

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, December 05, 2008*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Member of Siparia requesting leave of absence from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the hon. Member seeks is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the University Students Guarantee Loan Fund for the year ended December 31, 2005. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Karen Nunez-Tesheira)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the University Students Guarantee Loan Fund for the year ended December 31, 2006. [*Hon. K. Nunez-Tesheira*]
3. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Receipts and Payments of the Intellectual Property Office for the year ended December 31, 2007. [*Hon. K. Nunez-Tesheira*]

*Papers 1 to 3 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.*

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, a written reply has been circulated. Regrettably, we do not have answers to the two Questions for Oral Answers. We ask for them to be deferred for one week.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper:*

**Health Facility  
(Endeavour Road)**

- 239.** Could the hon. Minister of Health state:
- (1) Whether there is a lease agreement for the health facility on Endeavour Road opposite to the existing health centre, the monthly rent being paid and the date of commencement of the tenancy;

- (2) whether there are any plans to build a hospital in Chaguanas;
- (3) if the answer to (2) is in the affirmative, could the Minister state what is the status of the new area health facility announced in August 2005 by the then Minister of Health;
- (4) if there are plans to build a facility, and when? [*Mr. J. Warner*]

**Brian Lara Stadium  
(Construction Details)**

- 240.** With respect to the Brian Lara Stadium could the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs state:
- (a) Whether construction activities are currently taking place; and
  - (b) If the answer to (a) is in the negative, could the Minister explain why there is no activity on the site and whether this is linked to problems of payment to contractors? [*Mr. V. Bharath*]

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION  
Private Properties  
(Government's Rental Of)**

*The following question was asked by Mr. Jack Warner (Chaguanas West):*

- 203.** Could the hon. Minister of Public Administration state:
- (a) The number of private properties being rented by the Government as at July 30, 2008;
  - (b) the initial date of each lease and the name of the lessor; and
  - (c) the total sums paid in rental from the initial date of each lease to July 30, 2008?

*Vide end of sitting for written answer.*

**ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, under this item, the Minister of Housing has a statement, but apparently she is not quite ready to make it at the moment. By agreement—Dr. Moonilal would be starting the debate on food prices today. After your initial speaking time we would take the Minister's statement.

**RISING FOOD PRICES  
(GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO CONTAIN)**

[Seventh Day]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [January 25, 2008]:*

*Be it resolved* that this honourable House condemn the Government for its failure in containing food prices at affordable levels for the entire population.

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** When last we met on this Motion, the hon. Member for Oropouche East was on his legs. He had contributed for six minutes. He has 39 minutes of original time.

**Dr. R. Moonilal** (*Oropouche East*): Mr. Speaker, when last the House met to discuss this Motion, in the six minutes provided on the last occasion, I indicated to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources who was very compassionate and appeared to be convinced of his good work and that of the Government. He was very loud and I indicated to him that if food prices would go down the louder he spoke, we would be eating for free today.

The point that I was making in that six minutes was that governments and ministers as they come and go can speak as much as they want and as loud as they care. What is the central issue is the status of food prices in the market, community and village and the capacity of ordinary citizens to afford basic amenities, foodstuff and staples. No matter how we speak, it would not change the prices in the market. The Minister will do well to listen as opposed to wanting to talk to the complaints and concerns and then seek to address those issues in the context of policies and programmes.

I will begin with a few preliminary points to congratulate the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla for filing this Motion in the House of Representatives and providing this House with an opportunity on a regular basis, to address such a pressing problem facing the national community; the escalation of food prices; the cost of living linked to poverty and our economic development and challenges. The Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla, our shadow Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources should be commended. Parliament should deal with this matter in all seriousness and honesty and seek to provide on the part of the Government, the policies, programmes and approaches which the Government is advancing that would help the situation.

Another introductory matter I will raise is that the issue of food prices and agriculture is linked to the state of the economy; the developments taking

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place in the national and international economy and its impact on Trinidad and Tobago. We on this side of the House recognize that. Where there is a difference is that we believe that notwithstanding economic turmoil and challenges across the globe which may have different degrees of impact upon Trinidad and Tobago, it is the responsibility of the Government in Trinidad and Tobago to deal with and manage the crisis in a way that the least burden would fall on the poorest people.

I have had the opportunity since the last occasion to look at the contributions of Members of this House who have had the opportunity to speak. There are some issues I want to deal with because we are in a debate. It is important that those of us on the Opposition will respond to some of the arguments and claims being raised by our colleagues opposite and seek to set the record straight. This is a country where if you say something that is wrong and repeat it and continue repeating what is wrong, people out there would believe that wrong is right. [*Laughter*]

Now that I have the litmus test that my colleagues opposite are following me and listening attentively, I could proceed. Now that I throw a little bait and they grab, I have a sense that they are listening, so I could deal with the matter. Now that I have their undivided attention, I would reflect on the contribution of the hon. Minister of Legal Affairs, hon. Peter Taylor, Minister of Legal Affairs. He contributed to this debate like other Ministers, but I would address him first because he holds a significant portfolio that involves consumer affairs related to this matter. The Minister sought, as others have done before, to indicate that the Government of the PNM has been trying seriously and is committed to dealing with the matter of agriculture and food prices.

In doing that, most of them carry in their back pocket, not the election date, but a little book of the UNC's terms in office. Every time they have to confront their reality they look back in that book to see what the UNC did or proposed to do and would bring not a commendation, but would seek to condemn the UNC in its approach to dealing with whatsoever sector, whether it is social development, agriculture and so on. As they do this they always reflect on Caroni (1975) Limited. You cannot debate agriculture and food prices in this country without getting to that issue.

The Minister of Legal Affairs made a few dangerous comments. I was shocked as a newcomer to this House, that he would allow himself to be trapped by the rhetoric and propaganda of senior colleagues. The Minister of Legal Affairs wants us to believe that before he joined the PNM Government, it took decisive action to close down Caroni (1975) Limited and it had the courage to act. Earlier this year, it was the *Newsday* editorial dealing with agriculture that said that the worst decision ever taken in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, as it

relates to agriculture, was the closure of Caroni (1975) Limited. You had a company that was cutting cane, you closed down that company to start a company that cuts grass. That is the issue. You had a company that was a state farm that was involved in agriculture, agribusiness, poultry, dairy and citrus production, you closed down that and then promised a mega farm in Chaguaramas.

It took \$5 billion to close down Caroni (1975) Limited. That figure you will get from their interministerial committee meeting chaired by Dr. Lenny Krishendath Saith in dealing with Caroni (1975) Limited and its transition. [Interruption] That is his name. They spent billions of dollars to close Caroni (1975) Limited and then spent another \$5 billion to open large farms. I believe that they got this large farm concept from Cuba because the Prime Minister went for some adjustments to his heart. I think that he went back there today. When he comes back by Monday we can expect five more state farms to be constructed. They spent \$5 billion to close down Caroni (1975) Limited and \$5 billion to open a state farm. That is \$10 billion. To this day, we have no large farm, small farm, nothing. In the last couple years of the operation of Caroni (1975) Limited, they produced 145,000 tonnes of sugar of which we consumed 45,000 tonnes and 100,000 tonnes for export.

Over the last few months I had the opportunity to visit Guyana on a frequent basis doing a piece of work with the sugar union. When we looked at the operations of the Guyana Sugar Corporation called Guysuco, like Caroni (1975) Limited, they absorb billions of dollars in social work for communities. They provide drainage.

#### **1.45 p.m.**

Caroni (1975) Limited helped the rural communities and local government organizations to provide drainage and health centres; to maintain community centres and to fix roads. That is what Caroni (1975) Limited was doing.

Caroni (1975) Limited had an estate police department and they would drive around and that acted as a deterrent to crime. When you shut down Caroni (1975) Limited, what happened was that the hospital in San Fernando or Port of Spain became overcrowded and the police, who did not have enough resources to patrol rural Trinidad, had to expand their operation.

Caroni (1975) Limited would help with drainage and irrigation. What have you now? A situation where, if there is 20 minutes of rain, towns and villages are under water. When you look at Caroni (1975) Limited—I think that the Minister of Finance in her contribution alluded to it; that Caroni (1975) Limited was

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unprofitable, but they did not factor in the social and developmental work, the enormous contribution that it made to the national community. I speak not only of paying national insurance and taxes.

Incidentally, I understand there are some Members of the House—I will come to that later—who run companies without paying National Insurance contributions. I will come to that when I deal with another matter.

So Caroni (1975) Limited contributed to the national economy and to rural development. They closed that entity. Make no mistake about it, it was driven by spite, malice and political consideration. You cannot make a mistake and claim otherwise.

In the last period of Caroni (1975) Limited's operation, the UNC embarked upon an approach to restructuring Caroni (1975) Limited to develop profit centres, an approach defined by private sector participation in the state enterprise. Eight years later, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is speaking about the same approach, after closing it down.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stay a minute or two on their position that the UNC wanted to close Caroni (1975) Limited—that was our secret. In fact, they say that the UNC's plan was to close Caroni (1975) Limited and all they did was implement it. Our plan was to provide water for all. Why did they not implement it? That is the hypocrisy we are speaking about today.

It was the former Prime Minister, the hon. Basdeo Panday, Leader of the Opposition, who, in addressing a Caroni (1975) Limited long service award in 1999, outlined our plan for the sugar industry and Caroni (1975) Limited. The then Prime Minister indicated that under a UNC government not a man would go; there would be no unemployment. The company would be restructured to ensure that profit centres were created and that there was private sector participation. So the Prime Minister, under the UNC government, spelt out our approach to Caroni (1975) Limited.

I am highlighting hypocrisy because it undermines policy. When we were in office and were embarking on private sector participation as it relates to the rum distillery and had entered into an arrangement with, I think, Angostura Limited, for private sector participation, the UNC had identified the assets as worth, at that time, \$48 million. The then Opposition leader said that we were giving away the rum assets. He said that they were worth \$900 million and that somebody named Fuchs—he listened to Fuchs—had told him it was \$900 million.

The assets of the rum distillery were sold recently for about \$5 million. When we had \$48 million for it, the Member for San Fernando East said \$900 million,

but he sold it for \$5 million. That is hypocrisy. He came into government and he closed Caroni (1975) Limited. I am telling these young people of their leader, so that when they are fired in January in the Cabinet reshuffle, they will understand. I am telling them about their leader whom I know well. He is my parliamentary representative. Because of him, there is a leak in front my house and I am waiting for him to come back from where he went.

In the budget reply of the Leader of the Opposition on Friday, October 15, 1999—let the Minister of Finance hear this; this is not from *The Economist*. I know that is her favourite. This is from something more worthy than *The Economist*, the speech of the Member for San Fernando East. He said:

“The Prime Minister himself”—meaning the Member for Couva North—“has now directed”—us to the problems of the sugar industry. The sugar industry faces difficulties—“a development that would wreak havoc in Central and South Trinidad where some 60,000 of our citizens depend on this industry for survival and sustenance. The People's National Movement will not allow this to happen and wishes to advocate a new approach to the industry based on:

- (a) mechanical harvesting;
- (b) automated sugar production;
- (c) intercropping of short crops in the cane growing season;
- (d) agro processing; and
- (e) reduction in employment levels without any loss of benefits.

This approach to technology and efficiency, Mr. Speaker, will make this industry competitive in any market of the world”—he is always world conscious; that is one thing about the Member for San Fernando East—“and, while protecting the sugar industry in Trinidad and Tobago, will ensure a stable and secure future for sugar workers and cane farmers alike.”

To make matters worse, on September 19, 2001, Mr. Manning, in his budget speech again, said:

“A PNM government will focus on the production of crops aimed at the satisfaction of domestic requirements and encourage—” and develop the sugar industry—“We will address the technical, economic and operational inefficiencies of Caroni (1975) Limited. He actually did that. He closed down Caroni—” (1975) Limited.—“with a view to making the industry efficient and economically viable.”

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Those words are in the *Hansard*. That is not from Roodal Moonilal's scrapbook. If, in 2001, he said that, by 2003, he closed Caroni (1975) Limited down. He did not wait.

I remember these things. I am a participant in the process of fighting against the tyranny and the malice. He went to Woodford Square in 2001, during the 18/18 tie and said that the Opposition must come to Parliament otherwise Caroni (1975) Limited would not get money. He held it to ransom. Tell your leaders come and help us form the Parliament, elect a Speaker, otherwise Caroni (1975) Limited will not get money. That is the nature of what we are dealing with. The company was making a breakthrough as it relates to citrus, dairy and the production of food.

I say this not only to keep the attention of the Member for Diego Martin Central, but to remind you that the crisis we face today is not only in the area of food prices, but also food production and that Caroni (1975) Limited was really the flagship of the State's food-producing entity.

When the Member for Princes Town South/Tableland, the Minister of Legal Affairs, speaks about the Government having the courage to close Caroni (1975) Limited, I remind him that his political leader was high in praise for the workers and committed himself and his future government to having a vibrant and efficient sugar industry.

The Government has a problem here with food prices and inflation. *The Economist*-reading Minister of Finance will tell us that inflation is really being propelled by food inflation—it is something that the Minister has spoken about a lot—but the Government, unable to concentrate on food production, spends its time on food pricing and chasing down every “doubles” man in the country.

When I knew the Member for Princes Town South/Tableland at the University of the West Indies, Faculty of Social Sciences, in the 1980s, I knew him as Peter Taylor. Today he is more like Peter Sellers, resembling Inspector Clouseau chasing after this hapless “doubles” man, calling on him to lower prices. It is a joke. I have never heard him speak about Apsara and these high-end places. There are some restaurants around Port of Spain where a plate of food is \$500, but I do not hear the Member quarrelling with Apsara and Prime. He now wants to chase down every “doubles” man in his area. He is in the constituency where Ali's Doubles is based and he is on the warpath with Ali's Doubles in Princess Town South/ Tableland. That is what he is doing.

It is a strategy. It is not just the “bara” man under attack. It is a strategy to deflect national attention from their inability to produce food; their inability to



help the farmers and from their inability to generate growth in the agricultural sector. So they are telling their supporters—

**Mrs. Nunez-Tesheira:** He is only looking at the camera.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Could I say that, like the Minister of Finance, I am also not trained in economics, but I can make some assertions about economics. I can speak about supply and demand. We both are not trained in this area.

I am highlighting an issue. Unable to deal with food production, they tell their supporters, poor people who cannot afford food, that it is not them, it is really the monstrous, evil, deceitful, tyrannical—it is really the supermarket owners, the parlour vendor who is cutting two ounces of cheese, selling a Chubby and some dinner mints. You see the “doubles” man, he is the biggest culprit of all. Food prices are sky high. That is what they are doing.

**2.00 p.m.**

There is a risk to that. I want to warn this Government that there is a reason bandits go into roti shops, take a beef roti and a chicken roti and walk out without paying. Do you know why? A message is sent to them that the people who run these places are crooks and cheats and they make their profit unfairly, so we should not redistribute the income. That is the message the Government is sending, when they attack the parlour owners, the doubles vendors and the soup kitchen persons. That is the message they are sending.

Please, I want to tell my friend from Princes Town South/Tableland, if he really wants to monitor all these aloo pie people he should send out some inspectors to see what they are doing and what they are charging, but do not go on national television and threaten these people and send messages to the national community about certain groups of people, which he is, in a blanket way, suggesting are unfair and evil profit-seeking cheats. That is the problem that we are facing in this country. That is also linked to crime. I do not want to dwell too much on this matter.

For seven years I have represented the people of Oropouche and now Oropouche East. We have hard-working people who really make “doubles”, aloo pies, saheenas and pholourie and they are hardworking people. In my constituency, there is something akin to a tourist attraction where you can come down on a Sunday evening and enjoy, not only the drive but the delicacies of the region. People look forward to that. When you attack these people, you attack me and you are attacking their livelihood.

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When people get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to work, cook and prepare, it is not just flour and oil, it is not that. In fact, the Member for D'Abadie O'Meara, I am sure, would have spent hours in the kitchen making some saheenas and aloo pies. She would tell you that it is not just flour and oil, it is pepper and other ingredients such as bhandania. Labour cost also goes into it. When the "doubles" man prepares and makes a profit and someone robs him of his \$3,000 or \$4,000, he loses all the profit. Crime is also affecting this group of people. You must factor that in when you attempt to come with a sledge hammer to deal with that category of people who work hard.

I am using "doubles" because the Member for Princes Town South/Tableland has targeted these people in his eyes. When you sell nuts on the street, vegetables or soup, you work hard. As a Government, you must encourage that; encourage people to make their own buck and sell whatever vegetables they have or make some processed food and sell. You must encourage that and not persuade people not to do that. Do not attack them and make it out as if they are cheats. That is an issue I wanted to raise, which is consistent with the attacks from the Member for Princes Town South/Tableland.

He went on to speak about the global crisis. Of course, everyone on the Government's side is now an expert on the global crisis. What I find most interesting about this argument was repeated by the Minister of Finance as well. I like the argument of when things are going good, we average 7 per cent to 9 per cent economic growth and that is because of the prudent management of the Government and things go bad, well that is the international economic condition; it is the world. When things are good, this is our sound economic management. Food prices and inflation are sky high, well it is an international problem. The Member for Princes Town South/Tableland told us about the international problem in Europe and the United States. I will deal more with that as we proceed.

The Minister of Public Administration made a few interesting points as they relate to agriculture and the importance of agriculture. He also had an internationalist perspective, by looking at developments in Africa, which are quite significant, given the global crisis of their own growth rates and what is taking place in the agriculture sector.

We have had contributions from the Minister of Finance. I am generally not unkind, so I would not say much there, but highlighting the issue of the era of cheap food is over was a recurring theme. It may well be so; the era of cheap food is over. The Minister of Finance sought to indicate that in this period, notwithstanding economic and industrial development and prices of export

commodities, cheap food is over and that will not come again. It also highlights the growing importance of expanding and developing your agricultural sector. An important dimension to the development of agriculture has to do with land use and land distribution. Because you are not going to plant all this food on a few Caribbean Airlines aircraft out in Piarco; you would have to plant on land. You have to provide farmers with land and the basic amenities. Having heard from my colleagues opposite, with what I call their internationalist perspective, because they read big, big books, I would like, in a few minutes, to give the grassroots perspective, which is also a perspective.

As someone who has been in an agricultural community and constituency for seven years and would have met farmers at different levels and interfaced with those persons in the market and NAMDEVCO, I have a sense of some of the issues there. When you meet farmers and you ask what about the problems they face, in seven years “none ah dem never tell me about China and India”. They have never come to me and said: “Doc, the problem we really face is that these Russians are up to something. They do not do that. Do you know what they tell you? They tell you that the price of food is high in the NAMDEVCO/Debe Market. I would ask why and they would say: “Well you see what is happening. We have to spend \$X for fertilizers and the price has increased 150 per cent. We have to spend \$X on irrigation. The irrigation is horrible and we cannot get the State or local government authorities to help with irrigation. Labour is almost impossible to get in the agricultural sector now, so we have to pay higher with less persons to work. Rain comes, flood comes, crop gone so we lose our crops. We have less and the price goes up because of the demand. You hear these simple things from the farmers. Surely, the solution is not Russia, China and India. It is providing subsidy for fertilizers, increasing your irrigation and drainage works in these communities, providing regularization on certain lands and providing some type of crop insurance. What is required in this country is crop insurance to insure crops from damages against floods. Someone said that they grow crops on the riverbanks so when it floods they can get money.

With respect to the compensation from the Government—I do not know if they call it compensation, but they have a word for that—you cannot ask farmers to plant \$5,000 in their input and you give them \$21 compensation for lost crops. That is obscene and if you speak to the farmer that is the issue.

The former Minister’s voice was equally as low as the current Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. They came to Oropouche and gave a cheque for \$21 for loss of agricultural produce. That is the situation. You have to

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insure the crops. The day is coming when this Government, or the incoming UNC government, would have to take steps to subsidize agricultural labour. We must subsidize agricultural labour, because we have created an economy where people will not go into agriculture; they will not.

The Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development—that is another occasion when we would talk about the great labour laws that you have in the pipeline.

We need to subsidize agricultural labour, so that the farmers can get people to help them. We do not have a highly-mechanized state farm in this country. At large farms with economies of scale, you can do that, but for the small farmer, he just cannot afford to buy all the mechanical equipment. He needs the subsidy of labour. This Government is advised to look at that.

Those are the problems facing the farming community. I cannot think of much again. The subsidies should be in the range of 60/40, 40 per cent public financing and 60 per cent private financing for labour cost in the agricultural sector. If you agree with that you can stand now and say it. What do you suggest Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development? [*Interruption*] You are not suggesting at all. That is not the issue.

I want to make another issue on land distribution. Again, it is not my duty. I really have consideration for my colleagues on this side of the House. There is a judgment at the High Court, No. 3606/2003, by Mr. Justice Lennox Deyalsingh. This judgment was delivered on December 07, 2007. That was the matter between the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Rights Association and Patrick Augustus Mervyn Manning and Minister of Finance/Corporation Sole, in which Mr. Justice Deyalsingh ordered that this Government, on or before June 30, 2008, granted leases to the VSEP workers. We are dealing with land distribution, which is integral to agriculture; to producing food. Hear what Justice Deyalsingh had to say: On or before June 30, 2008, the Government should grant leases. In the first case, two-acre agriculture plots with all proper infrastructure including access, drainage and irrigation facilities to each plot. Secondly, the Government should grant leases of one-lot residential lots with all proper infrastructure, including access to water and electricity to each lot; the two-acre agricultural plots and one-lot residential lots.

I want to expose a conspiracy and malice on the part of this Government. This judgment was December 07, 2007 from Mr. Justice Deyalsingh. The Government's spokespersons, a few months later, in the person of Deosaran Jagroo, CEP at Caroni (1975) Limited and Minister in the Ministry of Finance, then Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo—she had a favourite name around here, I forget what it was.

She was known by another appellation. Minister Sahadeo and Deosaran Jagroo said that the Government would keep its promise to provide former Caroni (1975) Limited workers with leases for two-acre agricultural plots and residential lots. They have committed the Government. “Government will keep promise” was the headline of Monday, December 10, 2007. It is the immediate aftermath of the judgment. [*Interruption*] Putna. I am not with Putna. That is not what I normally refer to her as. I refer to her as former Minister Sahadeo, not Putna.

On December 10, 2007 the Government said: “We will keep our promise”. Today is December 05, 2008. As of today, I am informed, one year later and five years later after the closure of Caroni (1975) Limited from a judgment of the court—this judgment is hanging over the Government. As of today, there are 8,100 available residential lots prepared and developed. Mr. Speaker, 100 residential lots have been distributed. That is 1 per cent. They have made a commitment. This is an order of the court.

### **2.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, as of today, they have distributed 100 residential lots out of the 8,100 that are available. Now, one would think that the hardest part of this problem is to get the plots ready—grade the land, prepare the infrastructure—and have them for distribution. One would think that distribution would be easy.

**Mr. Speaker:** The speaking time of the hon. Member for Oropouche East has expired. Before I put the Motion for the extension, we will now hear from the hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment. [*Desk thumping*]

### **STATEMENT BY MINISTER Short-term Approach to the Accelerated Housing Programme**

**The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Emily Dick-Forde):** Mr. Speaker, thank you. In his address to the nation on Sunday, November 30, 2008, the hon. Prime Minister listed the housing programme as one of the areas of Government activity that would be affected. Permit me to quote from that address by the hon. Prime Minister:

“There continues to be an urgent need for affordable housing in Trinidad and Tobago. Regrettably, we will start no new housing units at this time. However all housing units under construction will be completed as well as preparatory works for projects already on the drawing board. We will also expedite the distribution of those houses already completed.”

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Permit me now to elaborate on what the hon. Prime Minister said by presenting the details that led to this decision, and to address the several expressions of concerns from citizens on the potential impacts of this decision. This statement also explains how the distribution of houses should be expedited over the period, and will outline how the time over which no new housing developments will be started should be used by the Housing Development Corporation to improve the Accelerated Housing Programme in terms of quality and quantity of units provided.

Hon. Members are informed that in a recent conversation with senior management of the Housing Development Corporation, the Ministry was informed that there were 64 housing projects ongoing in various stages of completion. These projects are expected to yield 14,363 new homes. The stages of completion range from nearly completed, to units still to be started on sites under development. The expected completion dates for these 14,363 units range from one month to 36 months. Some site completion times may even be longer than this.

Many of the over 14,000 units are located in developments where the roads and basic utilities are at various stages of readiness. The funding and construction works required to complete the housing units and all amenities for creating sustainable communities are significant. The decision was taken therefore, to concentrate on advancing the completion of these sites, which includes the completion of the units and the infrastructure, using the funding made available for the Accelerated Housing Programme for 2009.

It must be noted that the Accelerated Housing Programme received the same allocation under the Infrastructure Development Fund at the revision of the 2009 budget as it did under the 2008 budget, that is, an amount of \$700 million. This amount represents \$100 million less than what was allocated under the original budget for 2009.

As the hon. Prime Minister stated in his address on November 30, 2008—“There continues to be an urgent need for affordable housing in Trinidad and Tobago”—we recognize this and will continue to do all that we can to meet that need while also ensuring a quality unit and living experience to our citizens.

The Government believes that the decision to start no new housing developments is, indeed, a wise decision as it affords us the opportunity to complete those that were started at a faster rate than if we were to stretch our resources to work on started developments as well as start new ones to meet our target.

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The issue of the target of 10,000 housing starts a year must also be addressed. The Vision 2020 goal of 10,000 units envisages 8,000 units built by the Government and 2,000 by the private sector. These targets were set under very specific macroeconomic assumptions. The global economic crisis informs us that our projected growth rates under the operational plan for this period must be revised downward. As a consequence, we must also rephase our targets. That exercise will be commenced shortly for all ministries under the Vision 2020 Office in the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment.

However, for the housing programme, we believe that it is wise and prudent to focus on completing started developments while preparing the groundwork for new ones. The ministry, through the HDC, is in the process of purchasing lands in several areas throughout the country.

The ministry shall use this time to address all issues of approval and regulatory requirements to ensure that when economic conditions improve, as they will, we are positioned to resume the Accelerated Housing Programme toward the achievement of the original Vision 2020 targets.

All of what has been stated thus far means that the distribution of affordable homes will not stop. Moreover, as stated by the hon. Prime Minister, we are poised to speed up the delivery of affordable homes over the next year as 45 of the 64 projects under construction have a scheduled completion date of 12 months or less. This represents an estimated 7,700 housing units to be delivered over the next year. The Government believes that in these challenging times it is more prudent to complete and deliver 7,700 homes to our citizens over the next year rather than initiate 8,000 new housing units.

We wish to signal here that there may be a revision of the target to focus not on the commencement of housing units, but on completed, high quality houses in sustainable communities, units ready for delivery to our citizens. This is what the housing programme promises and this is what we will continue to deliver. When we measure performance on the basis of units completed, it ensures that we focus on our goal to provide affordable homes to our citizens, which should improve our delivery record.

Hon. Members and citizens may recall that the former National Housing Authority was made defunct and the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) created to implement new, modern systems of management that would allow it to fulfil its mandate to facilitate the provision of quality affordable homes, and all the attendant facilities for sustainable communities. This period of global

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economic difficulty will be used to complete the refinement of those systems, which are necessary to ensure that the HDC pursue its mandate successfully.

The HDC will also focus on working with the homeowners to ensure a smooth transition into their new home through workshops and seminars prior to the distribution of keys. This is to ensure that homeowners understand their rights and responsibilities as the owners of property, and the HDC's rights and responsibilities as the seller of that property.

It is this Government's intention to continue to promote the desirable values and attitudes that all individuals should manifest as responsible citizens, working together with us to attain developed country status on or before the year 2020. Some of these values and attitudes captured in our national vision statement include united, resilient, caring, productive, healthy, happy citizens, who reflect the attributes of self-reliance, respect, tolerance, equity and integrity.

To encourage such attitudes homeowners will also be exposed to more in-depth information and education on community living. The ministry has had many complaints about the need for programmes and interventions on community living to help reduce the incidence of conflict and discomfort to persons as a result of the inconsiderate actions of others living in their communities. This time of global economic difficulty will be used to encourage our homeowners and all of our citizens to reflect the change they wish to see and be exemplars of the values and attitudes that make up our vision for the citizens of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thus far, this statement has presented the fact that a considerable amount of construction activity will be undertaken through the HDC in the coming months. We believe that there should be no major reduction in work for contractors.

Since there are over 14,000 units under construction which started over several years in the past, this suggests that we have been operating at close to full capacity. The continuation of the Accelerated Housing Programme, through the completion of these units, will assist our economy at this time as continued employment is provided for skilled and unskilled workers in the construction sector. With employment in the Government's housing construction programme holding steady in the next 12 to 24 months, we hope that there will be very little negative impact to national employment as has been predicted by some commentators.

During the coming months, therefore, the HDC is directed to develop further its professional relationship with contractors to ensure that they maintain the high standards which we require for the delivery of quality homes to our citizens. The



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HDC will use this time to perfect a system of evaluation of the quality of work done by contractors and services provided by project managers, as well as their general performance. This evaluation should result in a database of approved contractors and project managers for tendering for future Government housing developments. A high level of professionalism, quality and service is required and must be delivered by service providers in the construction industry.

This Government has determined that these challenging times will be an opportunity for us to improve service delivery to our citizens through continued sound planning and the re-engineering of our processes. We shall ensure that we are focused on productivity and efficiency improvements during these rough times and be ready to accelerate our development programmes when our economy, and the economies of the world, returns to normal. As stated in our Operational Plan 2007—2010, the driving force behind Vision 2020 has always been and will remain this Government's enduring passion and desire to bring prosperity and a higher quality of life to every individual, family and community across the country.

We are committed to this vision and to those stated ideals and goals. The decisions taken at this time with respect to our housing programme were informed by and will result in the achievement of our Vision 2020 goals.

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

**RISING FOOD PRICES  
(GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO CONTAIN)**

*Motion made*, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. R. L. Maharaj SC*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr. R Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for your kindness and generosity during this season of giving. Before the interruption, I was dealing with the issue of land and land use as they are linked to agriculture. Like you, sitting and listening attentively to the Minister's statement, it also dawned upon me, the issue of land use as it relates to housing, which I would also like to comment on in a few moments.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition Chief Whip and colleagues on this side, I also want to take the timely opportunity to register our complaint with the tendency on the part of the Government to organize its business so that they must make Statements by Ministers and interrupt with monotonous frequency. With

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unfailing regularity, they will interrupt every Friday the debate and Members' contributions. On the Order Paper there is an item called "Statements by Ministers". I do not think that it is so hard for them to prepare for the appointed time to give their statements. I just want to leave that matter there.

**2.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker on the issue of land distribution, I was making the point before the statement; we are informed that residential lots, 8,100 are available today for distribution. So far 100 residential lots have been distributed; that is 1 per cent. The Opposition is asking, what is the problem with distributing the residential lots? What is the problem? What is the keep back? Are we waiting for the former Caroni workers to die? Is this some strategy, some conspiracy to deny those workers an integral component, an element of their separation package which is legally owed and to which the Government is obliged and duty-bound to provide? This is the question.

If you have residential lots developed already; they are ready to be distributed today, what is the keep back? Developing the lots would have been the problem, certainly not distribution. They published—again, in doing my research I came across all their big magazines, publications and so on, in which they invited 500 former Caroni workers to come in and they listed their names in the newspapers, to deal with allocation and get more information and so on.

Mr. Speaker, they invited all the Caroni workers, naming them in a notice, an entire supplement, calling all the persons to come in for a discussion. This was almost one year ago. Today 100 residential lots distributed, when you have 8,100 available.

Let us go to agriculture because this debate really is about food prices and agriculture. Let us go there! In terms of agricultural lands, six months ago, 4,000 2-acre parcels of agricultural lands were ready to be distributed. That is out of a total of 7,600 promised, and indeed, the Member for Caroni Central is reminding me that it emerged in response to a question filed in this House—it was, I believe, a written response where the Estate Management Business Development Company gave a response—it was question 163, and outlined the number of agricultural parcels that are available and prepared.

So, out of a promise of 7,600, 4,000 are ready to be distributed at 3 o'clock on Friday afternoon, but so far, 320 parcels have been given out. So, out of 4,000 available, 320 given out; the last batch of 90—I think—some time in May 2008. So, that is a delivery percentage—I like this percentage "eh"—of 4.2 per cent. They have delivered 4.2 per cent in terms of agricultural lands. Today, we have the obscenity of travelling and looking along the road in the former Caroni

sections as we call them, bush now growing on the lands; bandits and criminal elements are putting up four-by-four shacks so they can hide their narcotics, guns and ammunitions and so on the lands prepared for agriculture, because this Government is failing to distribute the agricultural lands to the former Caroni workers. Why? Surely, it cannot be hard to distribute. The hardest part of this deal is to prepare. *[Interruption]*

I told you six months ago, 4,000 were ready.

**Mr. Ramnath:** You are asking a rhetorical question.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Today 6,300 parcels of land are ready, but only 320 parcels are given.

**Mr. Ramnath:** This is a racist Government.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** That really is the crisis we face. We talk so much about agriculture. So much! The land is there ready and waiting, developed to give out to the former workers who you invited one year ago to apply and so on and you do not have it. You are not giving it to the Caroni workers. So, you cannot be serious about agriculture. *[Interruption]* You cannot be serious about food prices.

I have noted like the Minister outlined in his contribution, their concern with agriculture and so on, but you have to give out the lands and I say this in the context of an article in the *Daily Express*, August 12, 2008 and the headline here is “Ex-Caroni workers drop out of land programme”:

“Many workers”—and this is in August, “eh”, not December—“say that they are tired waiting, they have to go on to other jobs.”

In many cases they are saying that as age catches up and their work life is coming to an end, it is getting harder now to contemplate working on this agricultural land that they do not know when it will come. Apart from that, the workers themselves were asked to expend resources to develop access roads and drainage. Access roads are also critical for the farming community.

Another article I had the opportunity to read in the *Business Guardian*, Thursday, May 05, 2008: “Caroni’s empty basket, Caroni lands are now dilapidated, abandoned and overgrown with bush, whereas, before you had food production”. So, what are you talking about? While that is happening they continue to waste. We heard recently from the Prime Minister on television in an address to the nation—with his address to the nation pink tie—that we are going to experience cuts in recurrent expenditure and some capital expenditure and so on and they are going to cut.

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While they are indicating that and telling us that schools would not be built, police stations would not be constructed, community centres would not be constructed, I only hope that the Minister of Education remembers the promise to construct a primary school in Monkey Town, Barrackpore, to begin in October 2008. I am hoping that that school for the children of Barrackpore will not perish because of the economic challenges of the day, when the children have waited three years for that school. You are committing yourself to that, I assume?

**Miss Le Gendre:** It is committed in the budget.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I pray that the children would get their school, but they continue to waste money. [*Interruption*] I am reminded that two weeks ago, it was in response to a question in this honourable House, the relevant Ministry and Minister indicated that NAMDEVCO and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs spent a total of \$810,000 between January 2007 to the present day in publishing in the three daily newspapers a price-watch notice. Imagine almost \$1 billion—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** One million dollars.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:**—\$1 million, sorry, for price watch. One million dollars for price watch, while that is happening, do you know very soon the price of a pound of tomatoes will outstrip the price for a barrel of oil? [*Laughter*] Very soon a pound of tomatoes will cost more than a barrel of oil, while they were wasting \$1 million. But, that does not hurt me as much as the next one I want to draw to your attention. I am looking at December 04, 2008—yesterday—in the newspaper—this is a Government and I am speaking about the waste of money while we cannot pay compensation to farmers, “eh”.

As you know there is now a state enterprise running a car park: “Park at the Parkade”, and there is a one-page full colour ad by UDeCott—the cost of this is \$15,000—In three newspapers, telling you that the Parkade is open, ideal and secure for your parking and how many cars can go there. And they are telling you it is \$5 for an hour; \$45,000 on one day to advertise a car park. Who are you competing with? The car park at the corner of Duke Street and Abercromby Street run by Ramgoolie, who sits down on an iron chair with an umbrella? Is that your competitor? Is that what you are spending \$45,000 to advertise?

**Mr. Ramnath:** They are competing with Ramgoolie. [*Laughter*]

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** They are competing with the car park on the South Quay by the bus shed; a Government state-owned enterprise running a car park and \$45,000 a day to advertise the car park. You could put up a sign in front of the car park and say park here, \$5 an hour.

The people in Tobago, the people in Point Fortin and Barrackpore, I do not think they necessarily want to read about this great car park in Port of Spain.

**Mr. Ramnath:** We do not even have a car park in South.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, do you know that it would take 9,000 cars parking for one hour to get back the money they pay for ads for a day. Nine thousand cars parking for one hour to get back the money they spend in one day to advertise a car park in Port of Spain.

**Hon. Member:** That is PNM belt tightening.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** What is that, belt tightening? That is seat belt tightening. [*Laughter*] Mr. Speaker, this is the wanton waste of resources that we talked about. [*Desk thumping*] This is the point, advertisement.

**Mr. Bharath:** How much already sold?

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Well, they have a nice list here of how much—I will pass that on to Members, maybe they want to use the monthly reserved option. I am sure it is a state enterprise running this, there may be platinum members, gold members and so on, to get car park facility in Port of Spain.

**Mr. Ramnath:** UDeCott.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** That is the obscene wanton waste of resources.

**Mr. Bharath:** They sold out most of the spaces already.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Ten per cent is available. In fact, the \$45,000 was to tell you that only 10 per cent car park space is available again, come now whilst it is hot. [*Laughter*]

So, Mr. Speaker, on the matter of housing and food, I draw your attention, Tuesday, August 19, 2008: “Farmers are protesting, food first, houses later.” The Minister came this afternoon and in a statement that we all listened to so attentively, told us something about the house programme and they will give out houses and so on, and that is fine. But they have used prime agricultural lands for houses. Apart from flooding issues and so on, they are in a position now where many of these houses in Golconda and in Diamond are overrun with bush, with grass. Sometimes we call the police in San Fernando to tell them to go in some of these housing areas, we understand that criminal elements are hiding out there—I hope they are not legitimate tenants, but that is where they are hiding out.

In my constituency in a part called Hermitage near Palmiste, I had the experience to call upon HDC and related agencies when they were bulldozing

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agricultural food crops from a farmer and when I confronted the HDC, I said why are you destroying the peppers, the bodi—what is that, the Member for Princes Town North has a bhaigan or a cucumber or something there in his bag. He is walking around now from doubles to grocery—when I asked the HDC people, I said why are you bulldozing the crops?

**Mr. Ramnath:** Why are you against the doubles?—

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes, this is inspector Clouseau who is chasing the doubles vendor.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Peter Sellers.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Peter Sellers. [*Laughter*]—they gave me the most brilliant and profound answer I ever got in life, they said we must destroy these crops here because we are clearing the lands for agriculture. [*Laughter*] And that is the nature—they said we must clear these lands, this is our mandate. I said but why, look pepper, tomatoes; why are you destroying that? They said we have a mandate, we are clearing the lands for agriculture, and farmers came into my office and they were crying and weeping. I dispatched letters to the then Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources; I do not know if anybody got any compensation for that.

Mr. Speaker, if you are serious about food prices and food production, you cannot undertake this type of activity, you must be serious. I want the Government to answer—I do not know who it will be because most of the agriculture related Ministers spoke already—tell us out of your Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA) which they established some years ago, how many of our young people have been trained and are currently involved in agriculture which the programme was established for? Tell us of the increase in the provisions to the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), how many farmers have accessed this; where are these farmers and what are they doing? Because you can give a loan for \$2 million, but that is really two farmers, whereas you can give a loan for \$1 million to 10 farmers. Sometimes when we hear the blanket absolute figure it masks the fact that it really is not farmers. It is two businessmen get a loan from the ADB to put a juice plant somewhere and they may not even put it there.

So what is the role of the YAPA, the agricultural development programme? I am not just criticizing in a vacuum. I understand that NAMDEVCO and other agencies have been having a Sunday farmers' market and so on, and trying to bridge the gap between the original price at the field and providing for consumers. I understand the work that some of them are doing. In fact, in my own area in Oropouche—

**2.45 p.m.**

It is useful because they can do that and it helps, but that is in controlling prices. While today, I am inviting you to consider the issue of food production, not food price alone. That is the challenge. Otherwise, every time you have to deal with a food price crisis, you will invoke China and India and condemn the doubles man unless you do not deal with food production, which invariably would lead to a decrease in prices, because there is a basic law of economics. If everybody along a street in a village come out and put cucumber in the front to sell, the price of cucumber will go down. It must. That is a basic law. And if you understand the basic economics—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Ramnath:** Same thing with doubles.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Precisely—of that sector, all will be well.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to summarize and make a couple concluding statements. In closing, I want to say that on a previous occasion I had indicated that one fundamental difference among many, between the People's National Movement and the UNC, is our concern with equality of opportunity and equality. [*Desk thumping*] Today,—every time I speak I will highlight a next difference—the second difference I wanted to point out between the People's National Movement and the United National Congress, is our concern with agriculture farming as a basis for economic development.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Good point. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** There can be no developed country status until you develop a capacity to produce food for yourself. We are very clear that Trinidad and Tobago is an open society and there is a point at which our citizens will always want foreign food and drink because we are open to tastes from abroad. It is a globalized village, but there is also a point at which we must develop our food producing capability to satisfy the needs of those who are really underprivileged and needy, because middle and upper class will always have a taste for external, foreign taste and so on and will want to buy juice from Miami and so on. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Exotic goods.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Exotic goods. But when you concentrate on food production, you do so, so that those who are in need, that 16.7 per cent of persons who Government tells us are under the poverty line can access food. Your food production capacity helps and that is where developed country status comes from.

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Developed country status did not come from the tall buildings. Their analysis of developed country is that when they came into power there were two tall buildings in Port of Spain and when they leave power, there will be eight tall buildings in Port of Spain. That is their thinking on development. That is their thinking and eventually they may have the Minister of Legal Affairs selling doubles on the fifth floor at the Hyatt one day if this continues, because the Hyatt is a State run Government organization, built by Government for Government. So eventually you will have to convert that into some type of market as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, the priority must be clear. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Ramnath:** “Don’t be hurry you know, you will get burn.”

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** And might I add that in rural communities, we have been crying out to the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and to the Ministry of Works and Transport to help us, to clear and develop agricultural access roads. Farmers complain all the time for agricultural access roads. The Minister of Local Government came to Penal/Debe, took a tour and they showed her all the roads that are in dilapidated state. I think she picked some pepper and ochro too somewhere there. She made a commitment to assist and she could not. She did not.

Mr. Speaker, another critical problem I want to end with is this issue of praedial larceny. Some of them on that side may be guilty of it, I do not know. They themselves may be guilty of this when they walk in the House with vegetables, and there is no assurance that they bought it. If they come in with vegetables here, we must really check whether the praedial larceny squad knows of any report.

**Mr. Speaker:** I see you are in a jovial mood, but—

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** No, please. What you are really doing is broad-brushing the whole Government Bench and I know you do not really mean that, so—

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** No, wait, I will give you a little injury time. Do the right thing.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the remark. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Ramnath:** Broad-brush it by saying *[Inaudible]*

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Let me concentrate on the issue of praedial larceny, not the defendants.



Mr. Speaker, this is a very critical problem facing rural Trinidad and the agricultural sector. We have heard time and time again from the Minister of National Security, from the Ministers of Government on this issue, much more needs to be done, not much more needs to be said. That is a fundamental difference. Not much more needs to be said, much more needs to be done to provide the resources to the police; to enhance the squads; to take praedial larceny seriously, so that farmers will feel protected that if they lose 20/25 pounds of produce, they will either be compensated; the police will hold and convict the offenders; and it will not happen again. Farmers are in mortal fear today of planting any crop outside of their eyesight.

**Mr. Imbert:** [*Inaudible*]

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes, people have reported the losses of their own poultry, dairy products and so on, livestock.

Mr. Speaker, farmers have told us that they will not plant anything away from their house where they can see it in the evening, at night or in the morning. Because regularly, we have marauding gangs that go through these areas and just pick people's produce, take it to the market and sell wholesale to vendors who then end up selling the crops of a hard-working farmer. So while we are really concerned with food price, the doubling vendors and so on, we should also be concerned with this issue and strengthening the police.

And I want to say in defence of the police officers, I have had much contact with policemen in the Oropouche area on this matter and in defence to them, when you call them on these matters, they will always tell you, they do not have vehicles and manpower. Even if they hold someone, they have to abandon the police post to go to San Fernando Police Station to do the necessary formalities and so on. They have to carry the person back to the farm to show him the produce or the farmer to see the produce and so on and they do not have that equipment and manpower. So that really is the problem.

If you would just assist with praedial larceny, farmers will be happy; with agricultural access roads; with subsidy for fertilizers, with irrigation and drainage; and with the price of labour. These are the issues. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that notwithstanding the deep interest of my colleagues opposite, they would have taken note and responded to some of these matters in a timely fashion.

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

**The Minister of Tourism (Hon. Joseph Ross):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The more I read this Motion that was brought to this House by the hon. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla and the more I listen to the speakers on the other side, is the more I wonder whether these people really believe what they are saying. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Sharma:** That is your opening statement?

**Hon. J. Ross:** I ask myself whether these people really live in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, after listening to the last speaker in particular, the hon. Member for Oropouche East—and I listened to some of his comments—I feel that it is incumbent upon me to respond to some of the things he had to say.

**3.00 p.m.**

First of all, I want to comment on his congratulations to the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla for piloting this Motion. [*Crosstalk*] I cannot understand why he would want to really and truly congratulate the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla, and later on I would show why I think that instead of congratulating that Member he should be congratulating this Government for its efforts in dealing with prices and in dealing with food production. [*Desk thumping*]

He also argued about the mistake that the Government made in closing down Caroni (1975) Limited. In my view, the decision to close down Caroni as a whole—not the constituency of Caroni, but sugar production—was made over 170 years. If we recall our history quite clearly, slavery was abolished not merely for economic reasons, not merely, in fact, for humanitarian reasons, but for economic reasons. The argument was already settled long, long time. It took us 170 years to realize that the time had come for this country to go into other aspects of agriculture. This is one reason why I think, again, that this Government should be complimented and congratulated. [*Desk thumping*]

I have to come to the defence of my colleague to the right. I could not understand why he would attack the hon. Minister for asking doubles vendors to reduce prices. [*Interruption*] This is the point; it was not only the doubles vendors. [*Crosstalk*] When prices fell generally he asked all the suppliers of goods that use some of these ingredients to, at least, pass down some of the reduction in prices to the consumers; doubles vendors happened to be one of them. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Hon. J. Ross:** The price of flour had been reduced significantly, and this is what the hon. Member was asking. [*Desk thumping*]

In my short discourse this afternoon, I would want to touch briefly on three things. I am encouraged to do so largely as well because of the contribution of the Member for Oropouche East. I want to respond to some of what I considered to be very unfounded, unfortunate and probably very misleading statements made by some of the Members on the other side. I would not be able to go through all of them, so I probably would target one or two.

I would also like to put as well this whole question of rising food prices in a proper context. In a context that would enable this honourable House and the population at large of Trinidad and Tobago to understand and to appreciate the initiatives, the actions and the plans of this Government to provide food security and affordability for every single person in Trinidad and Tobago.

Last, but by no means least, the hon. Member for Oropouche East talked about the Agricultural Development Bank and its importance. I think I would like to answer that question this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, rising food prices is not a new phenomenon. Rising food prices is not unique to Trinidad and Tobago. When I looked at the headlines, over the last year or so, in some of the leading magazines around the globe: *Time Magazine*, "The world's growing food price crisis"; *The Economist*, "The end of cheap food"; *Financial Times*, "US food groups plan hefty price rises;" *Wall Street Journal*, "Global food price shock;" Finfacts of Ireland, "Rising global food prices to hit consumption"; and the list goes on and on and on. I am saying that it is not unique to Trinidad and Tobago.

Very early this year, Mrs. Karen de Montbrun, the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Organization at a trade and investment conference that was held in Macoya, at the Centre of Excellence, made it quite clear that we must face the reality. I am quoting her now:

"We must face the reality that the days for cheap food are over."

That statement was made by the President of the TTMA this year.

Mr. Speaker, as early as 1980, I want us to recall—and I am glad that my good friend, the Member of Parliament for Mayaro, is back at his seat; he would, more or less, I believe, confirm what I am saying—I think it was Willard Harris, better known as Lord Relator to all and sundry in Trinidad and Tobago, who had a famous song, "Food Prices". Willard Harris was able, even at that time, to identify the problem of rising food prices in Trinidad and Tobago and globally. [*Interruption*]

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I thought I had the document here, but nevertheless. Harris pointed out that it was very difficult, even then, for people to buy stuff in the grocery. It was difficult even then; he actually called almost every single product you would go to the grocery for. He was showing that the prices were so high; that was in 1980.

If we look at it again, the price of foodstuff and the shortage of basic food stuff must be of concern to any government, and everyone for that matter. I want to emphasize now that Government intervention alone cannot and will not be enough to solve this problem of rising food prices. We need a concerted effort; every businessman, every farmer, every individual, every consumer in this country, every single one, would have a part to play, and Government as well would have its part to play in controlling and ensuring that we have affordable prices for all and sundry.

I am going now to the hon. Member for Fyzabad. In one of the statements that he made quite early in his contribution he accused the Prime Minister of misleading the country. He said that the Prime Minister told this nation that one of his areas of focus would be to reduce food prices. His assertion was that no sooner the Prime Minister made that statement, food prices went skyrocketing: chicken went up; bread went up; flour, oil, cheese, eggs, et cetera. He started enumerating all the things that went up. But again, you have to ask yourself if the hon. Member understood what the Prime Minister was saying.

When the Prime Minister said that his focus would be on reducing prices, he did not imply that food prices would go down immediately. He meant that Government would put attention, Government would concentrate upon, and Government would put efforts and energies and resources into ensuring that prices were maintained at a particular level and as well to ensure that people, particularly the lesser fortunate in our country, could afford to get the food that they need. The Prime Minister never insinuated that he would perform magic.

It is indisputable that one of the areas of focus of this Government is to keep food prices at an affordable level for all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It is indisputable that Government is doing all within its powers to ensure that the people of Trinidad and Tobago can afford and can have the basic food that they would need.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources while he was here made it clear that our vision for agriculture was to create a robust, modern, prosperous and competitive sector and to improve the nation's food security.

Mr. Speaker, Government has gone through the rigorous process; Government has gone through the aches and pains of developing a master plan for this country,

and we continue to put the necessary mechanisms in place to ensure that the results of our plans are not only achieved, but are maintained and sustained. The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and other speakers have substantially informed this House and the nation of these plans, so there is no need for me to go into all the details. When I look at the Motion again, in itself it implies lack of sustainability. The Motion that was moved by the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla was very shortsighted; it is just looking at now, at now, at now. The Government is not just concerned about now and now, but is concerned about now and down the road, so we are putting in place both short-term, medium term and long-term measures to ensure food security and affordability in Trinidad and Tobago.

We have been making available more and more lands for agricultural production. Government has been involving more and more persons in agriculture as well. The hon. Member for Oropouche asked about the Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA); about how many persons had been trained and what had been done in that area.

I want to make it clear that over 7,000 persons passed through the YAPA programme between the years 2002 to 2007; over 7,000 persons. A lot of them have been retained within the agricultural sector; some have chosen not to remain, and that is their right. No one can force you to do something that you do not want to do. Government acts as a facilitator. Government puts the mechanisms in place, but we also recognize that the people have the freedom to choose where they want to work. A lot of them have remained in agriculture.

Government has also been providing more and more support for persons engaged in farming; more and more support: incentives for land preparation and purchase of vehicles and equipment. Under Government's Agricultural Incentives Programme almost 15,000 applications were approved between 2002 and 2007.

So when you come here and say that the Government has not been doing anything, it is a fallacy. This Government has been doing almost every possible thing to ensure that food is available at a reasonable price.

Mr. Speaker, Government has also established a National Agricultural Business Development Programme. We have put in place a programme to revitalize our local cocoa industry. All these things were highlighted by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. We have also embarked upon major infrastructure improvement and development as they relate to agricultural access roads and bridges.

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Just recently I was driving through Princes Town, and when I saw the number of access roads that were being put in place in that agricultural area; it points to the fact that the Government is concerned about ensuring that the farmers have access to and from their gardens to make it easy for them to increase production. All this infrastructure: The number of access roads that we have rehabilitated, that we have constructed, the number of bridges and culverts, inverts and drains in agricultural areas, and all the development work, were carried out for the farmers. Yet those Members on the other side continue, or have the gumption as some would say, to say that the Government is not doing anything in terms of infrastructural development for the farmers.

I come back to the hon. Member for Fyzabad. I recall in his contribution he said that at one home in Fyzabad lunch was served for a family of four. They had rice; they had peas, one other vegetable item and a salad and meat. That cost the family \$9.50 per plate. He went on to say that the head of that home was a CEPEP worker and so on.

Instead of this Member saying thanks to the PNM, thanks to the Government, which gave the poor man an opportunity to be able to feed his family, the hon. Member accused the Prime Minister of doing nothing to help the less fortunate. I cannot understand the level of thinking of this kind. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** They have no thinking.

**Hon. J. Ross:** He would have preferred that this guy go somewhere else and do something that was illegal to provide food for his family. Mr. Speaker, CEPEP is functional; it is another way that the Government is ensuring that persons have employment, that persons have an earning, that persons can provide food for their families.

The Government has done everything possible to ensure that in Trinidad and Tobago every person is employed. Today, unemployment is just about 5 per cent. Where else in the Caribbean; where else? There are very few places in the world where this is happening. This is more than a phenomenal achievement; very few countries have achieved full employment. This says that despite the rising food prices, people are still in a position in Trinidad and Tobago to feed, to clothe and to shelter themselves and their families.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Fyzabad said that the Prime Minister promised an unprecedented level of food production in this country that would make food affordable to everyone. He claimed that was not so.

**3.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister had outlined at the time Government's plans for establishing all these farms and so forth, and these kinds of statements the hon. Member was making are very dishonest and misleading and a simple process as building a house takes time. You have to secure the land, draw up plans, obtain approvals, obtain funding, hire contractors, and you can go on and on. It takes time, so he cannot expect if Government states its intention and puts down its plans that there would be almost action, when I say action, almost come to fruition immediately thereafter. What the Prime Minister was doing was outlining Government's programme for increasing agricultural production and as well ensuring affordability.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has delivered in education and health,; we have brought unemployment down, we are modifying and beautifying Port of Spain, we have built over 20,000 houses and so forth. This Government has a history of delivering, and if the Prime Minister said that Government would do everything possible to make agriculture as important and successful as energy, the Government's track record is there to show. It will be achieved with the help of God. Hon. Member for Fyzabad, your judgment is seriously flawed and erroneous. We continue to perform. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take him up on one other point. He quoted the World Health Organization (WHO) as saying that people in Trinidad and Tobago are not eating enough vegetables and it is affecting the kids in schools. What is he insinuating? What is he trying to tell us? Was he saying to us that we do not have enough vegetables in Trinidad and Tobago? In a report produced by the *Tourism Global* in September 2007 entitled "The Trinidad and Tobago Accommodation Sector as a Consumer of Locally Produced Goods and Services and the Contributor to Government Revenues", that is the article in which it was reported that the hotel sector sourced between 62 per cent to 85 per cent of its requirements locally in the area of dairy, vegetables and meats. Close to 80 per cent of the vegetables the hotels use are sourced locally.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that the children of Trinidad and Tobago are not eating enough vegetables, I believe is one of choice; it has nothing to do with availability but with choice. I am saying if the hon. Member had suggested that we need to embark on a serious national drive to educate our people on eating the right foods I would have supported him, but I cannot support him when he tries to blame the Government for the children not eating enough vegetables when there are more than enough for the people of Trinidad and Tobago generally speaking.

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Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn the attention of this House to the question of the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB). I listened quite carefully to speaker after speaker commenting on the Agricultural Development Bank and the manner in which they referred to it, one wonders whether it was ever meant to serve a useful purpose in terms of the development of the agricultural sector.

The operations of this bank have been maligned over and over by Members on the other side. I feel it is important for us to trace the development of this bank, trace its historical development and to see where it was then and where it is today in 2008; to see what it did then, and what it is doing now in 2008. The ADB has come a very long way, it has played a very important part in agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago and continues to be one of the premium agencies in the development of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago.

My information is that in the 1800s, there was a need to assist the plantation owners to replant their estates which were devastated by major hurricanes, and a mortgage lending institution was formed. So it started off as a mortgage lending institution to these landowners, and with the advent of World War II, quite a number of plantations went into bankruptcy and the Government of that day had to acquire several of these properties through what was then called the Agricultural Credit Bank (ACB). So first was the Agricultural Credit Bank coming into play to assist some of those landowners who had suffered devastation.

Mr. Speaker, I know that some of the Members on my side may not be as old to remember Hurricane Flora, but in 1963 Hurricane Flora devastated Tobago—and the Member for Tobago West could recall that—and by extension agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago was a major victim. The Government at that time, a PNM government had to redesign the ACB so the government redesigned the Agricultural Credit Bank and gave birth to what is now called the Agricultural Development Bank in 1968. New policies were set out for the development of this bank.

Between 2001 and 2004, funding to the tune of \$39 million was provided to improve productivity and implement good practices, as well as grades and standards focusing on vegetables, agri-services, agri-industries and livestock. So between that period, we saw the Agricultural Development Bank playing a very important role in providing services and funding, and the bank had then adopted a more holistic approach by providing training, technical and marketing support, and by offering new products such as the Tobago credit pilot and cocoa revitalizers.

The bank was growing in importance, expanding its role, assisting more and more farmers and making more and more contributions to agribusiness and



agriculture. The bank also got involved in training activities to groups such as the Caroni (1975) Limited ex-workers who all benefited from training provided by the ADB.

Mr. Speaker, so all this talk and half-truths that are being highlighted by the other side, I do not think we need to entertain them at all. The ADB continues to play a major role in agriculture development, in food security and affordability of food in Trinidad and Tobago. The problem I believe on the other side is that they would like the ADB to be operated in a very uncontrolled manner, and under this Government, that we will never see. The Agricultural Development Bank will continue to operate in an efficient, effective and very productive way.

Mr. Speaker, it must be recognized that we in Trinidad and Tobago import most of our basic foods: rice, oil, milk, potatoes for the doubles and aloo pies and what have you. As such, we must be subject—I see the hon. Member for Tabaquite when I said potatoes for doubles, it is like “dis man doh know nothing about doubles.” I really meant aloo pies.

Mr. Speaker, we must be subject to the vagaries of the marketplace. We are not swimming in this alone in the tide of rising prices. The rising food prices and shortages must be placed in its proper context, we must see the issue against a global scarcity of basic food items, and we are seeing a change now, things are beginning to fall. So if you put it in context you would see that this Government has been doing the right things and within the areas it can control.

Mr. Speaker, the scarcity or the high prices were brought about by a number of things: droughts across the globe; rising oil prices; growing affluence of the Asian population; corporate monopolization of the world’s food system and growing interest in agro-fuels and biofuels. All these things would have contributed to rising food prices, and I understand that while global consumption of milk had risen by some 14.3 per cent between 2002 and 2007, the number of cows for milk production had risen by a meagre 1 per cent. In other words, demand was outstripping supply globally. So if in economics demand is outstripping supplies, of course, those who are supplying would tend to increase their prices.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a global village today and as such we must be affected by what goes on around the world. Trinidad and Tobago is just a dot in the ocean and this fast unfolding rising prices or food shortages now affect the entire world, even the prosperous and rich Japan is feeling the effects of it.

Mr. Speaker, what we have also been witnessing has been referred to as the politics of food scarcity. In other words, those countries that produce tended to

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restrict the exports in order to control their domestic prices; Vietnam, Cambodia, Egypt have done the same in terms of restricting rice exports for a period.

The global food supply is caused by the effects of factors affecting both demand and supply. So the whole question of food prices globally has been affected by both demand and supply. And on the demand side, we are witnessing the addition of some 70 million people every year on the planet, 4 billion people moving up the food chain, an increase in the world grain consumption from 20 million to 50 million in 2005.

### **3.30 p.m.**

So we are seeing more and more people moving up the food chain, more and more people coming on stream requiring more and more food and we have not witnessed the comparable increase in food production globally.

On the supply side, there is just not enough land in the world to provide the necessary increases. These are just some of the factors. I heard calls from the other side for price control. I think I heard the hon. Member for Siparia earlier in her contribution, talking about controlling prices; Government needs to put controls on the prices. Price controls are not necessarily effective. Price control could send a negative signal throughout the entire country. They could be more damaging in the medium to long term, since they tend to distort resource allocation and lead to further food shortages.

These are some of the fallouts of implementing price controls. Price controls, we know, also encourages hoarding and then Government now has to take its time and energies to have excessive measures to make these controls effective. So when they can stand on the other side and say: "Put price controls; put price controls", it is easy to say, but worldwide it has shown that it is not effective and we have more problems emanating where price controls are put in place than where the market forces are allowed to control.

I want to turn for a brief minute to the *Business Guardian* of Thursday, December 04, 2008. There are so many articles written. There is an article written by Sandra Chouthi entitled "Lower food prices". It is interesting to note that it starts by saying:

"Guyana has had a bumper 2008 rice crop.

That's good news for heavy rice-eating Trinidadians as T&T imports the staple from its Guyanese neighbour."

This is one. So we are seeing a fall in the price of rice. Then the author had spoken to one, I think it is Charles James, the managing director of another company, the country's biggest rice importer, and among other things, here is what it said:

“James said that while he’s a wholesaler, he receives complaints from consumers that they are not benefitting from price reductions.”

This is what the hon. Minister of Legal Affairs was saying, that the consumers are complaining that they are not receiving the benefits of price reductions. They even spoke about NFM reducing flour prices but the price remains the same. Mr. James went on to state:

“I would like to work together with you in finding a way for the benefits to reach the supermarket shelves so that the end users may also benefit for, as you know, supermarkets are a law unto themselves.”

This is coming to us on December 04, 2008. While we are complaining about rising food prices, this wholesaler is saying that a lot now rests with the supermarkets.

“NFM reduced the price of its flour by 15 per cent as of November 25.

The management of National Flour Mills Ltd indicated earlier this year that any savings from falling wheat prices would be passed on to customers.”

This is what Government expects, that as prices begin to fall, that these things would be passed on. I observe that every time I say, rice, the Member for St. Augustine is laughing; I am not going there.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** That get stale now, man.

**Hon. J. Ross:** I know that, but he is the one who is laughing.

**Mr. Abdul-Hamid:** Not as stale as the rice.

**Hon. J. Ross:** The management of NFM indicated that:

“Our stock of the higher-priced wheat is almost totally depleted, thus, we are now in a favourable position to provide more affordable flour to the national community.”

And we can go on and on, but the author was very balanced, unlike some of the quotations that I heard those Members making from another newspaper. He went on to say that even though the prices of some commodities were falling, there are some that were now costing a bit more. Let me read it for you.

“While oil and rice are cheaper for the time being, corned beef, sardines and condensed milk now cost more.

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The price of sardines increased because of a shortage of fish on the world market.”

Not because this Government is not doing anything; because of a shortfall in fish.

“The price of metals on the world market went up, so the price of the tins in which sardines are packed also rose.”

It is expected:

“A case of 24 tins of sardines was \$150, but is now \$190.

Naisa imports sardines from Thailand, Peru, Ecuador and Chile.

With milk powder manufactured in China being found to be contaminated with melamine, China’s production is in limbo and the country is now buying milk from Australia and Europe to meet its domestic needs. This means a reduced global supply and increased prices on the world market. The drought in Australia has not helped. ‘There’s a shortage of cattle in Brazil, a major supplier in the world of corned beef. Everyone is demanding higher wages, there’s higher transportation costs...’”

The other side has been calling on the Government to subsidize food, to subsidize items. If every time a product goes up in price Government has to be subsidizing and subsidizing, when will it end? Government has to put the mechanisms in place to ensure that we have affordable prices, that we have an adequate supply of food and this Government, if you watch carefully—all the talk they have been talking about shortages—Trinidad and Tobago has not experienced any real shortage within the last year or so.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. N. Parsanlal*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. J. Ross:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker; thank you very much my colleague, Minister of Information. I was saying that subsidizing food items is not the answer and will never be the answer. It is a panic reaction and panic action from Government is never the way to go, and this Government is not one to panic.

Unlike what those on the other side would like to suggest, the situation is under control. When this Motion was moved in this House, you would recall there was a shortage of rice; you could not get rice. There was a shortage of flour; you could not get flour. There was a shortage of oil at the time the Motion was moved. Do we have that today? All I am saying is that the reasons for the shortages were being tackled nationally, regionally and globally and at this point in time there is no food shortage in Trinidad and Tobago. Prices are falling and prices are expected to fall and Government will continue to encourage or to put the mechanisms in place for increasing food production in Trinidad and Tobago and as we continue along this route we are assured that there will be more food; there will be cheaper food in the medium to long term.

I want to thank my colleague again, the Member for Princes Town South/Tableland. We have been criticized by the other side. They have asked: What is happening in all these large farms? Where is the production? Where are the products? Where are the fruits? Where are the cassavas? Where are the legumes? Where are the cucumbers? We are not seeing anything. We had indicated to this House that by the end of this year you would start seeing more food. I am only showing you one cucumber today. [*Laughter*] I want all of you to see it. Now I am showing two.

[*Member displays cucumbers*]

I am sorry that I could not bring more cucumbers here. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Hon. J. Ross:** This came from Tucker Valley. [*Desk thumping*] If you go now, you would see acres and acres of food crops; you would see cassavas; you would see lettuce—[*Desk thumping*—you would see sweet potatoes and you would see much more. Mr. Speaker, it takes time, and I understand that over this weekend some of these products would be in the farmers' markets. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** At what price?

**Hon. J. Ross:** At what price? You do not have to worry about that. You would not feel it in your pockets; it would be so cheap. We are bringing down the price of food in Trinidad and Tobago and all this is in keeping with Government's vision and Government's plan. I could go on and on.

When we look at the plans that these people have—

**Mr. S. Panday:** “Yuh sounding good”; go on! [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Hon. J. Ross:** They have been criticizing Government's plan to mechanize agriculture; you want us to continue with these individual farmers all over the place, but there are a lot of economies for us as we expand the farms, as we get more and more farmers together into groups. There are more economies for them, than to have them operate their small individual plots. There is more to come. The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and probably the Minister of Legal Affairs would apprise you of this later on.

**3.45 p.m.**

When you look at the food index over the years, it would show you that Trinidad and Tobago is just a small country and I am looking at the food price index that has been put out by statistics from New Zealand and you look at between the year 2002 and 2007.

It increased from 92 per cent to 94; fell by 1 per cent in 2002 to 93; then it went up to 102 per cent, 115 per cent, 118 per cent in 2005, 128 per cent in 2006 and 158 per cent in 2007. It was an overall increase over that period of 64 per cent. This is global. When food prices are going up and you want to single Trinidad and Tobago and get on and “ramajay” as though we are not doing anything to contain food prices in this country, I tell you go into some of those other islands and other parts of the world. In Trinidad and Tobago, we are very fortunate to have a government like this one.

I will close shortly, but since I see my colleague, the Member for Mayaro, is reading the newspaper, I want to tell him about Lord Relator, his good friend. Back in the 1980s, as I said earlier, Relator sang this song on food prices. I will recite a few of his verses.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Sing it.

**Hon. J. Ross:** I would need the music. This was in 1980.

A friend of mine come and tell me about two months ago to bring back de ole time calypso.

He said well Relator, people keep asking why yuh doh bring back an ole time reminder?

Ah said is ah good idea without a doubt

But what de hell yuh want me to sing about?

Is den he declare, sing about de price ah food and how tings so dear.  
 Okro selling a dollar for five  
 Ah dollar for celery, ah dollar for chive.  
 Dey raise currant and deh raise raisin,  
 Egg is six and eight dollars now ah dozen.  
 Eddoes averaging round ah dollar ten  
 And is 1.25 ah pound now for melongene  
 Ah lime long time was ole talk and fun,  
 But now ah lime is 95 cents for one. Ah said well pardner, every ting yuh jus  
 said was true.  
 Money today have no value.  
 If yuh argue people go say dat yuh funny.  
 An tell yuh dat, yuh cyah eat de money.  
 Is true. Yuh cyah push de money down yuh troat,  
 But people still not getting their money's worth.  
 De vendors and dem so fierce,  
 Dey does raise the price when some tings get scarce.

**Mr. Peters:** Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, my good friend, Member for Barataria/San Juan. I could not resist because what I want to tell my good friend is that at the time when that song was written and sung, the PNM was in power. Quite apart from that, there is a follow-up to that that says that the PNM should take a rest. Now that my good friend has recited the original, I do not know if it might be appropriate for me to do the follow-up.

**Hon. J. Ross:** Mr. Speaker, I was just waiting to hear him say that he wrote this song. I know that nobody like him could have written this song. I know that he would get up. Relator was not criticizing the Government. He was criticizing those people out there who were exploiting poor people and raising the price of goods without discretion. Read "de" song carefully. This is the last thing I said.

Dem venders and dem so fierce,  
 Dey does raise de price when someting get scarce.

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Just recently we experienced floods in Trinidad and Tobago. The price of some of the vegetables that are produced in some of those areas obviously, became scarce again and the prices went up. You would always find that with any product. When it is in scarce supply the prices go up. When you have an abundant supply prices go down. This is why Government has intervened to augment agricultural production in Trinidad and Tobago.

Unlike those on the other side, as I said, we have this situation under control. Rising food prices are tackled at various levels. Simply put, we are promoting agriculture in the backyards. Public education on the purchase of goods is being promoted by the Ministry of Legal Affairs. We have removed VAT on a number of items as we have heard. Large sums are being injected into some of the small and medium agricultural farms. We continue to work on the development of infrastructure, roads and bridges. We continue to develop and implement plans to curb praedial larceny. The Minister of National Security was here a few weeks ago and highlighted the decline in praedial larceny.

We continue to provide agricultural training and appropriate incentives to farmers. These measures would ensure that Trinidad and Tobago becomes more self-sufficient. I do not believe that we will ever become fully self-sufficient in food production.

This Government is very cognizant of the issues. We are fully aware of some of the problems and the need to maintain food prices at an affordable level. We continue to provide assistance for the less fortunate in terms of cash transfers. We have social programmes in place to ensure that you can afford to feed your families. We continue to take care of the needy as well.

We are making remarkable progress in all these programmes. I am confident that all our efforts will not only bear fruits, but in the end they would bring vegetables, ground provision, rice and other basic supplies as well to satisfy the needs of this country.

In closing, the hon. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla should rethink this Motion; be objective and man enough to stand in this House and withdraw and compliment the Government for all its efforts and plans.

Thank you.

**Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj SC (Tabaquite):** Mr. Speaker, it is said that when a government does not have any response to a motion, it becomes brazen face. This is a vivid example of what has happened here today. [*Desk thumping*]



As a matter of fact, the Motion is for the Government to show what adequate measure it has taken. On the contrary the Motion says that “the Government has failed to take adequate measures to keep food prices at an affordable level to all citizens;” It was incumbent upon this Government not to come with all this rhetoric and say that Government has a vision. It will get food prices down. It cannot rely on that kind of credibility.

The Government said in this House that it had a vision and it will get crimes down. What has happened? The highest crime rate in the country and region! [*Desk thumping*] The Government cannot say that because food prices are high in the world, we should also have high food prices and that is a consequence of what is happening in the world. The Government has to show that by its management of the economy and the country, it has acted in the best interest of the country. If after all that vision and all these years from 2002 to 2008, the megafarms could only produce two cucumbers [*Laughter*] and come with Lord Relator’s calypso which he sang in 1980 about high food prices, then you have failed! Gypsy sang a calypso, Sinking Ship six years after that. The food prices continue to rise. It is appropriate that right now “de ship sinking and food prices going high”.

Before I delve into this debate, let me take one aspect of what the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan said. He said that because of the high food prices in the world—he lumped it with, you have high food prices, so therefore Trinidad and Tobago would have a consequential effect.

Quite recently, with the world economy meltdown and countries in the world suffering as a result of the problem and the ripple effect, there are countries which have stated to their citizens that they do not have to worry because they have the wealth. We cannot say that we have the wealth. The Emir of Qatar said, “In our good days we saved US \$60 billion. You do not have to worry because we can live on the interest.” We did not save in our good days. We have saved very little, US \$2 million. We have spent a lot. We did not tighten our belts. At times when you have plenty, you have to save for the rainy day. We did not do that. We spent and we spent and we spent. We came in this House and said stop spending. The Governor of the Central Bank said stop spending. You continued to spend and spend. When the money get scarce, tighten your belt.

That is the opposite. When the money gets scarce you must be able to rely on the interest of what you have saved. [*Desk thumping*] “So we doin dis ting upside down because is ah upside down Government.” When we had plenty, private jet was “de” answer. If we did not stand in this House, this country would have been in a worse position. We would have had a private jet and the expenses. We stood

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in this House and said you have to do certain things in order to solve and detect crime. We have the answer! We have the vision! Crime will come down! You do not have to have brain to be a Minister of National Security. Today, over 500 murders in Trinidad and Tobago. People cannot walk the street safely to go to their gardens and you come here in this honourable House to say withdraw this Motion! You have vision!

This hon. Member has the brazen face to say that one of the best decisions of the Government was to close down Caroni (1975) Limited. Then he said that the food price is on a basis of demand and supply. It does not take an elementary school child to understand that if you had the human resource at Caroni (1975) Limited, people who are experienced and knowledgeable in agriculture and food production had those lands that you had then, now in cultivation with food, we would have had more supply of food in Trinidad and Tobago.

**4.00 p.m.**

There would have been less demand to import food. We could have exported food and it would have been cheaper. We would not have had to bring the Cubans to make a megafarm in Tucker Valley in Trinidad. What was needed was management—taking the human resource and the land resource, cultivating it and encouraging food production. You could have used Caroni (1975) Limited to have a major university in respect of agriculture. You could have had technology and science in order to do that. You could have had a canning industry, but you were prepared to use the moneys on a Prime Minister's palace, on the Tarouba Stadium and on a jet plane.

That is why the problem in this country is not accepting responsibility. They are not accepting responsibility for crime and they are not prepared to accept responsibility for anything. The Government thinks it can come to this House and hoodwink the national community. They should apologize to the people for taking a measure that will cause irreparable harm.

They have come to this Parliament and given the idea that there is no problem with the economy. The revised budget is now based on \$55 for oil and the price of oil is less than \$55. It is \$46. No problem; depend on our vision. The vision of the Prime Minister is that manna will come from the sky and feed the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

We cannot depend on the vision of the Government. Vision 2020, if it was a vision, has collapsed. We have to stop living in the dream and the Government has to listen and, even at this stage, reconsider its decision and policy on

agriculture and on Caroni (1975) Limited. The Government should try to get all the lands that are good for agriculture and keep them. Instead, it is putting concrete on those lands. They have done it for the last few years to build buildings.

The people of Trinidad and Tobago will not be able to eat the Tarouba Stadium. That is a white elephant. The moneys could have been spent on Caroni (1975) Limited and food production. The people of Trinidad and Tobago would not be able to eat the Prime Minister's palace or the big buildings in Port of Spain. The money is thrown away on those because in times of need the management of those buildings would be too difficult for the taxpayers to pay for.

We saw it in the 1980s when the Government took the windfall and invested it in big buildings. Yes, they have served well, but we could have done without some of them. We had to go to the IMF, structured adjustment, and it took us years to recover from that—20 years it took us. Mr. Speaker, this arrogance of the Government should stop.

Before I forget, I want to deal with some of the points the last Member spoke about. I know that Point Lisas has served a lot of good for Trinidad and Tobago, but if you notice, in the last budget we were not talking too much about Point Lisas. If you remember the history of Point Lisas, it was not that we should have Point Lisas and promote in the same way as the food and agriculture sector. The impression that was given was that Point Lisas would solve the ills of Trinidad and Tobago. What is happening now with the economy which impacts on food prices? Some of the plants are closing temporarily. What has happened to the price of natural gas, ammonia, methanol and all those things? We cannot depend upon Point Lisas. We cannot even depend now on the oil price or the natural gas price. Prices are going down. What will happen in the world? There is less demand for oil and natural gas.

If you study what is happening, even with the American policy, it will mean less demand for our gas and oil. So it will get worse. We have to face the reality. The difficulty is: What do we have to depend upon? The Ryder Scott report said there is a guarantee of 12 years. So for 12 years we will have these resources at a reduced price, or we may end up having these resources at a high price again. There is no one who can come here and say with any authority that there will be no recession in Trinidad and Tobago and that right now there is no recession. We will only know that in September 2009 when the data is produced for us to see if there is negative growth. Nobody can say that now.

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Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a time for Government to reconsider its food production policy and the policy with Caroni (1975) Limited, it is now. It is a sign of maturity for the Government to accept that it may have made an error of judgments; that they have to reconsider it and do what is best for the country.

It is in that context that I call on the Government to reassess its priorities and accelerate the process for giving Caroni (1975) Limited workers their agricultural lands. I do not mean just handing it to them. I mean giving it with the necessary infrastructure; expedite the process and make sure they get their leases. If they get their leases and Government encourages the farmers to get back to farming, that will be in the national interest. This is not a UNC thing, a PNM thing or a COP thing. This is in the national interest; for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the last speaker talked about the Government putting the necessary mechanisms in place. Well, the Government has been saying that for a long time. As a matter of fact, anybody in this House or the national community would remember that since the Government got back to office, it has been saying that it is going to put the necessary mechanism in place to ensure that this country has food production. If that is to happen, it would mean that the Government had treated Caroni (1975) Limited and agriculture in the same way it treated the energy and the oil sector. It would have truly diversified the economy.

We have a situation in which 90 per cent of the foreign exchange is generated from the energy sector. We have not taken steps to ensure that the food production could generate a higher rate of foreign exchange. If we were serious about truly diversifying the economy, the non-energy sector and in particular the food production sector would have generated much more foreign exchange than it does now. My colleague, the Member for Caroni Central, has reminded me less than 1 per cent of GDP.

If I have to say my learned friends, apart from Members on this side, I would have to say the Member for Diego Martin North/East. I truly want to say, in my recent experience with this Member, that he seems to have a calling for law. Maybe he is in the wrong seat at this time.

Mr. Speaker, how could the Government have any credibility for the country to depend on what the Government says with respect to agriculture or anything? This Government has not shown its capacity, its capabilities, its abilities, its competence, its effectiveness to do even the simplest things. We have a simple thing like a Children Authority to be established since 2002 and it has taken six

years and it is not functioning up to today. If it takes six years to establish it and another six years to function, that is 12 years.

Last November, the Privy Council ruled that the Equal Opportunity Commission and Tribunal are constitutional and after a whole year the commission is merely appointed but not functioning. There is no machinery to make complaints. There is no tribunal, so an Act of Parliament is frustrated. We have to face the facts. Where is the competence of the Government?

Agriculture: Let us take what the hon. Member said. He talked about infrastructure. What is the infrastructure for agriculture? It is agricultural access roads and irrigation. Let us take agricultural access roads. I come from the constituency of Tabaquite in which agriculture is the bedrock of the constituency. In that constituency, there are three main areas in which there are the food baskets of the nation. There is a place called Lightbourne. If you travel into Lightbourne, you would see the beauty of the hills with all these produce. If you go to a place where the Tabac farmers grow their produce near the Nariva Swamp, you see the beauty where the people are producing. Then you go to a place called Tortuga, on the hills of Tortuga you see farming and people putting their produce in bags on their backs and walking for distances because there are no access roads. These people have been beseeching—there has been some improvement—but they have not gotten the maximum of what they ought to have gotten.

#### **4.15 p.m.**

Where you have areas like these and you do not have the access roads, even if they produce the goods, they cannot carry them to the market because they do not have the access to take the goods to the market.

Vehicles cannot pass on some of the roads. Even if you have a four-wheel drive, it is difficult because of the roads. Last year I made a tour of all those roads. I have written the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources about those agricultural access roads. I have asked for us to have an assessment done. So far, there has been little improvement, but the major production in these farms is adversely affected. There are areas where vehicles cannot go.

There are families, because most of these farms are family farms, where the children have to “tote” or carry these bags along those rough roads. There are some areas where there is a river and no bridges, because the bridge collapsed and has not been replaced. The children and the family have to put a log to pass through the river. They stand the risk of falling into the river. This has happened several times. When you look at that kind of infrastructure, how could the hon.

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Member say today that he has recognized infrastructure? They have failed to take adequate measures to keep these farms producing at the maximum.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government was really interested in a proactive food production policy, it would recognize that it has to give incentives and encourage these farmers. With respect to the infrastructure, they have to fix these access roads and bridges, because if they do not fix them, no matter what the farmers do, they would not be able to get the result from which the country would benefit at its maximum.

It is not only the agricultural access roads; it is a question of the land security, which is a major problem. These farmers have been farming on these lands for over 40 years. They have inherited it and they have kept on farming for 40, 50 or 60 years. They have been promised leases and deeds. What has happened is that most of them have not gotten their leases. I know it takes time to process, because there must be surveys, et cetera.

If the Government had vision, it would have recognized that if it continued with the policy it had and there was an economic meltdown, the country would suffer. Even if they could carry the country, while the oil and gas is at a high price, the Government is not God, anything could happen, with only 12 years guarantee something had to happen to make agriculture and food production a proactive policy. If the Government was interested, it would have come in the last budget—this is an issue that I spoke about in the last budget—and said: “Listen, notwithstanding our failures and omissions, we have decided to change our policy. We are going to spend a lot of money by taking some of the money from those big buildings and projects and putting it on agriculture and food production.” What do they have to do now? They said that the projects that were started would have to be completed and the projects that were not started, we are not going with them. We do not have the money now. How is it, when we had money and this windfall, we could have spent money wild? As a matter of fact, we are giving it away in the Caribbean. Somebody just has to knock or win an election and you come here and you spend money wild.

A Prime Minister cannot travel in an ordinary plane. That is not good enough for him. He cannot travel first-class; he wants a whole plane. He wants to lie down, sleep, jump up, probably play cricket and football in the plane. I do not understand it. The Prime Minister cannot travel. He would waste hours at an airport. That is the problem of governments in some of our countries. When we become a Prime Minister, we become arrogant; we lost touch with the people; we are living in a different world and we are disconnected to what is happening. That

is the problem. The problem is that this Government has been alienated from the people. It has deliberately alienated itself from the people. If you hear some of these Ministers—I do not blame them because they are instructed to do that—you would think that everything is nice and good.

As a matter of fact, I could never feel comfortable for what I saw in this Parliament the other day. The Prime Minister entered a political duel with his former Minister and none of them got up and told him he should not do that. When it reaches a stage where a Prime Minister could be so arrogant—if he wants to ask—it has now reached the stage of this Government—somebody a question, he would come to the Parliament to ask the question. “Dey better” take note that is going to happen. The arrogance of the Government is what is causing the Government not to understand the right policy.

There are infrastructure access roads and infrastructure deeds or leases for the lands. The reason these deeds are important is that people can use the lands as collateral in order to get a loan, get money to buy chemicals or invest in agriculture. Right now, most of the farmers who occupy these lands do not have deeds. They can take that they have been there for 40, 50 or 60 years prescription and that they have possessor title, but they do not have the deeds for the land. The Government, if it wants to show that it is serious to have adequate measures to make food prices cheaper, has to take steps immediately to do this. These things should not be saying that we could get up and we would do it.

I know, and I am sure they would know, that Ministers are basically managers of the ministries. They have a duty to micromanage their ministries. They have to set what they want to do and they must set target dates. They must have follow-ups and reviews. They must not just leave it to the public servants; they must implement the policy. Therefore, if the ministries are going to promise these things, they must have target dates and make sure that they are done.

The other infrastructure is markets. Right now, “if you see the conditions of some of these markets!” There is need for food markets in Trinidad and Tobago. There is need for improvement. As a matter of fact, with respect to the wholesale market in Macoya, I do not know about other constituents, but constituents from my constituency have to leave Tabaquite, for example, on a Saturday afternoon at about 1 o’clock to line up in a queue to be able to sell their produce at Macoya. In the line up, when the rush hour has gone or is about to go, there would be a middle man who would come, because they would never be able to sell their produce, and offer them less for their produce and they have to accept it, because they have no choice. It is either the produce goes back and perishes or they lose

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everything. What is happening is that the middle men and women in the purchasing of goods on a wholesale basis from these farmers are in effect robbing the farmers. This is being permitted.

As a matter of fact, not only the farmers association but, I, as a Member of Parliament, have made representation to the Ministry for this practice to be looked at. I offered to go to the Macoya market one morning at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock to show the person what happens with these farmers. There is a grave injustice. That has not been corrected. It is not sufficient for the hon. Member to merely say we have a vision and we would do this and we recognize so and we recognize so. They must come and show what they were doing.

Have you heard any one of them showed that there was a problem in constituency A for agriculture and that problem was solved? Have they shown that there were agricultural access roads, there was none or there was a bad condition and that problem has been solved? The reason they would not do that is because in almost every area in which agriculture is done, it is in a bad condition.

I have gone to the food basket in the St. Augustine area with the famers there and I have seen it for myself. What has happened is bad agriculture access roads and bad irrigation. They also have another problem, with which they have been knocking on the door since this administration got into office. Their chemicals and fertilizers are at a very high and prohibitive price. If the Government was interested in having an aggressive food production policy, what it would have done was take what is needed by farmers to see whether they can be given it at a cheap price; whether it is subsidy or not.

Right now, while we are talking about this, in spite of our problems of the ripple effect of the world economy and the energy sector, this Government is subsidizing natural gas, oil and electricity to foreign companies. The Government policy could be that the taxpayers must subsidize the price that the foreign companies would pay for oil, natural gas, electricity and water, but the farmers of this country cannot receive subsidies for their agriculture produce.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only the price of the subsidies, when you live quite down in Tabaquite, Lightbourne Village or parts of Tortuga, to get to the centre where these products are sold it is very difficult. The Government has not taken steps to decentralize the availability of these products. They have not taken steps to even have an itinerary vehicle on certain days going around making these produce available. They have not taken steps to ensure that people can go to these farmers with orders and say: "We are going to drop these produce near your



home, at your home or at your garden.” They have not done that. The farmers are fighting for survival. When they put in their hard work and they get their produce—you should see how many tomatoes, cucumbers, bodi, bhaigan/melongene and ochroes were wasted and thrown away. Mr. Speaker, if the farmers survived all of this—

When there is flooding, they lose everything. In the last major flooding in Trinidad and Tobago, I am sure if any one of them went to see what farmers lost they would cry. I am sure they would not worry whether they were PNM or UNC; they would cry. For six months or so, these farmers produced these crops and overnight in an hour or two all were gone. They have lost not only their crops, but their investment and labour. Mr. Speaker, when they lost that, do you know how much they got for the crops and everything in their house? They got \$3,500.

Mr. Speaker, the crops alone are worth over \$100,000; their personal effects in their homes are worth about \$50,000 to \$60,000 and they got \$3,500.

**4.30 p.m.**

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday, December 12, 2008 at 1.30 p.m. On that day, we will do the Senate amendments to the Financial Institutions Bill, and if the Tobacco Bill comes from the other place, we will seek to do that Bill and move it through all its stages. That should be the last sitting for this session unless an emergency arises.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question for the Motion for the Adjournment will be put at the resumption of the tea break. I have a little House announcement. The driver of TCH 1951, if that happens to be a vehicle belonging to—is it the hon. Member for Princes Town?

**Mr. S. Panday:** I do not drive any SUV. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Member has left his headlight on, so communicate with him. Perhaps, his battery may be run-down by the time he gets there. The sitting of the House is suspended for tea and we will resume at 5.00 p.m.

**4.32 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

*Adjournment*

*Friday, December 05, 2008*

[MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, there are two Motions to be raised on the adjournment; one by the hon. Member for Tabaquite and the other by the hon. Member for Oropouche East. We are going to deal with the first Motion by the hon. Member for Tabaquite.

As I am on my legs, I think it is important for Members who have made the effort to be on time to convey to their colleagues the importance of these sittings on a Friday, and that they should really make every effort to resume on time after the tea break.

**Committees of Parliament  
(Inaction of the Government)**

**Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj SC** (*Tabaquite*): Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. The leave I got was to move the Motion, namely the inaction of the Government not facilitating the committees of Parliament which is provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to function in an open and transparent manner to serve the public interest.

The purpose of this Motion is not really to concentrate on the past, but to concentrate on the future, and in the hope that the Opposition will be able to persuade the Government to reconsider its apparent policy so that the committees, and in particular the departmental committees, which are provided for under the Constitution, would function in such a way that it will achieve the objectives of the provisions of the Constitution.

In 1999, the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was amended bringing into force a departmental committee system. It was recognized that the existing committees which were provided were not sufficient in order to provide openness, transparency and accountability in Government, and the Constitution was amended to establish the Joint Select Committees to investigate and report to both Houses in respect of government ministries, municipal corporations, statutory authorities, enterprises owned or controlled by or on behalf of the State and which received funding from the State of more than two-thirds of its total income in any one year, and service commissions with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission in relation to their administration, the manner of the exercise of their powers and methods of functioning and any criteria adapted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.

This amendment had created a revolution in the way the Government had to account to the Parliament. The purpose was for the citizens to be able to exercise

their right to know and to be able to assess the security of the Government and to get information which it would not normally get.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the way the committee system has functioned for some of the period is that there were three departmental committees and, at some time, the Government had taken a decision that there should be only two committees and history would show that the other place recommended that there be three committees and the Government accepted that.

The purpose of these committees would not be served if the committees do not function. I do not mean merely calling a meeting. Recently, what has happened is that the quorum for meetings was increased to seven and that is not the recommended number. As a matter of fact, in the learning that I have read in England, India and New Zealand, it is recommended that the quorum should be one-third.

What has happened is that over the years the quorum was less than seven Members. The fact that you have seven Members to form a quorum for these committees would in effect mean that the committee is likely not to function, because it is sometimes difficult to get seven, six or five persons to attend these meetings.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this brings into focus the whole question of the policy of the Government to provide the right of the public to scrutinize the Government. I would like to make an appeal to the Government to give a commitment this afternoon to this honourable House that its policy would be changed, and for the next session that change will occur in that it will recognize the citizens must enjoy this right to know, must benefit from this constitutional provision, and by not having the quorum reduced to three or four Members the public is going to be short-changed in the Government accounting to the population.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what has happened during this session is that the committees have taken a long time to be established and to even work. I do not want to go into a fault-finding exercise. The fact of the matter is that we now have them going and, therefore, the best way to correct this and to deal with the future is to try and see whether we could get the committees functioning with a smaller quorum.

The other matter which has caused some concerns—probably the Government, on the eve of the Parliament going to be prorogued—the Government is going to have sufficient time to consider this—and which I think I can safely say is not promoting openness and transparency in the functioning of the committees, is the fact that its proceedings do not have the benefit of live media and television coverage.

**5.10 p.m.**

That is what used to happen under our committee system and I think that the Government should take the position that if it does not have anything to hide, why it wants to have a media blank, a media shutout, a public shutout of what is transpiring in the committees. As a matter of fact, the committees would have enough power to ensure that it is regulated in such a way that unpredicted harm would not be done to the committee or to the population at large and that it would be able to serve the public interest. I think that using one or two incidents which may have occurred, which the Government did not like to be able to have a media shutout and in effect a public shutout of what is happening in these committees is not right in the interest of the public.

The other issue which I want to raise, is the issue of the chairmanship of these committees and I think that there have been two policies with respect to this issue: whether a Government Member should chair the committee or whether an Independent Senator should chair the committee. Whatever may have been the position in the past, I think that what we should do is that the Government should say, let us not look back, let us look ahead. What is the public really entitled to? What is the purpose of these committees? Is the public entitled to have the perception or the actuality or at least the perception that the committees are being run fairly and independently and do not serve any partisan interest?

As a matter of fact, you would know that the whole rule of the perception of bias in law is grounded on the basis that the public must have confidence in the administration of justice in the court system, and therefore if it is that the functioning of the committee system can give the appearance, not actual bias, but give the perception of possible bias, it would undermine the public confidence in the committee system. I think in that setting the Government being the custodian of the Constitution, being the architect of policy, being responsible for governance, and one of the principles of governance which this country would be discussing at the Summit of the Americas and at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, which are going to be held in Trinidad and Tobago are the principles of good governance; openness, transparency, accountability; whether select committees should in effect shut out the public and the media.

I think that what the Government should do is that it cannot in one hand hold out to the international community that it is hosting a conference here and it is interested in promoting the principles of good governance, but with the other hand it is saying in practice we should not allow it. This could have not only impact on the enjoyment of rights of the public in Trinidad and Tobago, but it can have

impact on the credibility and the image of the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what has happened, I have some records here in the research that was done for me in respect of what is a quorum and we would have seen that with the history of this, in 2004 the quorum of the committee constituted four Members, with one Member from either House inclusive of the Chairman. Sorry, that was the position before 2004. On April 16, 2004 the quorum was changed from five to four Members, constituting one Member from either House inclusive of the Chairman. At a subsequent meeting held on July 10, 2007, the committee further agreed to reduce the quorum from four to three Members retaining the same composition as above. On July 22, 2005 it was agreed that the issue of the quorum should be revisited; the committee decided to reduce the initial quorum of seven to four.

We have a situation from the research which was done for me to show that the different numbers which the quorum had from time to time and which it was considered necessary to reduce it to four. Now, I want to make it quite clear, I do not want this to be construed as a partisan political issue. [*Interruption*] I want it to be construed as something in the national interest. And yes, my friend has threatened already he will deal with it as a party political issue.

**Mr. Imbert:** I never said that.

**Mr. R. L. Maharaj SC:** I have no problem with that. [*Crosstalk*] I have no problem with that.

**Mr. Imbert:** I never said that.

**Mr. R. L. Maharaj SC:** What I want to put on record in this House for the public to read, to hear and to see for themselves, is that we on this side of the House are asking the Government to show it does not have anything to hide; that it has nothing to hide with respect to transparency and openness, and the inference that the public can get, if the Government opposes at this time in the context of what we are having in Trinidad and Tobago—our proposals—the public can infer whether the Government has anything to hide. [*Desk thumping*] That is the issue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government has the majority of Members on these committees and the whole issue of these departmental committees is for them to be permitted contemporaneous accountability. That is to say for example, if the crime situation was a problem, the committees and the public would be entitled to know from the Minister of National Security and examine the whole

issue, why it is the Government is not making a dent on the crime problem, and that is all for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Just let me correct the record. At no time did I say I was going to deal with this matter in a partisan political manner. I was engaged in crosstalk with the hon. Member for Oropouche East and I indicated that I would deal with him. [*Interruption*] Not with you or the issue. [*Laughter*] I will deal with him.

It is necessary to put some facts on the record. The section 66A committees were an addition to the Constitution by way of Act 29 of 1999, as far as I am aware. The PNM then in Opposition—the record is clear—did not support the establishment of these committees. That is a fact! So our approach to this matter is consistent, and at the time we did not support the establishment of these committees because we felt that because of the limited numbers in this Parliament and with the existence already of the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, that, if three more committees or more, because there was no fixed number given, so there could have been five, but let us assume three, when you add those three to the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, there simply would not have been a sufficient pool of Members to make these committees function effectively.

We made that point very clear in 1999 and we stood by our position, we did not support this amendment to the Constitution. And I may say this is not an entrenched provision, because there is a belief outside there as well that section 66A is an entrenched provision, it is not. It is simply an addition which can be removed also with a simple majority. Not that we intend to do that, but I simply want to make that point.

Now, we have come from 1999 to today and we are at the point exactly as we predicted in 1999. There are five committees, each comprising 12 Members, that means you have to find 60 people and therefore of necessity you are going to have duplication. It is a fact that Ministers are very busy and Ministers have full portfolios in this country and in this Government, and therefore it is extremely difficult for Ministers to find the necessary time to participate in these five committees that now exist. I made the point then, it has come to pass now. Theoretically, these committees may be a good thing, but not in a Parliament comprising 41 Members.

In the British Parliament there are 600 members and therefore they can easily find persons to serve on committees of this nature. So, I just need to put that in the record again. We told you so then and we are telling you now the same thing. I may also say, this whole question of quorum—and we said at the time that if the view was that the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee were ineffective, that the correct thing to do would be to strengthen those committees and to give them additional powers and perhaps give them the ability to examine records contemporaneously. That is what we said then and we maintain that position now. We did not see the need for these—I did not want to use the word—duplicitous but perhaps it is a pun on words, it may very well be appropriate. We did not see the need to duplicate the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee. We thought you could just simply increase their powers and responsibilities and give them the ability to look at matters contemporaneously.

And let me deal with the quorum. The quorum was set at four by a minority of Members and the mischief that flowed from that was that this little minority of Members—these committees have 12 Members, so four people deliberated, a minority of Members or five and established a quorum of four. Having established a quorum of four—anybody here can stop me if I am going wrong—that little group of four now, that little minority, established a quorum of three and if they had kept going they would have had a quorum of one eventually. *[Laughter]*

So, the whole thing was a nonsense. It is a farce! A little minority cannot keep whittling away at the quorum, and then the Member for Tabaquite, the Opposition Chief Whip, comes into this Parliament and uses the “records” as a precedent of the practice of this House. That was a dubious practice. We feel that the quorum should be reasonable. We do not believe that any one group should be allowed to dominate these committees and this is why we picked seven. It is seven out of 12! We did not feel that any little particular group should be allowed to dominate the committees and that is why we picked seven out of 12. And we do not believe that seven out of 12 is unreasonable. These committees are very important and I want to stress that. The Government accepts these committees. We are not going to abolish section 66A of the Constitution. We are going with it, but understand the constraints that have been created by the formation of these committees.

Now, while I am on it, the Member for Tabaquite made the point that there may have been one or two incidents which the Government did not like. That is not so! They were not one or two. Every meeting! Every single meeting there was misbehaviour in these joint select committees. You had chairmen of these

committees assuming powers unto themselves that they did not have, calling for witnesses without getting the agreement of the other Members; summoning people as if it were a Spanish Inquisition and behaving in the most unprofessional manner during the committee sessions. *[Interruption]* That is the record.

It is not as the Member for Tabagite has painted it. It was not a bishops' tea party—to use the words that the absent Member for Couva North likes to use—it was not a picnic. It was similar to an inquisition where persons behaved in an entirely unprofessional manner.

**Hon. Member:** “Wajang”.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Yes, that would be a good word.

**5.25 p.m.**

So this is the reason why we are of the view that these committees are not a circus; it is not a sideshow and we have nothing to hide. We on this side, speaking on behalf of the Government, have no issue per se with the question of public or private hearings. What we are concerned about, is the behaviour of Members and the behaviour of certain Members.

I remember there was one meeting of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee—if I would stray away from these joint select committees because the Motion did not distinguish between joint select and Public Accounts (Enterprises)—a chairman declaring that he was the king of the committee. He said, "I am the king of this committee and you" and he was looking at hon. Members, elected Members and so on—"are my subjects"—with an imperious wave of his hand. A Member of the other place, Madam Deputy Speaker. That kind of objectionable behaviour cannot be tolerated *[Laughter]* and I do believe that the Member for Chaguanas East—*[Interruption]*

**Dr. Moonilal:** “Pot calling de kettle black”.

**Hon. C. Imbert:**—who was a member of that particular committee in the last session, put the chairman in his place and compelled him to apologize to this House for his abominable behaviour *[Desk thumping]* and I congratulate the Member for Chaguanas East for that. Stopped him in his tracks, so that everything must be put in perspective. It is not a question of the Members of these committees being all dignified and upright like little lambs, merely seeking the truth in a very innocent way, respectful and so on, nothing like that. They truly behave, some of them like “wajangs”. I think that is an appropriate word to use, that some Members of those committees behave like “wajangs”.



Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to put some matters into the record. There are chairmen of committees at this point in time who need to do some homework and I am speaking specifically to the Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** How I reach in that?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Madam Speaker, when we go to Standing Order 80(9)—  
[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** You do not even know what Standing Order.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** It is all right, I will get it. Standing Order 80(9) is very clear.

"Subject to any order of the House or resolution of the Committee, the sittings of a Select Committee shall be held in private."

You see, hon. Members opposite do not like us to point out these things. It is there in black and white, Standing Order 80(9), and I am speaking specifically now with respect to the Public Accounts Committee. If one goes now to Standing Order 71, it describes the Sessional Select Committees as follows:

"...Public Account Committee;  
...Standing Orders Committee;  
...House Committee;  
...Committee of Privileges;  
...Regulations Committee."

And Standing Order 80(9) is crystal clear that:

"Subject to any order of the House"—and there has been none—"or resolution of the Committee, the sittings of a Select Committee shall be held in private."

Madam Deputy Speaker, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. What the Member for Oropouche East does not understand, the committees all come to an end at the end of each session.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to have a course in remedial English for Members opposite, especially the Member of Oropouche East, because it says:

"There shall be the following Sessional Select Committees—".

I mean, he murders the English language. [*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker, would you quieten down the Member for Oropouche East?

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East, it is kind of rare that the hon. Minister of Works and Transport would ask for protection from you, but he is asking for protection. Could you be so kind as to allow him to complete his contribution?

**Dr. Moonilal:** I will deal with him under flooding.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. You know when you do a correspondence course and maybe somebody else sits the exam for you and you acquire a certificate, you go around pretending that you have some knowledge, but the committees that I have just called out, Public Accounts, Standing Orders and so on, they come to an end on the prorogation of Parliament. So that on December 16, 2008, all of these committees will disappear and together with the committees, will all resolutions of the committees in the previous session.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know you understand that. I am speaking to you because the hon. Member for Oropouche East does not, so that a resolution of a sessional committee in a previous session has no effect in a subsequent session. And therefore, on each occasion, because Standing Order 80(9) makes it crystal clear that sessional committees shall be held in private unless by order of the House or resolution of the committee, on each occasion that a select committee is established, there would have to be a new resolution for the proceedings of the committee to be held in private. But he cannot understand. He does not understand that and it is for this reason that we are not going to tolerate a quorum of three or two or one, so that no little cabal, no little group comprised of hon. Members opposite can twist, distort and pervert the Standing Orders of this Parliament. [*Desk thumping*]

I wish to give this House the assurance that the Government intends to ensure that all committees of Parliament function effectively. But the Government also intends to ensure that no person on the other side, whether they are good, bad or ugly, whoever it is, would not be allowed to manipulate, pervert and subvert the rules as apply to the function of these committees.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**Nationwide Flooding  
(Government's Failure to Prevent)**

**Dr. Roodal Moonilal (Oropouche East):** Thank you. I am dealing with flooding, but I may be dealing with the flood of lies as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise this afternoon to deal with a very important matter, a motion on the adjournment of the House pursuant to Standing Order 11, which reads, "The failure of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to undertake infrastructure maintenance and development in a timely manner, to prevent the escalated nationwide incidence of flooding and its attendant damage to property and crops, and the resultant human suffering, death, dislocation, destitution, serious health hazards and falling workers' productivity."

Madam Deputy Speaker, it became imperative for the Opposition and for myself to file such a Motion to force the Government to outline its policies and programmes, to bring relief in the very near term to the people of Trinidad and Tobago as it relates to the incidence of flooding.

There was a time when we spoke about flooding in the context of certain areas in Trinidad and Tobago, primarily Central Trinidad and in some cases deep South Trinidad, where every year several villages, towns and so on experience this horrific flooding and the attendant damage to crops, property and so on. Within recent times, notwithstanding the continued flooding in some areas, the perennial annual flooding, what we have seen happening is almost a nationwide incidence of flooding, particularly in the nation's capital, Port of Spain. It is really a tragedy of immense proportion that the International Financial Centre is often under water. When it rains for 20 minutes there is a national anxiety that takes place.

Just today, I am coming to Port of Spain around 12 o'clock midday, to attend this sitting and when you look at the clouds and notice the rain approaching, there is this anxiety. You start receiving texts from colleagues and so on to indicate do not come to Port of Spain, it is raining; be careful; what time is the Parliament finishing? Now this is a serious matter. There are some ministries of Government, public institutions, state enterprises and so on, at 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock on a particular day, they will send the entire staff home, anticipating bad weather, rain and flooding and traffic woes and so on. And the Government has stated very little and has done I believe very little to address this issue.

It is no coincidence that this problem rests at the doorstep of the Minister with responsibility for works who we all know very well, who has on many occasions presided over some of the more significant catastrophes and disasters in this country. Without a doubt, the Ministry of Works and Transport has been the centre of attraction of an enormous amount of controversy. If the Caroni bridge fall, man dead; the Tacarigua bridge fall down, traffic; two drops of rain in Port of Spain, flooding and what has the Government said, what has the Government done.

*Nationwide Flooding*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

*Friday, December 05, 2008*

We thought that it was important to raise in the Parliament, but it was on November 14, 2008 that the Member for Oropouche East raised this matter as a matter of urgent public importance. On that day, the Motion was dutifully denied by a Speaker expressing regret and then four days later Port of Spain was under water. I hate to say I was so prophetic. It is not something I would boast about—but I am not a prophet—but such is the nature of this problem that it really, the Government is duty bound to come and give us some information on what is happening.

On January 23, 2008—I want to draw your attention to another matter—the current Minister of Works and Transport, a well known character who regularly misleads the House, indicated to the national community—and I am looking at an article in the *Trinidad Express* dated Wednesday, January 23, 2008:

"Imbert reveals drainage master plan for POS."

I am quoting Imbert here because this is the headline. They are referring of course to the very distinguished Member for Diego Martin North/East and I quote:

"A master plan for an improved system in the nation's capital city, Port of Spain, is on its way to Cabinet and contains a proposal...construction of storage basins..."

"It is expected that this proposal will be taken to Cabinet in the near future and that the drainage master plan...will be approved...and suitable funding...allocated...construction work can begin in the...near..."

This is January 2008. The Minister goes on:

"The hydraulic profiles generated by the model for the St. Ann's River ...confirmed that the river...is inadequate..."

And in January telling the population, "Look, we are dealing with this matter, there is a master plan". By November 18, 2008 all flooded out and next year in November—I do not want to talk about April, it might be the dry season. They may be lucky that President Obama might come on Air Force I and not Coast Guard I—we expect Dr. Manmohan Singh and others to be in Trinidad around this time for a Commonwealth Summit. What a state it will be if nothing happens and you have all these Commonwealth Heads of Government in a raft in Port of Spain going to the summit.

**5.40 p.m.**

On Tuesday, November 18, 2008 I want to remind colleagues who did not know, the hon. Prime Minister had to go to the Hyatt. On that day they stopped his convoy on Wrightson Road and invited him with his security to walk on

Wrightson Road, because it was impossible for the cars, the police and his official car bearing the coat of arms, to get to Hyatt, given the traffic problem and the flooding. The Prime Minister had to walk to the Hyatt. It was quite instructive that he was going to address a seminar on Trinidad and Tobago's transition to a knowledge based society; that was the topic, but he walked. [*Laughter*]

We make this as an urgent issue for the Minister to respond. It is not about the Opposition UNC-A or Dr. Moonilal; he could talk until "thy kingdom come" about Oropouche East and so on; it is not my character that I am dealing with, it is flooding. There are people who cried in Port of Spain on November 18, 2008; people cried. It is not a character issue.

When the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) presided over the PAC, the PAC this year took a decision to broadcast live, pursuant to Standing Order 80(9), a resolution of the committee. The Member for St. Augustine was in that meeting, so a decision was taken, pursuant to Standing Order 80(9), for the PAC to be live on television.

I say that only to say that this is not a character issue; it is an issue of being honest. I am challenging the Minister of Works and Transport, if it is for 15 minutes alone for this year that is coming to an end, that you must take off your hypocrisy cap and shed yourself of the rubbish talk and address the issues today, because the country is fed up.

It flooded at the end of August this year, around the 26<sup>th</sup>; there was massive flooding in Claxton Bay; some of you would remember that; they blocked the road. The Minister of Works and Transport at the next Cabinet press conference said, "This is bizarre; this only happens once every 100 years." By September 07 it flooded again. [*Laughter*] So between August 26, 2008 to September 07, 2008 100 years went by. I know dog years are one in seven, but what animal is that? He takes this country for a joke.

When it rained on November 18, 2008 he said, "This is, again, weather conditions very unusual." That simply is not good enough; when you cannot provide irrigation and drainage, clear the rivers. There is a particular river in Oropouche East, along Mohess Road; I have written the Ministry of Works and Transport; I have written their officials to clear and what is called pave the river. They are only telling me that they do not have enough money, but when it rains and you have flooding in that area, they would come with hampers and give out Crix biscuits and corned beef, and think people would be happy with that. This country is much too mature for such, to use a word familiar to the Member, dotishness.

*Nationwide Flooding*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

*Friday, December 05, 2008*

Today, I am calling upon the Minister to tell the country what he intends to do under his tenure. In January, I understand there will be a Cabinet reshuffle, so we may have a different Minister of Works and Transport. There is a responsibility today for the incumbent Minister of Works and Transport to answer these questions. [*Crosstalk*]

Finally, in a couple minutes, let me indicate as well that as the Motion reads, unless I am mistaken, and I stand to be corrected, this was the first time ever or the first time in a very long time that we have actually had the death of children which was related to flooding. Before you would have the death of chickens, ducks and so on, but this time on November 18, 2008 it was very significant, in that, in a country with a murder rate of over 500, a kill rate from traffic accidents of 200, two persons, I think young children, died resulting from events surrounding flooding. That is something we must note very carefully. This lack of care is something we want to concern ourselves with.

I want to reiterate something about worker productivity. We are developing a culture where people do not work; you go to work and you do not work. Now there is an additional issue where you go to work, rain set up and you go home, related to the weathers conditions, flooding and so on.

Finally, the problem that continues year after year, which is the destruction of crops, linked to agriculture, of course, and the destruction of property. I have been like many Members on this side, I assume a couple on the other side, to visit the homes of persons who have had their basement or ground floor destroyed, their furniture, electronic items and kitchen appliances. It is really suffering.

I remember a colleague of mine in a building near to the Red House crying because the water had taken over the ground floor and all their appliances were destroyed, their clothes and so on. It is really a sad situation, and something I believe that the Government should consider strongly, given this new wave now of anxiety, frustration, stress and despair, because we are so concerned that we cannot conduct our business as normal, because of rainfall for 20 minutes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to thank hon. Members for the opportunity to outline some of the work the Government has been doing.

First let me put some facts into the record, as compared to the hyperbole of the Member for Oropouche East.

Before I begin, the Member spoke about a reshuffle, but when one examines hon. Members opposite, all I want to know, I can figure out who is the bad; I could figure out who is the ugly, but who is the good? [*Laughter*] [*Crosstalk*] The erstwhile leader of the UNC-A did indicate that their party was the home for the good, the bad and the ugly. I want to repeat: I can figure out the bad and the ugly, but who is the good in the UNC-A; I would love to know. [*Laughter*] Let us move on to the matter at hand. [*Crosstalk*]

For the benefit of the general population and hon. Members opposite, if they are at all interested, when one looks at rainfall patterns over the period 2002—2008—and I have all the records here from 2002—2008—when one looks at the records, a clear pattern emerges. What one sees is that the rainfall in Trinidad and Tobago, for the rainy season, has been increasing steadily over the last five or six years. The mean rainfall during the rainy season has been increasing steadily over the last five years.

The figures clearly show a continuous increase in the total rainfall for the period June to December, the rainy season. That is a fact that needs to be put into the record. That could easily be established by reference to the Met Office, and that gives some understanding of the current situation.

Notwithstanding the hyperbole of the Member for Oropouche East, one of the patterns of 2008 is that the usual flood prone areas in Trinidad and Tobago, and if Members were honest they would realize this, the Caroni River basin, the Caparo River basin, the rivers in San Fernando, the Cipero, Vistabella, Marabella, those catchments, the Mamoral area, Oropouche area, the traditional flood prone areas of Trinidad, have mercifully been spared any significant flood event in 2008; that is a fact.

Members opposite are entitled to say whatever they want, but the facts are that in 2008 we have not seen the usual incidents of flooding in the Caroni basin, Caparo basin, the San Fernando catchments, Oropouche, Mamoral, et cetera.

**Mr. S. Panday:** The rain fell in the West!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** What we have seen instead is an increased incident of flooding, primarily along the East-West Corridor, along the foothills of the Northern Range and in certain areas in Central and South Trinidad, particularly in the Gasparillo area. We have seen significant flooding, but not in the traditional flood prone areas.

We as a country need to analyze what is going on, rather than get engaged in "ol' talk". What one is seeing along the East-West Corridor is that the removal of forest

*Nationwide Flooding*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

*Friday, December 05, 2008*

cover, the denudation of hillsides over years and building development over a number of years, have created a situation where the run-off that is coming from the hills in the Northern Range is far more than it used to be. The forest cover has been removed. People have built all along the Northern Range over the last 20 to 30 years, and the volume of water that is coming off the hills is significantly more than it used to be.

We have also had quite a prolonged rainy season in 2008, so you find that the hills in the Northern Range, in particular, are saturated, so that the soil is wet and you have all the slopes of the Northern Range full of water.

For the geologists among us, I do not think there are any here today—

**Mr. S. Panday:** "You get rid of him!" [*Laughter*]

**Hon. C. Imbert:** The Northern Range is comprised of a material called "weathered shale". [*Crosstalk*] You have a situation where all along the Northern Range the hills are saturated, so that hillsides that have been stable for many, many years, are simply collapsing and very unfortunate situations are occurring. That is causing the natural watercourses to be filled with silt and debris, causing problems for the drainage system.

These are facts, and we as a country will have to come to terms with it, that along the Northern Range there are several areas of instability creating difficulties for our drainage system, and we would have to have new approaches to deal with the weather phenomenon that we have experienced in 2008. [*Crosstalk*]

For the record, I have asked the Drainage Division to go into the records and look at the work that was actually done. [*Crosstalk*] Just in the years 2005 to 2008, on clearing and dredging of rivers the Ministry of Works and Transport has spent \$283 million.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, I am having great difficulty hearing the very important contribution of the hon. Minister of Works and Transport. Would you please give him some silence so he could complete his contribution.

**Hon. Members:** Nobody wants to hear you!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** The Drainage Division has given me the records of recurrent expenditure for just over the last three years. The Drainage Division has completed 756 dredging and river clearing projects in that three-year period, 756 projects, with a total expenditure of \$283 million.

The areas in which work has been done are diverse. I will start with the last one, project No. 756, the Wynappie River, Guayaguayare Road, Rio Claro;



desilting works. That is project No. 756. No. 755 is the Blazney River, Santa Cruz, work was done. Work was done in La Horquette River; the Carenage Ravine; the Malick River; the Caparo River; the Bagatelle drains; Sadhu drains; the San Juan River; the Morne Coco Ravine; the Sonny Ladoo Ravine and Gucharan River. Madam Deputy Speaker, \$2.6 million was spent to improve the Gucharan River.

**5.55 p.m.**

I go to project 737. Work was done on the Cunupia River; the Carmen Main Drain; the Lazzarie River; the Killdeer River; the Richardson Lagoon; the Mulchan Seuchan Main Drain; the Maraval River; the Sonny Ladoo Ravine.

Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we move on, the Bon Espoire Drain; the Petersfield Main Drain; the Oropouche River; the Fondes Amandes Ravine; the Jerningham Main Drain; the Welcome Road Main Drain; the St. Peter's Ravine; the Narine Drain. I am on No. 702 and I am counting backwards.

The John Jules Main Drain; the School Street Drain; the Whiteland Drain; the Papourie River; the Hawkins Drain; Patna Village Drain; St. Joseph River; the Ciperio River; the St. Peter's Garden Ravine; the Diego Martin River; the Manning Ravine; the Seebarrack Drain; the Belle Avenue Main Drain. I am counting backwards.

The Aranguez Ravine; Mon Desir Drain; the Lagoon Mahaut River; the Gucharan River; Cunupia River; Alley's Creek; St. John's Sluice Gate; the Cunaripo River; the Ciperio River which is No. 630. The Caroni Outfall Drain; the El Chorro River; the Crown Trace Outfall Drain; the Woodbine Ravine; the Covigne River; the Chaguanas Main Drain; the Perseverance Main Drain; Oropouche River; Cunupia River; the La Puerta River; the Sangre Grande River; the Don Miguel Drain; the St. Joseph River; the Hill View Ravine; the Morne Coco Ravine. I have only reached No. 594 counting backwards.

The Abbe Poujade Drain; the Saut D'eau Ravine; the Petit Valley Ravine; the Erica Street Drain; the Rich Plain Ravine; the Maraval River; the Arena River; East Chaguanas Drain; the Dibe Ravine; the Aranguez Ravine; the North Chaguanas Ravine; Texiera Street Drain; Caparo River; the Guayamare River; the Bamboo Main Drain. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, I never thought that the contribution of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East would elicit such laughter. This is a very serious matter, we are dealing with flooding. I know it is 6 o'clock and you all are sounding like we are now starting Parliament.

Continue hon. Member.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Maharaj Drain, Calcutta, the Cunupia River, the Skimming Drain, Sam Boucaud Ravine, Andolusia Ravine, Guayamare River.

**Mr. Panday:** You call that already.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** The Camacho Drain; the Malick River; the El Chorro Ravine; the Cantaro River; the Hawkins Drain; the Las Lomas River; the Chaguanas Main Drain again; the Couva River. It is over the last three years, so on an annual basis we are doing work on these ravines.

The St. Augustine Main Drain; Cunupia River; the Morvant Ravine; the William Street Drain; the Alta Garcia Drain; the Morne Coco Ravine; the Caparo River. You see, they like to say that we are not working, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Mitchell Drain; the San Juan River; the Guaico River; North Oropouche River; Guanaco; the La Quesa Main Drain; the Arima River; the Guayaguayare River. All of this is work done by the Drainage Division.

The Bovel Canal; the Rusty Iron River; the Reform Main Drain; the Kelly/Elono Main Drains; the Caroni Savannah Main Drain; the Honda River; the Marchine River; the Skimming Drain; the Blue River; the Felicity Main Drain; Pranz Gardens Main Drain; the Madhosingh Ravine; St. Helena; the Caigual River; the Alley Creek River. [*Interruption*]

I will have to waive the Standing Orders. The point I am making is that over the last three years, the Drainage Division has executed 756 projects at a cost of \$283 million in every nook and cranny of Trinidad and Tobago. We have worked tirelessly; we have had equipment, men and materials out there. I wish to make the point that hon. Members opposite like to come to this House and mislead the population and it is necessary to put on the record the work that the Drainage Division has been doing and I wish to give this House the assurance that it will continue to work tirelessly to serve the population of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.01 p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**  
**Private Properties**  
**(Government's Rental Of)**

*The following question was asked by Mr. Jack Warner (Chaguanas West):*

- 203.** Could the hon. Minister of Public Administration state:
- (a) The number of private properties being rented by the Government as at July 30, 2008;
  - (b) the initial date of each lease and the name of the lessor; and
  - (c) the total sums paid in rental from the initial date of each lease to July 30, 2008?

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Minister of Public Administration (Hon. Kennedy Swaratsingh):** The Property and Real Estate Services Division of the Ministry of Public Administration is the Division charged with the responsibility for overseeing the rental of properties by Government. Leases between the State and owners of private property are usually for term of at least 3 years and must be registered in the Land Registry of the Registrar General, which is a public registry. This Division is currently engaged in a project to review hundreds of files and other records dating back decades, to put relevant information into an appropriate electronic system to improve its ability to produce pertinent reports. According to the information currently available.

One hundred and Sixty-One (161) properties were being rented by Government as at July 30, 2008.

The attached table presents the responses to parts (b) and (c).

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

Source: Property and Real Estate Services Division

Ministry of Public Administration

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
1	A&W Isidore Smart Investments Limited	Ministry of National Security				
			8-Nov-82	55 Edward Street	Port of Spain	135,525.00
			1-May-84	55 Edward Street	Port of Spain	158,460.00
			10-Nov-04	55 Edward Street	Port of Spain	165,132.00
			10-Nov-05	55 Edward Street	Port of Spain	607,596.80
			3-Jul-08	55 Edward Street	Port of Spain	18,987.40
						Total: \$1,085,701.20
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,085,701.20</b>
2	A.A. Laquis Limited	Ministry of Legal Affairs				
			1-Aug-04	110 Henry Street	Port of Spain	769,256.60
			1-Aug-07	110 Henry Street	Port of Spain	373,739.74
						Total: \$1,142,996.34
						<b>Lessor Total: : \$1,142,996.34</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total	
3	A.E. Hadeed Holdings Limited	Ministry of the Attorney General	1-Dec-04	134 Henry Street	Port of Spain	15,694,336.94	
		Parliament	1-Jan-01	132 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,772,683.50	
			1-Jan-04	132 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,980,638.64	
			1-Jan-07	132 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,206,616.50	
							Total: \$4,959,938.64
							<b>Lessor Total:: \$20,654,275.58</b>
4	Accountects Ltd	Ministry of Public Administration	1-Jan-06	95-97 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	2,487,936.00	
							<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,487,936.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

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No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
5	Aga Khan International Limited	Ministry of Education	1-Jul-07	45 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	909,182.43
						Total: \$909,182.43
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$909,182.43</b>
6	Agnes Sanoir	Ministry of Education	1-Sep-03	2 La Finnette Road	Maraval	922,760.00
						Total: \$922,760.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$922,760.00</b>
7	Agostini's Ltd	Ministry of Legal Affairs	1-Jan-06	2A Nelson Street	Port of Spain	2,338,159.50
						Total: \$2,338,159.50
			1-Jan-03	2A Nelson Street	Port of Spain	212,369.13
						Total: \$212,369.13
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,550,528.63</b>

Written Answer to Question

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No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
8	Alana Jillian Ward	Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education	1-Dec-05	60 Gordon Street	San Fernando	651,369.21
						Total: \$651,369.21
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$651,369.21</b>
9	Alstons Limited of Ansa McAL	Ministry of Social Development	22-Nov-04	67 Independence Square	Port of Spain	836,096.80
						Total: \$836,096.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$836,096.80</b>
10	Amar Properties Developers Ltd	Ministry of Public Administration	1-Jan-07	14-17 Victoria Square	Port of Spain	539,749.98
						Total: \$539,749.98
		Ministry of Public Administration and Information	18-Nov-03	14-17 Victoria Square	Port of Spain	810,014.40
						Total: \$810,014.40

Written Answer to Question

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No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Office of the Prime Minister				
			18-Nov-03	14-17 Victoria Square	Port of Spain	810,014.40
			1-Jan-07	14-17 Victoria Square	Port of Spain	539,749.98
						Total: \$1,349,764.38
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,699,528.76</b>
11	Anglican Church	Ministry of Education				
			1-Jan-89	Issac Junction	Couva	401,257.80
						Total: \$401,257.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$401,257.80</b>
12	Ann Redman	Elections and Boundaries Commission				
			1-Sep-01	Corner Pro-Queen Street & Robinson Circular Road	Arima	399,901.32
			1-Sep-04	Corner Pro-Queen Street & Robinson Circular Road	Arima	482,908.92
						Total: \$882,810.24



Written Answer to Question

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No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Health	1-Jan-05	Corner Pro-Queen Street & Robinson Circular Road	Arima	151,122.72
						Total: \$151,122.72
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,033,932.96</b>
13	ANSA Group of Companies Limited	Ministry of Finance	1-Sep-92	20 Vincent Street	Port of Spain	2,096,720.50
			1-Jun-04	20 Vincent Street	Port of Spain	5,496,480.00
						Total: \$7,593,200.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$7,593,200.50</b>
14	Anthony Aboud	Ministry of Housing and Settlement	1-Nov-99	110-112 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	578,760.00
						Total: \$578,760.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$578,760.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

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No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total	
15	Anthony Ali and Sharipha Ali	Ministry of Public Administration	1-Jan-06	2A St James Street	Princes Town	386,452.50	
		Ministry of Social Development	1-Jan-06	2A St James Street	Princes Town	353,394.00	
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$739,846.50</b>	
16	Arthur George and Beulah George	Elections and Boundaries Commission	8-Aug-04	52A Bonne Adventure Main Road	Gasparillo	241,298.75	
			8-Aug-07	52A Bonne Adventure Main Road	Gasparillo	85,800.00	
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$327,098.75</b>	

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
17	Autorama Limited	Ministry of National Security	1-Nov-06	Corner William Lane & El Socorro Road	San Juan	3,558,880.00
						Total: \$3,558,880.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,558,880.00</b>
18	Ava Company Limited	Ministry of Public Administration	25-Jun-08	107 Eastern Main Road	Tunapuna	16,180.00
						Total: \$16,180.00
		Ministry of Social Development	1-Jun-08	107 Eastern Main Road	Tunapuna	132,764.99
						Total: \$132,764.99
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$148,944.99</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
19	Ava Tang	Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs	1-Oct-04	12 Abercromby Street	Port of Spain	6,298,168.80
						Total: \$6,298,168.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$6,298,168.80</b>
20	Basic Space Ltd	Ministry of Health	1-Feb-05	40-42 Henry Street	Port of Spain	4,580,100.00
			1-Feb-08	40-42 Henry Street	Port of Spain	899,662.50
						Total: \$5,479,762.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$5,479,762.50</b>
21	Beeran Bhagwandeem	Elections and Boundaries Commission	5-Jul-06	14 Mary Street	Siparia	166,848.00
						Total: \$166,848.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$166,848.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
22	Ben Holding Limited	Ministry of Public Administration and Information	1-Jul-04	76 Boundary Road	San Juan	2,154,690.72
						Total: \$2,154,690.72
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,154,690.72</b>
23	Benny Bridgela	Ministry of Tourism	1-Jan-05	Church Street	Mayaro	294,000.00
						Total: \$294,000.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$294,000.00</b>
24	Bess Motors Ltd	Ministry of Finance	1-Feb-05	4 Market Street Extension	Chaguanas	655,961.46
						Total: \$655,961.46
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$655,961.46</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
25	Bhim Ramdhan	Judiciary	1-Jul-04	4 Toco Road	Sangre Grande	881,832.42
						Total: \$881,832.42
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$881,832.42</b>
26	Big "3" Ltd	Elections and Boundaries Commission	1-Sep-01	Lot 33 O'Meara Road	Arima	636,652.80
			1-Sep-04	Lot 33 O'Meara Road	Arima	663,180.00
			1-Sep-07	Lot 33 O'Meara Road	Arima	344,853.60
						Total: \$1,644,686.40
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,644,686.40</b>
27	Birjah Development Company Limited	Ministry of Health	1-Apr-06	77-81 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	83,966.40
						Total: \$83,966.40

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Housing				
			1-Apr-95	77-81 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	394,812.00
			1-Apr-05	77-81 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	244,065.60
			1-Apr-05	77-81 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	219,659.04
						Total: \$858,536.64
		Ministry of Works and Transport				
			1-Jun-94	77-81 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	510,108.34
			1-Jan-07	77-81 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	530,820.00
						Total: \$1,040,928.34
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,983,431.38</b>
28	Bishop Claude and Bernadine Arthur					
		Ministry of the Attorney General				
			20-Sep-07	123 Henry Street	Port of Spain	619,932.80
			20-Sep-04	123 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,574,305.43
						Total: \$2,194,238.23
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,194,238.23</b>





Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries				
			5-Feb-07	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	2,580,600.00
						Total: \$2,580,600.00
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-Apr-99	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	811,800.00
			1-Apr-99	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	1,145,664.00
			1-Apr-02	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	1,071,576.00
			1-Apr-02	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	1,116,288.00
			31-Mar-05	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	1,158,720.00
			31-Mar-05	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	1,731,840.00
			1-May-07	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	660,000.00
						Total: \$7,695,888.00
		Ministry of Health				
			5-Feb-07	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	374,886.72
						Total: \$374,886.72

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development				
			8-Jan-06	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	81,000.00
						Total: \$81,000.00
		Ministry of Local Government				
			14-Aug-07	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	363,000.00
						Total: \$363,000.00
		Ministry of National Security				
			14-Aug-07	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	363,000.00
						Total: \$363,000.00
		Ministry of Public Administration				
			1-Sep-01	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	149,688.00
			4-Sep-04	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	318,780.00
						Total: \$468,468.00
		Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs				
			1-Oct-07	12 Abercromby Street	Port of Spain	972,813.60
						Total: \$972,813.60

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Trade and Industry				
			1-Aug-06	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	51,750.00
						Total: \$51,750.00
		Office of the Prime Minister				
			1-Jan-04	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	700,920.00
			1-Jul-05	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	333,000.00
			1-Aug-06	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	134,550.00
						Total: \$1,168,470.00
		Parliament				
			31-Mar-05	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	168,000.00
						Total: \$168,000.00
		Service Commission Department				
			1-Oct-01	El Socorro Road Extension 1	San Juan	738,000.00
						Total: \$738,000.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$30,593,132.22</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
31	C.L.. Financial Ltd	Personnel Department	1-Jan-04	76-78 St. Vincent Street	Port of Spain	5,668,553.34
						Total: \$5,668,553.34
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$5,668,553.34</b>
32	Capital Plaza Ltd	Ministry of Public Administration	28-Sep-06	11-13 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	2,011, 657.12
						Total: \$2,011,657.12
		Ministry of Community Development	4-May-06	11-13 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	728,448.24
						Total: \$728,448.24
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,740,105.36</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
33	Caribbean Insurance Company Limited					
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-Mar-95	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	540,648.00
			1-Mar-98	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	607,327.92
			1-Mar-01	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	866,838.96
			1-Mar-01	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	958,886.00
						Total: \$2,973,700.88
		Ministry of Social Development				
			1-Sep-07	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	319,665.00
						Total: \$319,665.00
		Office of the Prime Minister				
			21-Jun-89	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	395,621.28
			1-Jan-95	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	290,844.00
			1-Mar-98	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	326,775.42
			1-Mar-01	78 Independence Square	Port of Spain	1,153,060.42
						Total: \$2,166,301.12
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$5,459,667.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total	
34	Chaguaramas Development Authority	Ministry of Agriculture	1-Feb-98	Tucker Valley Road	Chaguaramas	20,240.00	
		Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Surveys	1-Jan-76	1st Avenue South	Chaguaramas	2,733,090.00	
		Ministry of Finance	1-May-93	Western Main Road	Chaguaramas	732,000.00	
		Ministry of Health	1-Jan-82	Airway Road	Chaguaramas	5,550,600.00	
		Ministry of National Security	1-Jan-74	Airway Road	Chaguaramas	1,556,250.00	
			1-Jan-74	Teteron Bay	Chaguaramas	35,467,672.05	
			1-Jan-74	Morne Street	Chaguaramas	2,624,875.00	

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of National Security				
			20-Mar-96	Western Main Road	Chaguaramas	111,000.00
			1-Feb-07	Chaguaramas	Chaguaramas	1,190,000.00
						Total: \$40,949,797.05
		Ministry of National Security				
			1-Jan-74	Staubles Bay	Chaguaramas	4,573,644.45
						Total: \$4,573,644.45
		Ministry of Public Administration and Information				
			1-Jan-76	Granwood	Chaguaramas	158,400.00
			1-Jan-93	Granwood	Chaguaramas	748,000.00
						Total: \$906,400.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$55,465,771.50</b>
35	Chloe Limited	Office of the Leader of the Opposition				
			15-Apr-03	11 Charles Street	Port of Spain	1,457,686.80
			15-Apr-06	11 Charles Street	Port of Spain	1,376,590.14
						Total: \$2,834,276.94
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,834,276.94</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
36	City Drugs Investment Ltd	Ministry of Health	13-Jun-97	42 Independence Square	Port of Spain	1,148,903.28
			13-Jun-03	42 Independence Square	Port of Spain	1,619,110.80
			13-Jun-06	42 Independence Square	Port of Spain	1,549,491.50
						Total:
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$4,317,505.58</b>
37	Comsure Real Estate Company Limited	Ministry of Health	1-Jan-99	3 Queen Street	Port of Spain	2,297,919.65
			1-Jan-04	3 Queen Street	Port of Spain	1,360,087.20
			1-Jan-07	3 Queen Street	Port of Spain	900,201.60
						Total:
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$4,558,208.45</b>
38	David Ramdin and Dianne Ramdin	Ministry of Health	1-Jan-06	102-104 Coffee Street	San Fernando	200,674.80
						Total:
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$200,674.80</b>



Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total	
39	Delta Trading Company Limited	Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education	16-Nov-04	Eleanore Street West	Chaguanas	385,407.44	
					Total:	\$385,407.44	
		Ministry of Social Development	16-Nov-04	Eleanore Street West	Chaguanas	935,869.44	
					Total:	\$935,869.44	
						<b>Lessor Total::</b>	<b>\$1,321,276.88</b>
40	Diamondtex Limited	Judiciary	1-Jan-08	110-112 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	510,879.60	
					Total:	\$510,879.60	
						<b>Lessor Total::</b>	<b>\$510,879.60</b>
41	Diana Cohen-Chan	Ministry of National Security	1-Jul-05	10-14 Phillip Street	Port of Spain	4,066,654.32	
					Total:	\$4,066,654.32	
						<b>Lessor Total::</b>	<b>\$4,066,654.32</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
42	Dr. Anthony Fraser and Lorna Fraser	Ministry of National Security	1-Jul-06	131 Coffee Street	San Fernando	900,074.00
						Total: \$900,074.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$900,074.00</b>
43	Dr. Colin McDonald	Judiciary	18-May-05	Shivan Road	Tobago	684,000.00
						Total: \$684,000.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$684,000.00</b>
44	Dr. Harold Nunes	Elections and Boundaries Commission	1-Apr-07	125 Eastern Main Road	Barataria	240,029.44
						Total: \$240,029.44
						<b>Lessor Total: \$240,029.44</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
45	Dr. Joseph Hussain	Ministry of National Security	1-Sep-04	8 New Street	Port of Spain	376,648.00
						Total: \$376,648.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$376,648.00</b>
46	Elaine Motilal	Ministry of Social Development	1-Jan-01	Lot 19 Southern Main Road	Cunupia	174,742.40
			1-Jan-04	Lot 19 Southern Main Road	Cunupia	179,735.04
			1-Jan-07	Lot 19 Southern Main Road	Cunupia	131,293.44
						Total: \$485,770.88
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$485,770.88</b>
47	Ellis Clarke	Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development	9-May-06	Corner John and Lange Streets	Chaguanas	441,698.40
						Total: \$441,698.40
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$441,698.40</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
48	Elvis Marketing	Ministry of National Security	27-Oct-05	2 Knox Street	San Fernando	1,481,700.00
						Total: \$1,481,700.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,481,700.00</b>
49	Empire Court Limited	Ministry of National Security	1-Jan-04	67 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	4,373,545.68
			1-Jan-07	67 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	2,934,275.40
						Total: \$7,307,821.08
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$7,307,821.08</b>
50	Esau Jaggernauth and Monica Jaggernauth	Ministry of Finance	1-Jul-03	Corner St Marie & King Streets	Cedros	140,300.00
						Total: \$140,300.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$140,300.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
51	Felicia Bocas Trust Company Limited					
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-Mar-05	46 Park Street	Port of Spain	1,918,080.00
			1-Sep-07	46 Park Street	Port of Spain	704,000.00
						Total: \$2,622,080.00
		Ministry of National Security				
			1-Sep-04	46 Park Street	Port of Spain	727,272.00
			1-Sep-07	46 Park Street	Port of Spain	274,560.00
						Total: \$1,001,832.00
		Service Commission Department				
			1-Sep-04	46 Park Street	Port of Spain	54,978.30
			1-Sep-07	46 Park Street	Port of Spain	233,288.00
						Total: \$288,266.30
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,912,178.30</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
52	Fernandes Industrial Centre Limited	Ministry of Finance				
			1-Jun-00	4 Fernandes Industrial Centre	Laventille	396,900.00
			1-Jun-03	Eastern Main Road	Laventille	489,888.00
			1-Jun-03	Eastern Main Road	Laventille	489,888.00
			1-Jun-03	4 Fernandes Industrial Centre	Laventille	6,531,840.00
			1-Feb-04	6 Fernandes Industrial Centre	Laventille	1,036,800.00
			1-Feb-04	Eastern Main Road	Laventille	1,036,800.00
			1-Jun-06	4 Fernandes Industrial Centre	Laventille	0.00
			1-Feb-07	6 Fernandes Industrial Centre	Laventille	748,000.00
			1-Feb-07	Eastern Main Road	Laventille	748,000.00
						Total: \$11,478,116.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$11,478,116.00</b>
53	Fernandez Gift	Ministry of National Security				
			14-Jan-08	30 Opal Gardens	Diego Martin	33,000.00
						Total: \$33,000.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$33,000.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
54	G.V. Holdings Limited					
		Ministry of Community Development, Culture & Gender Affairs				
			1-Aug-98	51-55 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	431,885.52
			1-Aug-05	51-55 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	130,069.80
			1-Aug-06	51-55 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	875,658.30
						Total: \$1,437,613.62
		Ministry of Education				
			1-Aug-98	51-55 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	719,809.20
			1-Aug-03	51-55 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	1,124,085.60
			1-Aug-06	51-55 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	850,190.40
						Total: \$2,694,085.20
		Ministry of Public Administration & Information				
			1-Jul-04	52 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	5,935,939.80
						Total: \$5,935,939.80
		Ministry of Public Administration & Information				
			1-Jul-07	52 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	2,729,031.24
						Total: \$2,729,031.24

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Works and Transport				
			1-Oct-01	36 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,800,000.00
			1-Oct-04	36 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,750,000.00
			1-Jan-06	50 El Socorro Road	San Juan	992,511.00
			1-Oct-07	36 Henry Street	Port of Spain	585,360.00
					Total:	\$5,127,871.00
		Office of the Prime Minister				
			29-Mar-04	51-55 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	2,673,216.00
					Total:	\$2,673,216.00
					<b>Lessor Total::</b>	<b>\$20,597,756.86</b>
55	General Building and Loan Association					
		Statutory Authorities' Service Commission				
			1-Oct-05	81-83 Abercromby Street	Port of Spain	1,320,042.90
			1-Oct-07	81-83 Abercromby Street	Port of Spain	438,101.37
					Total:	\$1,758,144.27
					<b>Lessor Total::</b>	<b>\$1,758,144.27</b>



Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
56	Go Brave Investment	Ministry of Information				
			1-Sep-04	Lot 29 Trincity Industrial Estate	Trincity	1,893,640.00
			1-Sep-07	Lot 29 Trincity Industrial Estate	Trincity	852,138.00
						Total: \$2,745,778.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,745,778.00</b>
57	Herrick Patrick and Nicole Patrick	Ministry of Education				
			1-Jan-05	Main Road	Chaguanas	444,231.06
						Total: \$444,231.06
		Ministry of Social Development				
			31-Mar-94	Main Road	Chaguanas	332,148.96
			1-Apr-94	Main Road	Chaguanas	265,951.44
						Total: \$598,100.40
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,042,331.46</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
58	Hosein's General Wholesalers Limited					
		Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development				
			8-Jan-07	40-42 St. James Street	San Fernando	1,898,618.40
						Total: \$1,898,618.40
		Ministry of Legal Affairs				
			1-Feb-04	3 Leotaud Street	San Fernando	574,551.72
			1-Feb-07	3 Leotaud Street	San Fernando	424,624.81
						Total: \$999,176.53
		Ministry of the Attorney General				
			1-Jan-06	78 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	922,909.50
						Total: \$922,909.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,820,704.43</b>
59	Hosein's Home Improvement Centre Limited					
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-Jul-98	80 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	545,174.28
			1-Jul-01	80 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	629,371.08
			1-Sep-03	52 Ciperro Street	San Fernando	1,404,719.28
			1-Jul-04	80 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	791,976.15

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-Sep-06	52 Ciperro Street	San Fernando	1,465,512.84
			1-Jul-07	80 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	441,623.91
						Total: \$5,278,377.54
		Ministry of Social Development				
			1-Dec-03	82 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	719,964.00
			1-Dec-06	82 Independence Avenue	San Fernando	551,515.28
						Total: \$1,271,479.28
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$6,549,856.82</b>
60	Hoyte's Electrical Service an Supplies					
		Ministry of Local Government				
			1-Apr-03	146-148 Coffee Street	San Fernando	342,656.64
			1-Apr-06	146-148 Coffee Street	San Fernando	97,632.64
						Total: \$440,289.28
		Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs				
			1-Apr-03	146-148 Coffee Street	San Fernando	95,408.64
			1-Apr-06	146-148 Coffee Street	San Fernando	108,600.86
						Total: \$204,009.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$644,298.78</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
61	Huntingdon Limited	Ministry of the Attorney General				
			5-Aug-04	33 Independence Square	Port of Spain	3,053,202.72
			1-Aug-07	33 Independence Square	Port of Spain	968,443.08
						Total: \$4,021,645.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$4,021,645.80</b>
62	Indra Khan	Ministry of National Security				
			1-Feb-06	7 Glencoe Gardens	Point Cumana	162,400.00
						Total: \$162,400.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$162,400.00</b>
63	Issam Koury	Office of the Prime Minister				
			1-Mar-96	44 Queen Street	Arima	327,600.00
			1-Mar-99	44 Queen Street	Arima	1,057,680.00
						Total: \$1,385,280.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,385,280.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
64	Jack's Tyre Traders Limited	Ministry of National Security	31-Oct-07	2-3 Gaston Street	Chaguanas	164,754.90
						Total: \$164,754.90
		Ministry of Public Administration and Information	6-Sep-07	2-3 Gaston Street	Chaguanas	1,368,779.00
						Total: \$1,368,779.00
<b>Lessor Total::</b>						<b>\$1,533,533.90</b>
65	Jacqueline Lewis-Viera	Ministry of National Security	26-Apr-01	6 Belmont Circular Road	Belmont	869,721.60
						Total: \$869,721.60
			<b>Lessor Total:: \$869,721.60</b>			
66	Jason Hadeed & Cordell Hadeed	Ministry of Finance	1-Dec-02	109 Henry Street	Port of Spain	4,417,783.20
						Total: \$4,417,783.20
			<b>Lessor Total:: \$4,417,783.20</b>			

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
67	Jennifer Mohammed and Jury Mohammed	Ministry of Finance	1-Jun-04	High Street	Princes Town	699,219.00
						Total: \$699,219.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$699,219.00</b>
68	Jodhan Ramsumair	Ministry of Social Development	1-Oct-00	LP 860 High Street	Rio Claro	419,012.65
			1-Oct-03	LP 860 High Street	Rio Claro	468,946.80
			1-Oct-06	LP 860 High Street	Rio Claro	377,762.70
						Total: \$1,265,722.15
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,265,722.15</b>
69	Joslyn Mark	Ministry of National Security	3-Jul-00	Tumpuna Road	Cumuto	636,439.68
						Total: \$636,439.68
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$636,439.68</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
70	Judy Mathura	Ministry of Finance				
			1-Mar-04	6 Prince Street	Arima	334,694.50
			1-Jan-06	6 Prince Street	Arima	377,889.60
			1-Mar-07	6 Prince Street	Arima	149,519.93
			6-Jun-08	6 Prince Street	Arima	11,288.30
						Total: \$873,392.33
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$873,392.33</b>
71	K.G. Hosein	Elections and Boundaries Commission				
			1-Jan-98	High Street	Princes Town	85,800.00
			1-Jan-99	High Street	Princes Town	187,200.00
			1-Jan-02	High Street	Princes Town	360,000.00
			1-Dec-05	High Street	Princes Town	381,920.00
						Total: \$1,014,920.00

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Local Government				
			1-Jan-98	High Street	Princes Town	343,200.00
			1-Jan-99	High Street	Princes Town	748,800.00
			1-Jan-02	High Street	Princes Town	1,440,000.00
						Total: \$2,532,000.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,546,920.00</b>
72	Kemnarine Ramdath	Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs				
			1-Apr-98	7 Lothians Road	Princes Town	185,017.82
			1-Jun-07	7 Lothians Road	Princes Town	65,763.18
						Total: \$250,781.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$250,781.00</b>
73	Kenneth Hosein	Ministry of Education				
			1-Jun-07	Corner St.Croix Road & High Street	Princes Town	196,142.10
						Total: \$196,142.10



Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Local Government				
			1-Jan-02	High Street	Princes Town	1,440,000.00
			1-Dec-05	High Street	Princes Town	1,527,680.00
						Total: \$2,967,680.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,163,822.10</b>
74	Kevin Cheeranjie and Sandramatie Cheeranjie	Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education				
			1-Aug-07	Corner Warner & Wilson Streets	St. Augustine	642,022.92
						Total: \$642,022.92
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$642,022.92</b>
75	Keystone Property Development Comapany Limited	United Nations Development Programme				
			1-Feb-01	3A Chancery Lane	Port of Spain	7,618,045.78
						Total: \$7,618,045.78
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$7,618,045.78</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
76	Land Securities Limited					
		Ministry of Social Development				
			1-Aug-04	46 Richmond Street	Port of Spain	770,605.50
			1-Aug-07	46 Richmond Street	Port of Spain	308,102.85
						Total: \$1,078,708.35
		Service Commission Department				
			1-Sep-03	59-61 Cipriani Boulevard & Woodford Square	Port of Spain	3,242,808.00
			1-Sep-06	59-61 Cipriani Boulevard & Woodford Square	Port of Spain	10,998,523.80
						Total: \$14,241,331.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$15,320,040.15</b>
77	Leela Kowlessar					
		Ministry of Works and Transport				
			1-Dec-01	45 Eleanor Street	Chaguanas	413,892.36
			1-Dec-04	45 Eleanor Street	Chaguanas	595,047.95
			1-Dec-07	45 Eleanor Street	Chaguanas	185,505.81
						Total: \$1,194,446.12
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,194,446.12</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
78	Leroy Lee Chong	Ministry of Finance				
			1-Aug-80	6-8 San Fernando Street	San Fernando	202,470.80
			1-Aug-83	6-8 San Fernando Street	San Fernando	261,878.40
			1-Aug-86	6-8 San Fernando Street	San Fernando	179,573.76
			1-Mar-90	6-8 San Fernando Street	San Fernando	536,227.20
			1-Jan-95	6-8 San Fernando Street	San Fernando	30,559.68
			1-Jan-00	6-8 San Fernando Street	San Fernando	1,538,109.30
						Total: \$2,748,819.14
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,748,819.14</b>
79	Leslie Marley's Electrical Supplies	Judiciary				
			13-May-04	1 Sorzano Street	Arima	56,925.00
						Total: \$56,925.00
			1-Jan-07	1 Sorzano Street	Arima	62,964.00
						Total: \$62,964.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$119,889.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
80	Leslie Soverall	Ministry of Local Government	1-May-88	Corner Hollis Avenue & Woodford Street	Arima	3,638,439.00
						Total: \$3,638,439.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,638,439.00</b>
81	Linda Lalsingh	Ministry of Local Government	1-Oct-05	LP 647 Southern Main Road	Couva	495,000.00
						Total: \$495,000.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$495,000.00</b>
82	Lynette Welch, Winston Welch and Ian Welch	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources	1-Nov-99	35 Cipriani Boulevard	Port of Spain	898,513.74
			11-Nov-02	35 Cipriani Boulevard	Port of Spain	1,903,144.08
						Total: \$2,801,657.82
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,801,657.82</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
83	Madinah Investment Limited	Judiciary				
			1-Apr-01	7 Court Street	San Fernando	1,222,252.20
			1-Apr-05	7 Court Street	San Fernando	2,121,114.00
						Total: \$3,343,366.20
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,343,366.20</b>
84	Mark Hansraj and Vashtee Hansraj	Ministry of National Security				
			18-Nov-02	136 Talparo Main Road	Arima	179,452.80
			18-Nov-05	136 Talparo Main Road	Arima	76,942.80
			1-Dec-06	136 Talparo Main Road	Arima	132,901.20
			1-Dec-06	136 Talparo Main Road	Arima	41,968.80
						Total: \$431,265.60
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$431,265.60</b>
85	Mary Chai	Ministry of Social Development				
			3-Jul-03	233 Eastern Main Road	Tunapuna	510,720.00
						Total: \$510,720.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$510,720.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
86	Matouk Holdings Limited	Ministry of the Attorney General				
			1-Oct-97	112 Henry Street	Port of Spain	2,589,840.00
			8-Oct-00	112 Henry Street	Port of Spain	7,012,500.00
			8-Oct-06	112 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,995,840.00
						Total: \$11,598,180.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$11,598,180.00</b>
87	Max Senhouse Property Sales & Rental	Ministry of National Security				
			1-Oct-07	1 Achong Trace	Tunapuna	31,500.00
						Total: \$31,500.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$31,500.00</b>
88	Mc Donald Greene	Elections and Boundaries Commission				
			1-Sep-04	11 Hamilton Street	Tobago	353,262.00
			1-Sep-07	11 Hamilton Street	Tobago	156,000.00
						Total: \$509,262.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$509,262.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
89	Melody Ltd	Ministry of Education	1-Nov-06	64-66 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	459,478.40
						Total: \$459,478.40
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$459,478.40</b>
90	Michael Joseph and Josephine Joseph	Ministry of Local Government	1-Jul-07	82 Long Circular Road	Maraval	649,363.00
						Total: \$649,363.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$649,363.00</b>
91	Mohan Rampersad	Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development	1-Apr-99	147A Coffee Street	San Fernando	898,884.00
			1-Apr-02	147A Coffee Street	San Fernando	2,009,820.00
						Total: \$2,908,704.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,908,704.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
92	Moonan Enterprises Ltd					
		Ministry of Energy And Energy Industries				
			1-Dec-98	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	4,320,000.00
			1-Dec-04	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	5,617,920.00
			1-Dec-04	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	3,070,983.30
			1-Dec-04	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	108,205.00
			1-Dec-07	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	700,399.70
						Total: \$13,817,508.00
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-Apr-99	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	432,000.00
			1-Dec-04	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	2,544,470.60
			1-Dec-07	116 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	601,815.06
						Total: \$3,578,285.66
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$17,395,793.66</b>
		Ministry of Finance				
			18-Jan-01	4 Market Street Extension	Chaguanas	944,360.10
						Total: \$944,360.10
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$944,360.10</b>



Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
94	N.J Nahous Investments Limited	Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education				
			1-Dec-06	Corner Agra & Patna Streets	St. James	6,766,390.20
			1-Dec-06	Corner Agra & Patna Streets	St. James	6,766,390.20
						\$13,532,780.40
						Total: 0
						<b>\$13,532,780.40</b>
						<b>Lessor Total:: 0</b>
95	N.J. Nahous Invesments Limited	Ministry of Social Development				
			1-Aug-04	45A-45C St. Vincent Street	Port of Spain	4,981,927.62
			1-Jul-05	45A-45C St. Vincent Street	Port of Spain	267,421.20
						Total: \$5,249,348.82
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$5,249,348.82</b>
96	National Insurance Board	Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development				
			1-Aug-02	Garden Side Street	Scarborough	155,520.00
						Total: \$155,520.00

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Legal Affairs				
			1-Jul-04	72-74 South Quay	Port of Spain	4,552,502.50
			1-Jul-07	72-74 South Quay	Port of Spain	2,601,430.00
						Total: \$7,153,932.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$7,309,452.50</b>
97	National Maintenance, Training and Security Limited	Ministry of Education				
			1-Jan-05	Aranguez Main Road	San Juan	1,093,680.00
						Total: \$1,093,680.00
		Ministry of Social Development				
			1-Jan-05	Aranguez Main Road	San Juan	470,360.52
			28-Feb-05	Aranguez Main Road	San Juan	1,396,255.00
						Total: \$1,866,615.52
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,960,295.52</b>
98	Nealco Properties Limited	Ministry of Health				
			1-Aug-06	Corner Edward & Park Streets	Port of Spain	8,167,290.11
						Total: \$8,167,290.11
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$8,167,290.11</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total		
99	Nicholas Development Company Limited	Ministry of Finance	1-Apr-07	63-65 Independence Square	Port of Spain	1,297,920.00		
								Total: \$1,297,920.00
		Ministry of Information	1-Apr-08	63-65 Independence Square	Port of Spain	486,720.00		
								Total: \$486,720.00
		Ministry of Trade and Industry	2-May-07	63-65 Independence Square	Port of Spain	6,814,080.00		
								Total: \$6,814,080.00
		Office of the Prime Minister	1-Apr-07	63-65 Independence Square	Port of Spain	648,960.00		
								Total: \$648,960.00
								<b>Lessor Total:: \$9,247,680.00</b>
		100	Nickalan Enterprises Limited	Ministry of Planning and Development	1-Sep-04	76 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,733,449.20
1-Sep-07	76 Henry Street				Port of Spain	599,865.00		
					Total: \$2,333,314.20			
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,333,314.20</b>		

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
101	Nizam Tamer	Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources	1-Jul-07	118 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	1,586,191.75
						Total: \$1,586,191.75
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,586,191.75</b>
102	Omar Ali	Ministry of National Security	10-Aug-04	LP 7/5 Craig Estate	Cedros	176,250.00
						Total: \$176,250.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$176,250.00</b>
103	Ossley Francis	Ministry of National Security	1-Aug-03	4 Orange Grove Road	Tacarigua	1,369,728.00
			1-Aug-06	4 Orange Grove Road	Tacarigua	1,309,988.00
						Total: \$2,679,716.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,679,716.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
104	Park Plaza Ltd					
		Ministry of Health				
			22-Feb-08	Corner Park & St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	180,576.00
						Total: \$180,576.00
		Ministry of Legal Affairs				
			1-Dec-05	Corner Park & St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	308,700.00
			15-Aug-07	Corner Park & St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	1,037,768.60
						Total: \$1,346,468.60
		Personnel Department				
			1-Jun-96	Corner Park and St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	171,000.00
			1-Sep-04	Corner Park and St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	1,363,670.00
			1-Sep-07	Corner Park and St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	611,161.50
						Total: \$2,145,831.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,672,876.10</b>

*Written Answer to Question*

*Friday, December 05, 2008*

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
105	Patrick Gordon					
		Elections and Boundaries Commission				
			1-May-06	28 Canaan Road	Point Fortin	405,183.06
						Total: \$405,183.06
		Ministry of National Security				
			20-Apr-07	12 Richardson Street	Point Fortin	307,507.20
						Total: \$307,507.20
		Ministry of Social Development				
			11-Feb-05	63 & 63A Main Road	Point Fortin	450,530.24
						Total: \$450,530.24
		Ministry of Works and Transport				
			11-Feb-05	63 & 63A Main Road	Point Fortin	450,371.06
						Total: \$450,371.06
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,613,591.56</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
106	Percy Thomas					
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-May-02	400 Eastern Main Road	Sangre Grande	504,460.80
			1-May-05	400 Eastern Main Road	Sangre Grande	636,012.00
			1-May-08	400 Eastern Main Road	Sangre Grande	46,024.80
						Total: \$1,186,497.60
		Ministry of National Security				
			12-Jul-06	LP 848 E.M.R. D'Marie Hill	Sangre Grande	360,605.52
			12-Jul-06	LP 848 Eastern Main Road	Sangre Grande	360,605.52
						Total: \$721,211.04
		Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment				
			1-Jun-08	LP 848 Eastern Main Road	Sangre Grande	14,285.84
						Total: \$14,285.84
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,921,994.48</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
107	Perseverance Holdings Ltd	Judiciary	16-Apr-06	6 Irving Street	San Fernando	2,970,174.96
						Total: \$2,970,174.96
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,970,174.96</b>
108	Phyllis Maharaj	Ministry of Finance		Corner Brierley & Henderson Streets	Sangre Grande	44,241.12
			1-Jul-98	Corner Brierley & Henderson Streets	Sangre Grande	71,724.24
			1-Jul-98	Corner Brierley & Henderson Streets	Sangre Grande	146,911.80
			1-Jul-04	Corner Brierley & Henderson Streets	Sangre Grande	Total: \$262,877.16
		Ministry of National Security		Corner Brierley & Henderson Streets	Sangre Grande	171,068.40
			1-Jul-03	Corner Brierley & Henderson Streets	Sangre Grande	Total: \$171,068.40
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$433,945.56</b>



Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
109	Pizza Boys Group of Companies	Judiciary				
			1-Jan-04	8 Prince Street	Arima	1,405,866.96
			1-Jan-07	8 Prince Street	Arima	927,430.56
						Total: \$2,333,297.52
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,333,297.52</b>
110	Polanc Holding Limited	Ministry of Education				
			1-Jun-05	17-19 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	1,584,864.00
						Total: \$1,584,864.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,584,864.00</b>
111	Police Service Credit Union	Ministry of National Security				
			14-May-07	19A Mon Chagrin Street	San Fernando	168,058.24
						Total: \$168,058.24
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$168,058.24</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
112	Port Authority Of Trinidad and Tobago	Ministry of Finance	1-Oct-95	Dock Road	Port of Spain	42,690,915.96
						Total: \$42,690,915.96
		Ministry of National Security	1-May-01	Port of Scarborough	Tobago	308,197.50
						Total: \$308,197.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$42,999,113.46</b>
113	Praetorian Property Mutual Funds	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1-Nov-03	6A Queens Park West	Port of Spain	6,102,791.64
						Total: \$6,102,791.64
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$6,102,791.64</b>
114	Prakash Persad	Ministry of Education	1-Jan-07	Corner Savi Street & Boodooville Circular Road	Sangre Grande	291,583.80
						Total: \$291,583.80

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Social Development				
			1-Jan-07	Corner Savi Street & Boodooville Circular Road	Sangre Grande	248,742.90
						Total: \$248,742.90
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$540,326.70</b>
115	Pramnath Diptee	Ministry of Local Government				
			1-Feb-08	6 Grell Street	Siparia	182,342.80
						Total: \$182,342.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$182,342.80</b>
116	Premier Building Company	Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs				
			1-Jan-01	7 Main Road	Chaguanas	720,135.36
			1-Jan-04	7 Main Road	Chaguanas	593,635.39
						Total: \$1,313,770.75
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,313,770.75</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
117	Premier Properties Ltd	Ministry of Works and Transport				
			24-Jul-03	41-43A Sackville Street	Port of Spain	4,247,769.24
			24-Jul-06	41-43A Sackville Street	Port of Spain	3,179,748.00
						Total: \$7,427,517.24
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$7,427,517.24</b>
118	Promenade Development Limited of ANSA McAL Limited	Ministry of Finance				
			1-Jan-97	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Street	Port of Spain	3,919,803.84
			1-Feb-03	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	1,885,543.66
			1-Jun-03	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Street	Port of Spain	115,500.00
			1-Jun-03	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Street	Port of Spain	1,041,802.78
			1-Jun-03	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	596,750.00

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Finance				
			1-Jun-04	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Street	Port of Spain	1,100,704.00
			22-Feb-06	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Street	Port of Spain	2,193,560.00
						Total: \$10,853,664.28
		Office of the Prime Minister				
			1-Dec-04	Corner Independence Square South & St Vincent Street	Port of Spain	1,332,555.41
						Total: \$1,332,555.41
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$12,186,219.69</b>
119	Ramdeo Ramkalawan	Ministry of Education				
			1-Jan-06	1 Hindustan Junction	Princes Town	92,851.20
						Total: \$92,851.20
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$92,851.20</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
120	Ramindranath Sooklal and Nargis Sooklal					
		Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs				
			1-Feb-99	358 Brierley Street	Sangre Grande	101,232.00
			1-Feb-99	358 Brierley Street	Sangre Grande	197,081.64
			1-Feb-02	358 Brierley Street	Sangre Grande	101,232.00
			1-Feb-05	358 Brierley Street	Sangre Grande	166,008.67
						Total: \$565,554.31
		Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development				
			1-Feb-99	358 Brierley Street	Sangre Grande	96,840.00
			1-Feb-02	358 Brierley Street	Sangre Grande	101,232.00
			1-Feb-05	358 Brierley Street	Sangre Grande	141,724.80
						Total: \$339,796.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$905,351.11</b>
121	Ramkaran Rambocas and Leela Rambocas-Ramcharan					
		Elections and Boundaries Commission				
			1-Oct-95	Ojoe Road	Sangre Grande	104,286.60
			1-Jul-04	Ojoe Road	Sangre Grande	148,764.00

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Elections and Boundaries Commission	1-Jul-07	Ojoe Road	Sangre Grande	110,377.28
						Total: \$363,427.88
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$363,427.88</b>
122	Ramlal Jaggernauth and James Jaggernauth	Ministry of Works and Transport	30-Jun-05	235 Iere Village	Princes Town	315,517.50
						Total: \$315,517.50
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$315,517.50</b>
123	Ramnarine Ramdass	Judiciary	1-Jan-04	74 Ramsaran Street	Chaguanas	5,403,103.92
						Total: \$5,403,103.92
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$5,403,103.92</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
124	Ramsaran Bissram and Shurash Bissram	Ministry of Local Government		Corner Ramdass Street & Eastern Main Road	Sangre Grande	808,846.20
			1-Oct-04			Total: \$808,846.20
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$808,846.20</b>
125	Ranji Ramlochan	Elections and Boundaries Commission				
			1-Jun-01	1326 S.S. Erin Road	Penal	179,830.44
			1-Jun-04	1326 S.S. Erin Road	Penal	199,579.80
			1-Jun-07	1326 S.S. Erin Road	Penal	119,047.60
						Total: \$498,457.84
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$498,457.84</b>
126	Rann's Agencies Limited	Ministry of Local Government		Corner Elie Road &High Street	Rio Claro	427,957.20
			1-Jul-95			



Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Local Government				
			1-Jul-98	Corner Elie Road & High Street	Rio Claro	575,796.96
			1-Jul-04	Corner Elie Road & High Street	Rio Claro	927,314.42
			1-Jan-05	Corner Elie Road & High Street	Rio Claro	53,684.80
			1-Jul-07	Corner Elie Road & High Street	Rio Claro	545,941.01
						Total: \$2,530,694.39
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,530,694.39</b>
127	Renel Limited	Ministry of Information				
			1-Jan-92	Uriah Butler highway	Chaguanas	39,463,073.10
						Total: \$39,463,073.10
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$39,463,073.10</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
128	RGM limited	Office of the Prime Minister		Corner Victoria Avenue & Albion Lane	Port of Spain	4,971,277.80
			1-Jan-06			Total: \$4,971,277.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$4,971,277.80</b>
129	Richard David Mohammed	Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development		Corner Elie & Mota Streets	Rio Claro	100,759.14
			12-Jan-07			Total: \$100,759.14
		Ministry of Local Government		Corner Elie Road & High Street	Rio Claro	545,927.85
			1-Jul-07			Total: \$545,927.85
		Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs		Corner Elie & Mota Streets	Rio Claro	104,355.54
			12-Jan-07			Total: \$104,355.54
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$751,042.53</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
130	Ricky Ramnarine	Ministry of Social Development	15-Oct-04	62 Abercromby Street	Port of Spain	1,119,492.50
			15-Oct-07	62 Abercromby Street	Port of Spain	360,108.45
						Total: \$1,479,600.95
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,479,600.95</b>
131	Road Transport Engineering Limited	Ministry of Social Development	1-Jan-06	10-12 Neverson Street	Point Fortin	90,165.90
						Total: \$90,165.90
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$90,165.90</b>
132	Robin Debideen	Ministry of Finance	1-Feb-03	92 Wrightson Road	Port of Spain	1,959,804.00
			1-Feb-06	92 Wrightson Road	Port of Spain	1,885,865.94
						Total: \$3,845,669.94
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,845,669.94</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
133	Roman Catholic Archbishop	Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment	1-Sep-05	16-18 Sackville Street	Port of Spain	4,810,864.00
						Total: \$4,810,864.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$4,810,864.00</b>
134	Roodal Ramnasibsingh and Anne Marie Ramnasibsingh	Ministry of Finance	1-Mar-08	26 1/2mm Naparima/Mayaro Road	Rio Claro	105,560.00
						Total: \$105,560.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$105,560.00</b>
135	Salickram Ragunanan	Ministry of Local Government	1-Jul-07	Corner Dougdeen & De Verteuil Streets	Rio Claro	114,355.80
						Total: \$114,355.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$114,355.80</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
136	Samaka Holding Limited	Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries	10-Jul-07	South Trunk Road, Gulf View	San Fernando	2,278,319.40
						Total: \$2,278,319.40
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,278,319.40</b>
137	Sarafat Khan	Ministry of National Security	17-Feb-07	788 Saline Road	Chaguanas	122,381.30
						Total: \$122,381.30
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$122,381.30</b>
138	Scott Land and Investment Ltd	Ministry of Planning and Development	7-Dec-05	Park and Pembroke Streets	Port of Spain	2,106,265.24
						Total: \$2,106,265.24
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,106,265.24</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
139	Seeraj Gopaulchan	Ministry of Finance				
			1-Jun-00	LP 63 Ramsaran Street	Chaguanas	450,084.60
			1-Jun-03	LP 63 Ramsaran Street	Chaguanas	575,346.24
			1-Jun-06	LP 63 Ramsaran Street	Chaguanas	754,004.16
						Total: \$1,779,435.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,779,435.00</b>
140	Smack Limited	Ministry of Education				
			31-Jul-92	33 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	594,658.61
			1-Mar-95	33 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	1,007,206.20
			1-Jan-99	33 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	399,830.34
			1-Dec-99	33 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	919,609.78
			1-Jan-06	33 Pembroke Street	Port of Spain	1,828,267.80
						Total: \$2,921,304.93
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$4,749,572.73</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
141	Solomon Ali Holdings Ltd	Ministry of Health				
			1-Jan-03	43-45 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	845,230.68
			1-Jan-06	43-45 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	704,358.90
						Total: \$1,549,589.58
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,549,589.58</b>
142	Sookoor Ali Hosein	Ministry of Local Government				
			9-Aug-07	218 S.S Erin Road	Penal	1,065,460.00
						Total: \$1,065,460.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,065,460.00</b>
143	Steve Sinanan	Ministry of Education				
			1-Aug-06	18 Abercromby Street	Port of Spain	2,443,341.75
						Total: \$2,443,341.75
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,443,341.75</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
144	Susan Chong Sing	Ministry of the Attorney General	1-Aug-06	63 Cordner Drive	Tobago	103,408.00
						Total: \$103,408.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$103,408.00</b>
145	TATECO	Parliament	1-Nov-05	Scarborough	Tobago	121,573.12
						Total: \$121,573.12
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$121,573.12</b>
146	Tatil	Housing Development Corporation	1-Nov-05	44-46 South Quay	Port of Spain	11,456,256.00
						Total: \$11,456,256.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$11,456,256.00</b>



Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
147	Teachers Credit Unit Co-operative Society Limited	Ministry of Education	1-Apr-06	50A Jerningham Avenue	Port of Spain	476,082.60
						Total: \$476,082.60
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$476,082.60</b>
148	TECU Credit Union Co-Operative Society	Elections and Boundaries Commission	1-Apr-05	Southern Main Road	Couva	474,196.80
						Total: \$474,196.80
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$474,196.80</b>
149	Telly Paul and Company	Environmental Commission				
			1-Jan-05	Corner New & St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	1,573,230.75
			1-Jan-08	Corner New & St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	209,989.44
						Total: \$1,783,220.19

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
Office of the Prime Minister						
			1-Jan-99	Corner New & St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	311,209.92
			1-Jan-05	Corner New & St. Vincent Streets	Port of Spain	714,020.16
						Total: \$1,025,230.08
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,808,450.27</b>
150	Texaco Credit Union	Ministry of Finance				
			1-Aug-01	Southern Main Road	Marabella	1,429,122.24
						Total: \$1,429,122.24
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,429,122.24</b>
151	Texalina Limited	Ministry of Finance				
			1-Oct-03	35 Henry Street	Port of Spain	2,449,726.20
			1-Jun-06	35 Henry Street	Port of Spain	2,158,210.86
						Total: \$4,607,937.06

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
		Ministry of Works and Transport				
			1-Apr-05	31 Wrightson Road	Port of Spain	6,200,149.20
						Total: \$6,200,149.20
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$10,808,086.26</b>
152	Trinidad and Tobago Unit Trust Corporation	Integrity Commission				
			1-Jun-01	82 Independence Square	Port of Spain	3,019,248.00
			1-Jun-04	82 Independence Square	Port of Spain	2,935,380.00
			1-Jun-07	82 Independence Square	Port of Spain	3,355,128.00
						Total: \$9,309,756.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$9,309,756.00</b>
153	TRINTOC	Ministry of Education				
			1-Sep-98	Southern Main Road	Point-a-Pierre	5,950.00
			1-Sep-98	Southern Main Road	Point-a-Pierre	5,950.00
						Total: \$11,900.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$11,900.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
154	TTARP	Ministry of Education	1-May-05	167-169 Belmont Circular Road	Belmont	1,169,868.96
						Total: \$1,169,868.96
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,169,868.96</b>
155	TTMA	Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education	5-Oct-04	42 Tenth Avenue	Barataria	1,120,000.00
			1-Sep-07	42 Tenth Avenue	Barataria	400,000.00
						Total: \$1,520,000.00
		Ministry of Trade and Industry	1-Sep-04	42 Tenth Avenue	Barataria	1,120,000.00
			1-Sep-07	42 Tenth Avenue	Barataria	400,000.00
						Total: \$1,520,000.00
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,040,000.00</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
156	Tucana Ltd	Ministry of National Security				
			20-Dec-05	135 Henry Street	Port of Spain	2,584,573.02
			20-Dec-07	135 Henry Street	Port of Spain	1,119,413.05
						Total: \$3,703,986.07
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$3,703,986.07</b>
157	Unan Pustam	Ministry of Local Government				
			13-Aug-04	De Gannes Village	Siparia	419,601.00
			13-Aug-07	De Gannes Village	Siparia	186,902.10
						Total: \$606,503.10
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$606,503.10</b>
158	Usha Rani Maraj	Ministry of Health				
			1-Sep-05	92 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	2,209,036.44
						Total: \$2,209,036.44
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$2,209,036.44</b>

Written Answer to Question

Friday, December 05, 2008

No.	Lessor Name	Occupant	Date of Lease	Address of Property	City	Total
159	Victom Limited	Ministry of National Security	29-Dec-05	33 Sackville Street	Port of Spain	651,540.33
						Total: \$651,540.33
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$651,540.33</b>
160	Vidia Gosine	Office of the Prime Minister	1-Apr-04	97 High Street	Princes Town	1,206,962.64
						Total: \$1,206,962.64
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$1,206,962.64</b>
161	Winfield H. Scott Trust Company Limited	Elections and Boundaries Commission	1-Mar-05	134-138 Frederick Street	Port of Spain	8,686,913.95
						Total: \$8,686,913.95
						<b>Lessor Total:: \$8,686,913.95</b>
						<b>Grand Total \$629,659.475.00</b>