



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Debates of the House of Representatives

5th Session – 10th Parliament (Rep.) – Volume 36 – Number 43

**OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE WADE MARK
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE NELA KHAN
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Friday 12th June, 2015

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: JACQUI SAMPSON-MEIGUEL

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, June 12, 2015*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Patrick Manning, Member of Parliament for San Fernando East, and Mr. NiLeung Hypolite, Member of Parliament for Laventille West. They have both asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 2002. [*The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai)*]
2. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 2003. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
3. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 2004. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
4. Financial Statements of Caribbean Industrial Research Institute for the year ended September 30, 2012. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
5. Financial Statements of Caribbean Industrial Research Institute for the year ended September 30, 2013. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
Papers 1 to 5 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.
6. Report on Technical Assistance to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago on the Budget Process. [*Mrs. Nela Khan (Deputy Speaker)*]
7. Concept Note for the Establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) for the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Mrs. N. Khan*]

8. Annual Administrative Report of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year 2010. [*The Minister of Sport (Sen. The Hon. Brent Sancho)*]
9. Annual Administrative Report of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year 2011. [*Sen. The Hon. B. Sancho*]
10. Annual Administrative Report of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year 2012. [*Sen. The Hon. B. Sancho*]
11. Annual Administrative Report of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs for the year 2010. [*Sen. The Hon. B. Sancho*]
12. Annual Administrative Report of the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago for fiscal year 2013. [*The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)*]
13. Annual Administrative Report of ExpOrTT Limited for the fiscal year 2012/2013. [*The Minister of Trade, Industry, Investment and Communications (Sen. The Hon. Vasant Bharath)*]
14. Annual Administrative Report of the Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited for fiscal year 2012. [*Sen. The Hon. V. Bharath*]
15. Annual Administrative Report of the Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company for fiscal 2014. [*Sen. The Hon. V. Bharath*]
16. Annual Administrative Report of the National Flour Mills Limited for 2014. [*Sen. The Hon. V. Bharath*]
17. White Paper on National Minerals Policy, 2015. [*The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine)*]
18. Minerals (General) Regulations, 2015. [*Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine*]
19. Errata to the Ministerial Response for the Eighteenth Report of Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2,) on the administration and operations of the Government Human Resource Services Company Limited (GHRM). [*The Minister of Public Administration (Hon. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan)*]
20. Annual Administrative Report of the Ministry of Public Administration for the period October 2011 to September 2012. [*Hon. C. Seepersad-Bachan*]

21. Annual Administrative Report of the Ministry of Public Administration for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*Hon. C. Seepersad-Bachan*]
22. Annual Administrative Report of the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation for the period October 2013 to September 2014. [*The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Marlene Coudray)*]
23. Annual Administrative Report of the National Commission for Self-Help Limited for October 2011 to September 2012. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray*]
24. Annual Administrative Report of the Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for 2011/2012. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray*]
25. Administrative Report of the Arima Borough Corporation for the fiscal year 2013/2014. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray*]
26. Annual Report of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*Mrs. N. Khan*]
27. Transformation for Accountability—A forward-looking review of the 10th Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago (2010-2015). [*Mrs. N. Khan*]
28. Annual Report of the Police Service Commission for 2013. [*Mrs. N. Khan*]
29. Errata to the Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Public Accounts of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ended September 30, 2014. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.
30. Annual Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago International Financial Centre Management Company Limited for the year ended September 30, 2013 and Annual Administrative Report as at June 30, 2014. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
31. Administrative Report of the Civil Aviation Authority for the financial year ended September 30, 2010. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
32. Administrative Report of the Civil Aviation Authority for the financial year ended September 30, 2011. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
33. Administrative Report of the Civil Aviation Authority for the financial year ended September 30, 2012. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]

34. Administrative Report of the Civil Aviation Authority for the financial year ended September 30, 2013. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
35. Administrative Report of the Civil Aviation Authority for the financial year ended September 30, 2014. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
36. Ministerial Response for the Nineteenth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2), on an inquiry into the administration and operations of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. [*The Minister of Transport (Hon. Stephen Cadiz)*]
37. Annual Administrative Report of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the fiscal year 2009/2010. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
38. Annual Administrative Report of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the fiscal year 2010/2011. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
39. Annual Administrative Report of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the fiscal year 2011/2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
40. Administrative Report of the Public Transport Service Corporation for the period July 01, 2011 to June 30, 2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
41. Administrative Report of the National Helicopter Services Limited for the fiscal year 2009/2010. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
42. Administrative Report of the National Helicopter Services Limited for the fiscal year 2010/2011. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
43. Administrative Report of the National Helicopter Services Limited for the fiscal year 2011/2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
44. Administrative Report of the National Helicopter Services Limited for the fiscal year 2012/2013. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
45. Annual Administrative Report of the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2009/2010. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
46. Annual Administrative Report of the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2010/2011. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
47. Annual Administrative Report of the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2011/2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]

48. Annual Administrative Report of the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2012/2013. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
49. Annual Administrative Report of the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2013/2014. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
50. Annual Administrative Report of the Vehicle Management Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the fiscal year 2009-2010. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
51. Annual Administrative Report of the Vehicle Management Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the fiscal year 2010-2011. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
52. Annual Administrative Report of the Vehicle Management Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the fiscal year 2011-2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
53. Annual Administrative Report of the Vehicle Management Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the fiscal year 2012-2013. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
54. Annual Administrative Report of the Vehicle Management Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the fiscal year 2013-2014. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
55. Administrative Report of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (PATT) for the year 2012-2013. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
56. Administrative Report of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (PATT) for the year 2013-2014. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
57. Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited for the period January to December 2009. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
58. Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited for the period January to December 2010. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
59. Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited for the period January to December 2011. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]

60. Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation (PLIPDECO) for the period July 2011 to July 2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
61. Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited for the period January to December 2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
62. Annual Administrative Report of the Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited for the period January to December 2013. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
63. Pilot Authority Executive Report for the period October 01, 2009 to September 30, 2010. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
64. Pilot Authority Executive Report for the period October 01, 2010 to September 30, 2011.
65. Pilot Authority Executive Report for the period July 01, 2011 to July 01, 2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
66. Pilot Authority Executive Report for the period October 01, 2012 to September 30, 2013. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
67. Pilot Authority Executive Report for the period October 01, 2013 to September 30, 2014. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
68. Administrative Report of Maritime Services Division for the fiscal year 2011-2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
69. Administrative Report of Maritime Services Division for the fiscal year 2012-2013. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
70. Administrative Report of Maritime Services Division for the fiscal year 2013-2014.
71. Achievement Report of the Trinidad Transport Board for the period July 2011-July 2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
72. Administrative Report of the Transport Division for the period 2010-2011. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]
73. Administrative Report of the Transport Division for the period 2011-2012. [*Hon. S. Cadiz*]

74. Immigration (Amendment) Regulations, 2015. [*The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Brig. Carlton Alfonso)*]
75. Administrative Report of the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training for the period October 2010 to September 2011. [*The Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (Sen. The Hon. Fazal Karim)*]
76. Administrative Report of the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training for the period October 2011 to September 2012. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
77. Administrative Report of the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
78. Administrative Report of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education for fiscal year 2010/2011. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
79. Administrative Report of the University of Trinidad and Tobago for the period October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
80. Administrative Report of the University of the West Indies for fiscal year 2012/2013. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
81. Administrative Report of the Accreditation Council for fiscal year 2012/2013. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
82. Administrative Report of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme Limited for fiscal year 2012/2013. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
83. Administrative Report of the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago for fiscal year 2012/2013. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
84. Administrative Report of the Metal Industries Company Limited for fiscal year October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013. [*Sen. The Hon. F. Karim*]
85. Annual Administrative Report of the Agricultural Development Bank for the financial year ending September 2013. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
86. Annual Report of the National Association of Village/Community Council for the period 2009/2011. [*The Minister of Community Development (Hon. Winston Peters)*]

87. Annual Report of the Export Centres Company Limited Annual Report for 2010. [*Hon. W. Peters*]
88. Administrative Report of the Ministry of Science and Technology for 2011/2012. [*The Minister of Science and Technology (Hon. Dr. Rupert Griffith)*]
89. Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission for the year 2009. [*The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Nizam Baksh)*]
90. Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission for the year 2010. [*Hon. N. Baksh*]
91. Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission for the year 2011. [*Hon. N. Baksh*]
92. The Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission for the year 2012. [*Hon. N. Baksh*]
93. Administrative Report for Boiler Examiners Board for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (Hon. Errol McLeod)*]
94. Administrative Report for Minimum Wages Board for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*Hon. E. McLeod*]
95. Administrative Report for Advisory Friendly Societies Council for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*Hon. E. McLeod*]
96. Administrative Report for the Board of Governors of the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*Hon. E. McLeod*]
97. Administrative Report of the Occupational Safety and Health Authority and Agency for October 2012 – September 2013. [*Hon. E. McLeod*]
98. Administrative Report of the Board of Directors of the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited for the period October 2012 to September 2013. [*Hon. E. McLeod*]
99. Ministerial Response for the Twentieth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2), on an inquiry into the administration and operations

Papers Laid

Friday, June 12, 2015

of the Community Improvement Services Limited. [*The Minister of Works and Infrastructure (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan)*]

100. Annual Report of Taurus Services Limited for the year 2014. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Howai*]
101. Annual Administrative Report of the Community Improvement Services Limited (CISL) for the year 2012/2013. [*Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray*]

1.45 p.m.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS
(Presentation)**

The Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration (Hon. Rodger Samuel): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following reports:

**Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment
and Sustainable Development**

Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development on the Examination of Programmes and Services which provide support to victims of domestic violence.

**Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions
(Outstanding Matters Tenth Parliament)**

Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to inquire and report on municipal corporations and Service Commissions on Outstanding Matters for the Tenth Parliament.

Mrs. Nela Khan (Princes Town): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

**Legislative Proposal
(Draft Houses of Parliament Service Authority Bill, 2014)**

Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider the Legislative Proposal entitled “The Draft Houses of Parliament Service Authority Bill, 2014”.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development (Hon. Stacy Roopnarine): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following reports:

**Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group I)
Outstanding Matters Tenth Parliament**

Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group I) on Outstanding Matters for the Tenth Parliament.

Environmental Management Authority

Sixteenth Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group I) on administration and operations of the Environmental Management Authority (EMA).

Mr. Collin Partap (Cumuto/Manzanilla): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following reports:

**National Security
(Total Policing Initiative)**

First Report of the Joint Select Committee on National Security on the enquiry into the “Total Policing” Initiative on March 23, 2015.

**Government Ministries, Statutory Authorities and
State Enterprises (Group 2)
Outstanding Matters Tenth Parliament**

Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report on Government Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises on Outstanding Matters for the Tenth Parliament.

Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited

Twenty-Fourth Report of the Joint Select Committee to inquire into and report on Government Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2) on an inquiry into administration and operation of the Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Winston Dookeran): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

**Foreign Affairs
(Relations between Trinidad and Tobago and Central and South America)**

Report of the Joint Select Committee on Foreign Affairs on enlightening Members of Parliament and the public on Initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed at expanding the relations between Trinidad and Tobago and Central and South America.

The Minister of Transport (Hon. Stephen Cadiz): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

**Energy Affairs
(Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Initiative)**

Report of the Joint Select Committee on Energy Affairs, Fifth Session (2014/2015), Tenth Parliament on introducing the Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Initiative.

Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon (*Point Fortin*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following reports:

**Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee
Fifth Report - Petrotrin**

Fifth Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on Annual Audited Financial Statements of Petrotrin for the period September 30, 2008—2013.

Sixth Report - First Citizens Bank

Sixth Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on the Annual Audited Financial Statements of First Citizens Bank for the period September 30, 2008—2012.

URGENT QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Urgent questions?

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, could I ask that the questions be stood down for just a few more minutes. We can proceed, we are just researching some of the answers and getting the data as accurate as we can.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the hon. Member has asked that these questions be stood for a few moments for some time later on in the proceedings whilst the Government does some further research.

Question put.

Mr. Warner: What time?

Mr. Speaker: Sometime further on in the proceedings. I would imagine and so on, long before. In the next hour? When would you be able to give an undertaking to the House?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, we do have—Ministers have been furnished with it. Let us proceed now. We will proceed now.

Mr. Speaker; You would like to proceed?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Yes, okay.

Mr. Speaker: All right. The hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**University of the West Indies
(Withholding of Grades)**

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training:

With respect to recent reports that students' grades are again being withheld at the University of the West Indies, can the Minister confirm whether the withholding of grades is linked to industrial action by staff at the university and if it is not, can the Minister advise why grades have not been provided to students?

The Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (Sen. The Hon. Fazal Karim): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With respect to recent reports that students' grades are being withheld at the University of the West Indies, I have confirmed from the Registrar of the university, through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, that the withholding of grades is not linked in any way to industrial action by staff of the university.

The grades have not been released as a result of a policy decision by the university that the new grade-point average (GPA) system will have to be reviewed by all examiners before the release of grades. This final meeting will be held by the board of examiners on Tuesday, June 16, 2015, and thereafter the results will be released to students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is that common to the other campuses like in Cave Hill and Jamaica?

Sen. The Hon. F. Karim: Mr. Speaker, the question I expect would have been posed particularly with respect to the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus.

**Ministry of Public Utilities
(Postal Workers' Union Protest)**

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): To the Minister of Public Utilities:

In light of Government's recent announcement of the settling of over 130 collective bargaining agreements, could the Minister provide an update on the ongoing protest action by the Postal Workers Union?

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Nizam Baksh): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the information that the Member for Chaguanas West has shared with us, that we are doing very well with regard to our negotiations, 130 settled so far.

With regard to the Trinidad and Tobago Postal Workers' Union, they have submitted their collective agreement proposals to the management, which has been forwarded to the Ministry and then forwarded to CPO. Right now I am advised that the CPO is preparing the proposals and guidelines by which the union and the management will be discussing shortly.

So, as soon as those guidelines are being prepared and forwarded to us at the Ministry, and then passed on to the management, discussions will continue on that. So far they have been talking on the non-cost items, and they have held four meetings and they are just waiting on the guidelines coming from the CPO to continue those discussions. Thank you.

Mr. Warner: Minister, thank you for the information. Is it possible to get some time frame when this will be completed?

Hon. N. Baksh: I did not give that because this is still in the hands of the CPO. As soon as we get that from the CPO we might be in a better position to give some guidelines with regard to the closing of that.

**Ministry of Health
(HIV Drug Shortage)**

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): To the hon. Minister of Health:

Given recent conflicting media reports can the Minister confirm if there is in fact a shortage of HIV drugs in Trinidad and Tobago and what has been done to address this reported shortage?

The Minister of Health (Hon. Dr. Fuad Khan): Mr. Speaker, supplemental to the Member for Chaguanas West, can he identify which conflicting reports that he is referring to so that I can answer?

Mr. Warner: Mr. Speaker, I did not walk with the newspaper reports, but if the Member did not read what I saw then I am sorry about that.

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, the Member indicated about conflicting reports, I would like to know which conflicting reports he is referring to. Supplemental, by the way.

Mr. Warner: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, does the country have a shortage of HIV drugs?

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, now, that is a question. Mr. Speaker, is he referring to ritonavir, atripla, Kaletra, Truvada or the conflict that Prof. Bartholomew is creating?

Mr. Warner: All.

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, as of this moment there are no shortages of HIV drugs in the country, because the hon. Prime Minister has placed a very efficient Minister of Health in the last four years. [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*]

Mr. Warner: Some things happen by accident.

Chaguanas Magistrates' Court (Completion of)

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): To the hon. Minister of Justice:

Given the recent allocation of \$12 million to the refurbishment of the Chaguanas' Magistrates Court could the Minister advise when this Court will be completed and ready for use?

The Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs (Hon. Prakash Ramadhar): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. Member for Chaguanas West, I think it is an important question and I use the opportunity to indicate that issues of the building and maintenance of courts are solely in the preserve of the Judiciary. We have made an enquiry on your behalf as to when that Chaguanas court will be completed, and as soon as we get that we will furnish that information to you.

**CLICO
(Dismissal of Officials)**

Miss Donna Cox (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy:

Could the Minister provide the grounds for the recent and sudden dismissals of the Chairman and Managing Director of CLICO and confirm whether the dismissals are linked to the decision to repay former directors of CLICO?

The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai): Mr. Speaker, the Central Bank by letter dated March 26, 2015 gave specific instructions to Clico that all payments to related parties were to be referred to the Central Bank prior to payments being effected. Central Bank has indicated that Clico made payments without the prior approval of the Central Bank, and as a consequence the Central Bank exercised its powers under section 44 of the Central Bank Act and dismissed the two individuals as a consequence.

Mr. Warner: Minister, can you advise us to whom those payments were made, and how much?

Sen. The Hon. L. Howai: Mr. Speaker, I did not walk with that information on the specific individuals or the quantum.

2.00 p.m.

**CLICO
(Payments to Directors/Creditors)**

Miss Donna Cox (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Finance and the Economy:

In view of conflicting accounts in the media regarding the rationale for recent payments made to former directors/creditors of CLICO and under whose authority payments were made, can the Minister provide clarity on this matter including under whose directive the decision was made, and advise on the plan going forward in this matter?

The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai): Mr. Speaker, subsequent to the information which I received from the Central Bank, the former Chairman of Clico provided a timeline of events in which he suggested that he did not agree that Clico had breached the guidelines given by the Central Bank.

Urgent Questions
[SEN. THE HON. L. HOWAI]

Friday, June 12, 2015

Mr. Speaker, I have asked the former Chairman for further particulars on the matter. He advised that as he was out of the country at the time, that I give him time to return and put together a response and I have agreed to do so. Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to provide any further clarification at this time until I receive the information requested from the former Chairman.

Miss Cox: Is the Minister saying that he does not know exactly under whose directive the payments were made?

Sen. The Hon. L. Howai: No, Mr. Speaker. I am saying that the payments were made by Clico without the approval of the Central Bank. With respect to the clarification in terms of clarity on the matter, I have asked for further particulars from the former Chairman of Clico so that I will be in a position to state more accurately what exactly transpired at the time.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Miss Marlene Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, questions for written answer. Mr. Speaker, again, it is about the third time I am asking, I have even invoked Standing Order 29(13) on question 135 to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs.

Hon. Member: What is that?

Mr. Speaker: Written question, questions for written response or responses. I think the hon. Member is referring to question 135.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, and that was due for response since April 17.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: I should like to invoke the very same Standing Order 29(13) in respect of question 133, which was due for answer since April 17 and which I have asked about on four different occasions, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Mr. Speaker, I would like to invoke the same Standing Order for 12 written questions. The first one, dated March 21; the second one, April 07; the third one, April 07; the fourth one, April 07; the fifth one, April 07; the sixth one, April 07; the seventh one, April 07; the eighth one, April 07; the ninth question, April 17; the 10th question, No. 144, April 18; the 11th question, No. 145, April 18; the 12th question, No. 147, was on April 29 and the 14th question, Mr.

Speaker, No. 148, on April 29. None has been answered to date.

Mr. Speaker: So the Members are invoking 29(4). Yes, but are you re-invoking it? I am asking all the Members so we can write to the relevant parties or Ministers in question. Is that what the Members are seeking the Speaker to do? I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what the purpose of that Standing Order is if it was invoked already a while ago and up to now I have not been able to get the answer to question No. 146, to the Minister of Finance and the Economy which was due since April 18.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Leader of the House.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, again for the record, I want to note that there are questions for written answers which we have brought to the House and we have attempted to circulate. A couple have been sent as well to the Parliament outside of the sittings. The Members have not been here for a month or so and they are asking for these answers all the time. When we come with the answers they are not in the Parliament. [*Crosstalk*]

The Member for Chaguanas West rattle out all the questions that he has asked, but, Mr. Speaker, questions to him have not been answered either. So I would advise him to answer his own questions from the United States Attorney General. Thank you.

Hon. Member: “Ohhh God.”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: I will invoke the relevant Standing Order and I will write on behalf of the Members who have raised it to the relevant Ministers. Maybe if you want to take stronger measures, in the next Parliament we refer our Standing Orders to the Standing Orders Committee and take stronger measures for the House consideration. But for the time being we go with what we have at this time. But I will invoke the relevant Standing Order and write to the relevant Ministers. Let us continue, please.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Industrial Relations (Amdt.) Bill (Additional Time Request by Unions)

The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (Hon. Errol Mc Leod): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you would recall two Bills, one entitled an Act to amend the

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Industrial Relations Act, Chap. 88:01, and the other, an Act to amend the

Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. These Bills, Mr. Speaker, were brought to the Parliament after a number of years of practice and critical examination of our existing Industrial Relations Act, and which practice and critical examination brought us to the development of a policy to reform the IRA and that policy helped us to identify proposals to amend the existing law and concentrating on particular fundamental areas in that law. Among those areas we identified the appointment and tenure of judges, the meaning of the word “worker”, member in good standing, recognition and certification of unions and their associated bargaining units, decertification and penalties in the cases of illegal industrial action among other areas.

Mr. Speaker, there have been responses by social partners in industrial relation practice. Some of those responses have provided us with very valuable information insofar as the thinking of some of those social partners are concerned. We received very, very important proposals from the National Trade Union Centre, from the ECA, Employers Consultative Association, and there are some individual unions that would have made very disciplined and mature proposals.

There had been something of an uproar over an area that was inadvertently placed among the proposals that we have brought to this Parliament. But generally, unions and employers have been asking for more time to engage in greater consultation than we have so far had.

Today, this Government wants to indicate that we will provide for the broadest level of consultation and we shall return in the 11th Parliament to bring about the reforms that are so necessary in the Industrial Relations Act of Trinidad and Tobago. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister.

Campaign Finance Reform/General Election

The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are really two areas I would like to deal with in my statement and I will begin with the first, which has to do with Campaign Finance Reform. As a party we have consistently advocated for electoral finance reform. Changes are required now more than ever. Throughout

our history of service in Opposition, as well as in Government, we have called for major reform to promote transparency, accountability and openness in politics and public life. It has been a long-standing concern to me and something I have fought for all my political life. We must aspire to a better politics, a better national debate and a better Trinidad and Tobago. And more than recognizing the desire of citizens across Trinidad and Tobago for more transparent governance and the deepening of our democracy, we must take decisive action to ensure that it comes to pass.

When we were in Opposition, on October 27, 2006, the then Member of Parliament, Ganga Singh, raised a Motion on Election Financing. It was not taken further by the then PNM administration. That Motion, Mr. Speaker, read as follows. Mr. Speaker, and this is MP Ganga Singh, then MP for Caroni East:

“Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas it is acknowledged that political parties play a vital role in the functioning of democratic government;

And Whereas there is at present no legislative framework regarding the registration of political parties or the disclosure, by political parties, of contributions made to them by individuals or corporations;

And Whereas the financing of political parties is an issue of major public concern;

Be It Resolved that the House do appoint a special select committee to make recommendations as to what principles and systems of financing of political parties would be appropriate in the public interest.”

That Motion then, in 2006, did not bear any fruit, raised when we were in Opposition.

Further, in 2009 we were still in Opposition, we supported a parliamentary Motion moved by then Independent Senator, Prof. Ramesh Deosaran, for the establishment of a Joint Select Committee to consider establishing a Legislative Framework to govern the Financing of Election Campaigns. On our behalf, then in Opposition, Sen. Wade Mark spoke about the need for sunlight to act as a disinfectant to tackle the dirty and dark mess of that time. Then, Sen. Wade Mark, highlighted the need to deal with misappropriation of public funds, embezzling of funds from state owned companies, abuse of state resources, the use of state employees’ offices and vehicles for campaign purposes.

In 2010, in our declaration of principles in our Partnership Manifesto we stated that we will promote legislation for the registration and funding of political parties subject to review by an independent body. In 2013 another Independent Senator,

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Helen Drayton moved a Private Motion in the Senate challenging politicians to look at election campaign financing. Most recently, our Government in November 2014 set up a Joint Select Committee with the following terms of reference, and I

quote:

“...to propose a legislative framework to govern the financing of election campaigns and to submit its report with recommendations to both Houses of Parliament within six months of its appointment.”

with Mr. Wade Mark, the Speaker of the House serving as Chairman of the Committee.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this matter we have been consistent and so too has been our party. The Joint Select Committee last met in May of this year, 2015. It has published a report outlining its proposals. In their report they noted that oversight of campaign financing and disclosure of financiers were lacking and current legislation lacks accountability and transparency.

2.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we will give due consideration to all the recommendations of the committee, including that there be limits on private contributions and regulations on permitted loans be considered for legislation. The committee advocated the consideration of public campaign financing and recommended limits on spending. The recommendation that some form of regulation of third parties be considered and that parties and candidates should be required to maintain records and report on all direct and in-kind contributions as well as all campaign expenditure during the campaign period, are all part of a system of accountability that we hope would represent the future elections in this country.

We will look at implementing their recommendations—the recommendations of that joint select committee which the hon. Speaker chaired—for clearly defined disclosure roles and that the EBC be established as a political finance regulator with sanctions at its disposal. More importantly, the committee recommended the matter of election campaign finances be considered by the next Parliament and that their report is to serve as a foundation.

Mr. Speaker, the next stage in this process will be consideration of that report and other matters by the Law Reform Commission. We will refer that report, Mr. Speaker, now, to the Law Reform Commission. My focus is on emphasizing and

ensuring transparency, accountability and integrity in public life. I am proud of the record of my party and my Government in this regard and that is why we introduced and passed procurement laws [*Desk thumping*] in accordance with our promise.

Hon. Member: What a sham.

Mr. Speaker: Please.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Mr. Speaker, the law has been passed but it has not yet been proclaimed. We set up an implementation committee being chaired by the former President of the Senate, Mr. Timothy Hamel-Smith. I had a meeting with him yesterday and he has advised me their committee will be meeting on Monday—which is next Monday—and coming out of that they will be recommending to the Government proclamation of those sections of the Bill for immediate proclamation in this time. So we will continue our work on that procurement legislation. We will proclaim it, as recommended by the implementation committee.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I have always been insistent that we will introduce high standards in Trinidad and Tobago's public life. If we do not, our democracy suffers and the people who form our electorate are the losers.

Mr. Speaker, the Law Reform Commission, as I said, will be given the report of the joint select committee on campaign financing. We will look to having a Green Paper prepared and, Mr. Speaker, I want to give the commitment that my Government will do all that it can to bring to Parliament in the next term, campaign financing and financing of political parties and electoral financing—to bring a Bill to Parliament, [*Desk thumping and interruption*—I am agreeing—in the next life of this Parliament in 2015, and that will be the 11th Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, Members.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Mr. Speaker, my Government—our Government—has been the only Government under our Republican Constitution to have served its full parliamentary term. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, we became a Republic in 1976 and we are guided by the Republican Constitution and, therefore, in 10 elections—Mr. Speaker, I can give you the date of every election, the date of dissolution and the date of opening of Parliament. [*Interruption*]

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Mr. Speaker: Please, Members.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: I am saying that this Government, my Government, the People's Partnership Government, is the only Government—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:—under the Republican Constitution from 1976 to have served its full parliamentary term. [*Desk thumping*] The reason why this Parliament is known as the 10th Parliament is because there have been 10 elections and in all 10 elections, I say again, my Government, the Partnership Government, has been the only one to serve its full term.

Mr. Speaker, as the 10th Republican Parliament draws to a close, I would like to record my gratitude to you, as Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, Member for Port-of-Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Me?

Mr. Speaker: Member for Point Fortin, please.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Point Fortin will not be back here, so she has to make her last noises. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, as this 10th Republican Parliament comes to an end, I would like to record my gratitude to you, as Speaker, for your sterling service as the Presiding Officer of this House, [*Desk thumping*] and to thank you for providing the hon. Members with the benefit of your counsel and guidance that has been derived from your many years of service in our parliamentary system. And, Mr. Speaker, if I may say, under your watch, for the first time since we became independent, we have had new Standing Orders of the Parliament. [*Desk thumping*] From 1961 to now, there are new Standing Orders, and to all those who contributed to that, we also say thank you.

I know this year, Mr. Speaker, will mark your 25th straight year of service in our nation's parliamentary system and I want to place on record my Government's gratitude, as well as my own gratitude, for your 25 years of service to our nation in Parliament—a quarter of a century. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, we would also like to place on record our gratitude and thanks to all members of the parliamentary staff. In particular, we would like to thank Ms. Jacqui Sampson for her sterling contributions as well as her guidance and counsel that have allowed us to chart the waters through this journey for the past five years, [*Desk thumping*] and, indeed, all of the parliamentary staff who have worked so diligently to provide us with the high quality of service in respect of all our duties as parliamentarians. Please convey our best wishes to the members of the staff of the Parliament and to those of the protective services who have also assisted us. And, of course, I am sure Members on the other side will remember those up in the tea room, all those in the catering staff who have served this Parliament for the past five years. We thank you. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*] I said for all of us. Why are you grumbling so much? You are not coming back too. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Imbert: “Yuh takin too long.”

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: This is your last day in Parliament, you know. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Please, please. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Mr. Speaker, the term of office of this Parliament is one of the very few in our nation’s history that has been able, as I said, to last the five years. We brought amendments to the Constitution last year. It required a simple majority. There were amendments to the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill made in the Senate. Those amendments are on the Order Paper standing in my name. I want to place on record today that I have given due consideration to the voices of civil society with respect to that Constitution (Amdt.) Bill and this is why yesterday I made the announcement, which I will repeat today, that that will be a second term matter. We will accept to deal with the right of recall of MPs, to deal with the term limits on the Office of the Prime Minister and a majority run-off election system.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it means that this 2015 general election will be contested on the existing rules and regulations and I am serving notice that this will be an election issue over which the People’s Partnership and the PNM have clear divisions. We will go to the country on these issues and on others.

Mr. Speaker, there has been much discussion about fixed dates for elections. The relevant sections of the Constitution that deal with this issue require a three-quarters majority in this House and a two-thirds majority in the Senate. In

other words, it is a deeply entrenched provision in our Republican Constitution. Without the support of the Opposition, that measure would never have been implemented.

Mr. Imbert: Never passed.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: And so, it would never have been passed. Mr. Speaker, that too shall become a platform issue during the 2015 election. Mr. Speaker, I intend to bring these measures to this House in our second term when there is likely to be new leadership in the PNM [*Desk thumping*] after the general election is held later this year.

We were opposed when we amended the Municipal Corporations Act, 2013, to bring a system of proportional representation. That, too, will be another matter that will become an election issue as we go to the—[*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, we were opposed by the PNM when we tried to amend the Constitution in 2011 to ensure the death penalty could be carried out once more. Yet again, they denied us the three-fourths majority and the Bill failed. We were opposed in our amendment to the Constitution to deliver self-internal government for Tobago.

Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Once again, the special majority we needed was denied by the Opposition as they continued their relentless resistance to many progressive measures to bring advancement and change to our society.

However, Mr. Speaker, the one thing they tried very, very hard—they tried exceedingly hard. The one thing that they could not deny us was the ability to serve out our complete term in this Parliament. [*Desk thumping*] They told the electorate in 2010, in 2011, '12 and '13 and in every year, that we would not last more than a few weeks in Government. Then that became a few months, then it became a year. And after that they continued to call for early elections on a regular basis because the political strategy to remove their leader in 2010 and to seek to come to power because they expected us to collapse early, failed to materialize. That strategy backfired.

Mr. Speaker, they got rid of their leader in 2010, but they could not get rid of us. [*Desk thumping*] We always have the trust and the confidence of the people behind us and we are still here at the end of this Parliament. We were elected for five years. We have served faithfully and well for those five years. [*Desk thumping*] Some of us who were with us in the beginning are not here with us

now. That is the nature of politics. We have transformed the landscape of our country in five short years in a way that we had not seen for over 50 years, and we do believe one good term deserves another. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition tried to create panic in the society by saying that if we hold a general election in September it would be too late to hold a national budget and have it approved. Nothing can be further from the truth. In 2002, the then Prime Minister waited until August 28 to advise a dissolution of Parliament after he and his party failed to elect a Speaker of the House on two occasions when they held the reins of power after the 18/18 tie. They could have dissolved the Parliament earlier and gone to the country but they chose to wait. That was their right.

Mr. Speaker, the current Leader of the Opposition was a Member of the Cabinet at that time and at no point did he, or any Member of that Government, lift a finger in public to argue about the time frame for passing of a budget. So I want to make it abundantly clear that these spurious allegations and arguments—when we know that their Government called a general election on Monday, October 07, 2002 and opened the Parliament on Thursday, October 17, 2002 and they went immediately into passing a budget in both Houses before the deadline date of October 31, 2002. If the result of that election had gone another way, we would have been the ones to work with the same timeline to pass the budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are nowhere near those timelines from 2002 and they should know better than to make such spurious arguments when there is more than adequate time to pass the budget if there is an election in September. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, Members.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC: Mr. Speaker, the only other Parliament in the history of Trinidad and Tobago which was when we were under the Monarchy, prior to the Republican Constitution, was in 1971 to 1976. That was the only Parliament that served a full term. As I said, under the Republican Constitution, this Government is the only one, the 10th Parliament, to serve its full term. Mr. Speaker, we will be the second one to do so in our parliamentary history from the date on which it first met five years ago to the date on which it will be dissolved.

Mr. Speaker, there are similarities with the '71 and '76 Parliament insofar as—and, Mr. Speaker, it is uncanny—the date of the election in 1971 was May 24, 1971. That, too, was the date in 2010. In 1971, Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, that

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Parliament met on June 18, so did this Parliament and this Government meet on June 18 in 2010.

But there is one major difference between this Parliament and the '71 to '76 Parliament. On June 18, 1976, the House of Representatives held a sitting, at which time they approved a number of amendments to Bills brought from the Senate and transacted other parliamentary business. After that, there was a period of 87 days between the dissolution at midnight on June 18, 1976 and the holding of the general election on Monday, September 13, 1976. Mr. Speaker, 1976 was a leap year, and so September 13 fell on a Monday. Only the Member for San Fernando East in this Parliament was a Member of the House in that 1976 Parliament and he would be aware of that sitting on June 18, 1976.

Mr. Speaker, my respectful view is that we should not be meeting on June 18, 2015 in spite of the precedent that was set in 1976. Accordingly, out of an abundance of caution, and notwithstanding that in my respectful view the law is that, by effluxion of time and in keeping with the constitutional provisions, the Parliament would stand dissolved at midnight on Wednesday, June 17, but given that there was a precedent that a Parliament sat after on the 18th, out of an abundance of caution, to ensure there is no ambiguity about the date on which this Parliament should end its term, I will advise His Excellency the President to dissolve Parliament at midnight on Wednesday, June 17, 2015.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the People's Partnership Government is ready to return to the voters of Trinidad and Tobago. We are ready because we are proud of our record of achievement. We are ready because of the promises that we have kept to the voters of this country. And so, Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that general election in Trinidad and Tobago will be held on Monday, September 07, 2015.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn *sine die*. [*Desk thumping*]

Closing Remarks

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before putting the question for the adjournment

of this honourable House, please permit me to make some brief remarks. First of all, I wish to thank you for your support during this Tenth Parliament. As Speaker, I am delighted when we were able to achieve a number of milestones during this Parliament, the major ones being the comprehensive strategic plan and the amendments to the Standing Orders.

Successful initiatives also included recommendations to improve the Legislature's scrutiny of the annual budget, as well as activities to strengthen the outreach and communication policies of the Parliament. Another key initiative included working on a strategy to advance the process of the functional autonomy of the Parliament, and the reformatting of the functioning of constituency relations offices.

Hon. Members, there are no words to aptly describe how pleased I am with the achievement of these strengthening initiatives during my tenure as Speaker of the House. Of course, all of this could not have been achieved without, as the hon. Prime Minister said earlier, the support and dedication of the Clerk of the House, the Clerk of the Senate and the dedicated parliamentary staff, including our police officers. [*Desk thumping*] Let us continue to undertake transformative changes to further modernize and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Parliament's operations so that we can better serve our citizens.

Hon. Members, before I close, may I also remind you that Thursday, June 19, 2015 will mark the 78th anniversary of the founding of the modern trade union movement in Trinidad and Tobago. The year 1937 marked the beginning of the trade union revolution which gave birth to the modern labour movement. You all are aware of this.

Hon. Members, in closing, may I take this opportunity to invite all Members, even for a brief moment, to the Members' Lounge to have some light drinks and refreshments on my invitation as we bring our Tenth Parliament to a close. [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 2.34 p.m.