanan]

Clause 4 reintroduced.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, there is an amendment which has been circulated, so I propose that clause 4 be amended as per the circulated amendment as follows:

4 A. Delete the words "The Constitution is amended in section 122—

(a) by repealing subsection (2) and substituting the following new subsections:" and substitute the words:

"The Constitution is amended in section 122 by repealing subsections (2), (3) and (4) and substituting the following subsections:"

B. In the proposed section 122—

(a) in subsection (3) delete the word "may" and substitute the word "shall", and delete the word "to" and substitute the words "as members of";

(b) delete subsections (4) and (5) and substitute the following:

"(4) The President shall issue a Notification in respect of each person nominated for appointment under subsection (3) and the Notification shall be subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Representatives.

(5) The President shall make an appointment under this section only after the House of Representatives has approved the Notification in respect of the relevant office."; and

(c) insert after the proposed subsection (6), the following:

"(7) The members of the Police Service Commission shall hold office in accordance with section 126, other than subsections (4) and (5)."

C. Delete paragraphs (b) and (c).

Question put and agreed to.

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

Clause 5 reintroduced.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, there is an amendment per the circulated clause 5 which reads as follows:

5 In the proposed section 122A—

(a) in subsection (1)(b), delete the word "charge" and substitute the word "offence"; and

(b) in subsection (3) delete the word "may" and substitute the word "shall".

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman: Mrs. Bissessar, do you want to revisit clause 5?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Yes, please.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 5 recommitted.

Question again proposed, That clause 5 stand part of the Bill.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Subsection (3) of the original Bill circulated states that a member of the Police Service Commission may not be removed from office except in accordance with this section. I am saying that is contrary to 126(5) which says that a member may be moved only in accordance with clause 126(5). So now, we are having a 122A which says you must only remove here, and then there is 126(5) which says you can only remove in accordance with 126(5), so they are contradictory. They are both giving exclusive jurisdiction under that clause and that cannot happen, you cannot have two clauses giving exclusive jurisdictions for removal.

Mr. Jeremie: If you look at clause 4 which was approved—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: The new clause 4?

Mr. Jeremie: The amendment to clause 4 in clause 4(c)(7) which is:

"(c) insert after the proposed subsection (6), the following: (7)…"

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: So you have dealt with it?

Mr. Jeremie: Yes.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 5 again ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 6 reintroduced.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, there is an amendment that is circulated and the drafting changes to paragraphs (b), (d) and (e) in section 123(1) are necessary to facilitate the introduction of the new paragraph (f).

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Do you have to put the amendment first and then I speak?

Mr. Jeremie: No.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I am looking at clause 6B (2) at the end which says:

"…criteria and procedure prescribed by Order of the President."

There was a draft order with which we had serious problems and I think that is to be revised.

Mr. Jeremie: Yes.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I would ask for this Order to be subject to negative resolution so we would have sight of it before you actually put it into effect.

Mr. Jeremie: Yes, that was a point raised in the debate and although there was no expressed reply, we readily agreed to that.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: So it would be amended as follows:

Insert after the word "President", the words "subject to negative resolution".

Mr. Chairman: She is proposing that you further amend the clause by adding the words "subject to negative resolution".

Mr. Jeremie: Which clause is this?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: It is clause 6B (2) on page 3.

Mr. Jeremie: Yes, we agree to that. Clause 6 is amended as circulated and further amended in 6B. (2) by inserting the words "subject to negative resolution of Parliament" after the word "President". It reads:

6 A. In the proposed section 123(1)—

(a) in paragraphs (b) and (d), delete the word "and";

(b) in paragraph (e), delete the full stop and substitute the words "; and"; and

(c) insert after paragraph (e), the following:

"(f) hear and determine appeals from decisions of the Commissioner of Police, or of any person to whom the powers of the Commissioner of Police have been delegated, as a result of disciplinary proceedings brought against a police officer appointed by the Commissioner of Police."

B. In the proposed section 123, delete subsections (2) and (3) and substitute the following:

"(2) The Police Service Commission shall nominate persons for appointment to the offices stated in subsection (1)(a) and section 22(1) of the Police Service Act, 2006 in accordance with the criteria and procedure prescribed by Order of the President subject to negative resolution of Parliament.

(3) The Police Service Commission shall submit to the President, a list of the names of the persons nominated for appointment to the offices of Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of Police."

C. In the proposed section 123(4), delete the words "The President may issue a Notification containing the names of the persons selected to be appointed as the Commissioner or a Deputy Commissioner of Police" and substitute the words "The President shall issue a Notification in respect of each person nominated under subsection (3)".

D. In the proposed section 123(5), insert after the words "approves the Notification", the words "in respect of the relevant office".

E. In the proposed section 123(8)(a), delete the word "fourteen" and substitute the word "seven".

F. In the proposed section 123, insert after subsection (9), the following:

"(10) Notwithstanding section 132, no appeal shall lie to the Public Service Appeal Board in respect of a decision made by the Police Service Commission under this section."

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I wish to speak on clause 6B(3) on the same page please. I am sorry; I did not realize you were going to put the amendment. Just for clarification, through you, Mr. Chairman to the Attorney General.

Concerns were raised about the submission of the list to the President and then to be laid here. Have you dealt with that? It says:

"(3) The Police Service Commission shall submit to the President, a list of the names…"

But some concerns had been raised by persons on this side about whether the submission to the President was the proper channel. I just need it for the record because I am of the view it is a proper submission to go through the President, but there were concerns raised by persons who spoke on this side.

Mr. Chairman: I think that was addressed.

Mr. Jeremie: We felt as a matter of policy if it is not the President, it would have to be a political figure and we felt it would be better off coming from the President. So that was one we did not take on board, but we agreed to make the power mandatory instead of discretionary.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Yes, it is of discretion. Do we have it anywhere that it will be laid in the Parliament?

Mr. Jeremie: What is that, the notification?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: The list of names.

Mr. Jeremie: It has to come to the Parliament; it is subject to affirmative resolution.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Can you point me to where that is?

Mr. Valley: It is in the Bill.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I need to see it.

Mr. Jeremie: It says:

> "The President shall issue a Notification…"

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: You see, with the amendments, things have been taken out and added, so I need you to point me to it.

Mr. Jeremie: It is clause 6C 123(4) on page 4. It says:

> "The President shall issue a Notification in respect of each person nominated under subsection (3)".

And the Notification shall be subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Representatives.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Where is that in here?

Mr. Valley: You are looking at the amendments. You have to look at the original Bill.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: No, you need to look at both.

Mr. Jeremie: What are you looking at?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I am looking at both. So you tell me where to find it.

Mr. Jeremie: It is on page 2 of the amendments and on page 8 of the Bill. Sorry, it is on page 4 of the amendments,.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Okay.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 7 reintroduced.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that clause 7 be amended as circulated. It reads:

> In the proposed section 123A(3), after the words "any police officer" insert the words "not below the rank of Superintendent".

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 8 and 9 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 10.

Question proposed, That clause 10 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that clause 10 be deleted.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 10 deleted.

Clause 11.

Question proposed, That clause 11 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that clause 11 be renumbered as clause 10.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 11, renumbered clause 10, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Before you put the entire Bill, I want some clarification. Is the Police Service Regulations mentioned in the Police Bill or in here?

Mr. Jeremie: It is mentioned in the Bill.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I had asked for an amendment there, but I do not see it, when we get there we will deal with it.

Clause 12.

Question proposed, That clause 12 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that clause 12 be renumbered as clause 11.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that renumbered clause 11 be amended to read as follows:

Renumbered 11 A. In the proposed section 11(2)—

(a) delete the words "as the case may be," where it first occurs;

(b) after the words "Police Service Commission" delete the words "appointed under section 122(1)"; and

(c) after the words "as the case may" delete the word "be" and substitute the word "require".

B. In the proposed section 11 insert after subsection (2), the following:

"(3) Any appeal filed by a police officer and pending before the Public Service Appeal Board at the commencement of this Act shall be heard and determined by the Board after the commencement of this Act as though this Act had not been passed."

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 12, renumbered clause 11, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Preamble ordered to stand part of the Bill.

House resumed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the third time.

The House voted : Ayes 30

AYES

Valley, Hon. K.

Manning, Hon. P.

Rowley, Hon. Dr. K.

Imbert, Hon. C.

Narine, Hon. J.

Boynes, Hon. R.

Beckles, Hon. P.

Rahael, Hon. J.

Roberts, Hon. A.

Bereaux, H.

James, Hon. E.

Hart, Hon. E.

Callender, Hon. S.

Seukeran, Hon. D.

Job-Davis, Hon. E.

Hinds, Hon. F.

Khan, F.

Achong, L.

Williams, E.

Singh, G.

Dookeran, W.

Persad-Bissessar, Mrs. K.

Ramsaran, M.

Rafeeq, Dr. H.

Sharma, C.

Nanan, Dr. A.

Baksh, N.

Moonilal, Dr. R.

Khan, Dr. F.

Lucky, Miss G.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

2.00 p.m.

POLICE SERVICE BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to consolidate, amend and revise the law relating to the Police Service, to ensure efficient management of the Service and to provide that the principles of equity and meritocracy shall be applied at all times and for other related matters, be now read a second time.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Clauses 1 to 22 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 23.

Question proposed, That clause 23 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, there is an amendment which has been circulated and it reads as follows:

A. Renumber as section 23(1)

B. Insert after the renumbered section 23(1), the following new subsection:

"(2) An appeal shall lie to the Commission from any decision of the Commissioner, or of any person to whom the powers of the Commissioner have been delegated, as a result of disciplinary proceedings brought against a police officer appointed by the Commissioner."

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: The amendment does not appear to make sense with the whole format of the new legislation. What you are doing here is giving an appeal to the commission from any decisions of the commissioner or to any delegate of the commissioner who makes a decision. But when we did the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill which is now enacted, the commission was only responsible for the offices of commissioner and deputy commissioners. There was no responsibility given for those persons below that rank, so that I do not know how you can appeal the decision of the commissioner to the commission. Would you explain that?

Mr. Jeremie: We did an amendment, which we discussed on the last occasion, to give them jurisdiction to hear appeals, so that is now part of the law—123(1). In other words, remember the discussion that we had about self-containing the Police Service Commission and doing away with the Public Service Appeal Board, that has now become law.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I will take your word for it. I know we had lengthy discussions on that particular section. I saw you had deleted it.

Mr. Jeremie: Say that again?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: There was a section I had concerns with and you deleted it because I said it did not apply, but you are saying that you have inserted a power for the commission to hear appeals.

Mr. Jeremie: What we did was to create a separate power in the commission to hear appeals.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I take your word for it. I do not recall it.

Mr. Jeremie: It is there. It is at section 123(1)(f).

Mrs. Persad-Bissesser: But it would be as amended and I do not have that amendment.

Mr. Jeremie: It is there in the list of amendments.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: In the new amendments or the old amendments? Is it the amendments today or the ones from the last day?

Mr. Jeremie: It is on page 3 of the amendments.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Today's amendments or last day's amendments?

Sen. Jeremie: That last day's amendments.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: I take your word for it, Attorney General. It is just out of an abundance of caution I wanted to see where it came from. If you say it is there, I take your word for it.

Mr. Manning: And if we err we will correct it.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Certainly.

Mr. Manning: There is no malice. That is the point.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: No, there is no malice. I just want to be sure we are doing the right thing.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 23, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 24 to 63 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 64.

Question proposed, That clause 64 stand part of the Bill.

Miss Lucky: Mr. Chairman, might I ask the House to consider in clause 64 where it deals with the right to prosecute police cases, that in the second line where it states "any police officer", we put a restriction? I am aware that clause 64 is no different to what exists now in the Police Service Act, in that there is no restriction that is placed upon a police officer who is acting in the capacity as a police prosecutor. However, as a healthy compromise, it is respectfully submitted for consideration that we do, in fact, put a restriction in the statute which, actually, to some degree in the most part obtains now, and that is, instead of leaving it as "any police officer", meaning that a police constable could conduct a prosecution, that we put "any police officer not below the rank of sergeant". There is a lot that will be gained from doing that; it is not going to upset the apple cart in any way. It would mean, especially in remote jurisdictions, there would be a greater level of transparency and accountability, and also in terms of competence and experience coming from the police prosecutors.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. Chairman, I would like to support that. From my own practice and your own, in the Magistrates' Courts you have persons below the rank of sergeant and you do have a lot of difficulties. In fact, we should not even have police officers prosecuting; we should, in fact, have attorneys, but for

the time being, whilst we get our house in order I would support the proposed amendment.

Mr. Chairman: Where it appears secondly or firstly?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Where it says, "any police officer" in the second line, insert "not below the rank of sergeant".

Miss Lucky: So it means from a sergeant up.

Mr. Jeremie: I am told that the drafts people would prefer "of or above the rank of sergeant".

Miss Lucky: And we go with what is considered to be the correct language.

Mr. Jeremie: Thank you for that.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 64, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 65 to 75 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 76.

Question proposed, That clause 76 stand part of the Bill.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: This relates to, "Grant of one month's salary to next of kin of a deceased police officer". It says that, "When a police officer dies the Minister shall order that a month's salary of the officer" be paid to his children, spouse and so on. I would like to suggest three months' salary, please.

Mr. Hinds: I would like to suggest six.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Six would be fine, but we will give them three months and then they will have the other—

Mr. Jeremie: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we are in agreement with that.

Mr. Chairman: The amendment reads as follows:

> Clause 76 be amended by inserting in the first line after the word "that", the word "three" and in the second line delete the apostrophe in "month's".

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 76, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 77 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 78.

Question proposed, That clause 78 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Jeremie: Mr. Chairman, there is an amendment which has been circulated and it reads as follows:

A. Renumber section 78(1) as section 78.

B. Delete subsection (2).

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. Chairman, we had raised concerns with clause 78 and I guess this amendment is an effort to deal with those concerns, but it does not fully deal with my concern. I had asked for a time frame within which the old regulations would continue to operate. So you have deleted that. You are saying, okay, you are not operating with the old regulations at all, but I would still like those regulations to come to the Parliament. I would like to ask then that the new regulations be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament, and I will tell you why. In all our consultations with stakeholders within the police service and outside, the regulations were seen as a major—

Mr. Jeremie: Of the House?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Yes, of the House. The Senators are very upset you do not want to take things there. I hope you plan in your Constitution reform to abolish the Senate. Maybe that is your plan.

Mr. Jeremie: We apologize to them.

Mr. Persad-Bissessar: We are agreeing, Mr. Chairman, so I do not have to justify. It is basically that the regulations are so outdated. I do not want to leave it in the hands of the Executive alone. So we are asking in clause 78, line one:

"The President may make regulations subject to the affirmative resolution of the House of Representatives…"

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 78, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 79 and 80 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

First to Fifth Schedules ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

House resumed.

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

POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to establish an independent body to investigate criminal offences involving police officers, police corruption and serious police misconduct and for other related matters, be now read a second time.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Clauses 1 to 53 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.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the third time.

The House voted: Ayes: 29

AYES

Valley, Hon. K.

Manning, Hon. P.

Rowley, Hon. Dr. K.

Imbert, Hon. C.

Narine, Hon. J.

Boynes, Hon. R.

Beckles, Hon. P.

Rahael, Hon. J.

Roberts, Hon. A.

Bereaux, H.

James, Hon. E.

Hart, Hon. E.

Callender, Hon. S.

Seukeran, Hon. D.

Job-Davis, Hon. E.

Hinds, Hon. F.

Khan, F.

Achong, L.

Williams, E.

Singh, G.

Dookeran, W.

Persad-Bissessar, Mrs. K.

Ramsaran, M.

Rafeeq, Dr. H.

Sharma, C.

Nanan, Dr. A.

Moonilal, Dr. R.

Khan, Dr. F.

Lucky, Miss G.

Question agreed to.

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

APPRECIATION OF SUPPORT

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning): Mr. Speaker, I consider this a very historic moment in the life of this Parliament. I have been here for a number of years and I have seen all kinds of legislation passed here of significant import to the lives of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but this package which this House has just approved I consider really to be landmark legislation and a major step forward in the fight of Trinidad and Tobago against the criminal elements among us.

2.30 p.m.

As we had said before, there are a number of countries in the region that find themselves in similar circumstances and are looking very closely to see what Trinidad and Tobago would do in this regard. Now that this legislation has been passed, I have no doubt that there are other countries in the region that would wish to emulate the example that is now being set here.

This country owes a debt of gratitude on this matter to Sir Ellis Clarke and the team of technocrats whom he led from Trinidad and Tobago, the region and the United Kingdom. It was a dedicated group of technocrats who sat for long hours and hammered out an arrangement which this evening was the subject of approval of hon. Members.

I thank and congratulate my honourable colleagues opposite for sitting with us and arriving at modifications to the initial proposals that could meet with the approbation of hon. Members on both sides. It is a historic day and while we would not expect that there would be a change in the crime situation tomorrow, what this certainly does, it sets the stage for better arrangements in the future and a police service in which the national community can have more confidence and levels of crime that would be more consistent with the national aspirations of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Permit me also to thank hon. Members on this side, my colleagues for having been so patient in this matter and lending their support to this historic legislation.

Thank you.

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (*Siparia*): Mr. Speaker, the exercise has been a very long one. We thank those on the other side and our side for some very novel and innovative ideas that have come forward. I know we have asked that the model we have put here—the Prime Minister is now saying—may pave the way for other Caricom nations. The policy framework within the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill should be looked at with respect to other institutions within Trinidad and Tobago.

Equally important as putting measures in place which may help with the crime situation in the country and what we look forward to, the Prime Minister has put on the front burner, that is equal opportunity legislation. However, whilst we record that we have completed; done a lot of work and all those who have assisted, at the end of the day, it is the implementation. It would not be easy. I ask the hon. Prime Minister to put a dedicated committee in place to oversee the

implementation. If it sits there it is not going to happen. The police service and the commissioner are very busy. For this to work it is the implementation. I request respectfully, that a dedicated committee be set up for implementation of the legislation.

Thank you.

Hon. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, in agreeing in principle to the proposal that has been advanced by the very distinguished Member for Siparia, let me also place on the record our profound gratitude to our technocrats in Trinidad and Tobago, especially the people from the Office of the Attorney General [*Desk thumping*] who worked so hard and tirelessly on this important package of legislation and who are here today with us.

Thank you.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, we have another matter to complete before we adjourn. Could you suspend for five minutes, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the sitting of the House is suspended for five minutes and we would resume at 2.45 p.m.

2.35 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

2.45 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to consultation, I beg to move that this House be adjourned to Friday, April 07, 2006 at 1.30 p.m.

I wish to inform my colleagues that that day would be Private Members' Day. Perhaps, the Opposition Chief Whip would want to inform us of the matter to be discussed on that day.

Mr. Ganga Singh (*Caroni East*): Mr. Speaker, it augurs a new beginning. After consultation with the Leader of Government Business, we decided not to spoil the historic moment with any kind of partisan debate emerging later in the evening.

I merely want to indicate that on Private Members' Day we would be dealing with the motion that deals with the allegations made by Vernon Paul.

Hon. Valley: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that there will be no accusations on that day.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 3.47 p.m.