

Leave of Absence

Tuesday, April 18, 2006

SENATE

Tuesday, April 18, 2006

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie and Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand who are ill; Sen. Sadiq Baksh and Sen. Angela Cropper who are out of the country.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Prof. George Maxwell Richards:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., PhD, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO MR. VASANT BHARATH

WHEREAS Senator Sadiq Baksh is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, VASANT BHARATH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Sadiq Baksh.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 13th day of April, 2006.”

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., PhD, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO MR. WALTON FRANCIS JAMES

WHEREAS Senator Angela Cropper is incapable of performing her duties as a Senator by reason of her absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, WALTON FRANCIS JAMES, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Angela Cropper.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 12th day of April, 2006.”

Senators, I have not yet received the instrument from President's House for Ms. Bonnie-Lou De Silva. When the instrument for Ms. Bonnie-Lou De Silva arrives, at that stage, I would read it and she would take the oath. In the meantime we would take the other two Senators.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sen. Vasant Bharath and Sen. Walton Francis James took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, if you go to the Appendix you would see questions that are outstanding for about five months which is unprecedented in the history of the Senate. I will like you to appeal to my hon colleague to see if those answers can be sent to the various Senators, especially me.

Madam President: Sen. The Hon. Dr. Saith, will you please attempt to get those answers as early as possible for us please?

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries: (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith) Madam President, I have been advised that the Minister of Local Government was unable to be here at this time. We had signalled to the Senate that we would debate that Bill today. Unfortunately, I do not think that we could do it. I think that it would be unfair to Senators to go to the next Bill when they were not advised.

In the circumstances, I would like to move that the Senate be adjourned to Tuesday, April 25, 2006, at 1.30 p.m. I believe that it would be Private Members' Day. I can assure Senators that on the next regular sitting of Government Business, I would work them twice as hard for the little holiday they are having today.

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, I want to bring a development to your attention. Last Thursday I was informed that today's sitting would be an extremely short one. That has to do with the fact that traditionally, Easter Tuesday is celebrated in the isle of Tobago. I was made to understand—I would not call the name of that particular individual unless you insist that I do so—that because today's sitting would be very short, I sought to enquire why. In Tobago Easter Tuesday is more or less a tradition among the people.

I know when I was on that side and Dr. Saith was there, we always adjourned sitting to the following week to allow our colleagues from Tobago to be part of the exercise. I do not know if last week it was an oversight on the part of the Government that it did not move to have the adjournment to the following Tuesday.

I suggest to Sen. The Hon. Dr. Saith that we run this Parliament collectively. I prefer if a decision of that nature is to be taken that communication be had among him, the Independent Benches and me, so that we would be aware why we would not sit for a long period. As you are aware, in matters like these the Leader of Government Business can contact us. Through correspondence we can agree not to meet on that day. I will like, for the record, to indicate our disappointment. It is very unfortunate that the Leader of Government Business told us today that because of the absence of Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas, we would be unable to deal with the Bill, when the information that I received had to do with the celebration or activity that is taking place in Tobago today.

In future, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Saith would be well advised that whenever we are celebrating Easter we do not come back the following Tuesday and allow the people of Tobago to celebrate their activity which they normally do and we have

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acceded to in terms of a request. I wanted to bring that to your attention and to record our disappointment that we have to be wasting Parliament's time to do an exercise that we could have done through correspondence.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: I am not sure what he means by correspondence. Once a sitting is scheduled we must have it. I indicated to the Clerk that the possibility existed that we may have to do this and I believe that she contacted the Leader. I am not here to score political points.

The reality is that I have moved to adjourn for a week. It will be Private Members' Day next week and the following week we would deal with the Bills that are before us. I think the time has come that when we adjourn we should prepare ourselves for two Bills instead of one as has been the practice.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Madam President: Hon. Senators, before we take the adjournment, I have received the instrument for Ms. Bonnie-Lou De Silva. We would do the swearing in before we take the adjournment.

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., PhD, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO MS. BONNIE-LOU DE SILVA

WHEREAS Senator John Jeremie is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, BONNIE-LOU DE SILVA, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of the said Senator John Jeremie.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 14th day of April, 2006.”

Oath of Allegiance

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OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sen. Bonnie-Lou De Silva took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 1.49 p.m.