

**THE**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**OFFICIAL REPORT**

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD  
AND TOBAGO WHICH OPENED ON DECEMBER 17, 2007

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**SESSION 2007—2008**

**VOLUME 1**

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**SENATE**

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

**10.00 A.M.**

The Senate having assembled, and it being the first meeting of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Clerk of the Senate read the following Proclamation:

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

No. 9 of 2007.

[L.S.]

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

/s/ G. Richards  
President

**A PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS it is provided by subsection (1) of section 67 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago that each session of Parliament shall be held at such place within Trinidad and Tobago and shall commence at such time as the President may by Proclamation appoint:

Now, therefore, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, do hereby appoint the Red House, Port of Spain, Trinidad, as the place at which the First Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad

*A Proclamation*

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

and Tobago shall be held and 10.00 a.m. on Monday the 17th day of December, 2007, as the time at which the said Session shall commence.

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 7th day of December, 2007.

#### **ELECTION OF PRESIDENT**

**The Clerk:** Hon. Senators, in accordance with Standing Order No. 3(1) of the Senate, I now invite proposals for the Office of President of the Senate.

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** I propose that Mr. Danny Montano do take the Chair of the Senate as President.

*Seconded by Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran.*

*There being no other nominations, the Clerk of the Senate declared Danny Montano the duly elected President of the Senate.*

#### **OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Mr. Danny Montano took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, the sitting of the Senate is suspended for five minutes to allow the President to be robed.

**10.05 a.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**10.10 a.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

#### **ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, in accordance with Standing Order No. 4 of the Senate, I now invite proposals for the Office of Vice-President of the Senate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Mr. President, I propose Mr. George Hadeed to be the Vice-President of the Senate.

*Seconded by Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran.*

*There being no other nominations, the Clerk of the Senate declared George Hadeed duly elected Vice-President of the Senate.*

*Oath of Allegiance*

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Mr. George Hadeed took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I now invite the other Members of the Senate to take the Oath of Allegiance.

*The following Senators took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law:*

Sen. Conrad Enill

Sen. Dr. Lenny K. Saith

Sen. Bridgid Annisette-George

Sen. Mariano Browne

Sen. Martin Joseph

Sen. Hazel Ann Marie Manning

Sen. Arnold Piggott

Sen. Jerry Narace

Sen. Tina Gronlund-Nunez

Sen. Wesley George

Sen. Linus Rogers

Sen. Laurel Lezama

Sen. June Melville

Sen. Wade Mark

Sen. Dr. Adesh Nanan

Sen. Dr. Carson Charles

Sen. Dr. Jennifer Jones Kernahan

Sen. Mohammed Faisal Rahman

Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran

*Oath of Allegiance*

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

Sen. Dana Seetahal SC  
 Sen. Basharat Ali  
 Sen. Michael Annisette  
 Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan  
 Sen. Corinne Baptiste-McKnight  
 Sen. Annette Nicholson-Alfred  
 Sen. Helen Drayton  
 Sen. Gail Merhair

*Sen. Dr. Emily Gaynor Dick-Forde took and subscribed the Affirmation of Allegiance as required by law.*

#### PRAYERS

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago wishes to address all Members of Parliament. This sitting is now suspended.

**10.30 a.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

[INVOCATIONS]

#### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

*His Excellency the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Professor George Maxwell Richards TC, CMT, PhD, addressed both Houses of Parliament as follows:*

*The Hon. Patrick Manning, Prime Minister, Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano, President of the Senate, the hon. Barendra Sinanan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, the hon. Justice Roger Hamel-Smith, Acting Chief Justice, Cabinet Ministers, members of the Diplomatic Corps, heads of religious organizations, the hon. Basdeo Panday, Leader of the Opposition, members of the Judiciary and the Caribbean Court of Justice, other Members of Parliament, representatives of the media, other distinguished ladies and gentlemen:*

*On this, the ceremonial opening of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I take the opportunity to congratulate all the newly elected and appointed Members of Parliament. Some of you are experiencing the Parliament as Members for the first time, and I am sure that you are approaching your job with enthusiasm and the necessary commitment.*

*As you are aware, it is not a light matter as the future of our beloved country depends to a considerable extent on how you perceive that which you have been elected or appointed to do.*

*For those who recently presented themselves to the people, you are the people's choice and that recognition brings with it tremendous responsibility. For those of you who are new to this occupation, let me warn you that your constituents, and that translates to all of Trinidad and Tobago, regardless of portfolio, are not concerned about the obstacles that you may encounter in your attempt to satisfy needs or wants, and there is no such thing as a grace period, as I am quite sure you may have already noticed.*

*I would like to believe that you are committed to the long haul, and this is as it should be in politics. As time passes, you will come to understand better the saying in Latin, *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*; literally, "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country". It is the matter of sacrifice to which I refer; sacrifice which will manifest in different ways, but you have signed on voluntarily for the task ahead and hopefully, will go the distance. For those who have been appointed, the sacrifice is no less, and all must be mindful of the requirements of shared or collective responsibility in the system which guides the conduct of the Government. Policy decisions bear no individual names, but the concern of the people at whatever level is how they are affected by them.*

*Ladies and gentlemen, at this time there are several matters that engage our thoughts as a developing country, one that is in the forefront of scrutiny, certainly in the region, if not the world. While I do not intend to dwell upon it on this occasion, I must say that headline news gives us little comfort as a nation and can well have the effect of removing from our consciousness whatever good is taking place in our country. It is not just the heinous crimes that come to our attention, but it is being brought to our notice when an incident occurs, the extent to which a number of unseemly activities are taking place, sometimes within family settings involving children and older persons.*

*These are things of which we are made aware through the local information network, and even as we know that there are several positive outcomes of our efforts in many areas, we ought to be mindful of how we are being assessed internationally in terms of our development. We do not exist in isolation and some of these negative occurrences do have their effect on the international perspective.*

*The Global Competitiveness Report 2007/2008, featuring 131 countries for the period, produced by the World Economic Forum in conjunction with the Universities of Harvard and Columbia and which has partnered institutes around the world, including the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, gives us some idea of this.*

*It should be noted that, in the authors' view, the index is, and I quote:*

*"...an instrument that can be used to identify the competitive strengths of a country as well as the barriers that impede its economic progress, whether these be labour market inflexibility, fiscal imbalances, lack of governance, inadequate infrastructure or education, poor public ethics, red tape, insufficient innovation or sophistication of business activities or underdeveloped financial markets."*

*The index is constructed by combining hard data with the opinion of the top business leaders answering the survey questions. It helps to explain why some countries are more successful than others in raising income levels and opportunities for their respective populations and, according to the forum, should provide policymakers and business leaders with useful information in the formulation of improved economic policies and institutional reforms, identifying suggested priorities in the process.*

*The survey employs 12 pillars of competitiveness, none exclusive to the other, grouped under three headings as follows:*

*Basic requirements—key for factor-driven economies: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, health and primary education;*

*Efficiency enhancers—key for efficiency-driven economies: higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market sophistication, technological readiness, market size; and*

*Innovation and sophistication factors—key for innovation-driven economies: business sophistication, innovation.*

*On a scale of 1 to 7, Trinidad and Tobago scored an average of 4.5, 3.8 and 3.5 respectively under the above three headings. Its highest scores were registered at the third pillar: macroeconomic stability, 5.8, and the fourth, health and primary education, 5.5. Six other pillars registered scores representing 50 per cent and upwards, making a total of eight such pillars of the 12 employed. These were institutions, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market sophistication and business sophistication.*

*The survey suggests that Trinidad and Tobago, which stands midway in the rankings of the Latin American and Caribbean countries assessed, is making good progress towards its goal of developed country status, but much remains to be done. Indeed, in the list of countries' economies shown at their respective stages in the three stages of development, stage three being the highest, our country is in transition from stage two to stage three. This is a most encouraging note.*

*Another area of global interest that impacts on us is the environment, and I will deal with one aspect of it, that is, climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Fourth Assessment Synthesis Report on November 17, 2007, in Valencia, Spain, and the recent United Nations climate change conference held in Bali over the past fortnight, will, hopefully, in spite of all the obstacles that continue to stand in the way, be that catalyst which will launch negotiations for a comprehensive agreement on climate change, to which all nations can adhere. Regrettably, however, while delegates have agreed to a compromise on curbing climate change, the expectations for this conference have not been fully realized, and binding targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions have not, so far, been agreed upon.*

*The IPCC report tells us, inter alia, that in Brazil rain forests are being threatened and can transform into savannah; that in the Punta Arenas in Chile, parents sometimes do not allow their children to play outside or go to school for fear of the negative effects of ultraviolet rays. Eleven of the last 12 years rank amount the 12 warmest years in the instrumental record of global surface temperature since 1850, and land regions have warmed faster than oceans. I am sure that you do not need to be convinced, because of the perception of a dramatic rise in temperature that we are experiencing right here in Trinidad and Tobago.*

*In this regard, the report further indicates that human influences have had significant effects on climate change and that continued greenhouse gas emissions at or above the current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that would very likely be more than those observed during the last century.*

*There is evidence that human influences have very likely contributed to sea level rise during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and likely contributed to changes in wind patterns affecting extra-tropical storm tracks and temperature patterns. Increases in sea surface temperature as well as*

*progressive ocean acidification, which has been a reality since 1750, are expected to have increased negative impacts on marine shell-forming organisms, for example, corals and their dependent species, apart from other forms of marine life, with consequent negative impact on our tourism industry year, inter alia.*

*Sea level rise can lead to loss of coastal areas and associated impacts and can even inundate small island developing states, of which we are one. Imagine wanting to bathe at Icacos in county St. Patrick, ladies and gentlemen, but having to stop at Granville because Icacos and all the intervening settlements have been claimed by the sea. That is one of the realities of climate change.*

*Climate change will affect developing countries the most and over the next half century it could impede achievement of the United Nations' millennium development goals. Reduced rainfall, a fallout from climate change, will aggravate water and food insecurity which will erode some of the positive steps that have been taken towards poverty eradication and other development goals. There can be negative impacts on agriculture, forestry, ecosystems, water resources, human health, industry, human settlement and society as a whole.*

*Key mitigation technologies and practices currently commercially available in the following sectors: energy supply, transport, buildings, industry, agriculture, forestry/forests and waste must be employed, and industrialized and developing countries must collaborate in order to stem the tide of impending disaster. Funding for clean energy technologies is necessary and, particularly, transfer of clean technologies for energy supply and adaptation. Unmitigated climate change would, in the long run, be likely to exceed the capacity of natural, managed and human systems to adapt, but in several sectors climate response options can be implemented to realize synergies and avoid conflicts with other dimensions of sustainable development.*

*But what does this mean to the man in the street? How does this translate into his interest and why should these issues be raised at a ceremonial opening of Parliament? It is because they bear strongly upon the development of the people of this country. As you begin this term of office as representatives of the people's interests, reflection on them will certainly not be amiss. You must find ways and means of inspiring them to greater*



President's Address

Monday, December 17, 2007

*consciousness of their responsibilities as individuals and communities towards the environment and other matters connected to our country's development in their respective capacities.*

*For example, the references that I have made to the environment, while having implications for corporations engaged in the industrialization process, also call to mind the everyday activities of all of us as individuals. Many of us have been careless about the environment and are contributing to its degradation in ways that have become second nature, such as the disposal of garbage and the indiscriminate felling of trees, to name but two. This state of affairs must be reversed.*

*Your debates in the Parliament must convey that you are ever mindful of the trust that has been placed in you to promote the welfare of every citizen. This would sometimes require compromise on both sides of the political divide, but does not suggest, by any means, the suppression of different or diametrically opposed views. There should be room, however, for mature collaboration inside and outside of the Parliament, having as its primary objective the people's interest.*

*This demonstration of interest in the public above the cut and thrust of politics, is likely to influence the population at large to take a sustained interest in and to be more a part of the work that you do in this Chamber, in the Upper House and in your constituencies. It can lead to a more participatory approach in the decisions that emanate from parliamentary debates, and the development of a more inclusive society. Such a society would tend, on a wider scale, to make use of the benefits that become available to it, education being a critical one with heightened interest in tertiary education to which increasing access should continue to be a priority.*

*In our thrust to diversify the economy education would continue to play an important role in optimizing our human resource capability. The statement that our human resource is our most valuable asset may justifiably be regarded as overworked; nevertheless, we need to remind ourselves that it is making use of our human potential that will turn around our condition of poverty, crime, family disintegration and whatever ills we must tackle.*

*I posit that, as we seek to advance together as a nation, we must be equipped with a sound knowledge of our Republican Constitution of 1976, the essence of which is captured in the words of its preamble, all of which are important. Knowledge of our Constitution, as it now exists or as it may be in*

*the future, will also promote intelligent dialogue on what can be properly and reasonably required of executive officers of the State, including the Head of State. It is an objective to which we as leaders should set our minds and take appropriate action, including within our schools.*

*I choose on this occasion to highlight one section as follows, in keeping with some of the positions that I have advanced today. I quote:*

*“Whereas the people of Trinidad and Tobago...*

- (b) respect the principles of social justice and therefore believe that the operation of the economic system should result in the material resources of the community being so distributed as to subserve the common good, that there should be adequate means of livelihood for all, that labour should not be exploited or forced by economic necessity to operate in inhuman conditions but that there should be opportunity for advancement on the basis of recognition of merit, ability and integrity;”*

*In recalling these words, I am mindful that our gross domestic product over the last five years averaged some 9.2 per cent per annum, but at the same time the poverty level stands at 17 per cent; this is far too high. We must, therefore, strive for sustainable ways of lifting the poor out of their condition.*

*Much of this thrust will be played out in the parliamentary Chambers, the difficulty, particularly in the House of Representatives, is how in representative government a relatively small number of men and women can represent the opinions, aspirations, desires and interests of an electorate comprising different social strata, possibly half of whom, under the party systems, may be opposed to them in politics. Perhaps we might learn something from other democratic systems, perhaps the Swiss, which eschews much of the atmosphere of personal combat, directing attention more to issues and less to persons.*

*In that circumstance, the citizenry is more inclined to recognize itself as having a stake in political power and to see the officers of the State as exercising the functions entrusted to them. We must forge a political system in which, as someone has described it, government is in constant and organized relationship with the world of the people as a whole. This brings to mind Aristotle's position, which can hardly be debated, that there is a right inherent in the people, by virtue of their capacity of collective judgment to elect their rulers and call them to account.*

*President's Address*

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

*The principles which regulate public life in a morally healthy society, which we should all be seeking to develop and sustain, should also be recognizable in private life, as we seek to nurture a gentler and more caring society, working together for the betterment of ourselves, our families and our communities. It is an objective from which we seem to be very far at the moment.*

*There should be no room for our cupidities and gratification of personal ambitions. We should not have to embrace Plato's conviction, deeply disappointed as he was in the duplicity of his political contemporaries, that there is no place for a man of conscience in active politics. That need not be the prevailing sentiment in our country. [Laughter] But we should give careful consideration to the foundation of his doctrine, that is to say, that true statesmanship means the promotion of national character as the one thing which matters and is, therefore, the application on the grand scale of the principles of absolute morality. What falls short of this is opportunism masquerading as statesmanship.*

*And so ladies and gentlemen, Members of this august body, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago of which I am constitutionally a part, the people have placed their trust in us. By our leadership they will be guided. It is my hope and my prayer that they will be properly and effectively encouraged to realize their full potential as a vibrant people, a people of ideas and actions; ridding itself of unnecessary impediments of half measures, mediocrity and imitation; becoming more and more knowledgeable of its past, and under our guidance using such knowledge to shape our present and our future for the benefit of all of us, as individuals and as members of the communities in which we find ourselves at home and abroad.*

*In closing, may I remind us all, as a beacon for the way forward, that we the people "have affirmed that the nation of Trinidad and Tobago is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, faith in fundamental rights and freedoms, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions, the dignity of the human person and the equal and inalienable rights with which all members of the human family are endowed by their Creator;"*

*Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the courtesy of your attention. I express best wishes to you all for the Christmas season and many blessings in the New Year 2008.*

*May God bless our nation.*

*Senators return to the Senate Chamber.*

Monday, December 17, 2007

**12.15 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**PAPER LAID**

Address by His Excellency the President on the occasion of the opening of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill)*]

*To be printed as a Senate Paper.*

**COPYRIGHT (AMDT.) (NO. 2) BILL**

Bill to amend the Copyright Act, 2007 [*The Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

**LEGAL PROFESSION (AMDT.) (NO.2) BILL**

Bill to amend the Legal Profession Act, 1986 [*The Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

**CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE (HEADQUARTERS)  
(NO. 2) BILL**

Bill to provide for the implementation by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago of the Agreement Establishing the seat of the Caribbean Court of Justice and the Offices of the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean Court of Justice and the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission [*The Minister of Foreign Affairs*]; read the first time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.

**Congratulations**

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Mr. President, let me on behalf of the Government be the first to congratulate you on your elevation to President of the Senate and to extend our support for the session that will represent the finest hour to the deliberations in this Parliament.

On behalf of all of us, may I also wish to other Senators the best for the Christmas season, and may we all have a very prosperous New Year hopefully to return happy and refreshed to deal with the business of the State.

*Congratulations*

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Hon. President, in wishing you a very successful tour of duty, I wish to record some of our concerns and to seek, as you occupy this very important position, your co-operation. We on the Opposition Bench, will co-operate but only insofar as the integrity and intent of the Standing Orders are upheld.

Hon. President of the Senate, I would also like to indicate that in the last Parliament—you would know as you were in another incarnation—we suffered severely as it relates to Ministers being able to answer questions on the Order Paper. I want to serve notice that we would uphold the Standing Orders insofar as Private Members' Business is concerned. I serve notice that we will not be co-operating with any 4.30 p.m. adjournment, we will be going right up to 6.30 p.m. as we are entitled to.

Hon. President, these are very difficult times that we are in and I would want to wish you a successful tour of duty. I would also like to take the opportunity to wish all my colleagues on the Government Bench, on the Opposition Bench and on the Independent Bench and their respective families, warmest season's greetings and to wish all a very successful, prosperous, safe and productive 2008.

Hon. President, I want to extend to you and to your family a very happy Christmas. Whilst we did not second the motion, it is not personal; I want you to know this. We believe in a principle and we do not believe, hon. President, that a serving politician should be occupying a chair that is supposed to be extremely impartial. I hope that you will bring all your wisdom and experience to bear on these proceedings so that there will be fairness, impartiality, sensitivity and, most importantly, you seek to protect at all times the minority rights and the minority interest, which is the Opposition.

Hon. President, warmest season's greetings to you and your family. Thank you very much.

**Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran:** Mr. President, colleagues of this honourable Chamber, after listening to the prayers this morning and the address by His Excellency, it certainly would occur to all of us that there is some very serious business facing this country, and a large part of that responsibility falls upon Members of this two-Chamber Parliament.

I believe, Mr. President, that there has been a lot of unfinished business from the last Parliament, and those of us who have returned here will certainly seek to ensure that that business be completed in the most satisfactory way in the public

*Congratulations*  
[SEN. PROF. DEOSARAN]

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

interest. We are fortunate that we have many new Senators embellishing the reputation and the usefulness of this Chamber, and from them I am quite sure that the country expects some new ideas, some fresh insights in the way forward.

I myself believe, Mr. President, having listened to our distinguished Leader of the Opposition, that the Senate has a very special role to play in managing the affairs of this country. The word “Senator” itself, resonates with qualities of wisdom, foresight and patriotism and I have no doubt as I look around at my distinguished colleagues in this Parliament, that we all are quite capable of fulfilling that mission, in addition to the oath that we have just taken.

As far as you are concerned, Mr. President, I have always been impressed with your knowledge, not only of the Standing Orders, but of the Westminster system. We have a constitutionally driven structure in this Parliament which has as part of it, an Opposition, which has a role to play. But it seems to me and the rest of the country, I am sure, that there is a lot of space for consensus, collaboration and bearing collective responsibility as to the extent to which this Parliament fulfils its duty. I think with that spirit I would like to wish all my colleagues, Members of the Government Bench, Members of the Opposition Bench, my own colleagues on the Independent Bench and, as well on their behalf, to all of us here, a very merry Christmas and we look forward to many very peaceful and prosperous years ahead.

I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, and look forward to the qualities of integrity, fairness and collaboration as far as necessary. Thank you, Sir.

### **Vote of Thanks**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, let me first thank all sides for the very warm greetings on my appointment to the presidency of the Chamber. Allow me, secondly, to congratulate each and every one of you on your appointment and to welcome you to this Senate, those of you who are new and to welcome back those of you who have been here before. I have very different views as to what the Senate is and I think that Sen. Prof. Deosaran, perhaps, just briefly, articulated how I think. The Senate of the country is an elevated House where the scope and quality of debate is expected to be the highest level our citizens can produce. We are expected to be exemplars in how we speak, what we say and how we lead.

With the television before us now, more so than ever, we have a responsibility to set an example, especially for young persons. In so doing, it is my duty first and foremost to protect the Standing Orders. I am not here to take sides or to

*Vote of Thanks*

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

favour one against the other; my duty is to the Constitution and to the Standing Orders. I will do my best and be as faithful as I can to my understanding of these Standing Orders.

In this regard, I would seek your help and guidance as we go forward. I do not expect to be here by myself, I am here with each and every one of you and you have a most important role to play in that regard. I look forward to being here with you for the next few years. You have a big job in front of you, enormous challenges that I know that each and every one of you will meet. We must at all times try to put aside the partisan approach and try to do what we believe genuinely is in the best interest of the people.

While there are two parties represented in this Senate, we have an Independent Bench and I would remind the Independent Senators that they speak for themselves only. They do not represent a party, a lobby group, a family or anything else, they speak for themselves. They are selected by the President of the Republic for their wisdom and experience, because in his opinion he believes that they will bring an independent, impartial and wise view to the issues before this honourable Senate, and so be it. The Senators who have been here before understand what their functions are and have exercised that duty to their credit, all of them.

I welcome all of you here; I look forward to working with you and I wish you the very best. As I close, I wish each one of you the very best for the holiday season; to be safe, to be happy, to reflect on your new duties and to return whenever we are called back and I look forward to seeing you then.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 12.30 p.m.*