

*Leave of Absence**Wednesday, March 07, 2007***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Wednesday, March 07, 2007*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the Member for St. Joseph requesting leave of absence from today's sitting. The request made by the Member is granted.

**DEFINITE URGENT MATTER****(LEAVE)****Administration of Justice****(Critical State of)**

**Mr. Subhas Panday** (*Princes Town*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. In accordance with Standing Order 12 of the House of Representatives, I hereby seek your leave to move the adjournment of the House at today's sitting Wednesday, March 07, 2007 for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the current critical state of the administration of justice in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

The matter is definite because it pertains to a specific matter which occurred on Monday, March 05, 2007 at the Fourth Magistrates' Court, Port of Spain before Her Worship Magistrate Lee King, in the matter of The Police vs. the Chief Justice, Mr. Satnarine Sharma. In this matter, the main witness for the prosecution, who had already given evidence in chief, by way of a written statement, under the Paper Committal Procedure of the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Act, as amended, refused to continue giving his evidence, by submitting himself for cross-examination, in order to test the truth of his evidence in chief.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Shame. Shame on you!

**Mr. S. Panday:** He did so without giving the court reasons for his failure to testify, thereby bringing—

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the conduct of a judicial officer—  
[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Partap:** Sit down! [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Please. *[Interruption]* *[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. S. Panday:** I am speaking about a witness; I am not talking about—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, first, let me say this. Today is Wednesday and we are all here to have some other work done. I really do not want to tolerate shouting on both sides of the House.

The hon. Member for Diego Martin West is getting up to make a query. Allow him to do it and I will deal with that. I have already sought to truncate the statements—*[Interruption]* Hon. Member for Princes Town, please—submitted by the hon. Member for Princes Town, substantially. Hon. Member, if you have a point to make, there has to be a line drawn between what is acceptable and what is not. Hon. Member, make your point.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I crave your indulgence, and I am not in any way seeking to interfere with the Member's right to raise his Motion, but I am simply drawing to your attention that the conduct of a judicial officer is in violation of 36(10) where it simply says that the conduct of any judicial officer requires a substantive Motion.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Rubbish!

**Dr. Rowley:** That is all I am drawing to your attention. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Member for Princes Town, please, go ahead. *[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. S. Panday:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am a lawyer—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I did not ask you that.

**Mr. S. Panday:**— and I want to let my friend know that I know the law.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Take your seat, please.

**Mr. Ramnath:** What are you getting so excited about? *[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The point I am making is this—

**Mr. Ramnath:** You are not afraid of anything. You have no respect for the Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, please, let us not go there. Let the Member for Princes Town continue what he is doing. Hon. Member for Princes Town, do not go off course. I have particularly tried to give you as much latitude as I can without allowing you to break the Standing Order. Continue.

*Definite Urgent Matter (Leave)*

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**Mr. S. Panday:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you very much for the legal luminary mind you are. The matter is definite because it pertains to a specific matter—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Please, that is not where you were. Go back to the point at which you were.

**Mr. S. Panday:** It was a phrase.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, it was not. I know exactly where you stopped. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Ramnath:** You know, they are trying to intimidate you.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, can you kindly assist me with where I was?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Where were you? *[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** At “Paper Committals”.

**Mr. S. Panday:**—who had already given evidence in chief by way of written statement under the Paper Committal Procedure of the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Act, as amended, refused to continue giving his evidence, by submitting himself for cross-examination, in order to test the truth of his evidence in chief. He did so without giving the court reasons for his failure to testify, thereby bringing the administration of justice into disrepute. *[Desk thumping]*

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Chairman, I rise under 36(10), the conduct of a judicial officer—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Ramnath:** You cannot rise.

**Hon. Member:** Shut up.

**Dr. Rowley:** I am a Member of this House and I will have my say. *[Interruption]* *[Crosstalk]* Mr. Deputy Speaker, the conduct of a judicial officer is being brought into question. *[Desk thumping]* *[Interruption]* The Standing Order is very clear to all of us in this House.

**Mr. Ramnath:** You cannot overrule the Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Singh:** Exactly! *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Ramnath:** Go and overrule the Prime Minister, not the Deputy Speaker. *[Crosstalk]*

**Dr. Rowley:** Please, on 36(10).

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I will.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Why are you so afraid of—

**Dr. Rowley:** I am not afraid of anything, I am supporting—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** He is a witness; not a judicial officer.

**Mr. Singh:** Exactly, that capacity is different.

**Dr. Rowley:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Go ahead? You all are destroying the country and “mashing up” the Judiciary.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I can only admit to making a mistake, but the relevant Standing Order is:

“The conduct of the Governor, Members of the Senate or the House of Representatives or of judges or other persons engaged in the administration of justice shall not be raised except upon a substantive motion moved for the purpose; and in any amendment, question to a Minister, or debate on a motion dealing with any other subject any reference to the conduct of any such person as aforesaid shall be out of order.”

With the greatest respect, I do not believe that the conduct on that particular instance is applicable here. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. S. Panday:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The matter is urgent because of the high profile nature of the case and of the protagonists involved in this matter.

The events which have transpired in this matter have not only caused the apparent collapse in the criminal justice system, but the public’s loss of confidence in the administration of justice. [*Desk thumping*]

There are serious criminal matters pending before our courts and they may have to go the way of this matter. Many victims and the public as a whole would suffer a travesty of justice and the administration of justice would therefore appear to be a farce.

The matter is of public importance because it concerns the undermining of the most important pillars of a democracy and a civilized society. [*Desk thumping*]

The rule of law must be jealously guarded and Parliament must take steps to ensure same. [*Desk thumping*]

*Definite Urgent Matter (Leave)*

*Wednesday, March 07, 2007*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, judges have rightly so jailed members of the public including a female for failing to give evidence, not continue to give evidence in a matter—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Please, that is not within this part. You said “not continue to give evidence—”

**Mr. S. Panday:**—after they have given what appears to be cogent and compelling reasons for not doing so. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the one you typed over there are one or two typographical errors which I am trying to fix. Now, witnesses may refuse to give evidence and the court may be unable to impose sanctions on them—[*Desk thumping*—]by refusing to testify without obtaining the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He has shown total disrespect and disregard for one of most important offices in the administration of justice as enshrined in the Constitution. [*Desk thumping*]

The Parliament has utilized a great deal of parliamentary time in debating and passing stringent laws to strengthen the administration of justice and to speed up the justice system. This event has made a mockery of the Parliament and the judicial system. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you very much, the other pages, you truncated them. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member, I have listened carefully and I have read it carefully, but your Motion does not qualify.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much, and the people of Trinidad and Tobago will decide.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member for Princes Town, I said I agonized over it and I read a statement made by a former Speaker, Mr. Hector Mc Clean when I was at the end of that, trying to move a similar Motion like yourself. So, please, the people of Trinidad and Tobago will always be here. You are not entitled to comment after me. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. S. Panday:** I am not going to take off my jacket.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER**

**Chief Justice**

**(Steps Being Taken)**

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, sorry, I was anticipating the Clerk a few minutes ago. Mr.

*Statement By Minister*  
[HON. P. MANNING]

*Wednesday, March 07, 2007*

Deputy Speaker, on May 12, 2006, I informed this honourable House of the steps I had taken in contemplation of the exercise of my powers under section 137 of the Constitution to represent to his Excellency the President that the question of removing the Chief Justice from office ought to be investigated. On that occasion, I informed this honourable House as follows:

That on Friday May 05, 2006, I received correspondence from the Chief Magistrate making certain allegations against the Chief Justice.

That on the same day I informed His Excellency the President of the correspondence which I had in my possession.

That on May 08, 2006, I met with the Chief Justice and informed him of the complaint made by the Chief Magistrate against him.

That on May 10, 2006, I informed the Chief Justice of my intention to invoke section 137 of the Constitution.

That I had not yet formally written to the Chief Justice asking for his response, but I had asked my legal advisers to write to the Chief Magistrate seeking further particulars of his statement.

As it happened, the Chief Magistrate provided my lawyers with a further written statement on May 11, 2006. My lawyers had also written to the hon. Attorney General on May 12, 2006 asking that he provide any information he had concerning the allegations made by the Chief Magistrate. However, that process had to be interrupted because on May 12, 2006, the Chief Justice brought judicial review proceedings against my decision to commence consideration of my powers under section 137 of the Constitution and a High Court judge had ordered that I take no further steps in the meantime.

As it transpired, the Chief Justice withdrew those proceedings in September 2006 and the stay was accordingly lifted. However, there were then pending before the Privy Council, proceedings in which the Chief Justice was challenging the commencement of related criminal proceedings which had been brought against him by the police.

Accordingly, nothing further was done under section 137 until the Privy Council delivered its decision on November 30, 2006.

On December 06, 2006, my lawyers wrote to the Attorney General asking him to provide the statement which had been previously requested. That statement was provided on February 12, 2007.

*Statement By Minister*

*Wednesday, March 07, 2007*

On February 13, 2007, my lawyers requested from the Director of Public Prosecutions, copies of statements made by Sir Timothy Cassel Q.C. in relation to the matter which engaged my attention and those were received on February 15, 2007.

On February 21, 2007, I wrote to the Chief Justice attaching all of the statements which I had received and his reply is due today March 07, 2007.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was with great surprise that I read in the newspaper that on Monday, March 05, 2007—

**Mr. Ramnath:** Shame.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Panday:** We do not believe that.

**Hon. P. Manning:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, could I?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon. P. Manning:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Please, hon. Members, if you have something to say, when you get an opportunity you can say it. Allow the hon. Prime Minister to continue.

**Hon. P. Manning:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was with great surprise that I read in the newspaper that on Monday, March 05, 2007, the criminal proceedings against the Chief Justice were discontinued. I was naturally concerned about the impact which these developments may have on the exercise of my powers under section 137.

Accordingly, today I have written to the Chief Magistrate asking whether he had intended to give evidence before any tribunal set up under section 137, in the event that I were to decide that the question of removing the Chief Justice from office ought to be investigated. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Chief Magistrate is not minded to give such evidence, this will clearly influence the decision I have to make. For similar reasons, I have also written to the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions asking for an account of the circumstances and reasons which led to her decision to discontinue proceedings against the Chief Justice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have in the past, it is my intention to act in this matter with scrupulous attention to fairness and the requirements of the rule of law. [*Interruption*]

*Statement By Minister*

*Wednesday, March 07, 2007*

**Mr. Panday:** Vindictiveness.

**Hon. P. Manning:** I will make a further statement to this honourable House as matters progress.

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

#### **SECURITY ASSISTANCE (CARICOM) BILL**

Bill to provide for the implementation of the Treaty on Security Assistance among Caricom Member States and for matters connected therewith [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

*Motion made,* That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph*]

#### **VISITING FORCES BILL**

Bill to provide for the presence, activities, privileges and immunities of members of visiting forces and for matters connected therewith [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

*Motion made,* That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph*]

#### **VISITING POLICE FORCES BILL**

Bill to provide for the presence, activities, privileges and immunities of members of visiting police forces and civilian personnel and for related matters [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

*Motion made,* That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **RELATED BILLS**

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security and Minister of State in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to provide for the implementation of the Treaty on Security Assistance among Caricom Member States and for matters connected therewith, be now read a second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in moving the second reading of this Bill, I seek the leave of this honourable House to debate along with this Bill the other two Bills that are before this House which relate to this subject of debate and they are the Visiting Forces Bill, 2007 and the Visiting Police Forces Bill 2007.

*Assent indicated.*



**SECURITY ASSISTANCE (CARICOM) BILL**

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security and Minister of State in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the treaty on Security Assistance among Caricom Member States is a regional mutual assistance treaty whereby Caricom member States would provide assistance to each other during emergency situations. It has as its objectives:

- “(a) efficient and timely response to and management of natural and man-made disasters in order to reduce and eliminate the harmful consequences thereof;
- (b) expeditious, efficient mobilization and deployment of regional resources in order to manage and defuse national and regional crises and to combat serious crimes;
- (c) combating and elimination of threats to national and regional security, however arising; and
- (d) preservation of the territorial integrity of the Contracting States.”

It provides for cooperation among the contracting parties in these areas. However, while the Treaty represents an agreement to cooperate, including the deployment of military and police personnel by one contracting party in the territory of another, it does not in itself provide the legal basis for such deployment, or for the conditions under which the said personnel would operate in the territory of the other state. Neither does it provide for the protection of such personnel, who are providing a service at the request of the receiving state, in circumstances which are generally going to be extraordinary. Such protection is a principle which is enshrined in international law, and provided for in national legislation wherever there is to be deployment in the territory of another state.

Further, the protocol to the Treaty recognizes the possibility that in certain circumstances and at the invitation of contracting parties, assistance may be required from extra-regional sources.

Two courses of action are therefore necessary:

- (i) enactment of legislation to give the provisions of this Treaty the force of law in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Deputy Speaker, effectively, to incorporate it into our domestic legislation; and
- (ii) enactment of legislation that will provide for the conditions under which visiting forces will operate. In this case, the law which will govern the presence of regional or third party non-regional forces in Trinidad and Tobago.

Enactment of this legislation is taking place in the context of Trinidad and Tobago's role as a Member State of the Caribbean Community and cognizant of the rights and obligations deriving from that status which place us in the position of both beneficiary and benefactor. In this context, the Conference of Heads of Government has, as of February 13, 2007, agreed that Member States should enact such legislation in time for Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007 to provide the appropriate legal basis for certain aspects of the regional security plan for CWC 2007, including the deployment in host venue states of task forces comprising regional security personnel supported by international counterparts having special skills.

While the legislation is required to give effect to the Treaty on security assistance among Caricom Member States and is not exclusive to CWC 2007, it is particularly important to the host venue states and to those who will be providing support to military and law enforcement personnel to those countries which have been identified as deficient in their capacity to execute the agreed regional security plan for the tournament.

Trinidad and Tobago is both a host venue state and a provider of personnel. It is, therefore, in our interest to pass the legislation that is being proposed to this honourable House today and, in so doing, complying with the decision of Heads of Government. In that way, we place ourselves in a stronger position to require similar action in other Member States in the interest of our own military and police personnel who have been and who will be deployed throughout the region for CWC 2007 and beyond that.

One may well ask why only now this legislation has become necessary in the context of a Treaty that is not peculiar to CWC 2007. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ICC CWC 2007 has precipitated an unprecedented level of action in the context of regional security that may otherwise have taken a great deal longer but which is absolutely necessary, quite apart from the tournament, for our own safety and security in a global environment that places us in the middle of dangerous emerging international trends, many of which are not of our own making. It is against this background and on the basis of current threat assessments and international expert advice on security arrangements for global events that the regional security plan for Cricket World Cup 2007 has been formulated with the emphasis on pre-emptive rather than re-active action.

Preparation for the tournament has also seen unprecedented cooperation across the region in the area of security. This has facilitated decision making and, even more importantly, the early implementation of decisions which are in our

own national as well as regional interest. In some cases, it may appear that action is required in a last minute manner but time has always been against us, particularly so in the situation where the tournament is being held across nine sovereign states. Agreement must therefore be reached at the regional level in respect of the implementation of a regional security plan before action can be taken, in harmony with other Caricom Member States, at the national level. Agreement on the substantive legislation, including the acceptance of the models, was only reached in the middle of February of this year; just a couple weeks ago, just in time for our study of same and our shaping it to meet our own domestic circumstances.

It is important to note that Trinidad and Tobago has in the past assisted its neighbours in times of difficulty with military and law enforcement support, all this in an ad hoc manner and without the necessary legislative framework, including that which would guarantee protection for our personnel. We have been lucky so far in that there has been no untoward incident or incidents.

However, there are two considerations among others: the magnitude of the tournament and the fact that international support in the form of personnel with specialist skills has now been committed in respect of the execution of the regional security plan, and has brought into focus the level of liability and the unspeakable international publicity we could face without the required legislative framework should there be an incident involving visiting forces, whether regional or international. Even worse, without the customary legislation, we might not be afforded the required level of international support in those areas in which we are deficient, a situation which has the potential for further adverse consequences for our national and regional security personnel.

Security in the staging of a global event is always a primary concern and must of necessity be addressed from a global perspective. It must also be seen in its broadest sense as comprising, in addition to the obvious, such elements as disaster preparedness, including mass casualty, and public health. Furthermore, the experience of host countries has shown that the international nature of participation and attention requires cross border cooperation no matter what resources a host country might possess. For these reasons, Caricom Governments agreed to the establishment of an International Support and Advisory Group (ISAG), as did the Government of Greece in its security preparations for the 2004 Summer Olympics. Among the countries comprising this Group in 2004 was the United Kingdom, which chaired the group and we have had over the past year, and continue to have, the benefit of two persons who formed part of that 2005 team in the run-up to the Olympics in Greece in that year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of perceived threats, and I want to highlight some of them. The vulnerability and the potential threat to the region in the context of CWC 2007 were articulated by these very experts as follows:

“The attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on 9/11/01 radically changed major international event planning forever. The threat environment has subsequently become even darker with al Qa’da plots and attacks mounted through the Globe. The risk of a mass casualty attack on a world stage sporting event has increased. The responsibility of the host nation—or nations in this case—has proportionately increased.”

There had been no 9/11 when the region bid to host CWC 2007. The advice given was as follows, and I quote:

“The Caribbean needs to work harder to build strong defences. Caribbean governments must work together to make the Region a hostile environment for terrorists in which to operate. Other countries are ready to assist in this work. The Caribbean and its allies must co-operate closely on international intelligence and other forms of information exchange.”

The assistance sought by Caricom Governments is based on security gaps in regional capacity identified through a needs assessment, and the recommendations of the advisory group which has been meeting regularly with Caricom officials to assign responsibility for providing the region with security training, equipment and other logistical support.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to highlight, without getting into details, a number of sporting events where these kinds of security arrangements were implemented, and also to demonstrate en passant that this is not new, and we were not inventing the wheel, but borrowing the experience of our international colleagues, as I indicated earlier, the 2004 Summer Olympics in Greece.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Football World Cup 2006: Security plans for the World Cup included provisions for permanent police, medical, fire and disaster protection deployments in the host cities while outlining contingency plans for possible spontaneous events such as rioting, and unrelated crimes against the person.

The possibility of terrorist attacks was also a concern in areas where large crowds of people would be gathered.

However, the primary focus for the FIFA World Cup of 2006 was football hooliganism and this is where the cross border cooperation was considered to be most needed.

Five hundred police officers from other nations were given powers of arrest in that country with respect to their own nationals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to the United Kingdom, in particular, it was agreed that:

- forty-four uniformed English police officers would be deployed around Germany to work in close cooperation with the German police as part of the English police delegation;
- a small team of German police officers would be deployed at selected airports and ports to work with British police monitoring the departure of English fans;
- British police officers would be deployed in transit countries surrounding Germany to ensure continuity of police information and support;
- a team of four British prosecutors would work with the British police and German police and prosecutors to build packages of evidence that could be used in English courts.

A very thorough kind of operation and, indeed, admirable.

Under German law, uniformed British police officers were working with Federal police at airports and on the transport system which would have the same powers as German police officers.

Another example of where this kind of thing would be implemented is at the Summer Olympics Games which is planned for 2008 in Beijing.

The ICC Cricket World Cup has been touted as the third largest global sporting event since the Summer Olympics and the Football World Cup alluded to earlier. It is expected to attract a viewership in excess of two billion persons. Should it not be treated with the same level of significance?

The purpose of the Status of Forces Agreements and legislation is to give such forces the legal authority to exercise military or police functions in a foreign country, and to stipulate the conditions under which they will provide such services. A number of Status of Forces Agreements have been entered into worldwide between host states and sending states. While many are comprehensive in their provisions, they are but international agreements between states and must be incorporated into domestic or national law in order for them to become effective where in accordance with those constitutions that is necessary.

*Security Assistance (CARICOM) Bill*  
[HON. F. HINDS]

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know, in some countries, the mere agreement at an international level is also incorporation in some states. Others like Trinidad and Tobago require separate action for incorporation.

With respect to the three Bills and their specific provisions, it should be noted that Status of Forces Agreements and the legislation usually deal with military personnel and civilians forming part of their force. In the case of the Treaty on Security Assistance Among CARICOM Member States assistance is also provided for by way of police personnel. This is what makes it different. Usually, this has to do with military personnel and civilian staff that support them but, in this case, we are dealing with police as well. That was necessary because there are some countries in this region that are without armies or defence forces. All they have are police forces, so we had to make that adjustment in order to accommodate them.

There has been a long need to form a coalition between member States of Caricom to manage manmade and natural disasters to the region, and to provide a mechanism whereby the member countries could mobilize and deploy manpower in a structured and methodical approach.

The need to enact legislation to secure the country is now magnified by the creation of the Single Domestic Space for the hosting of the ICC Cricket World Cup, the necessary steps to pass legislation to ensure the safety of all persons within the jurisdiction—I say all persons, including fans, players, citizens and visitors—during this period. This requires an increase in manpower of both police and defence personnel which is not readily available locally.

Further, in the context of CWC 2007, States participating in the tournament have offered police personnel to assist regional law enforcement in the event of any law and order situation where there might be cultural or language difficulties in dealing with their own supporters.

But, ICC CWC 2007 is just one instance where there is need to have foreign police presence. Let us take this opportunity to prepare for foreseen as well as unforeseen events such as natural disasters, and such as that experienced by Indonesia on Tuesday, March 06, 2007.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very difficult to presume for Trinidadians and Tobagonians to appreciate the kind of devastation that some natural disasters caused because, fortunately, we have not experienced the worst excesses of these. But one must never lose sight of the fact that we live in the hurricane belt and we are also very prone to earthquakes as we are positioned very close to shifting

plates on the earth's surface. It is well known that stability of economies in Caricom is delicately intermixed. An event of severe magnitude in one country has a ripple effect throughout the region, not only on the humanitarian level but, certainly, in the financial arena. Ever mindful of this fact, we must make preparations for any eventuality.

Indeed, in the past, personnel from the armed forces together with civilians have been deployed outside of Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, 55 officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force spent three months in Grenada providing assistance for this Caricom neighbour in the wake of the devastation caused by hurricane Ivan. The work of the defence force was saluted and hailed by the hon. Prime Minister of that country, Prime Minister Mitchell as a model for other Caribbean countries.

Therefore, with the intention of promoting a system of regional security, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, being a member of Caricom, has sought to address this deficiency and to enhance the mechanisms by which requests for assistance would be made by one Caricom State to another and, indeed, the way in which the visiting forces would be dealt with when they arrive in the host state. With this intent in mind, the Treaty on Security Assistance Among Caricom Member States was signed by member States at Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis on July 06, 2007.

Recognizing that the Community may also have need on occasion to mobilize forces under a single command in relation to the management of a single incident or event, member States have also signed a protocol to the Treaty on Security Assistance Among Caricom Member States. The protocol which establishes the Caricom Operations, Planning and Co-ordinating Staff (COPACS) allows for the convening and mobilization of resources, at the instance of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in the event of an occurrence in the region requiring regional cooperation.

In order to give effect to this Treaty at the domestic level, the government has prepared, and we now propose the Security Assistance (Caricom) Bill, 2007.

Clause 2 of the Bill proposes to define "Contracting Parties" to be those countries that are signatories to the Treaty; to define "Minister" to be the Minister with responsibility for national security; and to define "Treaty" as to the one that I alluded that was signed in BasseTerre on July 06, 2006.

Clause 4(1) provides for the Minister to amend the Treaty or any protocol by Order.

*Security Assistance (CARICOM) Bill*  
[HON. F. HINDS]

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Clause 4(2) provides that unless otherwise specified, any reference made to the Treaty after an amendment under clause (4)(1), shall be construed as a reference to the Treaty as amended. [*Interruption*] Take your time. Just be patient.

In addition to the Treaty, the presence of foreign forces on Trinidad and Tobago territory requires a special legal basis. A distinction must be drawn between the right of presence and the law governing such presence. The right of presence derives from the required formal consent given by the receiving country to the presence of foreign armed forces within its territory via the Status of Forces Agreement. The law of the receiving country governing their presence includes all legal provisions to which foreign forces are subject while present on Trinidad and Tobago soil.

Two such pieces of legislation are now being proposed before this House for debate and they are: The Visiting Police Forces Bill 2007 to deal with police officers and the Visiting Forces Bill 2007 which is more usual to deal with military personnel.

The content of the legislation was taken from model legislation drafted by the Caricom Legislative Drafting Facility using the Jamaica Visiting Forces Act, No. 20 of 1975 which is quite similar to the UK Visiting Forces Act of 1952, and even more comparable to the Canada Visiting Forces Act of 1985. The process by which such model legislation was agreed upon was a lengthy one because, obviously, the needs, concerns and peculiarities of each sovereign state had to be addressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbados passed their legislation just about a week and a half or two weeks ago. They were the first country in the region to have done it. They were able to get off the mark a little more quickly, because Minister Mia Mottley was part of the team, and during the discussion she was able to take Barbados's peculiarity into account.

Trinidad and Tobago was not so lucky, so we were required, after it was agreed and the model legislation was drafted, to bring it home to Trinidad to ensure that it was consistent with our Constitution, the Defence Force Act, the Police Service Act and any other relevant legislation. That partly explains the allegation of inordinate delay that I heard screaming from the Leader of the Opposition only yesterday, which I read in a newspaper.

I merely want to take the opportunity to say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that Barbados settled theirs less than two weeks ago, and we had to look at the legislation to ensure that it passes our legal and constitutional tests,



and to redraft where necessary and make it consistent with our aspirations and our legal superstructures in Trinidad and Tobago and, hence, the reason for what appears to be, according to the Leader of the Opposition, the inordinate delay. You know, they are given for exaggeration and hyperbole.

While it is an internationally accepted practice that visiting forces must have some autonomy over their affairs in the receiving country, there are serious cautions in relation to that.

The intent of the Visiting Police Forces Bill is to give visiting police forces the powers of local police whilst making them subject to the authority and instruction of the Commissioner of Police. They will enjoy immunity from prosecution in our local courts in respect of acts done in the course of their duty, as well as in respect of acts committed against another member of their visiting force, or in respect of property belonging to their sending county. This immunity will pertain to acts that may constitute either a civil offence or a criminal offence provided the act is done in the course of duty; provided that it is an act against another member of a visiting force or property belonging to a visiting force.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Will the hon. Member give way for clarification?

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Sure.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Does a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force have a similar immunity with respect to acts done in the course of their duty?

**Hon. F. Hinds:** That is a useful question, and the answer clearly is yes. It is mutual. What is being done in Trinidad is being done in all the other member States so as to give the coverage to each other.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Thank you, Minister. Maybe I did not phrase the question sufficiently. I am asking: Does an existing member of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force or any of our protective services enjoy a similar immunity in Trinidad and Tobago? No.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Since it appears that the Leader of the Opposition has the answer—we were taught, as young parliamentarians, to ask questions for which we knew the answers at question time, so the Member could reserve that for some time later at question time. For the meanwhile, I shall proceed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the determination of whether an offence is done in the performance of one's duty will be certified by the Commissioner of Police in

Trinidad and Tobago. Acts committed outside the course of duty will be prosecuted by the courts of Trinidad and Tobago in accordance with its usual existing justice system. I think I need to repeat that. Acts done outside the course of duty will be prosecuted in the normal way and there will be no such immunity.

In many host countries, this can become an issue, and the Member for Siparia wants to create an issue. With respect to the level of protection afforded to a visiting police force, there is always going to be a need, regardless of which government is in power. This is consistent with international practice and international law. It is quite normal; not new. There will always be a need to balance the interests of the receiving state which wants the help of foreign states in certain circumstances; which wants their armed forces, police and other advisory personnel to help in extraordinary circumstances. You will always have to balance their interests and the interests of the sending states, the benefactor, as opposed to the beneficiary, if I may say so. It is quite normal. Therefore, I find the question tedious.

Trinidad and Tobago has agreed to enact such legislation at its domestic level with the assumption that other Caricom member States would also enact similar legislation. Indeed, undertakings were given at the regional level to do precisely that. On the basis of this reciprocal arrangement, a Trinidad and Tobago police officer, as I have already indicated, would enjoy the same police powers, rights and immunity from legal proceedings, afforded to his Caricom counterpart when the latter is invited to perform duties in Trinidad and Tobago. These powers, privileges and rights are conferred under clause 5 of the Bill which is before hon. Members.

On the international level, visiting forces legislation exists all over the world including many Commonwealth countries namely Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore. These pertain essentially to visiting military personnel.

Many host countries have mixed feelings about foreign personnel on their soil, especially since the concern of the sending state is to ensure that its personnel is not subjected to another country's jurisdiction for offences committed on foreign soil, and under a different legal system under which they may not enjoy the same constitutional rights and freedoms given to them in their home state.

Generally the sending state will wish for total immunity for its personnel which will be resisted by the host country who will seek to protect its citizens from harm by the visiting personnel. However, most crimes by servicemen against

local civilians, from the records and from international experiences, occur off duty, and in accordance with the domestic legislation are considered subject to the local jurisdiction and prosecution, as I have indicated.

**2.30 p.m.**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill will apply to those visiting police forces originating from countries listed in the Schedule to the Bill. Provision is also made for a country to be so designated by the Minister under clause 4(2) of the Bill. It is the act of being so designated that invokes the application of this legislation.

Clause 6 deals with the question of the recourse for the civilian national who would have suffered damage or loss of injury suffered at the hands of such visiting forces. Under clause 8 of this Bill, visiting police personnel, while acting in the course of official duties shall be deemed to be servants of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and as such, any action for compensation against a member of a visiting force will be an action against the State of Trinidad and Tobago under the State Liability and Proceedings Act.

Additionally, the Minister of National Security may make arrangements for the payment and settlement of such claims of settlement which will be defrayed out of moneys provided by Parliament, of course.

Clause 10 of the Bill prevents against double compensation by the receiving state where compensation has been paid or is payable by the designated state which is the sending state.

Lastly, it is customary international practice that visiting forces would be exempted from the payment of taxes, licensing and customs duties on fuel, vehicles and equipment which they may be importing into the host country for effectively carrying out their functions here. It is also customary to exempt from taxation, emolument income earned by members of visiting forces, always bearing in mind that the visiting forces are on the foreign ground at the request of the host country and it is the sending state that is paying their wages without contribution by the receiving state. It is only logical therefore, that visiting forces personnel would also be exempt from paying import duties on their personal effects when they first arrive in the receiving state.

Military intervention—and I am dealing now briefly with the Visiting Forces Bill—or assistance promotes cooperation on those occasions when a nation attempts to preserve order, stabilize itself as well as a restructure after a catastrophic occurrence.

Whilst crisis response by a nation may be costly, we cannot ignore the plight of neighbouring states for that reason only.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill is before Members and I do not think it is necessary to go into it any more; there are really straightforward and simple provisions. With foresight and anticipating the kinds of possibilities alluded to earlier, natural or otherwise, we responded and we are responding by the presentation of this Visiting Forces Bill.

The legislation before the honourable House augurs for enhanced coordination of activities as well as protection of contingents since at present, our military personnel are deployed on a “needs basis” without any immunities. Indeed, whilst we have relied on goodwill and gentlemen’s agreements, the time has certainly come to solidify these arrangements. As mentioned earlier, the other states are expected to codify their obligations, as well, so that there can be reciprocity.

This Bill seeks to provide for the presence, activities, privileges and immunities to visiting forces and the civil components thereof and the waiver of jurisdiction of service and civil courts relevant to those visiting forces and their civilian components. The Bill contains seven Parts and 27 clauses. Part I of the Bill provides for—what I call—preliminary matters.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Part II of the Bill deals with the jurisdiction of our courts and the courts of the visiting forces and gives to the visiting force immunity from civil and criminal jurisdiction in Trinidad and Tobago in respect of acts performed in the course of their duties. This does not mean that visiting forces can come to Trinidad and Tobago and commit offences with impunity, as I have already indicated.

This Bill differs from the Visiting Police Forces Bill in that it also deals with the roles of military tribunals which have been defined as “service courts” and which is not applicable with respect to the police. The service courts of the visiting forces shall exercise jurisdiction over their troops in respect of acts committed in the performance of their duties. Alternatively, if they commit any torts or crimes outside their official duties against a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago they would be subject to the jurisdiction of our local courts. As an added precaution for our citizens, we have provided for compensation, as I alluded to earlier, under the State Liability and Proceedings Act.

Part III of the Bill deals with attachments of and to Trinidad and Tobago forces. This would grant to visiting forces whose members are temporarily attached to the Trinidad and Tobago forces, the same status under the laws of

Trinidad and Tobago and the same powers of command, punishment and arrest as if they are members of the Trinidad and Tobago forces of relative ranks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we feel that we need to provide further protection to our citizens as a result of the immunities granted under this Bill and so we have provided in Part IV under Claims for Personal Injuries and Property Damages for the State to assume liability for claims made against the visiting force of a designated state. This Part will also empower the Minister with responsibility for national security to make payments for those claims.

Part V of the Bill deals with a coroner's inquest under this Bill. Part VI speaks to the issue of taxation and provides certain tax exemptions for members of a visiting force similar to those being afforded to police under the Visiting Police Forces Bill.

Part VII deals with three issues, essentially. One, it makes provision for the members of visiting forces to drive in Trinidad and Tobago so long as they have a valid driver's licence or permit issued in their designated state. Two, it contains rules and regulations making provision and providing that this Act shall be binding upon the State.

It is the duty of the Government to adopt and put in place the necessary measures to ensure the safety of all our people. The Parliament and the people must all be prepared to respond to the needs, hopes and aspirations of all of us. To ensure delivery of this service we must strengthen international cooperation. To achieve this we must have consensus, hence the model legislation and implementation of decisions arrived at with our regional counterparts. This Package is intended to construct the necessary legislative framework in terms as I have outlined.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with these opening remarks, I beg to move these Bills for the consideration of this honourable House.

I thank you.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members are reminded that all three Bills will be debated; that is the Security Assistance (CARICOM) Bill, 2007, the Visiting Forces Bill, 2007 and the Visiting Police Forces Bill, 2007.

**Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar** (*Siparia*): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These three Bills are very important Bills in the history of our nation. They represent part of the entire movement within the Caricom region for assistance,

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mainly with respect to Caricom Member States within that jurisdiction assisting each other, but we have very, very serious difficulties with these Bills.

In the first instance, we received these Bills very late yesterday afternoon, so coming here today to debate them in the early afternoon of the day really is to ask for a rubber stamping of what is contained in these Bills. There has been very little time for any kind of serious research on matters that really involve serious issues, if I may repeat the word, very serious issues. Of course, the chief issue in this nation today has to do with national security; security of the person; security of life, of limb, of property. So these are designed in some way to assist in that fight against crime.

While it is that the cricket is being used as the reason for rushing them through, they really have to deal with long after the cricket has come and gone. Because you will see that in none of these Bills we are dealing with any kind of sunset legislation as we dealt with in the past. That is to say there was a Bill we dealt with in a rush to get certain things done, because we were saying it had to do with the World Cup Cricket and on the basis of the Opposition's input we inserted a sunset clause.

So the pretext of the cricket is to usher in these three Bills which will allow Government to bring forces from anywhere in the world, to afford these forces, when they come here, immunity from civil and criminal prosecution in Trinidad and Tobago; would allow them all kinds of tax exemptions and other kinds of immunities and privileges contained within it. We are doing that without really having had time to seriously research these Bills; from yesterday evening, hit the road this morning to head to Port of Spain; so a matter of a couple of hours to look at very, very serious legislation.

We know the track record of this Government when it comes to drafting legislation and the hon. Minister has admitted that they only got it a few days ago and they had to fine tune it to suit Trinidad and Tobago; all kinds of nonsense that he spoke about. We know their track record when it comes to drafting legislation, that the legislation invariably is defective when it hits this House. It is the check and balance that is provided in the democratic Westminster tradition, where the Opposition is allowed to study the legislation and to have its input, that we could correct some of those deficiencies. Because as the Government comes blind-sided; it comes in fact vision focused, one-mind focus; this is what we brought; we are sticking to that; we are not doing anything else. There are several clauses, several things within it, in the short time given to us that I have serious problems with; which in the Committee stage, we can look at.

So my very first comment on this is to really condemn the Government for once again attempting to use this Parliament as a rubber stamp. [*Desk thumping*] It is their modus operandi in every sphere of life, in every area of the society and it is most obnoxious when it comes here in the root of our democracy, in the Parliament that you bring this yesterday evening, late today basically and debate it through all its stages.

When we talk about what this Parliament is about, I am saying this is an affront to parliamentary democracy. You will realize that if you look at all parliamentary procedures, in the Westminster style there are five basic principles of parliamentary procedure. First, this House is the master of its proceedings, the House of Commons. Second, all discussions must be relevant; we know that. Third, if possible, the House should not be taken by surprise and the usual required notice for debates is 48 hours. We have not even had 24 hours proper notice. When we look at working time, the Bills came very late yesterday. So in terms of working hours far less than a couple of hours to go through what are very, very serious pieces of legislation.

So that the time-honoured practice of democratic traditions in Westminster style, is once again being breached by this Government. But are we surprised? The Minister said that I made a comment about inordinate delay; that is not what I said; he did not even read that properly. What I talked about is the way that they intended to come to hijack this Parliament, to take the Parliament by surprise; to come at the 11th hour, as they invariably do to try to get the rubber stamp of their own Members, because they would not get it from this side. They are going to do it again very soon, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We sat in this Parliament not too long ago when it is the Government brought an amendment to the Bail Act. We said we would not support it; the Government said they wanted 60 days; the Back Bench gave them 90 days. You know the 90 days have expired and they have not put a single thing in place. So you know what is going to happen? Again, on the expiration of that, at the 11th hour they plan to come to the Parliament—what is it, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of next week—to do what they had so much time to do.

It is clear when it comes to the parliamentary agenda the Government is totally disorganized; the Government has no fixed agenda or no flexible agenda. It operates *vaille-que-vaille*, ad hoc and it is always reactive, rather than proactive.

So here we are; World Cup Cricket is here; people are already on the ground; matches are taking place; people are getting jam up in traffic; all kinds of things are happening; they are coming after the fact, indeed. It is true they were warm up

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matches but they are coming after the fact. What is the reason given? I have heard no plausible explanation from the hon. Minister as to why it is at the 11th hour we are here in this Parliament to debate these very serious pieces of legislation.

The honourable Minister attempted to say that it was only on February 14 that they passed this particular treaty. On the face of it, on the treaty itself, which is a schedule to the Security Assistance (Caricom) Bill, it says clearly that this treaty was first passed on July 06, 2006. Yes, it was amended thereafter on February 14, 2007. Was it so substantially amended on February 14? Was it totally changed? We do not know, because we have not seen the text of the original. But obviously, the principles were there; the schedule 1 is the first treaty and schedule 2 is the amendment. If that is the case then really you have even less of a case when it comes to saying why, knowing that this World Cup Cricket was going to be taking place; knowing that you will be having these visiting forces and so on, why you did not begin to prepare. You had from since July 2006, when you passed the original treaty and then you could have included whatever amendments that were made thereafter on February 14, 2007.

So the explanation given by the junior Minister in the Ministry of National Security is absolutely no explanation at all as to why it is—and he had the gall, the effrontery, in Trinidad we say, “bold face” and “brass face”, to say they operated with foresight and anticipation, when here it is, after the fact, people are here. You know the bomb squad from India is already here? The visiting forces are already here. What protection do they have? You are saying you are now coming to give them; you anticipated; operated with foresight and so on; totally shameless in his explanation. And that is the Minister who wants to say everything is tedious and he will not answer.

Therefore, we are not really surprised when it is that in the absence of his senior Minister, he was not given the opportunity to act as Minister of National Security. [*Desk thumping*] We are not surprised. His entire attitude—you ask him a question, instead of answering the question he wants to spend time attacking the person; attacking the messenger. Pompous and arrogant! I think he is the cream of the crop when it comes to, what we call the PNM approach of pomposity and arrogance in their attitude to the people; in their attitude of concerns being raised. He is surpassed by none other than the Member for Diego Martin East, I must admit. [*Desk thumping*]

So, I am saying that this is totally unacceptable. If Government is serious; if you really want to have this Caricom Security Assistance legislation that would be workable; that would be good for the people of Trinidad and Tobago; that would



be good for the region, you have allowed no opportunity for us to study these Bills in any detailed manner and therefore the first thing I would like to say, in keeping with the parliamentary tradition of giving proper notice to the Opposition, is that you take these Bills back and bring them even on Friday and we will be prepared to support them with appropriate amendments. [*Desk thumping*] We will be prepared to support them with the appropriate amendments because we understand it is important given what is happening in the world of cricket in Trinidad and Tobago, in the Caricom.

But, do not come and fool us; do not attempt to deceive us to say that you are bringing these Bills because of the World Cup Cricket, because it is not solely for the purpose of World Cup Cricket. It is going to allow the Government powers thereafter, in perpetuity. Until such other time as the Parliament may pass further legislation, it allows the Government to continue to do everything that is contained within this. The problem with that, Sir, is that the Opposition has not been given any real opportunity to study these Bills, so there can be that input; there can be that check and balance when you bring it. As I have said, when the Government brings a Bill here, it is blind-sided; it is one-sided; I see it like this; this is it; nothing else. But of course, that is where the check and balance of the parliamentary democracy is, that we can suggest changes.

In fact, I will make a point to you. You are now, within these Bills, deeming visiting forces from other countries; you are going to deem them to be the same and to operate under the same provision under our Police Service Act, No. 7, I think of 2006. So they are going to have the same kinds of rights, duties and responsibilities and so on. On the other hand, you give them immunity from civil and criminal prosecution. And I ask the question: Does a member of the Trinidad and Tobago protective services have immunity from civil and criminal prosecution? The answer is obviously no; they do not. Because they must face the courts of the land if it is they are alleged that whatever offence they have committed, they committed in the course of their duty, it is for the courts of the land to decide.

We had a serious incident recently; Shazard Mohammed was killed by the coast guard protective service. It was only after an uproar that that came to our courts. If a member of the visiting services should commit an offence in this country, are you granting him immunity from civil and criminal prosecution? That is what it is saying. I have serious problems about that. We must always look down the road; it may not be today, it may be tomorrow—this legislation is for every day hereafter, not just for the cricket—that those in that political directorate

bring in a mongoose gang, bring in mercenaries under the guise of visiting forces and they have immunity and they wipe out people they do not like.

We have already seen when they do not like somebody they are going for them, hell or high water. Whether you take them through judicial review; through criminal proceedings, we have seen their pattern of behaviour. So I have very, very serious concerns as to whether it is constitutional to deem these visiting police officers to be operating under our Police Service Act, when we have a whole structure in terms of the selection and criteria for appointments and so on of members of police service.

**Mr. Manning:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Siparia for giving way. This legislation really seeks to enshrine into law the arrangements involving visiting forces and their status as they are in Trinidad and Tobago. These things arise out of reciprocal agreement with countries. So that if Trinidad and Tobago visits other countries in respect to which we have an agreement, then the situation is the same, that Trinidad and Tobago forces will have the same kind of immunity. This is standard in the international arena and especially relevant to us now that Trinidad and Tobago has taken the decision to be part of peace keeping forces elsewhere; we have already done it in Haiti.

Our forces are going to various countries in the region. I take it that the Member for Siparia is aware that as World Cup Cricket is conducted over the next few months, about 203 Trinidad and Tobago troops and police officers will be part of a force that visits other countries in the region and will be the subject of the same immunities that we are seeking to give other visiting forces to Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar:** I thank the Prime Minister for his explanation, but I make the point again, this legislation in the way it is drafted, it is not just for cricket this month and next month. This legislation is in perpetuity and I am saying I am especially suspicious. In fact, we are exceedingly concerned on this side, because we believe that we should be given the time to look at this legislation properly; that was the first point I made. You bring serious legislation where you are granting all these immunities and privileges; all these clauses contained within it and we had two hours to look at it. How can I trust you? We do not trust them on the other side.

**Mr. Manning:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, sorry to intervene again, but we are late with this legislation only because we had to await model legislation from Caricom which is the subject of consideration by all parliaments in the region. And this legislation is drafted along the lines of legislation that is on the statute books now

in Jamaica. There is nothing sinister about it, it is merely that Caricom wanted and quite properly so, uniform arrangements in the region and the model legislation was late in coming.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar:** Once again, if this is so we have no way of verifying that. We got these Bills almost on the eve of closing working hours. With due respect, I do not trust the Government. It is for us to verify that this is so. It is for us to check it and research it. That is what the democracy is about; that is what this Parliament is about. Therefore, if you are so certain that this is above board; that it is in keeping with international norms, with the model legislation and so on, we ask you to give us until Friday. We will come back on Friday; we will accept or make changes as we see fit. But you cannot shove this down our throats in an arena, in an environment where this Government has shown on every single occasion that they cannot be trusted. We cannot do that and so the assurances of the Prime Minister—

**Mr. Imbert:** I wish to let the hon. Leader of the Opposition know that the hon. Member is pushing an open door, we will be quite happy to give you some more time to study this legislation and we can discuss that during the tea break.

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad to push an open door because this is very serious legislation. This is not about World Cup Cricket today only and this month and next month. Therefore, I am very happy to push the open door, but with due respect there is no point discussing it during the debate because after that I cannot speak. Therefore I will like to see it—

**Mr. Manning:** Do you want to adjourn now?

**Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar:** Certainly, we will adjourn and come back on Friday. You are going to the Senate on Tuesday, so we have enough time to study it properly; come back Friday and you could take it to the Senate on Tuesday. You have to be serious.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now adjourned to Friday, March 09, 2007 at 1.30 p.m. to continue the debate on these Bills with a view of completing the debate and passage of these three Bills on that day.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 2.58 p.m.*