

PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PARLIAMENT INFORMATION BOOKLET



PARLIAMENT
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



THE PARLIAMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago is the body responsible for making the laws that govern the country. It is therefore the Legislative arm of the state, the other two being the Judiciary and the Executive. The Parliament also has the responsibility of representing the interests of citizens and of holding the Executive accountable.

The Parliament is made up of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Parliament is described as bicameral which means that it is made up of two Chambers or Houses, the nominated Senate and the elected House of Representatives.

Members of the Senate are appointed to serve in the Parliament. The Senate consists of a Presiding Officer and three groups of Senators – those who represent the Government, those who represent the Opposition and the Independents. Sixteen Senators (as well as the Presiding Officer) are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister, six on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and nine at the discretion of the President, for a total of thirty-one.

The House of Representatives reflects the electoral districts in Trinidad and Tobago which at present are forty-one. However, when the presiding officer is selected from outside the group the membership is increased by one. The House of Representatives is currently comprised of forty-two Members. Members of the House of Representatives can belong to a political party or be independent. In the history of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago most of the elected representatives have been members of a political party. Members can usually be divided into two groups – those who belong to the Government and those who form the Opposition.

The Senate is presided over by the President of the Senate while the Speaker of the House is the Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives.

The Senate usually meets on Tuesdays at 1:30p.m. while the House of Representatives usually convenes on Fridays at 1:30p.m.

Above, left: Senate.
Below, left: House of Representatives.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago establishes the general rules and guidelines by which our country is governed. It stands as the supreme law which serves to guide the State in the performance of its duties.

Under the provisions of our Constitution, our rights and liberties as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are ensured. The Constitution has also provided for the establishment of institutions and procedures to guarantee these rights. Among these are provisions for the holding of elections every five years, the establishment of an Ombudsman for Trinidad and Tobago and the Judicature, to name a few.

Unlike the Constitution of Britain, the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago is a written document. Britain's Constitution although not written has been enshrined via centuries of practice and tradition.

The first Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago was the Independence Constitution of 1962. By Act No. 4 of 1976 on March 29, 1976 we enacted our first Republican Constitution. This Republican Constitution came into effect on August 1, 1976.

Under the provisions of the Republican Constitution, Trinidad and Tobago gained as its Head of State a President, as opposed to having the British Monarch as our Head of State. The Republican Constitution thus guaranteed self-governance for our country in both local and international affairs. We no longer hold allegiance to the British monarchy.

THE FIRST CONSTITUTION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WAS THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION OF 1962



Above, right: The Red House.
Below, right: House of Representatives Alcove.



PARLIAMENT
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

WHO CAN BE PRESIDENT?

A person is qualified to be nominated for election as President if he/she is a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, is of age thirty-five years or upwards, and at the date of his nomination as President, has been living in Trinidad and Tobago for ten years immediately preceding his nomination.

WHAT DOES THE PRESIDENT DO?

The Trinidad and Tobago Republican Constitution provides for a President who is the Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. He is also the person with all Executive Authority and powers which are exercisable within certain constitutional limits. Many of the decisions that are made by the President are done on the advice of or after consultation with another authority, usually the Cabinet, the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition. An example of that is the power to summon, prorogue and dissolve the Parliament, that is, by presidential order/proclamation he/she officially begins and ends sessions of Parliament as well as the parliamentary terms themselves.

HOW IS THE PRESIDENT CHOSEN?

The Constitution provides for an Electoral College consisting of all the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives assembled together. This meeting is arranged and chaired by the Speaker of the House. The President is elected by the Electoral College voting by secret ballot. Ten Senators, the Speaker and twelve other members of the House of Representatives constitute a quorum of the Electoral College. The President so elected shall normally hold office for a term of five years.



THE PRESIDENT

HER EXCELLENCY CHRISTINE CARLA KANGALOO, O.R.T.T.

Christine Carla Kangaloo was born in San Fernando on December 1, 1961, to Carlyle and Barbara Kangaloo. She is the fifth of their seven children.

Ms. Kangaloo attended the Grant Memorial Presbyterian Primary School; St. Joseph's Convent, San Fernando; and the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine and Cave Hill Campuses). She qualified with Honours in Law from the UWI in 1983. In 1985, she obtained her Legal Education Certificate from the Hugh Wooding Law School and was admitted to the practice of law that year.

From 1985 to 1992 Ms. Kangaloo worked with her father, Carlyle, in his law practice.

In 1992, Ms. Kangaloo entered the service of the Judiciary as an Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court. She served in that capacity for four years, leaving in 1996 to wrap up her father's practice, following his untimely passing. In 1998, Ms. Kangaloo joined an established law firm in San Fernando.

Ms. Kangaloo commenced Parliamentary service in 2001 when, in that year, she was appointed an Opposition Senator. She was appointed Vice President of the Senate between January to August 2002; a Government Senator and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister from 2002 to 2005; Minister of Legal Affairs from 2005 to 2007; and Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education from 2007 and 2010. Ms. Kangaloo was also the Member of Parliament for the Constituency of Pointe-a-Pierre from 2007 to 2010.

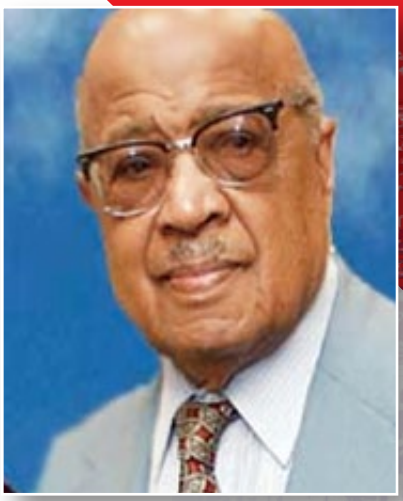
In 2015, Ms. Kangaloo was elected to the position of President of the Senate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago – a position in which she served continuously until January of 2023. As President of the Senate, Ms. Kangaloo acted as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on thirty-three (33) occasions.

Ms. Kangaloo was the first person who served as Vice President of the Senate to become the President of the Senate. Similarly, Ms. Kangaloo is also the first person who served as President of the Senate to be elected to the Office of President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Overall – as an Assistant Registrar in the Judiciary; an Opposition Senator; a Government Senator; an elected Member of Parliament; a Member of Cabinet; a Parliamentary Presiding Officer; and as Acting President of Trinidad and Tobago – and therefore, by reason of her long and varied career in multiple incarnations of public service, Ms. Kangaloo has acquired an acute, a singular and a comprehensive appreciation of the system and the mechanics of government, of public service, and of the needs of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Kangaloo has been married for twenty-four (24) years to Mr. Kerwyn Garcia. She is a cancer-survivor.

Source: https://otp.tt/the-president/thepresident/



THE FIRST PRESIDENT

SIR ELLIS CLARKE, T.C., G.C.M.G

[ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL AND ST. GEORGE]

Sir Ellis Emmanuel Innocent Clarke, an only child, was born on 28th December 1917 into a middle class family of Belmont. He received his high school education at St. Mary's College, where he won an island scholarship in mathematics. He pursued his tertiary education at London University where he obtained his L.L.B. He was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, London in 1941.

Not long after his return to Trinidad and Tobago, Ellis Clarke was called to the Bar in his homeland, engaging in private practice from 1941-1954. Between 1954 and 1962 Ellis Clarke held several posts in the Colonial Government: Solicitor General, Deputy Colonial Secretary, Attorney General and Constitutional Advisor to the Cabinet. After the attainment of Independence, Ellis Clarke became a foreign diplomat, holding numerous posts between 1962 to 1976, sometimes simultaneously, including Trinidad and Tobago's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

He was an ambassador for Trinidad and Tobago to the United States and Mexico. He was also Trinidad and Tobago's Representative on the Council

of the Organisation of American States. He also held the post of Chairman of British West Indies Airways (BWIA) from 1968 to 1973. He was appointed as Governor-General by Her Majesty the Queen of England in 1972, and assumed his duties on 31st January 1973.

On August 1st 1976, Trinidad and Tobago became a republic within the Commonwealth and the Republican Constitution provided for a President who is the Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed forces. Following a meeting of the Electoral College, as provided by the Constitution, Sir Ellis Clarke was elected unopposed as President, becoming the first President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago – an office he held until 1987.

Ellis Clarke was involved in the preparation of a draft Constitution, culminating in his attendance at the Marlborough House Conference held in London from 28th May to 8th June 1962.

He was bestowed the Companion of St. Michael and St. George (C.M.G.) in 1960, and made a Knight Bachelor (Kt. Bachelor) in 1963. He was one of the first to be awarded this country's highest honour: The Trinity Cross (T.C.) in 1969. He also holds El Gran Cordon, the highest national award in Venezuela.

Sir Ellis passed away on December 30, 2010 at the age of 93. His body lay in state at the Red House for two days before his burial.

Source: http://www.nalis.gov.tt/national_icons/EllisClarke.htm

PRESIDENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
(1976 - PRESENT)

SIR ELLIS CLARKE, T.C., G.C.M.G	1 August 1976 - 13 March 1987
MR. NOOR HASSANALI	19 March 1987 - 19 March 1997
MR. ARTHUR N.R. ROBINSON, T.C., O.C.C., S.C.	19 March 1997 - 17 March 2003
PROFESSOR GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., CMT, PHD	17 March 2003 - 17 March 2013
MR. ANTHONY THOMAS AQUINAS CARMONA, O.R.T.T., S.C.	18 March 2013 - 18 March 2018
MS. PAULA-MAE WEEKES, O.R.T.T.	19 March 2018 - 19 March 2023
MS. CHRISTINE KANGALOO, O.R.T.T.	20 March 2023 - Present

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

WHO CAN BE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE?

When the Senate first meets after a general election and before it begins any other business, it has to elect a Senator to be President of the Senate. The President of the Senate cannot be a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE?

Aside from being in charge of the Senate and its sittings, the President of the Senate also acts as Chairman of Committees of the whole Senate. He or she interprets the Standing Orders and has the power to control the conduct of business in all matters not provided for in the Standing Orders.

The President of the Senate also acts temporarily as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago when the President is unable to perform his/her duties of President because of his/her absence from Trinidad and Tobago or because of illness.

THE LONGEST SERVING PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE



DR. WAHID ALI was born on June 27, 1928 at Xeres Road, Chaguanas and died on August 9, 2008. He assumed the office of the President of the Senate on August 6, 1971, an office he held until January 12, 1987. He was the second President of the Senate after Sen. the Hon. J. Hamilton Maurice and served in the third Independent Parliament and the first and second Republican Parliaments. During his tenure as President of the Senate, Dr. Ali served as Acting President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on twenty occasions between 1977 and 1986. His Parliamentary career began in 1970 when he was first appointed a Senator. As President of the Senate, Dr. Ali served as the Joint President of the Trinidad and Tobago Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Chairman of several Sessional Select Committees of Parliament.



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE NIGEL DE FREITAS

In 2015, Mr. Nigel de Freitas was appointed a Government Senator and subsequently elected Vice-President of the Senate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, making him the youngest person to ever hold the position of Vice-President, at age 36 years, in the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament.

Following the General Election in 2020, Senator de Freitas, was again appointed a Senator and elected Vice-President in the 12th Republican Parliament.

On March 16, 2022, Senator de Freitas was given a new assignment when he was appointed to the position of Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries, where he served for ten (10) months. On January 18, 2023, at the 10th Sitting of the Senate, Senator Nigel de Freitas was elected President of the Senate, in the 12th Republican Parliament.

Senator the Honourable Nigel de Freitas, attended Bishop's High School in Tobago and continued his education at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, where he attained a B.Sc. in Marine and Freshwater Biology. In 2005, Senator de Freitas continued his tertiary level studies at the University of Guelph, and later attained an M.Sc. in Aquaculture.

The President of the Senate is a Marine Biologist by profession and has worked for over a decade providing operational management and technical expertise to both public and private sector companies in the fisheries sector.

PRESIDENTS OF THE SENATE (1976 - PRESENT)

MR. J. HAMILTON MAURICE	Term Served: 1961 - 1971 Date Elected: 29 December 1961
DR. WAHID ALI	Term Served: 1971 - 1986 Date Elected: 18 June 1971
MR. MICHAEL WILLIAMS	Term Served: 1987 - 1990 Date Elected: 12 January 1987
MR. EMMANUEL CARTER	Term Served: 1990 - 1995 Date Elected: 12 March 1990
MR. GANACE RAMDIAL	Term Served: 1995 - 2002 Date Elected: 27 November 1995 Date Elected: 12 January 2001
DR. LINDA BABOOLAL	Term Served: 2002 - 2007 Date Elected: 5 April 2002 Date Elected: 17 October 2002
MR. DANNY MONTANO	Term Served: 2007 - 2010 Date Elected: 17 December 2007
MR. TIMOTHY HAMEL-SMITH	Term Served: 2010 - 2015 Date Elected: 18 June 2010
MRS. RAZIAH AHMED	Term Served: 2015 Date Elected: 3 February 2015
MS. CHRISTINE KANGALOO	Term Served: 2015 - 2023 Date Elected: 23 September 2015 Date Elected: 28 August 2021
MR. NIGEL DE FREITAS	Term Served: 2023 - Present Date Elected: 18 January 2023

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WHO CAN BE THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE?

The Speaker of the House of Representatives can be elected from amongst members of the House. He or she must not be a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary. A person who is not a member of either the House of Representatives or the Senate may also be elected once he/she is a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago and is not disqualified for election as a Member of the House of Representatives.

When the House of Representatives first meets after any general election and before it begins any other business, it must elect a person to be Speaker of the House. Just as the President of the Senate, the Speaker stands as the person of authority in the House of Representatives.

WHAT ARE THE SPEAKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

The Speaker of the House of Representatives is considered the guardian of the freedoms of the Members of the House of Representatives and the chief characteristics required in a Speaker are impartiality and fairness.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Speaker, or in his/her absence the Deputy Speaker, is in charge of each sitting of the House of Representatives, acts as Chair of Committees of the House and ensures obedience to all rules for preserving order in the proceedings. As a result, he/she maintains order, enforces the rules as is necessary, interprets Standing Orders and practices of the House, deals with points of order and gives rulings when he/she has to.



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THE HONOURABLE BRIDGID ANNISETTE GEORGE, MP

Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George first entered Parliament as a Senator and Attorney General on November 8, 2007 and thus became the third woman to hold this post in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, following Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar and Mrs. Glenda Morean-Phillip. She was elected Speaker of the House of the 11th Parliament on September 23, 2015.

An alumnus of St. Joseph's Convent, Port of Spain, Mrs. Annisette-George is also a graduate of the University of the West Indies, having obtained her Bachelor of Laws from that institution in 1981. Before taking up the portfolio of Attorney General, Mrs. Annisette-George was the sole practitioner at Messrs. G.R. Annisette & Co.

Mrs. Annisette-George has held a wide variety of positions in both the private and public sectors including Commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Trinidad and Tobago (2003), Chairman of the Diego Martin Regional Corporation (1999-2003) and associate tutor/lecturer at the Hugh Wooding Law School.

She entered Parliament with some 24 years of experience as an Attorney at law.

Mrs. Annisette-George was sworn in as Speaker of the House of Representatives on September 23, 2015 and August 28, 2020, respectively.

THE LONGEST SERVING SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



MR. CLYTUS ARNOLD THOMASOS was born on July 23, 1906 and died on December 20, 1990. He served as Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1961 to 1981 for the first, second and third Independent Parliaments and later the first Republican Parliament. Before becoming the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Thomasos was a member of the Legislative Council (1956 - 1961) for St. George East. On October 26, 1956 he was also elected the second Deputy Speaker of the Ninth Legislative Council.

SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (1961 - PRESENT)

MR. JOHN. L.H.W. SAVARY	Term Served: 1950 - 1955 Date Elected: 20 October 1950 Speaker Savary proceeded on pre-retirement leave in March 1955 and died shortly afterward. The Deputy Speaker, Hon. A.S. Sinanan (the Member for Naparima) presided until the Legislative Council was dissolved on 25 May 1956.
MR. EDGAR MORTIMER DUKE 9th Legislative Council	Term Served: 1956 – 1961 Date Elected: 28 October 1956
MR. ARNOLD THOMASOS 1st Independent Parliament 2nd Independent Parliament 3rd Independent Parliament 1st Republican Parliament	Term Served: 1961 – 1981 Date Elected: 29 December 1961
MR. MATTHEW RAMCHARAN 2nd Republican Parliament	Term Served: 1981 – 1986 Date Elected: 27 November 1981
MR. NIZAM MOHAMMED 3rd Republican Parliament	Term Served: 1986 – 1991 Date Elected: 12 January 1987
MS. OCCAH SEAPAUL 4th Republican Parliament	Term Served: 1992 – 1995 Date Elected: 13 January 1992

SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (1961 - PRESENT) (continued)

MR. HECTOR MCCLEAN 5th Republican Parliament	Term Served: 1995 – 2000 Date Elected: 27 November 1995
DR. RUPERT GRIFFITH 6th Republican Parliament	Term Served: 2001 – 2002 Date Elected: 12 January 2001
MR. BARENDRA SINANAN 8th & 9th Republican Parliaments	Term Served: 2002 – 2007 Date Elected: 17 October 2002
MR. WADE MARK 10th Republican Parliament	Term Served: 2010 – 2015 Date Elected: 18 June 2010
MRS. BRIDGID ANNISETTE-GEORGE 11th Republican Parliament	Term Served: 2015 – Present Date Elected: 23 September 2015

THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR

The Speaker's Chair holds a special place in the heart of the country's political system. The Chair is a central feature of the Parliament, and it is where the Presiding Officer sits during parliamentary proceedings. It is a symbol of the Speaker's authority and of the authority of the Parliament as a whole.



The Speaker's chair is located in the House of Representatives. It was gifted to Trinidad and Tobago by the government and people of India when we gained Independence in 1962.

The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago was honoured to receive this special gift from the Government and people of India on February 9, 1968. It was presented by the High Commissioner for India in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Chair holds great significance for both countries, as it symbolizes the "supremacy of law and the democratic way of life that both nations have freely chosen to pursue."

The hand-crafted furniture stands as a representation of the deep cultural and historical connections between Trinidad and Tobago and India. It represents the strong ties that exist between the two countries and their shared commitment to democratic values.

It serves as a constant reminder of the need for democracy to be upheld and protected, especially in times of political uncertainty and upheaval. It also serves as a symbol of the importance of peaceful dialogue and cooperation in the pursuit of shared goals and objectives.

THE MACES

The ornamented maces are carried by the Marshal of the Parliament when he escorts the Presiding Officer in and out of the Chamber at the beginning and end of each sitting of the respective House.

The use of the mace is inherited from Commonwealth tradition where in Britain, the mace symbolised the authority with which the Marshal (Sergeant-at-Arms) of the Parliament is vested, in particular of his/her power to arrest persons without a warrant.

At each sitting, before prayers are read, the Marshal of the Parliament places the Mace on two rests on the table of the Chamber, where it remains (except while the House is in committee) until the end of the sitting. When the House goes into committee and the Presiding Officer leaves the Chair, the Marshal of the Parliament takes the Mace off the table and places it on two brackets below the surface of the table. When the Chairman leaves the Clerk's chair, the Marshal of the Parliament places the Mace on the

table again. When the Mace is not on the table, but on the Marshal of the Parliament's shoulder, no Member except the Presiding Officer is allowed to speak in the Chamber. Following on traditions adopted from British practice no proceedings take place if the Mace is not in the Chamber



MACE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (SILVER MACE)

The Mace of the House of Representatives was donated to the Legislative Council in 1899 and when Trinidad and Tobago achieved Independence in 1962, the Mace was used for the new House of Representatives. To date, the same Mace is still used.

MACE OF THE SENATE (GOLD MACE)

The Mace of the Senate was commissioned in June 1962 in order to prepare for the ceremonial opening of Parliament on August 31, 1962 thereby facilitating simultaneous meetings of both Houses. The Senate, since its creation, had used the Speaker's Mace for all its meetings except the first (Opening of the Legislature), when one was borrowed from the Federal Parliament.

As early as 1962, a flag and Coat-of-Arms Committee, comprising Members of the Legislative Council and several renowned artists such as Carlisle Chang and M.P. Alladin recommended the commissioning of a Senate Mace. Although the Committee recommended that a local metal craftsman be awarded the commission, the Senate finally chose the British firm of Thomas Fattorini Limited in Birmingham to undertake the work.

The design was loosely based on the Mace of the Parliament of Tanzania in Africa and adapted to local purposes.

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

WHO CHOOSES THE PRIME MINISTER?

The President of the Republic appoints the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is a Member of the House of Representatives, and is usually the leader of the political party which commands the support of the majority of members of that House.

Where no majority party emerges or where the party has no undisputed leader, the President appoints as Prime Minister the person who, in his/her view, is most likely to command majority support in the House of Representatives. In this case the President uses his/her discretion. The person appointed must be willing to accept the office of Prime Minister.

WHAT DOES THE PRIME MINISTER DO?

The Prime Minister's position of authority comes from the majority support in the House of Representatives and from the power to appoint and dismiss Ministers. The Prime Minister is in charge of the Cabinet and is responsible for the allocation of functions among Ministers.

Apart from being the Leader of the Cabinet, which has effective control of the nation's affairs, the Prime Minister keeps the President fully informed concerning the general conduct of the Government and shall provide the President with any information he/she may ask for with respect to any particular matter relating to the Government.



PRIME MINISTER

THE HONOURABLE DR. KEITH ROWLEY, MP

The President of the Republic appoints the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is a Member of the House of Representatives, and is usually the leader of the political party which commands the support of the majority of members of that House.

Dr. Keith Christopher Rowley was re-elected to the House of Representatives of the 12th Parliament on August 28, 2020 and was reappointed Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, a position he held since September of 2015, the 7th person to hold this office. A geologist by training, Dr. Rowley has been the representative for Diego Martin West since 1991.

A former pupil of Bishop's High School, Tobago and a graduate of the University of the West Indies (Mona), Dr. Rowley first served in Parliament as an Opposition Senator from 1987-1990 (3rd Parliament), was appointed Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (4th Parliament), Minister of Planning and Development and Minister of Housing (8th Parliament) and Minister of Trade and Industry (9th Parliament). Dr. Rowley received his instrument of appointment as Leader of the Opposition (as political leader of the People's National

Movement) on June 1, 2010, following the General Election for the 10th Republican Parliament.

Over his Parliamentary career, Dr. Rowley has served on several Parliamentary committees. In 2004 he chaired the Joint Select Committee of Parliament which examined and made recommendations for the live broadcasting of Parliamentary debates.

PRIME MINISTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (1962 - PRESENT)

DR. ERIC WILLIAMS	August 31, 1962 – March 29, 1981 He was Chief Minister from 1956 – 1959 and Premier from 1959 – 1962
MR. GEORGE CHAMBERS	March 30, 1981 – December 18, 1986
MR. ARTHUR N.R. ROBINSON	December 29, 1986 – December 17, 1991
MR. PATRICK MANNING	January 13, 1992 – October 6, 1995 December 24, 2001 – October 9, 2002 October 9, 2002 – November 6, 2007 November 7, 2007 – May 25, 2010
MR. BASDEO PANDAY	November 9, 1995 – December 24, 2001
MRS. KAMLA PERSAD-BISSESSAR	May 24, 2010 – September 7, 2015
DR. KEITH ROWLEY	September 9, 2015 - August 27, 2020 August 28, 2020 - Present

THE OPPOSITION

THE ROLE OF THE OPPOSITION

Following the results of a general election the Opposition is usually made up of the political party or parties in Parliament which do not form the Government.

The Leader of the Opposition is also appointed by the President. That person is a member of the House of Representatives and who, according to the President, is best able to command the support of the greatest number of Members of the House of Representatives who do not support the Government.

The Opposition is extremely important in making sure that the Government's decision-making processes are transparent and can stand up to scrutiny, by holding them to account for decisions and actions taken.

WHAT DOES THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION DO?

The duties of the Leader of the Opposition are not specific but can include some of the following:

- Chairing party meetings
- Spearheading the development of Party Policy
- Selecting opposition members to be shadow ministers
- Leading the team of shadow ministers which is called the Shadow Cabinet
- Selecting persons to be appointed opposition senators
- Acting as the chief spokesperson for the party inside and outside Parliament
- Presenting alternate policies to the Government and the people
- Leading the party in elections



LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

THE HONOURABLE KAMLA PERSAD-BISSESSAR, SC, MP

The Leader of the Opposition is the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, MP. She is the political leader of the United National Congress (UNC). The Leader of the Opposition is often seen as the alternative Prime Minister. He/she heads a rival alternative government known as the Shadow Cabinet. He/she is the only member of the Opposition to be accorded the title 'Honourable.'

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION (1962 - PRESENT)

Dr. Rudranath Capildeo	1962 – 1967
Mr. Vernon Jamadar	1967 – 1971
Mr. John R.f. Richardson	1972 – 1976
Mr. Basdeo Panday	1976– 1977
Mr. Raffique Shah	1977 – 1978
Mr. Basdeo Panday	1978 – 1981
Mr. Basdeo Panday	1981 – 1986
Mr. Patrick Manning	1986 – 1990
Mr. Basdeo Panday	1990 – 1991
Mr. Basdeo Panday	1992 – 1995
Mr. Patrick Manning	1995 – 2000
Mr. Patrick Manning	2000 – 2001
Mr. Basdeo Panday	2001 – 2002*
Mr. Basdeo Panday	2002 – 2007
Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar	2006 – 2007
Mr. Basdeo Panday	2007 – 2010
Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar	2010 – 2010
Dr. Keith Rowley	2010 – 2015
Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar	2015 – 2020
Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar	2020 – Present

* Did not accept the post of Opposition Leader

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT













- FIRST WOMAN TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
- FIRST WOMAN TO SERVE AS ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

DR. LINDA BABOOLAL

Dr. Linda Baboolal served as President of the Senate during the Seventh and the Eighth Republican Parliaments (2002–2007). She has the distinction of being the first woman to hold this office in the history of Trinidad and Tobago and also the first woman to serve as Acting President of the Republic.

A medical doctor specializing in general family practice, Dr. Baboolal attended Manitoba University and graduated from the Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians in Dublin, Ireland in 1973. She has worked extensively in both the public sector and in private practice in Trinidad and Tobago holding several posts at the Port of Spain General Hospital before moving on to general family practice.

During the period 1992 to 1995, Dr. Baboolal held the portfolios of Minister of Social Development as well as Minister of Health. In addition to her work in Parliament, she continued to do a great deal of voluntary work championing for better health in Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Baboolal had a special interest in the promotion of the inclusion of women in all aspects of life, especially in the decision-making arena.



- FIRST FEMALE PRIME MINISTER
- FIRST FEMALE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
- FIRST FEMALE POLITICAL LEADER OF THE UNITED NATIONAL CONGRESS
- FIRST FEMALE ATTORNEY GENERAL

KAMLA PERSAD-BISSESSAR, SC, MP

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar was born on the 22nd of April, 1952. As a little girl she was always interested in reading novels and was intrigued by the developing technologies of the time. Mrs. Persad-Bissessar graduated from Iere High School and went on to further her studies at the University of the West Indies, Norwood Technical College (England) and the Hugh Wooding Law School. Consequently, she was awarded a B.A. (Hons.), a Diploma in Education, a Bachelor of Laws (Hons.) and a Legal Education Certificate. In 2006 she obtained an Executive Masters in Business Administration (EMBA) from the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, Trinidad.

On completion of her studies, Mrs. Persad-Bissessar entered the teaching profession. Her career history can be described as people-centred and one that has always focused her energy within the public's eye. While in England pursuing studies, she worked as a social worker with the Church of England Children's Society of London. She taught at the St. Andrew's High School in Kingston, Jamaica, and at the UWI's Mona Campus in Jamaica and the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad. At the Jamaica College of Insurance, she was also a Consultant Lecturer. After lecturing for a total of six years, Mrs. Persad-Bissessar then became a full-time Attorney-at-Law.

In 1987 Mrs. Persad-Bissessar entered the political arena. From 1987 until 1991, Mrs. Persad-Bissessar served as an alderman for the St. Patrick County Council. Representing the United National Congress in Opposition, she took the Oath of Allegiance at a sitting of the Senate on November 1, 1994. Since 1995 she has been the Member of Parliament for Siparia, serving as Attorney General, Minister of Legal Affairs and Minister of Education between 1995 and 2001. The United National Congress returned to the Opposition benches in 2002 and on April 26, 2006, Mrs. Persad-Bissessar was appointed Leader of the Opposition, the first woman to ever hold that position in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. Mrs. Persad-Bissessar was appointed Leader of the Opposition a second time on February 25, 2010, almost one month after she was elected political leader of the United National Congress.

On Tuesday May 26, 2010, two days after a victory at the polls, Mrs. Persad-Bissessar created history yet again, becoming the first woman to hold the office of Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Mrs. Persad-Bissessar was appointed Leader of the Opposition on September 15, 2015, and re-appointed on August 28, 2020.



- FIRST FEMALE DEPUTY SPEAKER

PENNELOPE BECKLES-ROBINSON, MP

On March 29, 2016 Mrs. Pennelope Beckles- Robinson was appointed the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations.

Mrs. Beckles-Robinson entered political life in 1995 as an Opposition Senator and served as the Leader of Opposition Business in the Senate in the 10th Parliament (June 2010 - December 2013). Mrs. Beckles-Robinson was elected Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives on December 17, 2007 at the Ceremonial Opening of the 1st Session of the 9th Parliament. An attorney at law by profession, Mrs. Beckles-Robinson is the first woman to have ever been elected Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mrs. Beckles-Robinson was the elected representative for the constituency of Arima from 2000 to 2010 and 2020 to present, and has held diverse portfolios, having been Minister of Social Development, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, and Minister of Planning and Development.

A past student of St. Raphael's Grade School and a graduate of St Joseph's Convent, San Fernando, Mrs. Beckles-Robinson pursued her tertiary level education at the University of the West Indies, attending both the St. Augustine and Cave Hill campuses where she graduated with honours with a Bachelor of Laws degree. She then moved on to the Hugh Wooding Law School where she obtained her L.E.C.

Mrs. Beckles-Robinson's deep involvement in two of Arima's community organizations, namely the Arima Foundation for the Advancement of Women and Children and the Santa Rosa Heights Community Group, exemplify her commitment to the future of her community.

Outside of her Parliamentary and Ministerial portfolios, Mrs. Beckles-Robinson's political experience includes Vice Chairmanship of the PNM's Arima Constituency Group, Membership of the PNM's General Council, and serving as Public Relations Officer of the PNM's National Women's League.



- FIRST FEMALE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

DR. ADA INEZ DATE-CAMPS

Dr. Ada Inez Date-Camps began her career as a Medical Practitioner and served on staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children in London. She became the first female Vice President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago on May 21, 1970.

Dr. Date-Camps was born in 1920 to James and Linda Date. She attended Bishop Anstey High School, after which she went on to study at Queen's College, London. Dr. Date-Camps received her doctorate from the London School of Medicine and a Diploma from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in October 1945.

In 1946 Dr. Date-Camps was appointed to Grade C Medical Officer and worked in the Ministry of Health. She was recognized as one of the founding members of the PNM. In 1961 she became the Chairman of the San Fernando Municipal Services Commission.

Dr. Date-Camps was first appointed a member of the Senate in the first Independent Parliament on December 29, 1961, a post she held until August 25, 1966. Her re-appointment into the second Independent Parliament was from November 25, 1966 to 22 April, 1971. Dr. Date-Camps was a member of several parliamentary committees including Chairman of the Regulations Committee (1969-1970 Session).

Dr. Date-Camps was also well known for her community service and membership in several non-governmental organisations. She received a Chaconia Medal Gold for Community Service in 1981.



- FIRST WOMAN TO BE ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ISABEL TESHEA

Ms. Isabel Teshea was a woman of many firsts in the history of Trinidad and Tobago - the first woman elected to the House of Representatives (1961), the first female Minister and the first woman to serve as an ambassador for this country.

Ms. Isabel Ursula Teshea was born on July 24, 1911 in Princes Town. Ms. Teshea attended the Princes Town Government School. She also attended special courses in Community Education at the University of Puerto Rico in 1958.

Ms. Teshea was an active leader in social work and politics. She was one of the founding members of the Women's Volunteer Service and an early member of the People's National Movement. Ms. Teshea became Lady Vice-Chairman of the PNM in 1956, a post she retained for a number of years.

In 1961, she became Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Local Government and Community Development. She was Minister of Health and Housing from 1963 to 1967 and Minister of Housing from 1967 to 1970.

Between 1970 and 1971 Ms. Teshea was appointed Ambassador to Ethiopia and Zambia and from 1974 High Commissioner to Guyana, a post she held until her retirement in 1977 at the age of 66.

Ms. Isabel Teshea was the recipient of the Trinity Cross for public service in 1981; an award which was made posthumously, since she died on April 14 of that year at the age of 69.



- FIRST WOMAN TO BE ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

AUDREY JEFFERS

Ms. Audrey Layne Jeffers was recognised in politics as a 'trailblazer'. She was also known as a female educator and voice for the underprivileged.

Ms. Jeffers was born in Baden-Powell Street, Woodbrook on February 12, 1898. She was the eldest of two daughters. Although Ms. Jeffers was born into an upper middle class family, she was deeply affected by the poverty that surrounded her in the wider Port of Spain area.

Ms. Jeffers attended Tranquillity Girl's Government School. In 1913 she left Trinidad for England to pursue a course in Social Science at Alexander College, North Finchley. During World War I (1914 – 1918) she served with West African troops and organized a West African Soldiers Fund through the West Indian Committee to which people in Trinidad and other countries contributed.

Ms. Jeffers returned to Trinidad in 1920. On her return she established a junior school at her parents' home in St. Clair known as 'Briarsend'. Ms. Jeffers was one of the founding members of the Coterie of Social Workers which was established on April 30, 1921. She played a major role in the institution of the Children's Breakfast Centre, The Anstey House, The St. Mary's Home, The Blind Welfare Association and Day Nurseries.

Her great work was credited by Captain Arthur Cipriani (while he was Mayor of Port of Spain) for inspiring him to introduce legislation which allowed women to be elected as City Councillors.

On November 3, 1936, Ms. Jeffers was elected to the City Council. The area she represented was Western Ward which covered Woodbrook to St. James. Her efforts reached greater heights when in July 1946 she became the first woman ever to enter the Legislative Council (having been nominated by Governor Bede Clifford and re-nominated in 1951). She would spend 10 years in the Legislative Council (the only woman at that time).

Audrey Layne Jeffers made an indelible contribution to social welfare and politics.

For her work she received the Order of the British Empire (OBE). Ms. Jeffers was also honoured with the Chaconia Medal Gold for social service, posthumously, at the first Independence Day Awards Ceremony in 1969. A highway along the Port of Spain foreshore is named in her honour.



- FIRST WOMAN TO HAVE SERVED IN BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT – THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE

LILAS WIGHT

Ms. Lilas Wight was born at 14 Royal Road, San Fernando, the "middle child" of James and Constance McLelland.

After being privately taught at home she attended Holy Name Convent, Port of Spain, following which she attended the Notre Dame Convent in London.

Returning home after five years in London, Ms. Wight worked in the private sector and among positions held, was a confidential secretary for 5 years at Trinidad Cement Limited.

Ms. Wight engaged in social work through service groups such as the Soroptomist Club and the Girl Guides Movement of which she was the South Commissioner. Lilas Wight made her entrance into the political arena in 1957, one year after the PNM came into power. Ms. Wight's involvement in politics was a result of her volunteering her home for political meetings, hosted by the Opposition members.

Ms. Wight became a member of the Democratic Labour Party in 1961. That year she represented Pointe-a-Pierre in the borough council elections. She was also elected president of the women's arm of the party in the same year.

Ms. Wight served as a Democratic Labour Party Senator in the first Independent Parliament from December 29, 1961 to August 25, 1966. She became an opposition member in the House of Representatives on November 25, 1966 to April 22, 1971, representing Pointe-a-Pierre.

She remained inactive politically for several years after the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) dissolved, until the rise of the Organisation for National Reconstruction (ONR) in 1980. Ms. Wight then became a member of the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR).

In 1988 Ms. Lilas Wight received a National Award, the Humming Bird Medal Silver for social work.

Source: Nalis library



- FIRST WOMAN TO BE ELECTED AS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

OCCAH SEAPAUL

Ms. Occah Seapaul was born on April 4, 1940. She attended the Naparima Girls High School and in 1962 she received a Diploma in Sociology – Government of India Scholarship.

Ms. Seapaul was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, London, in June 1964. She joined the government's legal department in 1970 after having served five years in private practice in the Chambers of Justice Ralph Narine.

Of the years she has been in the public legal service, five were spent between the Advisory and Civil Litigation Department and another five in the Department of Criminal Law.

She has practised every aspect of law, including prosecuting at the Assizes and appearing at the Court of Appeal. Ms. Seapaul was the only woman to hold the position of Master of the High Court in the Caribbean. She was also the first female Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions.

Ms. Occah Seapaul was elected Speaker of the House of the 4th Republican Parliament (1991 - 1995) on January 13, 1992, and was the first woman to be elected to the office of Speaker.



- FIRST FEMALE OMBUDSMAN

LYNETTE ANTHEA STEPHENSON, SC

Ms. Lynette Anthea Stephenson, SC was appointed Trinidad and Tobago's third Ombudsman, having been first sworn in on February 20, 2006 and reappointed on February 27, 2009.

Ms. Stephenson has had a long and distinguished career in the public service of Trinidad and Tobago, having served, between 1976 and 1996, in several legal capacities from Temporary State Counsel II to Deputy Solicitor General, and then appointed Solicitor General in 1996.

She has also held directorships on the boards of state-owned companies including National Fisheries Company Ltd., Trinidad and Tobago Meat Processors Ltd. and the Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd. In addition, Ms. Stephenson has served as a member of key Cabinet-appointed committees, including the Standing Committee on Negotiation of Bilateral Air Services Agreements, the Trinidad and Tobago Steering Committee on the Unitization of Cross-border Hydrocarbon Reservoirs and as a member of the Team to negotiate a new Shareholders Agreement between Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago and Cable and Wireless West Indies.

Ms. Stephenson attained the status of Senior Counsel in November 2000. She believes the Office of the Ombudsman is vital "because it gives people the reassurance that someone in authority is seeking their interest."



- FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PAULA-MAE WEEKES, O.R.T.T.

On Monday 19th March, 2018, Ms. Paula-Mae Weekes took the oath as the Sixth President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, at an Inauguration Ceremony at the Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain.

One month earlier on February 19, 2018, the Electoral College elected Ms. Weekes as the Sixth President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Ms. Weekes was this country's first female President.

When her name was submitted as a nominee, Ms. Weekes held the position of judge of the Turks and Caicos Islands Court of Appeal – a position she assumed on February 1, 2017 for a three-year term.

Ms. Weekes is a former pupil of the Bishop Anstey High School, Port of Spain. In 1980 she attained a Bachelor of Laws Degree (Honours) at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, and in 1982 Ms. Weekes received a Legal Education Certificate from the Hugh Wooding Law School. She was called to the bar in 1982.

Ms. Weekes was employed as a State Counsel I – Senior State Counsel in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions from 1982 to 1993, after which she entered private practice, engaged chiefly in criminal trial and appellate work.

In September 1996 Ms. Weekes was appointed a Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago (Criminal Jurisdiction). Ms. Weekes was the fifth woman to be appointed a Judge of the High Court in Trinidad and Tobago. She held this post until 2005 when she was elevated to a Justice of Appeal, retiring in 2016.

From August 1 to 11, 2012, Ms. Weekes would act as Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago for the first time, as the most senior of the appellate judges in the jurisdiction.

Ms. Weekes is a trained and experienced judicial educator having become a fellow of the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute in 2000. She has designed and delivered programmes extensively in Trinidad and Tobago and also in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Jamaica over the years.

PARLIAMENT FACTS







- LONGEST SERVING SENATOR

WADE MARK

Mr. Wade Mark started his political career in 1974 as a member of the United Labour Front Political Party. In 1988, he was elected chairman of the People's Popular Movement.

In November 1990, he was appointed to the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago under the United National Congress. When the United National Congress won the general election of 1995, he then served as Minister of Public Administration and Information, and Leader of Government Business in the Senate.

During the period January 2001 to October 2007, Mr. Mark was appointed to serve as the tenth Vice President of the Senate during the Sixth Republican Parliament. Following the results of the general elections in 2002, he was appointed the Leader of Opposition Business in the Senate, a position that he maintained in consecutive Parliaments until May 2010.

Apart from his extensive experience as both a government Senator and an Opposition Senator, Mr. Mark served ardently on various Parliamentary Committees. He has been the Chairman of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee and various Joint Select Committees including the Joint Select Committee on the Equal Opportunity Bill.

Mr. Mark was elected Speaker of the House on Friday June 18, 2010 and on September 23, 2015 he was sworn in as an Opposition Senator in the eleventh Parliament, as well as on August 28, 2020 in the twelfth Parliament.



- LONGEST SERVING MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PATRICK MANNING, MP

Mr. Patrick Manning was the Parliamentary Representative for San Fernando East from 1971–2015, having successfully defended his seat for ten consecutive general elections.

He began his Parliamentary career as a Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Mines between 1971 and 1973.

Later, he assumed the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the then Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams in 1973. Between 1973 and 1978 he continued to serve as a Parliamentary Secretary in various ministries such as Planning and Development, Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication.

From 1978 to 1979, he was assigned as a Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Maintenance and Tobago), and between 1979 and 1981 he was appointed Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Public Service Portfolio) and Minister in the Ministry of the Prime Minister (Information Division).

Mr. Manning's portfolio also includes experience as a Minister in both the Ministry of Information as well as that of Energy and Energy Industries. In 1987, he became the political leader of the People's National Movement. Mr. Manning has also sat in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago as Leader of the Opposition from 1995 to 2001.

In 2001, he was appointed Prime Minister by President A.N.R. Robinson. Following the 2002 and 2007 general elections he again assumed office as the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, for the period 2007-2010.

At the end of the Tenth Parliament Mr. Manning had served as an MP for forty-four (44) years. He stepped down from active politics in 2015.

Mr. Manning passed away on July 2, 2016 at the age of 69.



- YOUNGEST PERSON EVER TO HOLD THE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANAND RAMLOGAN, SC

Anand Ramlogan, SC was appointed a Senator and Attorney General on Wednesday May 26, 2010, becoming the youngest person, at age 37, ever to hold the office of Attorney General in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. He served in that post until June 17, 2015.

Mr. Ramlogan hails from the rustic village of Ben-Lomond, in Williamsville. He attended the Reform Presbyterian School thereafter pursuing his secondary education at ASJA Boys College and Pleasantville Senior Comprehensive. He pursued his Bachelor of Laws degree at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus in Barbados where he topped the Law Faculty and won several prizes for outstanding academic performance.

Mr. Ramlogan was awarded several post-graduate scholarships and read for his LLM in corporate and commercial law at the Centre for Commercial Law studies, Queen Mary & Westfield College, University of London. He also simultaneously pursued a post-graduate diploma in Law at the University of Westminster. His post-graduate studies were pursued courtesy the British Chevening Scholarship and the British Foreign Office Scholarship programme.

Mr. Ramlogan returned to Trinidad and Tobago and started a private practice under the tutelage of Lynette Maharaj, SC and subsequently Sir Fenton Ramsahoye, QC. At age 22, he was one of the youngest barristers from the Commonwealth to address Her Majesty's Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Mr. Ramlogan has a distinguished record in public service and has served on many committees and statutory bodies such as the Law Reform commission, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Commission of Enquiry into the Administration of Justice and the Vision 2020 Plan for Constitutional Reform.

OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT

The Office of the Parliament provides the administrative and apolitical support services to the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The Office functions under the leadership of the Clerk of the House assisted by the Clerk of the Senate, as Deputy Head. The Office also ensures the proper functioning of the Chamber and offers relevant services to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Mission of the Office of the Parliament is: -

"To provide Parliamentarians and other stakeholders with high quality professional support services."

The key objectives of the Office of the Parliament are:

"To provide Parliamentarians and other stakeholders with high quality professional support services."

The key objectives of the Office of the Parliament are:

1. Ensuring that the Houses of Parliament and their Committees have the necessary procedural, administrative and research support to effectively carry out their functions;
2. Providing all Members with the requisite advice and assistance regardless of party or office;
3. Providing efficient and effective service delivery while at the same time ensuring that resources are allocated responsibly and utilized to their maximum capacity;
4. Increasing public understanding of Parliament and its institutions;
5. Developing its physical and human resources so that the organization will be equipped to anticipate and manage changes in the organization's environment.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE

This officer is accountable for providing strategic guidance, oversight and leadership for the effective stewardship of the resources and assets of the national Parliament. He/she directs the development and provision of all administrative, logistical, and support functions necessary for the Parliament to operate smoothly, including procedural services, legislative services, information technology, parliamentary communications, publications and broadcasting as well as corporate resources.

Essentially, the Clerk of the House directs the operations of the Office of the Parliament and contributes to the short and long-term achievement of the parliamentary mission and the enhancement of services to the Parliament





as an Arm of State and to MPs in three business lines (i.e., the Chamber; Committees; and Constituency). The officer is also relied upon to safeguard the fairness and impartiality of procedural information, counsel and administrative support given to the Speaker of the House, President of the Senate and all other House Members and Senators.

CLERK OF THE SENATE

As Deputy Head of Department, the Clerk of the Senate assists in the provision of constitutional support for the work of the Parliament, particularly the Senate and parliamentary committees.

He/she assists in directing the operations of the Office of the Parliament and contributes to the short and long-term achievement of the parliamentary mission. The Clerk of the Senate ensures the fairness and impartiality of procedural information, counsel and administrative support given to the President of the Senate, Leader of Government Business in the Senate and all other Senators. This officer also specifically directs the development and provision of all administrative, logistical, and support functions in the areas of procedural and legislative services (Senate), Committee Services, Library Services and Hansard Services.

THE OMBUDSMAN

The Constitution provides for an Ombudsman who is an officer of the Parliament and who is required to hold no other office of emolument nor engage in any occupation for reward other than the duties of his office. The Ombudsman is appointed by the President after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and shall hold office for a term not exceeding five years and is eligible for reappointment.

The principal function of the Ombudsman is to investigate complaints of administrative injustice in respect to decisions made or acts done or omitted by a Minister or department or authority of Government. The Ombudsman can best be described as a “grievance person” to whom a citizen can make a complaint with a view to redressing the mistakes, delays, rigidity and carelessness of the government bureaucracy. The role of the Ombudsman is an advisory one and the findings of investigations made are recommendations submitted in reports by him to relevant persons, authorities or to Parliament.

The Ombudsman is responsible only to Parliament, to which he makes annual reports on the performance of his functions including statistics of the complaints received and the results of his investigations. The office is non-political.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

What are Parliamentary Committees?

Parliamentary committees are small groups of Parliamentarians appointed by the Presiding Officers to consider, investigate and report to the Parliament on a particular matter which otherwise cannot be dealt with on the floor of the House. These groups of Members which are bipartisan in nature work informally and independently together towards a common goal.

Committees, as microcosms and extensions of the Houses of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, are limited to the authority, structure and mandates that have been delegated to them by the House or Senate. These are found in the Standing Orders concerning committees. The House and Senate has specified that, in relation to sessional, special or joint select committees, "the Standing Orders shall apply so far as may be applicable". Committees are bound to follow the procedures set out in the Standing Orders as well as specific orders that the House and Senate has issued to them.

The purpose of Parliamentary Committees

The principal purpose of parliamentary committees is to engage in activities which would otherwise be impossible to undertake in the large, formal environment of the Chamber of the House or Senate itself, such as finding out the facts of a case or issue, gathering evidence from expert groups or individuals, sifting evidence and drawing up reasoned conclusions. This kind of work is more effectively carried out by small groups of Members.

Another important function of committees is to scrutinise government's activities including legislation, the conduct of public administration and policy issues. Committees may oversee the expenditure of public money and they may call the Government or the public service to account for their actions and ask them to explain or justify administrative decisions. Through its committees the Parliament obtains information from Government agencies and relevant bodies and advice from experts on matters under investigation.

An advantage of committees is that several of them can operate simultaneously enabling many more investigations to be conducted. Committees are also extremely suited for proper scrutiny of various matters of a complex and technical nature, coming within the sphere of modern governmental business. Each committee has its own defined area of operation so that they are also able to specialise and build up a body of expertise among their members.

Furthermore, the committees functioning and deliberating away from the glare of publicity can develop a corporate sense among members, even though they may belong to different parties. This contributes to the consideration of

matters on merit. Hence, the parliamentary committee system has become an important agency through which the work of Parliament can be expedited and facilitated.

Additionally, committees 'take Parliament to the people' and allow direct contact between members of the public and representatives, resulting in Members of Parliament being better informed about community views.

Why are Committees important?

The Parliamentary committee system is one of the most important mechanisms for ensuring efficient and effective transparent democratic governance. They also assist in ensuring a more informed administration and policy-making process. Additionally, parliamentary committees facilitate the law-making process and enable the electorate to be part of this process.

NAME OF COMMITTEE	EMAIL ADDRESS
Public Accounts Committee	pac@ttparliament.org
Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee	paec@ttparliament.org
The Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations	paac@ttparliament.org
The Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee	–
Committee on Government Assurances	jscgovernmentassurances@ttparliament.org
The Committee on National Security	jscnationalsecurity@ttparliament.org
The Committee on Energy Affairs	jscenergyaffairs@ttparliament.org
The Committee on Foreign Affairs	jscforeignaffairs@ttparliament.org
The Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity	jschumanrights@ttparliament.org
The Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs	jscfla@ttparliament.org
The Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure	jsclpi@ttparliament.org
The Committee on Social Services and Public Administration	jscsspa@ttparliament.org
The Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities Committee	jsclascsa@ttparliament.org
The Committee on State Enterprises	jscse@ttparliament.org

Extract from: "A Guidebook for Parliamentary Committees"

THE RED HOUSE



FOUNDATION LAID

On the 15th February, 1844 the Governor of the Colony of Trinidad, Sir Henry McLeod, laid the foundation stone for a new block of government buildings, on a site on the west side of Brunswick Square (now Woodford Square). The architect was Mr. Richard Bridgens, Superintendent of Public Works.

The buildings comprising two main blocks, north and south, were to be connected by a double archway, much as the Red House of today, but on a smaller scale. The double archway was a feature required by the City Council to keep Prince Street open, as the building was built over it, with the stipulation that it should never be closed to the public, and through which pedestrians and wheeled traffic passed freely. Though incomplete, the southern wing, containing the law courts, was opened in 1848 and a month later the Council Chamber was formerly inaugurated with much ceremony by Lord Harris, after an impressive ceremony in Trinity Cathedral.

1903 FIRE

In 1897, as Trinidad was preparing to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the buildings were given a coat of red paint, and the public promptly referred to them thereafter as the Red House. This direct ancestor of our

present Red House was burnt to the ground on the 23rd March, 1903, during the Water Riots. On the day of the fire, while the new Ordinance regarding the distribution of and payment for water in the town was being debated in the Legislative Council, a protest meeting was held in Brunswick Square by the Ratepayer's Association, as there was much public dissatisfaction over certain clauses contained in the Ordinance which increased the water rates. At the end of the meeting, the crowds became noisy and stones were thrown, and all the windows of the Red House were smashed including a stained glass window in the chamber which was erected to commemorate the arrival of Christopher Columbus in Trinidad. When a woman was arrested by a policeman, the mob immediately became riotous. Stones were thrown into the Council Chamber and the Members were forced to protect themselves under tables and desks and behind the pillars. Still, the Governor, Sir A.C. Maloney, refused to withdraw the Ordinance. When it became known that the lower storey of the building was on fire, the riot act was read, following which the police opened fire on the crowd. Sixteen people were killed and forty-two injured, and the Red House was completely gutted. After the fire only the shell of the Red House remained.



1907

The work of rebuilding the Red House began the following year, and the Red House, as we know it today, was erected on the same site. It was opened to the public on the 4th February, 1907, by Governor, Sir H.M. Jackson.

The building was designed and built by D. M. Hahn, Chief Draughtsman of the Public Works, at an estimated cost of £7,485 and was completed in 1906.

The Red House today is the second Government building to be known by this name since the newly-constructed government offices were built on the same site and given the same name. The name Brunswick Square was changed to Woodford Square during World War I in 1914-1918. The rubble which was removed after the fire was used as landfill for Victoria and Harris Squares; so when you stroll through these public squares you may literally be walking on the history of the Red House.

1990 TO PRESENT

On Friday July 27, 1990 at 6:05 p.m., armed gunmen stormed the Parliament Chamber where the House of Representatives was in session, taking the then Prime Minister, eight of his Cabinet Ministers and six other Members of Parliament hostage.

The Red House suffered gravely from this invasion since the building was shot at and even shelled. In the aftermath, bullet holes were visible on walls, doors, windows and the ceiling of the Chamber. There was a gaping hole at the southern end of the building on the ground floor, made by a B-300 weapon fired on the night of July 28.

Seven people were killed in the Red House as a result of the attack on the building:

1. Roger George – Assistant Superintendent
2. Lorraine Caballero – Clerical Officer
3. Malcolm Basanta – Estate Policeman
4. Mervyn Teague – Government Broadcasting Unit employee
5. Arthur Guiseppi – Ex-policeman
6. George Francis – Chauffeur; and
7. Solomon McLeod – Police Headquarters Sentry

Many more were injured. Mr. Leo Des Vignes, MP for Diego Martin Central was shot and later removed to the hospital, where he died.

THE RED HOUSE REFURBISHED

On January 24, 2020, the refurbished Red House was reopened with a grand ceremony and simultaneous sittings. The Sittings of the House of Representatives and Senate had been relocated to Tower D at the International Waterfront Centre in 2011 while the renovation took place.

The Senate Chamber was refurbished to restore its historical charm while incorporating modern amenities. The Chamber now features elegant decor, updated seating arrangements, and advanced audio-visual systems to enhance the legislative experience.

Both Chambers, the House of Representatives and Senate, have been outfitted with enhanced public and media galleries to provide visitors with an engaging and informative experience.





TOURS AND VIRTUAL TOURS

To accommodate the growing demand for access and engagement, the Parliament continues to offer regular guided tours for the public. Visitors can join guided tours led by knowledgeable guides who provide information of the architecture, history, and functions of the building. These tours offer a unique opportunity to witness the inner workings of the nation's legislature, providing a behind-the-scenes look at the decision-making processes and the iconic spaces within the Red House.



We also recognize the need to adapt to the digital era therefore a virtual tour of the Red House has also been made available on the Parliament's website www.ttparliament.org. This virtual tour enables individuals from around the world to explore the historic chambers and public areas of the Red House remotely.

Through interactive online platforms, users can navigate through the building, zoom in on details, and access multimedia content that enhances the virtual tour experience. This initiative aims to promote accessibility and inclusivity by ensuring that anyone with an internet connection can explore and learn about the Red House's significance from the comfort of their own homes.

Above, left: Senate Chamber.
Below, left: Senate Chamber Alcove.

ETERNAL FLAME

The Eternal Flame is a monument which was originally constructed in the aftermath of the attempted coup d'etat of July 27, 1990 and was located just outside the building on the Abercromby Street side of the Red House. As part of the renovations of the Red House completed in 2020, the Eternal Flame was remodelled and moved to the Knox Street pedestrianised walkway.



Etched into the marble of the Eternal Flame are the National Anthem of Trinidad and Tobago, the Oath of Allegiance, The Affirmation of the People and the names of those who died at the Red House during the uprising.

FIRST PEOPLE MONUMENT

During excavation works being done at the Red House as part of the renovations, human bones and artefacts were unearthed. Bone samples, shells and other pieces of material were sent to the University of Florida, Brandon University of Canada and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. for testing. The test results of the bone samples revealed that they belonged to people living in Trinidad during the period AD 220 to AD 1400. Two particular samples of shells tested showed that they were from the periods BC 5510 to 5330 and BC 4330 to 4130.

In honour of this discovery a site was designated along Knox Street where these bones and artefacts were re-interred. The spot where these items are buried is demarcated by a monument dedicated to the First Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago.



THE ROTUNDA GALLERY

The Rotunda Gallery is nestled in the main entrance of the Red House and it serves as an essential component of the Parliament's outreach initiative.

In January 2020, the Parliament unveiled its newly created basement in the Red House as an exhibition space. The area now serves as a vibrant canvas that showcases a diverse collection of art pieces crafted by both self-taught amateur artists as well as seasoned masters of their craft.



With its modern ambience and carefully curated exhibitions, The Rotunda Gallery aims to offer a unique accessibility for individuals of all backgrounds to experience the grandeur of the Red House.



Since the first *"International Women's Day"* exhibition in January 2020, there have been more than twenty-five subsequent exhibitions, each with distinct themes. These often correspond with globally recognized occasions, as well as address local ideas, initiatives and challenges. Previous exhibitions have explored diverse topics such as *"See the Beauty Around Us: Caring for our Environment"; "The Movement of Figures: The Synergy of Art and Dance"; "Healing Through Art: Making Mental Health & Well-Being for All a Global Priority"; "The Diamond Jubilee: A Parliamentary Story"; "Carnival: A Celebration of our Trinbagonian Identity"* and *"Towards a Circular Economy: Imagining an Unpolluted Earth through Art".* These are just a few examples among many.

The Rotunda Gallery also serves as a hub for hosting events and gatherings, and fostering meaningful connections between Members of Parliament and the public. The Rotunda Gallery's purpose extends to provide all citizens with an opportunity to actively engage with their history and culture.



PARLIAMENT
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO





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