

Doctor Of Laws Degree Award

Friday, September 28, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 28, 2007

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE AWARD

(HON. PATRICK MANNING)

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Chair wishes to recognize an award given to the hon. Prime Minister and Member for San Fernando East, a Doctor of Laws Degree by the Medgar Evers College, New York. I wish on my own behalf, and I am sure on your behalf, to congratulate the Prime Minister on the award of this doctorate. [*Desk thumping*]

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you very sincerely for the kind sentiments that you have just expressed. I assure you that the award was received on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It is an honorary award, and I would like to assure you and hon. Members that I have no intention of adding any title to my name. That is not the proper thing to do. I propose to follow appropriate protocol in the matter. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

PAPERS LAID

1. The National Blood Transfusion Policy and Technical Guidelines. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]
2. The Draft National Family Policy of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

Government Ministries (Part I)

(Presentation)

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. Speaker, thank you very much. I wish to lay on the Table the Fourth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to enquire into and report on Government Ministries with responsibility areas listed in (Part I) and on the Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises falling under those Ministries.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT**Government Ministries (Part II)
(Presentation)**

Dr. Hamza Rafeeq (*Caroni Central*): Mr. Speaker, I wish to lay on the Table the Second Report (2006/2007 Session) of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to enquire into and report on Government Ministries (Part II), Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises falling under those Ministries.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, my recollection is that I think you gave these questions one week, but I do not have the answers to these questions. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: I think I have said all that I could say about questions.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Say more.

Mr. Panday: Mr. Speaker, say more.

Mr. Speaker: It is unacceptable for Government Ministers to whom questions have been addressed to refuse to answer them. It is not only an insult to the Chair, but it is also an insult to the House. [*Desk thumping*] I would hope that in the Ninth Parliament, whoever forms the government, that the Ministers would answer the questions posed to them.

Mr. Singh: Absolutely.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

**Community Development Bursary Programme
(Details of)**

45. With respect to the Community Development Bursary Programme, could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs indicate to this House:
- (a) the number of recipients of bursaries under the programme; and
 - (b) the quantum of moneys disbursed for fiscal 2005/2006 and for what given purpose? [*Mr. M. Ramsaran*]

**SWMCOL/CEPEP Investment Club
(Money Market Account)**

- 58.** Could the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment state:
- (a) the purpose of the fund established in the form of a money market account in the name of SWMCOL/CEPEP Investment Club;
 - (b) the signatories to that account;
 - (c) the current balance of that account;
 - (d) the average monthly balance of that account since its establishment; and
 - (e) the total amounts contributed annually by SWMCOL to the SWMCOL/CEPEP Investment Club? [*Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar*]

**SWMCOL
(Contracts from 2006 to date)**

- 60.** Could the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment provide:
- (a) the names of any consultancy firms employed by SWMCOL during the period 2006 to date; and
 - (b) the duration of the contracts and the contract amounts? [*Mr. S. Panday*]

**Allocation of Funds
(Details of)**

- 70.** Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs state the allocations made to TUCO, Soca Monarch and Calypso Tents for the period 2005–2007? [*Mr. G. Singh*]

**Indian Arrival Day 2007
(Details of)**

- 88.** Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs indicate:
- (a) what official functions were held by the government in observation of Indian Arrival Day 2007; and
 - (b) the amount of money spent by the government in hosting official functions to commemorate Indian Arrival Day 2007? [*Dr. R. Moonilal*]

**Tarouba Sporting Complex
(Completion and Cost of)**

90. With respect to the Tarouba Sporting Complex, could the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs advise:
- (a) what is the projected cost of the project; and
 - (b) the projected date for completion? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

**Attorneys-at-Law
(Legal Fees Paid by State to)**

93. With regard to legal fees paid by the State and/or its agencies could the hon. Attorney General advise what fees have been paid to the following attorneys-at-law for the period 2006 to date:
- (a) Israel Khan S.C.;
 - (b) Senator Dana Seetahal S.C.; and
 - (c) Michael Quamina. [*Mr. S. Panday*]

**Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC)
(Authorization of Crew)**

98. (a) Could the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment state who authorized a Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) crew using a T&TEC truck registration No. TBJ 7331-C70 to put PNM banners, bearing PNM slogans and a picture of the Member of Parliament for San Fernando East on T&TEC poles on Saturday 28th July 2007 at Cocoyea;
- (b) Can the Minister state whether T&TEC had been paid for the service; and
 - (c) If the answer to (b) is in the affirmative kindly state the amount paid, by whom and when was it paid? [*Mr. S. Panday*]

Questions not answered.

**DEFINITE URGENT MATTER
(LEAVE)**

Disqualification of Motion

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received a Standing Order 12 Motion by the hon. Member for Princes Town. I have read this Motion carefully, and I have

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attempted to see whether I could have brought this Motion in line to allow it to be read; regrettably there is nothing I can do to this Motion which will allow it to be read. In the circumstances, this Motion is denied and I am ruling that it will not be read.

Mr. Panday: Mr. Speaker, could you kindly indicate—

Mr. Speaker: I have ruled. You can come and see me at 4.30 p.m.

Mr. Panday: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I am on my feet! I have ruled that this Motion does not qualify. It is out of order, and I am further ruling that it will not be read.

Dr. Khan: Could you put it to a vote?

Mr. Speaker: I have been in this House for sometime, and I have never heard that. Please, proceed.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Draft National Policy on the Family

The Minister of Social Development and Minister in the Ministry of Housing (Hon. Anthony Roberts): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to lay the Draft National Policy on the Family as a Green Paper for public comments.

Mr. Speaker, let me start by indicating to this honourable House, and by extension the national community that this Government is very committed to ensuring the healthy functioning of all families in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, our Vision 2020 operational plan 2007—2010, under the developmental pillar “Nurturing a Caring Society” has identified as its first goal that “The foundation of Trinidad and Tobago will be Strong Families and Strong Communities”. As articulated in the Vision 2020 document, building strong families and communities is the key to nurturing a caring society, where vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, youth and persons with disabilities are cared for and protected. Mr. Speaker, I am sure this honourable House will agree that strong families give security, comfort and meaning to life.

However, research on the status of the institution of the family in Trinidad and Tobago, has confirmed that within recent times, many families are being negatively affected by the rapidly changing social environment in which many families are plagued by:

- disadvantaged economic situations;

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- poor parenting skills and practices;
- poor socialization skills;
- insufficient and ineffective communication;
- poor and at times abusive methods of discipline;
- the negative influence of the media, cable and television;
- migrant and absentee parents;
- a drug culture and its associated criminal sub-culture; and
- changes in community and societal values.

In addition, our research has indicated that there was a 15 per cent decrease in the number of marriages over the period 1980 to 2000, and a noticeable increase of approximately 67 per cent in the number of divorces for the same period.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is by no means unique to Trinidad and Tobago, but this Government believes that immediate corrective and remedial measures must be implemented if we are to restore the family—I mean the healthy functioning Family—as the main socialization unit of our communities.

In this regard, in July 2005, Cabinet agreed to the development of a National Policy on the Family. This policy document was developed by a multi-sectoral committee, and it reflects the ideal of Vision 2020, as it outlines a number of areas which address healthy families and healthy communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Draft Policy is guided by a set of General Principles which are as follows:

- family commitment and stability;
- family responsibility and support;
- family involvement and interdependence;
- family empowerment;
- support of vulnerable families; and
- gender equity.

What we are saying is that family members will be encouraged and guided to recognize their strengths and vulnerabilities; and to understand their responsibilities to their immediate and extended family members. In addition, the collective knowledge and experiences of families will be brought into any decision-making concerning the family.

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The policy also makes provisions for those families in need of financial and social support, so that any potential breakdown in family structure may be averted. You see, the Government will leave nothing to chance as we bring back value to our families.

Furthermore, the policy will not only operate at the level of individual families. The National Policy on the Family seeks to ensure that a family friendly environment is engendered in the society as a whole. To this end, the Draft Policy provides a framework for the development and implementation of effective strategies for healthy functioning families in Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, the policy document focuses on a wide variety of issues that are related to the enhancement of the well being of the family, such as:

- family responsibility and support;
- families and care giving;
- families and employment practices;
- families and social services;
- families and health;
- families, population development and STI reduction;
- families and education;
- families and housing;
- families and community development;
- families and the law;
- family research and programme planning; and
- the institutional framework for policy implementation.

Mr. Speaker, you would note that all areas which are affected by, or which can affect the proper functioning of the family, have been taken into consideration.

If I may, kindly permit me to provide the Members of this honourable House with a brief idea of the policy intent under each of the areas that I have just mentioned.

With reference to family responsibility and support, the strategies would include:

- the strengthening of civil society social support networks to allow them to facilitate improved family functioning;

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- mechanisms to prevent all forms of family violence; and
- appropriate pre-marital counselling for all persons who intend to be married to understand their legal, financial, and social responsibilities towards each other and any offspring.

For families whose circumstances require caregiving to family members, the strategies would include:

- quality home-based care for the frail elderly and persons with disabilities;
- opportunities and incentives for persons who serve as caregivers to their relatives to gain the requisite skills and information necessary to effectively perform their duties; and
- the conduct of family care assessments to ensure that quality care is being provided in the home.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to families and employment practices, in co-operation with employers, strategies would be implemented to promote balance between responsibilities of the job and parental responsibilities, especially for single-parent households with young children.

The approaches would include mechanisms for access to health insurance and social security, day-care centres and facilities for breast-feeding mothers within the workplace, pre-schools, part-time jobs, paid parental leave, paid maternity leave, flexible work schedules, and reproductive and child health services.

In the area of families and social services, resources and efforts will be targeted to preventing family problems before they become serious crises or chronic situations. Accordingly, parent support services would be provided to address the diverse parenting needs of families in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the physical, emotional and mental health of our family members is a key concern for this Government. As such, the Draft National Policy on the Family advocates for:

- a health care system which would encourage families to actively participate in the care of their family members;
- health care professionals who encourage family members, in particular the guardians of minors and mentally challenged individuals, to participate in the decision-making processes that pertain to the planning and delivery of care to their relatives;

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- health care services that are available in geographical locations and at times that facilitate ease of access by families; and
- special programmes to address the needs of women of child-bearing age, especially those who are pregnant or breast-feeding.

On the issue of families, population development and reduction in sexually transmitted infections, strategies would include:

- the provision of a range of accessible, affordable and appropriate reproductive health care services including family planning methods for all individuals of appropriate age; and
- the dissemination of information, education and counselling in responsible sexual behaviour and effective prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of families and education, the policy provides for age appropriate family life education. Our children, teenagers and adults will now be prepared for entry to committed relationships; the formation of families; and the transition to parenthood.

Families will also be educated on coping mechanisms during times of severe illness, relocation, and retirement.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that adequate housing is a major concern for many families in our communities. In this regard, the policy contends that affordable and appropriate housing would be made available to meet the needs of all families, including youth experiencing abuse and short-term crisis situations at home; and persons with special needs such as the elderly persons with disabilities, ex-prisoners, survivors of domestic violence, and persons who were formerly homeless. Whether we are discussing the immediate community in which we reside or the wider national community, families undoubtedly play a major role in community development.

Mr. Speaker, the Draft National Policy on the Family places significant responsibility on all of us as members of the national family to become actively involved in community preservation, development and enhancement. The policy will encourage families to:

- participate in programmes and activities that heighten environmental awareness and knowledge;
- engage in outdoor activities and active environmental stewardship; and maintain and improve the natural environment around them.

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Mr. Speaker, in our ongoing efforts to promote peaceful communities in the area of the law, families will be encouraged to, as far as possible, resolve disputes without a court hearing in a constructive, non-confrontational manner. As such, the primary dispute resolution process in the Family Court will include counselling, mediation and arbitration.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is committed to ensuring that all our policies and programmes meet and surpass the needs of their targeted audiences. We recognize that ongoing research and programme planning must be conducted to keep our families strengthening initiatives current and relevant. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative research would be conducted on the status of families in Trinidad and Tobago on a regular basis, to facilitate the development of effective programmes for the enhancement of our families.

The final key issue with regard to the Draft National Policy on the Family that I wish to highlight today is the institutional framework for policy implementation. The Government envisions a collaborative approach towards the effective implementation of this policy. Partnerships would be created among social services systems such as health, education and civil society to create a seamless system of services and support to address the needs of families here in Trinidad and Tobago.

In addition, the Draft Policy proposes a National Family Council, which will be established to serve in an advisory capacity, to address all national issues pertaining to family life and well-being. The Council will be required to use a multi-disciplinary approach that collaborates with and empowers families to address their needs. It will be comprised of representatives from various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Current and on going strategies to benefit families: Mr. Speaker, I want to believe that I have evoked the empathy of this honourable House on the vision for the evolution of the family in Trinidad and Tobago. As Irish playwright and Nobel Laureate, George Bernard Shaw, once said:

"Perhaps the greatest social service that can be rendered by anybody to this country and to mankind is to bring up a family."

Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that we bring up civic-minded families and individuals of sound character, who are ready to positively contribute to assist in the development of our nation.

It is this Government's strong belief that the Draft National Policy on the Family, once adopted, will serve to restore the traditional societal values which

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we seem to have lost. However, I want to impress upon the House that notwithstanding the development of this Draft Family Policy document, a diverse range of policy programmes and projects geared towards the enhancement of the family are currently in operation throughout the country. Some of these are:

- senior activity centres which aim to support the personal growth and independence of the healthy, active seniors;
- the Personal Assistants for Persons with Disabilities Training Programme which trains persons to provide attendant care for the differently-abled in their homes, school or the workplace;
- the Community Mediation Services Programme which empowers individuals, groups and communities to resolve disputes through dialogue in a non-threatening environment. Essentially, this programme allows people to talk it out, not fight it out.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, can you indicate to the House how long again you have? Today is Private Members' Day.

Mr. Singh: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: I had ruled in this Parliament that Members could speak for about no more than 15 minutes, but this is Private Members' Day, and it really belongs to Private Members. [*Desk thumping*] Your statement could have been made long before today.

Members, let me alert you that I would allow one statement. I think the Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries wants to make a statement and he will make that statement at 2.30 p.m. Now, I will allow that statement simply because it concerns cane farmers which is topical, and which has been recently concluded, but hon. Minister, your statement has gone on and on. It is late and you are, in fact, abusing Private Members' Day. [*Desk thumping*] So, I am going to ask you to circulate the rest of your statement.

Hon. Members, as I said earlier on, the Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries is due to make a statement. He has asked that this matter on the Order Paper be deferred to 2.30 p.m. With your leave, I will grant him permission to make that statement at 2.30 p.m. As I said, the only reason I am allowing him to do that is simply because it touches on an issue that has recently been concluded between the Government and the cane farmers. That is what I understand the statement to be about. I can

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assure you that it will not be long. I was waiting to hear someone on the opposite Benches object. Please, continue.

Mr. Singh: Wind up.

Mr. Speaker: If you can conclude in one minute I will allow you to conclude, but failing that you will have to circulate the rest of it.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I am going to circulate the report.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Very good.

[Report circulated]

Hon. A. Roberts:

- *the need to have the nation's elderly cared for by trained and efficient individuals is being addressed by the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs' Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme (GAPP). This programme serves a dual purpose in ensuring efficient geriatric care to the elderly as well as providing employment prospects to young persons through training in the field;*
- *we also have in place, Mr. Speaker, a Remedial Therapy Programme. This programme provides counselling services for probationers and their families, prevents recidivism, rebuilds relationships between young persons and their families, prevents family breakdown and links youths with community resources.*

Mr. Speaker, these programmes and projects are but a few in the Government's current arsenal to develop and protect our families and foster integration and inclusion among our citizens. The National Policy on the Family is the next logical step in raising the bar on the values and standards that we wish to inculcate into citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by assuring this honourable House that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has very deep respect for the sanctity of the family and recognizes the fundamental role of the stability of the institution towards the stability of the wider society. We, therefore consider the development of the Draft National Policy on the Family to be a most important step in ensuring the efficient and healthy functioning of families in Trinidad and Tobago.

I, therefore take this opportunity to encourage all Members of this House and indeed all citizens in the national community to participate meaningfully

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in the further development of the draft policy document. I have no doubt that it would redound to the benefit of us all.

To this end, we will be holding regional consultations throughout Trinidad and Tobago, culminating in a national consultation to finalize discussions on this very important policy.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore have the honour to lay on the Table the Draft National Policy on the Family as a Green Paper and advise of its publication for public comments.

**COMMUNITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAMME
(GOVERNMENT'S MISMANAGEMENT)**

[Fourth Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [March 02, 2007]:

Be it resolved that this House do condemn the Government for its lack of transparency, accountability and probity in the management of public funds allocated to CEPEP programme. [Mr. G. Singh]

Question again proposed.

Mr. Speaker: On the last occasion we met on this Motion, the hon. Minister of Works and Transport was on his feet. He has seven minutes of original time remaining. I now call on the hon. Minister of Works and Transport. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the outset, let me state that I certainly do not support this Motion. The mover of this Motion has sought to malign one of the more innovative social programmes of the Government, and there is no way that I can go along with this Motion, and the Government does intend to deal with this Motion at the appropriate time. I certainly will not support it.

I think it is necessary—on the last occasion when we were here, the Member for St. Joseph had used his contribution to talk about the Waterfront project. On looking at the *Hansard*, quite a bit of the debate on the last occasion was utilized to address the inaccuracies that had been put on the record by the Member for St. Joseph. In the time remaining, I think it is necessary to—[*Interruption*—]in the 37 minutes remaining, assuming that I get my extension—put into the record some facts with respect to the CEPEP as opposed to the fiction that has been put into this House by Members opposite.

CEPEP (Government's Mismanagement)
[HON. C. IMBERT]

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Now, as I indicated, CEPEP is a social programme of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. It was originally approved on May 23, 2002 and implemented by the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment through the Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company.

Now, CEPEP functions on three pillars: the preservation and enhancement of the environment; job creation for unskilled and semi-skilled persons; and the creation of a new cadre of entrepreneurs.

One of the points that need to be made right at the outset is that at present there are 113 CEPEP contractors operating in Trinidad, and the total employment in CEPEP is 5,640 persons in Trinidad and 489 persons in Tobago, therefore, the total employment in CEPEP is approximately 6,000 persons.

Members opposite have, on occasion, demonstrated a measure of ambivalence to CEPEP. They have switched, shifted and flip-flopped between condemning the programme; demanding that the programme be closed down.

The former Member for Couva North said that he was going to spend some of his personal time in giving free legal advice to CEPEP workers. I remember seeing this on one of those UNC's A team, B team or C team platforms. Mr. Speaker, these days, you really do not know which is the A, B, or C, but on one of those platforms I remember the former Member for Couva North telling his people that he did not have time to devote to them, because he is going to spend the rest of this time giving free legal advice to CEPEP workers in order to ensure that they get their new salaries and back pay and so forth. These are the same workers that they have spent five years condemning in this Parliament.

Mr. Partap: We never condemned the workers.

Hon. C. Imbert: You have condemned the workers; you have condemned the programme. Mr. Speaker, that is why it falls to me, on behalf of the Government, to make it clear that we are talking about the employment of 6,000 persons, mainly women. I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister make the point that it is a viable source of employment for women. Only a wicked and vindictive group of persons would want to send 6,000 persons on the breadline—6,000 women, single mothers, heads of households and so, on the breadline. That is why they will not vote for you and that is why they will vote for us. We care about them. You do not care about them; you do not like them. Mr. Speaker, let us move on now.

Mr. Speaker, CEPEP has done quite a lot over the last five years. As I indicated, in the previous occasion, in their private and quiet moments in the

corridor and elsewhere, hon. Members opposite are high in praise of the work done by CEPEP workers, but they would never come into this Parliament and say so or get up in public and say so. In the corridor, they would tell us how much they admired the hard work that CEPEP workers do, and in here they would say how useless CEPEP workers are—two-tongued and two-faced; just ambivalent.

In terms of what CEPEP has been able to achieve, let me just read into the record some of the things that the programme has actually done.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

Question put.

The House divided: Ayes 13 Noes 14

AYES

Valley, Hon. K.

Manning, Hon. P.

Imbert, Hon. C.

Boynes, Hon. R.

Beckles, Hon. P.

Roberts, Hon. A.

Rahael, Hon. J.

James, Hon. E

Hart, Hon. E.

Callender, Hon. S.

Seukeran, Hon. D.

Job-Davis, Hon. E.

Hinds, Hon. F.

NOES

Rafeeq, Dr. H.

Persad-Bissessar, Mrs. K.

CEPEP (Government's Mismanagement)
[HON. C. IMBERT]

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Moonilal, Dr. R

Sharma, C.

Partap, H.

Nanan, Dr. A.

Panday, S.

Baksh, N.

Singh, G.

Dookeran, W.

Yetming, G.

Ramsaran, M.

Lucky, Miss G.

Khan, Dr. F.

Question negatived.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Agreement Between Government and Cane Farmers

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Mr. Speaker, thank you. I was looking at the television, and I want to assure hon. Members that it is a short statement. I am pleased to announce that Cabinet agreed today on the terms and conditions of an agreement which was finalized on September 26, 2007 between five cane farming groups and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that earlier this year, the Government announced that 2007 would be the last year in which it would be purchasing sugarcane from private cane farmers. In July 2007, the Government initiated negotiations with five cane farming groups regarding a soft landing for private sugarcane farmers to provide for their transition to this new environment in which Government would no longer be purchasing their product. The negotiations were guided by a ministerial committee.

Mr. Speaker, I wish on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to commend the five cane farming groups for the vigour and candour with which they pursued the negotiations. Four groups representing the vast majority of farmers have since executed the agreement:

- Cane Farmers Association of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Trinidad Islandwide Cane Farmers Association;
- Direct Delivery Cane Farmers Cooperative Society Limited;
- Sugarcane Farmers Co-operative Society Limited; and
- Cane Producers Association of Trinidad and Tobago has not yet agreed.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement provides direct financial and indirect transitional support to assist eligible cane farmers. It is to be noted that cane farmers who wish to continue their business of cultivating and harvesting sugarcane would be able to do so in light of the Government's decision to sell the sugar factory at Ste. Madeleine to the Sugarcane Farmers Cooperative Society Limited. The terms and conditions of that purchase agreement are at an advanced stage of completion.

In respect of the direct transitional support, the Government would make payment individually by a cheque issued by Caroni (1975) Limited to eligible farmers on the basis of a formula which would involve the following four factors.

- firstly, eligible farmers would be those 3,420 farmers who were cultivating sugarcane during any one year of the two-year period 2006/2007, thereby ensuring that support would be provided only to those cane farmers who remained in the industry;
- secondly, the production base is the average tonnage supplied to Caroni and the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited (SMCL) by those 3,420 sugar farmers during the four-year period; 2003—2007. That amount is estimated at 456,000 tons;
- thirdly, the earnings per ton foregone by exiting cultivation and harvesting of sugarcane in 2007 is \$70 per ton; and
- fourthly, the period for providing transitional earnings per ton would be 2½ years, that is, for the years 2008 and 2009 and for January to June 2010.

Mr. Speaker, on the basis of this very well conceptualized formula the 3,420 cane farmers would be paid approximately \$80 million.

The Government is also providing indirect assistance which would facilitate cane farmers in their rapid transition to alternative agricultural activities.

Statements By Ministers
[SEN. THE HON. DR. L. SAITH]

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- firstly, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources would liaise with those cane farmers who wished to remain in agriculture to have them registered as farmers, to allow them to benefit from the incentives of the Agricultural Incentive Programme and to access the concessionary resources from the low interest window of the Agricultural Development Bank which as this honourable House is aware has been appropriately resourced with an allocation of \$70 million in the 2007/2008 budget;
- secondly, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources would initiate the process for regularizing the status of those sugarcane farmers who had tenancies with Caroni (1975) Limited, or who were squatting on state lands by issuing to them agricultural leases under the applicable terms and conditions of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, provided that the lands are not required by the State for public purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the auditing firm of Ernst & Young has been engaged by Caroni (1975) Limited to conduct an audit of the production statistics of cane farmers with a view to establishing eligibility of cane farmers as well as average tonnages supplied by cane farmers. This audit is being urgently performed and the Government expects payments to be made to cane farmers before the end of October 2007.

In conclusion, the Government is pleased to have been able to arrive at an amicable arrangement with the cane farmers in this matter as it disengages itself from the cultivation of sugarcane and the manufacturing of sugar.

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

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, a statement by the hon. Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

Dissolution of Parliament

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to state for the benefit of hon. Members and the national community that I have today advised His Excellency the President to dissolve Parliament with effect from midnight tonight. [*Desk thumping*] General election will be held in Trinidad and Tobago on Monday, November 05, 2007 and nomination day is Monday, October 22, 2007.

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

**COMMUNITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAMME
(GOVERNMENT'S MISMANAGEMENT)**

Mr. Ganga Singh (*Caroni East*): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Now that the election date has removed itself from the back pocket and gone to the front pocket—[*Interruption*—I am the mover of the Motion and I am winding up. I am on my legs. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Please. I was not aware that you were going to wind-up the debate. As the mover of the Motion, you are entitled to wind-up the debate. [*Interruption*] Yes, I know that. I would have thought that the relationship that exists between the whips—

Mr. Panday: What relationship?

Mr. Speaker: There is a relationship. Nothing is parliamentarily wrong in what you are doing. All I am saying is that I would have thought that you would have indicated to your colleagues what you are about.

Mr. Panday: No!

Mr. Speaker: Please, continue.

Mr. G. Singh: As I indicated, I am the mover of this Motion, and it is only fitting as the mover of the Motion that I wind-up this Motion. Now that the Prime Minister has announced the date, it is appropriate that we wind-up this Motion very quickly to get on with the election business of the people. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I wish merely to indicate:

Be it resolved that this House do condemn the Government for its lack of transparency, accountability and probity in the management of public funds allocated to the CEPEP programme.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move this Motion in my name. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*—I would like to speak on a Motion which is critical of the Government.

Mr. Speaker: It is his right. It is provided for in the Standing Orders. He can, in fact, speak. [*Interruption*]

Hon. C. Imbert: “All yuh want to play.” You must learn your Standing Orders.

Mr. Panday: Go ahead.

Hon. C. Imbert: A Minister can speak after the mover of the Motion once it is critical of the Government.

Dr. Khan: You have to put it to a vote.

Hon. C. Imbert: No. *[Interruption]* Go and read your Standing Orders. "All yuh want to play."

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Minister can, in fact, speak and wind-up the debate. Please, continue.

Dr. Khan: You have to put it to a vote.

Hon. C. Imbert: No. You do not know your Standing Orders. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Members opposite have been very critical of the Government with respect to this Motion. *[Interruption]* I will exercise my right to speak for 75 minutes.

Hon. Member: You would talk to yourself.

Hon. C. Imbert: You could walk if you want. Mr. Speaker, CEPEP has done a lot of work in the last five years. In the year 2004, CEPEP managed to clear and clean some seven kilometres of roadway. In the year 2005, CEPEP managed to clear and cut some 31 kilometres of roadway. In the year 2006, CEPEP was able to keep clean and clear some 33 kilometres of roadway. That is just roads.

In terms of watercourses, in 2005, CEPEP cleared 18 kilometres of watercourses. In 2006, CEPEP cleared 31 kilometres of watercourses.

In terms of open spaces, in 2004, CEPEP was able to clear 267 million square metres of open space; in 2005, 427 million square metres of open space; and in 2006, 450 million square metres of open space.

In terms of beach front, in 2004, CEPEP was able to clear 27,000 kilometres of beach front. In 2005, CEPEP was able to clear 65 kilometres of beach front and in 2006, 74,000 kilometres of beach front. In fact, let me correct a figure that I gave earlier. In terms of roadway, CEPEP was able to clear and cut 32 million metres of roadway in 2006.

In terms of landscaped areas, CEPEP was able to cut and clear 98 million square metres in the year 2006. *[Laughter]*

In terms of schools, the following school grounds have been maintained: Mayaro RC School, Mayaro Government Primary School, Guayaguayare RC

School, Guayaguayare High School, Newlands Nursery School, Point Fortin Secondary School, Egypt Government School, Point Fortin RC School, St. Bernadette's Convent, the Government Vocational Centre, Santa Flora Government Primary School, Buenos Ayres Government Primary School, Erin RC Primary School, Santa Flora Anglican School, Fanny Village Primary School, Cap-de-Ville Primary School, Chatham Village Government Primary School, Cedros Anglican and Cascade School for the Deaf. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I know they do not want to hear this. They do not want this information to go on the record. They do not want people to know what the 6,000 diligent workers in CEPEP have done during the last five years. They could want what they want, but I will tell the country, on behalf of the Government, what CEPEP has done.

In terms of landscaping, CEPEP workers have cleared the nature trails from Lopinot to Blanchisseuse to Caura; they have maintained the El Rancho Tropical Park; they have maintained a recreational park in Matelot; they have developed the beaches in Manzanilla; they have done landscaping in Diego Martin on the North Post Road. Recently, I visited this area. It is a beautiful forest area at the top of the North Post Road in Diego Martin. They have restored Fort Chacon; they have restored a number of parks in the Diego Martin area; they have established an eco-park in Caura; an eco-park in Tamana; they have done work on the La Brea Sea Wall; they have done significant work on the Beetham Estate Area, Palo Seco, Santa Flora, Sangre Grande, Toco, Matura and in Point Lisas. All of this is landscaping projects done by CEPEP.

They have maintained police stations in Point Fortin, Guapo, Santa Flora, Maraval, Caroni and Chaguaramas. They have worked on community centres in Mayaro, Guayaguayare, New Village, Guapo, Palo Seco, Rancho Quemado, Mount Bethel and so forth. All of this needs to be said.

Again, as part of the mandate of CEPEP, a number of illegal dump sites have been cleaned and rehabilitated on an ongoing basis over the last five years.

In terms of training of contractors—they have a lot to say about the contractors—but I can tell you that in my own constituency—I am speaking as a parliamentary representative, at least, until midnight tonight—a number of CEPEP contractors in the Diego Martin area have graduated and are now engaged in the business of general contracting, and are engaged in general construction in the construction of civil engineering works; and in the construction of building works.

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Certainly, I can say without any fear of contradiction that in the Diego Martin region, CEPEP contractors have begun to achieve their full potential and are graduating out of landscaping into general construction and other contracting works.

In terms of training, I am advised by the Solid Waste Management Company that a number of training courses have been put on for CEPEP contractors and CEPEP workers, in particular for CEPEP contractors. Contractors have been trained in business management; occupational safety and health; industrial relations; the design of landscaping; conflict resolution; and general company matters such as filling out National Insurance Forms, Value Added Tax Forms and taxation forms.

They have been trained in disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that whenever there is a natural disaster in Trinidad and Tobago—we are at the bottom of the hurricane belt in the Caribbean. As you may know, tropical storms and tropical depressions formed in the Atlantic come across and affect the Caribbean Islands from Trinidad going all the way up to as far as the Bahamas and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that whenever we have heavy rainfall and other effects of tropical storms, the first port of call is the CEPEP contractors. I can tell you that. Whenever there are difficulties in terms of mud and debris and with respect to persons in their homes and so forth, the first port of call after a natural disaster are CEPEP workers. I am sure that hon. Members opposite have benefited from the hard work done by CEPEP contractors. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, these things need to be said.

They are always out after a tropical storm or the passage of heavy rainfall or extreme weather. The CEPEP contractors are first on the site assisting persons to deal with disasters.

In addition, I am advised that the Solid Waste Management Company has trained workers in supervision; in industrial relations and conflict resolution; communication skills; occupational safety and health; first aid and site safety.

In terms of operators, equipment operators have been trained in landscaping, safety and in the maintenance of equipment.

2.30 p.m.

In terms of special projects, I am aware that CEPEP has paid special attention to a number of beaches in the country, in Chacachacare, Chagville, Balandra,

Salybia, Mayaro, Manzanilla, Point Radix, Indian Bay, Gran Lagoon, Guayaguayare, Quiman, Point D'or, Point Ligoure, Bonasse, particularly in the Southern.

Hon. Members: All PNM areas.

Hon. C. Imbert: What beaches do you have in Caroni? Name the beach for me. So stupid. Name the beach for me in Tabaquite. I want to know what beach you have in Tabaquite. What beach do you have in Princes Town? You expect CEPEP workers to maintain the beach in Caroni Central? The beach in Barataria? I mean, come on. *[Interruption]* Foolishness beyond the extreme, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of other work, during the recent Carifesta celebrations, the CEPEP workers were involved in the clean up of the National Stadium for almost two weeks. On various Independence Day celebrations, CEPEP workers, again have been engaged in clean up of various areas. Whenever we have visitors to this country, for example, over the last couple of years we have had visiting Presidents from various African states and other places, again we rely on CEPEP to ensure that we have an enhanced environment during the visit of these foreign dignitaries.

Mr. Speaker, while no one will say that CEPEP is 100 per cent perfect, the fact of matter is that there is no gainsaying the fact that the country is certainly much cleaner now than it was before the advent of the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme. *[Desk thumping]* Certainly, the country is much cleaner now than it was under their administration. *[Desk thumping]* Certainly Trinidad and Tobago is much cleaner now than it was in 2000, 2001, 1999; under their failed, disgraced administration. Nobody can say that is not so.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite like to ride the backs of poor people; that is what you like to do. Five years they spent maligning the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme. Five years they spent saying that they are going to close it down. It is like the official residence of the Prime Minister. One of them said they would turn it into a home for battered women and the other one said that they would sell it. That is their approach to governance. You know I also have some information on what CEPEP has done in terms of illegal dump sites as further evidence of the fact that we do not agree with this Motion.

I am advised that in addition to clearing, cutting and cleaning roadways, clearing watercourses and maintaining beaches, that there are a number of illegal dump sites that have been cleared by CEPEP and I will name them for you, Mr. Speaker. Illegal dump sites on the Arima Bypass Road; O'Meara Road; in the

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Morvant area, St. Michael's Road; Arima Old Road, Trincity; Demerara Road, La Florissante, Laventille Road; Caiman Road, St. Joseph; Valencia Main Road; St. Michael's Road, Quarry Village in Siparia; Santa Flora Main Road; Cayan Road in Santa Flora; Delai Road in Fyzabad. I am sure even the Member for Fyzabad is not aware that the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme has cleared up an illegal dumpsite in Delai Road in Fyzabad. [*Crosstalk*]

They also cleared illegal dumpsites along the M2 Ringroad in La Romaine; the factory at Forres Park; Mon Plasir Road in Cunupia; Lochan Trace again in Cunupia. This is a sum of the details of the work done by the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme. All of this is the work that has been done in the last five years, which they have spent five years maligning. [*Interruption*] Yeah, yeah. The other aspect of CEPEP that Members opposite would not like anybody to know is the incubation aspects of the programme. [*Crosstalk*] You know, before the introduction of CEPEP, there were a number of persons who would never have had the opportunity to get into business.

Mr. Sharma: "Oh gawd, you killing time". Stop wasting time. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. C. Imbert: There were a number of persons—Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. Members are upset that I am speaking again. I know you are upset, but I will say it again, that—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this being the last sitting of this Eighth Parliament, let us treat the Hansard Reporter to some quiet, please. Continue, hon. Minister. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it needs to be said that a number of persons who would have not had the opportunity to get into business were it not for this caring PNM administration, have had the opportunity—I still have at least 15 minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. C. Imbert: You could say what you want. Mr. Speaker, I am going to be speaking for longer than I intended to. If you had not done what you did now I would have only spoken for 37 minutes; now I will be speaking for a minimum of 52 minutes. [*Laughter*] You see, be careful what you ask for; you might not like what you get. [*Crosstalk*] [*Laughter*] So, I would repeat, a number of persons—Mr. Speaker, I am being constantly interrupted by the hon. Members opposite. I am begging for your protection, Mr. Speaker. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: We know it is the first time in this Eighth Parliament, I think the hon. Minister is begging, so please. More importantly, have some regard for the Hansard reporter. Continue, hon. Minister.

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I know they just do not want people to hear this, but there are a number of little people in this country—

Hon. Member: Like you. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. C. Imbert:—who would have been condemned to being mere labourers; they would have never been able to rise out of their circumstances; they would have never been able to rise out of whatever environment they were in because of no fault of their own. And I can tell you from my little interaction with some of these CEPEP contractors, that I have seen persons who had no experience in business whatsoever; persons who could not have even filled out an Income Tax form; did not even know how to process a National Insurance form; did not understand what corporation tax was; had no idea of what a balance sheet was; what a profit and loss statement was; had no idea of assets and liabilities, dividends and all of the things associated with the corporate world and with company business, grow from the status of being untrained and largely uneducated and become competent, dynamic and responsible businessmen through the programmes put on by the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme. And as I said, in my own constituency, I have seen persons engaged in CEPEP—yeah, yeah—

Hon. Member: You could stop now. You could stop now.

Hon. C. Imbert: Okay, you have to rounds up everybody.

Mr. Valley: Yes.

Hon. C. Imbert:—grow from being, as I said, almost at the state of labourers, to become corporate citizens, where they now proudly operate their companies. [*Desk thumping*] They never thought that the day would come when they would be employers. They never thought that they would become members of the employer-class in this country. They never thought that they would own property; that they would accumulate assets; that there would be a redistribution of the wealth of this country; that there would be a redistribution of oil revenues. All of this has been made possible through the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme, as a consequence of the policies of this caring Government.

Mr. Speaker, while it is accepted that there is a lot more work to be done. In any programme like this you are going to have teething problems; you are going to have glitches; you are going to have situations because you are transforming

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persons from a labourer environment, from the working class into the employer class; you are making them employers; you are making them employers of people; you are developing the entrepreneurial spirit in these people; you are getting them acclimatized in terms of all their corporate responsibilities as directors and shareholders in companies. And in any scenario like that you are going to have a situation where there will be some problems; there will be some undesirable persons in the programme; there will be some errant persons, as in politics.

You know, we will soon go to a general election and as happened before and as may happen again, there may be some undesirables, especially on the other side, [*Crosstalk*] who may find their way into this Parliament; it happens in the best of organizations. You see there is fallacy in this country; it is perpetuated by the Member for St. Joseph and his hon. friends, that we in this PNM administration are not mindful of some of the inadequacies of some of our programmes.

The Member for Arima was one of the first persons who had asked for an audit of CEPEP in order to identify the various issues within that programme. [*Interruption*] There is a fallacy that we on this side just sit and blindly allow things to happen. That is not so, Mr. Speaker. And it was the Member for Arima that had commissioned an audit of CEPEP and the audit uncovered a number of issues, as any audit does. Every year in this Parliament, the Auditor General lays a number of audits on the table; ordinary audits, special audits of companies, ministries, of programmes and so on.

When you read these audit reports, you see areas of weakness; you see areas which need corrections; you see areas that need attention, and that is why you have an audit in the first place. And it was the Member for Arima that commissioned the audit that uncovered some areas of weakness within the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme, which this Government is actively addressing, but that is not sufficient. [*Interruption*] There are areas of weakness in the Opposition, which the Member for Couva North actively addressed resulting in an A team and a B team.

So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this Motion. The Government does not support this Motion. We reject this Motion. This Motion has no place in this Parliament. There are issues with CEPEP, yes, but unbalanced from an overall perspective, there is much for congratulations with respect to the management of that programme. It has done a lot for this country and I support the programme and I support the efforts of the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment to

continuously improve and enhance the operations of CEPEP. So, the Government's position is, we reject this Motion.

I thank you.

Question put and negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

Felicitations

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, I stand to move the Motion on the adjournment at this time, given the announcement of the hon. Prime Minister a while ago, which of course, brings the Eighth Parliament to a close. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. K. Valley: I am pleased to thank all Members of this House for the cooperation that I received, generally I should say, not 100 per cent of the time, in carrying on my functions as Leader of the House. I think we have done some good work in this Eighth Parliament. The House Committee, the one that takes care of Members comfort in the House, was extremely instrumental. And as we move from here to the election trail, I am sure that we would keep it clean, and therefore, it is with those words that I now move that this House be adjourned sine die.

Dr. Hamza Rafeeq (Caroni Central): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I myself want to express our thanks and gratitude to all Members on the Opposition benches and even on the Government Benches for the cooperation that we have gotten over the last five or six years or so in this Parliament.

I particularly want to express our thanks and gratitude to the parliamentary staff [*Desk thumping*] who I think have carried out their duties very, very professionally at all times. [*Desk thumping*] We hope, we do not know, my feeling is that the composition of the new Parliament will look a lot different from what it is today and I hope that for those who will be coming back, we will continue the work that we have been doing [*Laughter*] and those who will not be coming back, may God bless them. Mr. Speaker, I also want to express our sincerest thanks and gratitude to you, for the work that you have done for us over the last five or six years. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Ganga Singh (Caroni East): Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Leader of Government Business and the Chief Whip, I too will like to join with them in, how can I put it, "the curfew tolls the knell of parting day... The plowman homeward plods his weary way", this Parliament session has come to an end and I enjoyed my relationship with both the Leader of Government Business and the Chief Whip, having served in that capacity.

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Mr. Speaker, I really want to congratulate all those who are engaging the democratic process and vox populi vox Dei, the people will decide and the people will have an opportunity to decide. But before the people decide I think that we really owe it to the staff of the Parliament [*Desk thumping*] who have a very professional manner in which they have conducted themselves. And whatever the composition of the next Parliament, we are certain that the professionalism of this Parliament will be sustained and continued. [*Desk thumping*]

So, Mr. Speaker, I would really like to wish all my colleagues the best in the upcoming fray and I expect that it would be a very interesting election campaign.

I thank you.

[*Dr. Khan stood*]

Mr. Speaker: I regret I cannot recognize an Independent UNC, because an Independent UNC is not necessarily a party. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Members, as Speaker of this Eighth Parliament, I am indeed happy that it was under my speakership that we have had the Parliament Channel on air. [*Desk thumping*] I think that has been a singular achievement of this Eighth Parliament. I wish to thank the Joint Select Committee that sat on that broadcasting committee to resolve that the Parliament Channel become operational. We have had some difficulties but hopefully in the near future the Parliament Channel will go free to air, meaning that it would be transmitted throughout Trinidad and Tobago. At the moment Channel 4 assists the Parliament Channel on a free-to-air basis. It has always been the intention of the Committee that the Parliament Channel should be solely for parliamentary purposes.

The other thing I would wish to highlight in this Eighth Parliament, is the revision of the Standing Orders. As all Members know we are operating with Standing Orders since 1961. All Members would have had before them a draft of the new proposed Standing Orders and hopefully in the Ninth Parliament that should be, in my view, the first order of business. The adoption of a new report would have to come forward in the Ninth Parliament, but I do hope that in the Ninth Parliament those Standing Orders will certainly be an item of priority.

I also would like to thank the Leader of Government Business; the Chief Whip, the hon. Member for Caroni Central and the Whip operating on behalf of the Congress of the People. In this Eighth Parliament we have had some semblance of history. The Chief Whip was previously the Member for Caroni East. He has been replaced by the Member for Caroni Central and we now have

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three distinct parties operating in the Parliament and not three and a half, as I said before. I wish to thank the Whips and the Leader of Government Business and all Members of the Parliament for courtesies extended to me, as Speaker.

As we leave this Eighth Parliament, I wish all Members to remember two Members of our Parliament who are ill at the moment; one has undergone emergency heart by pass surgery; that is the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and we do wish him well; to the hon. Member for Couva South, I think he has pending surgery and we do also wish him well in this pending surgery.

To the members of staff of this Eighth Parliament; all Members recognize the contribution the staff of this Parliament has played in terms of allowing Members to carry out their duties. I do hope that in the Ninth Parliament Members will have a little more regard for the Hansard reporters, because unfortunately or fortunately the *Hansard* reporters sit in the crossfire of talk, and while banter is expected, I appeal to those Members who would be returning to the Ninth Parliament and incoming Members, to do have some regard for the Hansard reporters.

Hon. Members, in closing, I wish to thank all of you for the opportunity afforded me to serve as Speaker of this Eighth Parliament, and I wish to invite all of you for some drinks in the tea room. It is the last occasion when all Members present at this Eighth Parliament can share in a drink and some form of camaraderie. I know some of you are anxious to go to the hustings, but half an hour or one hour would not make a difference to some of you who would be here and some of you who would not be here.

Hon. Members, again, thank you very much for your cooperation and thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 2.55 p.m.