

CROSSTALK

Issue 02 • October - December 2013



The Ceremonial Opening of the Fourth Session of the Tenth Parliament took place on Friday August 2nd 2013. Walking the red carpet are His Excellency President Anthony Carmona flanked by Senator the Honourable Timothy Hamel-Smith, President of the Senate (right) and the Honourable Wade Mark, MP, Speaker of the House (left).

CONTENTS

CROSSTALK

Page 3:

The Budget Brief

Every year, usually between the months of September and October, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago announces the presentation of the Budget Statement, heralding the debate on the Appropriation Bill. However, did you know that the country's budgetary process begins from as early as April?

Page 6:

The Privileged Ones

In the Constitution are enshrined the privileges and the immunities of the Parliament which are essential to its proper functioning. The Privilege Committee seeks to ensure that these powers and privileges are protected.

Page 8:

Transparency and Accountability- The Role of Committees

The idea of accountability of the government to the elected representatives of the people is one of the central features of democratic systems. Its main purpose is to seek and protect the public interest by preventing or minimizing the abuse of the powers.....

Page 11:

Constituency Highlights: Barataria/San Juan

The name "Barataria" comprises two words of Hindu origin - "Bara" and "Taria". In this issue, we feature the constituency of Barataria/San Juan.

Page 12:

Our Region, Our Parliament

There are three core functions common to all democratic parliaments: Representation, Lawmaking and Oversight. Focus moves to the legislatures of St Kitts and Nevis and Belize.

Page 14:

Parliament Welcomes

His Excellency Xi Jinping, the President of the People's Republic of China during his first state visit to our country.

Page 15:

The Red House Restoration

The Red House remains one of the iconic landmarks of Trinidad and Tobago, standing as a symbol of our democratic history. But it seems too that the Red House possesses other significant treasures from our past....



THE BUDGET BRIEF

by Kimberly De Souza

Every year, usually between the months of September and October, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago announces the presentation of the Budget Statement, heralding the debate on the Appropriation Bill. However, did you know that the country's budgetary process begins from as early as April? And that in addition to the Minister of Finance and the Economy, who presents the budget to Parliament, the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development also has an important role in its overall preparation?

At the Budget presentation, the government would reveal its plans regarding allocations of revenue and expenditure for the new financial year. But, what few citizens may know is that there is a process that must be followed before the Appropriation Bill comes to Parliament. Since the budget affects all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, below are a few facts about the process: the officers/offices responsible and the role of Parliament in the entire procedure.

What is a budget?

- A budget is a plan of the financial activity of the Government, for a fiscal year, outlining all estimated revenues and expenditure for the financial period.
- In Trinidad and Tobago a fiscal year cycle is twelve months in length, beginning on October 1st and ending on September 30th of the following year.

What support documents are related to the Budget?

- The Budget Speech - outlines the Government's strategic directions, priorities and plans for the year ahead.
- The Appropriation Bill.
- Public Sector Investment Programme - sets out Government's programmes, projects and allocations for each sector.
- Social Sector Investment Programme- details the annual performance of Ministries and facilitates strategic planning and collaborative programming for the social sector.
- Review of the Economy- gives an overview of the country's economic performance over the last financial year.
- Draft Estimates of Expenditure and Draft Estimates of Revenue.

Key participants in the Budget Process

- **The Minister of Finance and the Economy.** According to Section 113 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Minister would prepare and lay before the House of Representatives, estimates of the revenues and expenditure of the country, no later than 30 days after the commencement of each financial year.

- **The Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development-** charged with the preparation and monitoring of the Capital Budget.
- **Parliament** (the Legislative arm of Government) - examines and authorises the budget and scrutinizes expenditure by the Executive.
- **The Auditor General-** conducts audits of government accounts in order to ascertain whether the budget, as authorised by the Legislature, was implemented in accordance with set financial standards.
- **Non-Governmental Organisations-** Civil society groups that communicate their views and recommendations to the Minister of Finance through pre-budget public consultations.

The Budget Process

- **Drafting-** The first stage requires that all Ministries submit draft estimates of expenditure to the Ministry of Finance and the Economy by April 30th for the new financial year. When all inputs have been reviewed and analysed, the budget is then finalised and sent for Cabinet approval. The Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance and the Economy would then announce the date on which the Budget Speech will be delivered before the House of Representatives.
- **Approval -** The Parliament is directly responsible for the approval of the Appropriation Bill. Once the Bill has been presented it is debated and must be passed, first in the House of Representatives and then in the Senate. Once this process is complete, the Bill is forwarded to the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for his assent. Only then can authorisation be given by the Ministry of Finance and the Economy to have monies released to the various Ministries and Departments, for the delivery of services and programmes.



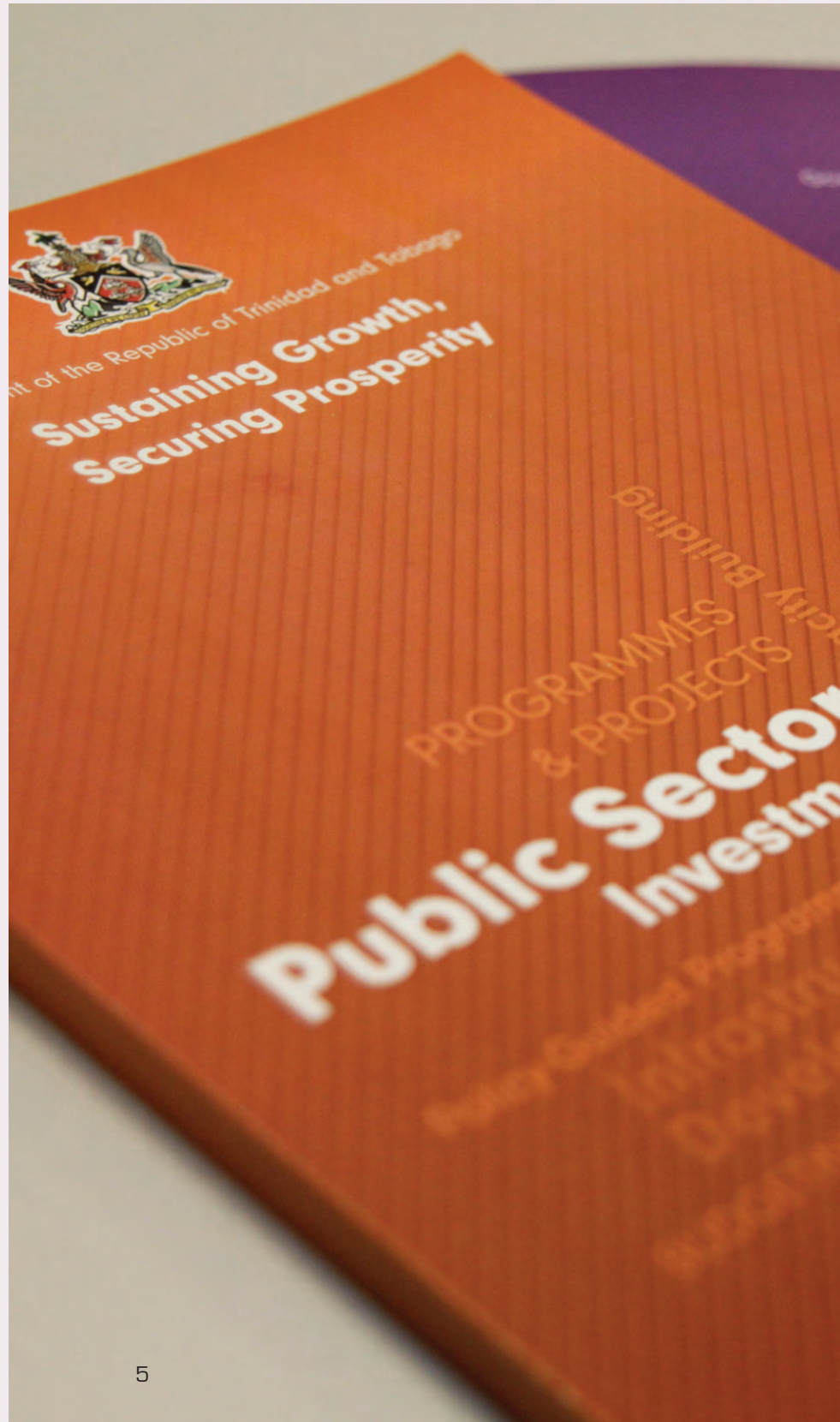
N.B- Release of funds are made on a quarterly basis and are based on the monthly projections of the Ministry or Department and their performance in the previous quarter. A review is undertaken within a six-month period to ascertain whether supplementation and/or variation of funds appropriated by Parliament is required, or if there is need to limit or suspend expenditure.

- **Audit-** The Auditor General's job is to carefully examine and verify the public accounts of all state enterprises, ministries and entities that expend public/appropriated funds. Within seven months after the close of the financial year (i.e. by April of the following year), the Auditor General would forward his/her findings contained in the **"The Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago"**

and “*The Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago*” to the Minister of Finance and the Economy, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the Senate. Upon the laying of these Reports in the House of Representatives they are referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

- **Scrutiny-** The final stage of the budget process involves the work of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which has oversight responsibility for the monies that have been allocated to the various Ministries. The PAC* assists the Parliament in holding the Government accountable for the use of public funds and resources. Financial oversight or scrutiny by the PAC is meant to ensure that citizens receive “value for money” regarding the delivery of goods and services provided by the government and that monies are spent as agreed by Parliament.

**The PAC is a small group comprising members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate.*





THE “PRIVILEGED” ONES

by Atiba Wiltshire

If you are a regular follower of parliamentary debates, you would have heard of the “Privileges Committee” particularly as it relates to MPs being held accountable for statements made or conduct exhibited in (and occasionally outside) the Parliament, which go beyond the privileges enjoyed by Members of the House/Senate. However, if you are not yet that familiar with the Privileges Committee- its role, how it is constituted and its powers, CrossTalk invites you to continue reading. Our investigations unearthed some very interesting facts...

Role:

The Committee of Privileges is charged with investigating allegations of breach of privilege or contempt of the House or Senate. Parliamentary privilege has been defined many centuries ago as “the sum of certain rights enjoyed by each House respectivelyand by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions.”

A “Contempt” has been defined as anything that impedes the function of the Parliament. Some actions which fall into these categories of breach of privilege or contempt of Parliament include: molestation of a member, deliberate misleading of the House, premature publication of the report of a Committee and restriction of Members’ freedom of speech, outside of the constriction placed by the Constitution and Standing Orders.

Powers and Composition

The Standing Orders of both Houses are similar in that they state that:

“(1) There shall be referred to the Committee of Privileges any matter which appears to affect the powers or privileges of the House/Senate, and it shall be the duty of the Committee to consider any matter so referred and report thereon to the House.”

In both Houses the Presiding Officer “ shall be a Member, and the Chairman, of the Committee of Privileges.”

For the House of Representatives, the committee shall consist of not less than six, and not more than ten members inclusive of the Chairman. While for the Senate, the Committee is chaired by the President and shall not exceed five members.

How do matters get referred?

When an act which may constitute a breach or contempt appears to have been committed, any Member is entitled to raise it as a matter of privilege for consideration by the Presiding Officer (the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate).

The Presiding Officer would then decide whether a “prima facie” case of breach of privilege has been committed and which would then require further investigation by the Committee. (“Prima Facie” means the presiding officer has concluded that on the surface, the evidence presented warrants further investigation by the Committee).

Workings of the Committee

As an investigative body, the Committee would evaluate the circumstances surrounding the case and this would usually involve calling for witnesses and documentary evidence to assist in its deliberations.

After the Committee has completed its investigation, it then reports its findings to the House or Senate, including recommendations for a course of action that may include suspension of the offending Member or person from attending parliamentary sittings.

The Committee may sometimes recommend an apology from the Member or person accused to the respective House. Or, the Committee may find that there is not enough evidence to make any concrete finding and therefore recommend no action at all.

It must be noted however that regardless of the recommendations put forward, the Committee does not have the power to implement. As with all Committees of Parliament, the final decision on what is to be done, is left to the Members of the Houses - to debate the contents of the report and to then vote on the course of action to be taken.

In the Constitution are enshrined the privileges and the immunities of the Parliament which are essential to their proper functioning. The Privileges Committee seeks to ensure that these powers and privileges are protected.

Source:

1. *Erskine May Parliamentary Practice, Twenty Fourth Edition page 203.*





TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY The Role of Committees

by Suzanne Salandy

Have you ever tuned into the Parliament Channel and seen a Committee meeting in progress? If you have, you would have noticed senior officials from various state agencies appearing before a small group of parliamentarians and having to answer questions related to the financial accounts, operations and management practices of their organisations.

These parliamentary committees, which are led by a Chairman, comprise members from both the House of Representatives and the Senate and fulfill an important role in maintaining oversight and accountability over the Government.

The idea of accountability of the government to the elected representatives of the people is one of the central features of democratic systems. Its main purpose is to seek and protect the public interest by preventing or minimizing the abuse of the powers entrusted to the Executive arm of government.

Simply put, this means that a government and its agencies should fulfill their responsibilities and, in cases where problems occur or complaints arise there should be some mechanism in place that would hold them accountable for their actions or omissions.



Accountability is tied in with the need to promote 'good governance'; two words that are often used in the argument that governments should observe the following principles:

- a commitment to openness and transparency
- the development of appropriate mechanisms of accountability, whether political or legal
- the encouragement of public participation.

Within the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, scrutiny over the Executive (Government) is exercised and maintained through five parliamentary committees. These "oversight" committees have been established by the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago and their powers incorporated into the Standing Orders of the Houses. (The Standing Orders are the rules that govern the proceedings of Parliament and the conduct of the Members in the Houses.)

These five Committees, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC); the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee (PA(E)C); the Joint Select Committees- Group 1 and Group 2 and the Joint Select Committee- MCSC- (Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions, with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission), are concerned primarily with examining the activities of the Executive in greater detail, particularly as they relate to public expenditure; conducting inquiries into a specific matter of public concern and investigating subject areas and providing public contact.

The scope of operation of the committees is limited to the authority, structure and mandate delegated to them by the Parliament; with their life span normally covering the duration of a Parliament – i.e. a five-year period.

Both the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee (PA(E)C) deal with matters of a financial nature: they are responsible for examining the appropriation accounts of monies granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure of Trinidad and Tobago.

Their powers also extend to examining the audited accounts of all Ministries and State Enterprises, for example the Ministry of Education, the National Insurance Board and the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

The PAC if it wishes can have a Permanent Secretary or Head of a Government Department appear before it to explain and clarify any discrepancy in how the particular ministry or agency spent its budget allocation during a particular financial year. Over the years, the PAC has been

instrumental in the establishment of a more responsive attitude from senior public service officials to the advice and requirements of the Auditor General's Department.

The Auditor General is the office responsible for the independent examination of the Government's accounts. Its reports are regularly presented in both Houses of Parliament. Based on sections 119(4), 119(8) and 119(9) of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, the House of Representatives may sometimes take the decision to refer the audited accounts of a Ministry or state enterprise for further examination and investigation to either the Public Accounts Committee or the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.

The work of Committees has allowed the public to learn about the inner workings of government agencies in a way that was not possible before as the committee members can ask officials of ministries and state agencies important questions that citizens would want to ask or need to know. Since 2007, Committee meetings have been broadcast and streamed live on the Parliament Channel 11 and via the internet at www.ttparliament.org giving citizens greater opportunity to follow and understand these proceedings. There are occasions too where the public is invited to attend committee meetings.

Over the years, recommendations contained in several committee reports have proven to be quite useful in helping to shape Government policy and have highlighted the important role that committees play in maintaining this supervisory control over state bodies and actions.

Through these committees, Parliament is able to perform several functions simultaneously, providing the opportunity for comprehensive investigation and detailed discussions that would not normally be possible during sittings of the House with all Members present.

In addition, committees provide opportunities to consult outside experts or authorities on matters which may require a decision of the House. Through widespread consultation, more ideas are generated, providing more creative solutions to problems, improving draft legislation and facilitating meaningful development of programmes and projects.

Parliamentary committees therefore remain potentially effective and powerful accountability mechanisms within our democratic system.



If Parliament is to be officially entrusted with the function of checking and monitoring the activities of the Executive, it must be equipped with the necessary resources and instruments to enable it to effectively perform its duties. Properly functioning oversight parliamentary committees are such instruments.

To find out more on Committees and their work, visit this link on the Parliament's website : http://www.ttparliament.org/committee_business.php?mid=2

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS

Barataria/San Juan

by Lystra Ramdeo



The constituency of Barataria/San Juan is one of five new electoral districts in Trinidad and Tobago, created in February 2010 when the electoral boundaries in Trinidad were adjusted.

Once known as the Lapeyrouse Estate (a former sugar plantation), Barataria was renamed by the former indentured workers who had been brought to work on the estate.

The name “Barataria” is Hindi in origin and comes from the words, “Bara” meaning twelve and “Taria” meaning plates and refers to the windmill that was used to power the sugar mill.

One major landmark in the area is the St. Theresa’s Roman Catholic Church, which was the first octagonal church built in Trinidad. The original town was named after San Juan Baptista (St. John the Baptist) to whom the church was also dedicated.

Undoubtedly, the San Juan Croisee is one of the more famous landmarks in the area and once served as a gathering point for numerous commercial activities such as the transportation of cocoa and sugar.

Other historical sites include the San Juan Post Office, Fire Station and the Real Street Mosque.

The Member of Parliament for Barataria/San Juan is Dr. Fuad Khan, who was first elected to office in 1995, and retained his seat until 2007.

At the last general election in May 2010, Dr. Khan was elected MP for the area. In addition to his constituency duties, he also holds the portfolio of Minister of Health. His focus is on improving social services and infrastructure as well as bringing about an awareness of the various services available to his constituents.

The Barataria/San Juan Constituency Office is located at #7 Railway Road, opposite the Priority Mall, San Juan. The office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm with Tuesdays reserved for the MP to meet with constituents to discuss their concerns. This arrangement operates on a “first come, first serve” basis.

Tel: 674-4787

Fax: 674-4788

Email address: fuadkhanmp@gmail.com

Sources:

The Newsday, The Trinidad Express

NALIS:

The National Library Information System Authority

St Theresa’s R.C., Barataria

OUR REGION, OUR PARLIAMENT

by Melissa Griffith

“Parliaments vary in size, in how members are elected, how long they hold office, in their ways of relating to political parties and to constituents, in their relations with executive powers, in their responsibilities in lawmaking and budgeting, in how they oversee executive spending and activities” (Johnson 2). These are the three core functions common to all parliaments in democracies; Representation, Lawmaking and Oversight and the Parliaments of St Kitts and Nevis and Belize are no exception.



St. Kitts and Nevis Parliament

As the two first British colonies established in the Caribbean (1624 and 1628 respectively), St. Kitts and Nevis have shared a long history of British colonization. Although the islands gained independence in 1983, today St. Kitts is still referred to as the “mother colony of the West Indies”. Until the late 19th century the two islands were governed as separate colonies until their unification with Anguilla. However, in 1971, following the Anguillan Revolutions of 1967 and 1969, that island broke away from the union to become a separate British colony.

The legislature of St. Kitts and Nevis operates as a democratic, sovereign and federal state with Queen Elizabeth II as its head, who is represented on the island

by the Governor-General. Notwithstanding this, the Governor-General acts on the advice of the Prime Minister who is the majority leader in the National Assembly (Parliament) and who, with a cabinet, conducts the affairs of the country.

The National Assembly of St Kitts and Nevis is unicameral in nature and may comprise fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) members. Normally, eleven (11) elected representatives are members of the Government and Opposition sides whilst three (3) are appointed Senators by the

Governor General. Of these three, two are appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister and the third on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition. If the Attorney General is not appointed a Senator, he/she sits in the Assembly as an “ex-officio” member (i.e. a member of a body who is part of it by virtue of holding another office) bringing the number of Senators to four (4).

At the last general election, held in January 2010, the ruling St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party (SKNLP), led by Prime Minister Denzil Douglas, won a fourth term in office, capturing six (6) of the eight (8) seats in St. Kitts, while in Nevis, the Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM), and the Nevis Reformation Party (NRP) won two seats and one seat respectively.



Belize Parliament

Presently, this is the tenth House of Representatives and the eleventh Senate since Belize became independent. Prior to 1840 when an Executive Council was created, Belize (then known as British Honduras) was governed under a system of public meetings where decisions were made and implemented in accordance with regulations known as Burnaby's Code. However by 1854 a Legislative Assembly was convened; presided over by a British Superintendent. With British Honduras becoming a Crown Colony in 1871, the nominated Legislative Council was replaced by a Legislative Assembly. This however, proved to be a short lived arrangement, as in 1935 the Legislative Assembly was reintroduced and presided over by a Speaker.

In April 1954 the country held its first general election. A step forward in the march for independence occurred in 1963 when British Honduras attained full internal self-government and in that same year, a new Constitution was passed with the Legislative Assembly being renamed the National Assembly and comprising the House of Representatives and the Senate. On October 9th, 1970, the National Assembly was inaugurated in the capital Belmopan with a Joint Sitting. Three years later in 1970, the name British Honduras was changed to Belize.

In 1981, Belize gained independence from Great Britain under a new Constitution with the Queen remaining as Head of State. Over the years, the numerical composition of the National Assembly has seen increases: from eighteen (18) to twenty-eight (28) in 1981, to twenty-nine (29) in 1993, and in 2005, to thirty-one (31). Similar to Trinidad

and Tobago, Belize has a bicameral legislature and follows the Westminster system. The House of Representatives comprises thirty-one (31) elected members while the Senate comprises twelve (12) members including the President of the Senate. In the Senate, six (6) members are appointed based on the advice of the Prime Minister, three (3) on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and one (1) on the advice of churches, the business community and trade unions.

In 2012, the United Democratic Party (UDP), led by Prime Minister Dean Barrow, was re-elected to Government winning seventeen (17) of the thirty-one (31) seats in the National Assembly. The remaining fourteen (14) seats went to the People's United Party under the leadership of Francis Fonseca.

Works cited:

Johnson, John K. The Role of Parliament in Government. Working paper no. 37251. Washington, D.C.: International Bank For Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2005. Print.

Sources:

"St Kitts and Nevis" (Federation of St Kitts and Nevis), The Handbook of Federal Countries, 2005, Ann L. Griffiths "Encyclopedia of World Constitutions", 2007, Gerhard Roberts

For information on the Parliaments of St Kitts and Nevis and Belize, you may contact:
The Parliament of St Kitts and Nevis, Government Headquarters,
PO Box 164, Basseterre, St. Kitts.
Tel 1(869)465-2521

The Parliament of Belize
www.nationalassembly.gov.bz



PARLIAMENT WELCOMES THE PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

By Kimberly De Souza

The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago has always been privileged to host Heads of State, foreign dignitaries and Presiding Officers from other regional and international Parliaments.

In June 2013, the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago hosted the President of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency, Xi Jinping. The objectives for the visit were to hold bilateral discussions with Prime Minister, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar and to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the two countries in the area of international affairs.

On Saturday 2nd June, 2013, His Excellency, Xi Jinping, visited the Parliament and was greeted at the main entrance to the Parliament Chamber, by Senator the Honourable Timothy

Hamel-Smith, President of the Senate and the Honourable Wade Mark, MP, Speaker of the House.

Before official discussions got underway, there was the exchange of gifts with His Excellency receiving a duplicate of our country's coat of arms, and a painting - by artist Glenn Roopchand - by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House, respectively.

His Excellency returned the courtesy and presented both presiding officers with two exquisite Chinese porcelain vases.

THE RED HOUSE RESTORATION PROJECT

From the Ground Up

by Atiba Wiltshire



With the gift exchange complete, talks between His Excellency and the Presiding Officers centered on the structure of the Parliament and bilateral relations between the two countries. The President of the Senate began by officially welcoming His Excellency to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago and spoke of his visit to the People's Republic of China in December 2012.

President Hamel-Smith also shared his memorable visit to the province of Shaanxi where he visited the museum of the Chinese Terracotta Warriors.

The Speaker of the House outlined the composition of the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament and mentioned a visit to China in 2012 which included members of parliament and parliamentary staff.

In their discussions, His Excellency and the Presiding Officers highlighted key areas such as the utilization of Information and Communication Technology in proceedings and management of Parliament, and the modernizing of laws relating to Powers, Privileges and immunities of Parliament.

His Excellency and his delegation were then taken by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House for a tour of the Parliament Chamber. This was His Excellency, Xi Jinping's first visit to Trinidad and Tobago.



In March 2013, news of the discovery of what appeared to be skeletal remains and other historical artifacts at the Red House, grabbed the headlines in the local media. The remains which were unearthed from one of the inspection units (pits which were dug to determine the structural integrity of the foundation and what seismic reinforcement would be needed) at the site, brought widespread speculation as to how the bones got there, whether they were indeed human and of Native American origin.

The actual restoration of the Red House is being managed by UDeCOTT (the Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago). However, with the discovery of the remains and artifacts, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago quickly recognised that further excavation and testing would have been required in order to determine what exactly lay beneath the site.

"CrossTalk" met up with Mr Neil Jaggassar, Project Administrator at the Office of the Parliament and the person overseeing the excavation project, to get a clearer understanding of the issues surrounding this important discovery.



According to Mr. Jaggassar, the skeletal remains were first discovered on March 26th during excavation works at the Red House. Since that initial find, workers continued to unearth skeletal remains and other artifacts (shells, pottery) on an almost daily basis. These finds were at depths ranging from three (3) to nine (9) feet.

As the discovery of these human remains and other artifacts could have signalled the existence of other historical and cultural material at the Red House, an archaeological excavation team, led by the late Peter Harris was assembled to oversee the careful removal of these items.

Samples of the skeletal remains were then sent abroad for DNA testing and radiocarbon dating in order to determine the ethnicity, gender and likely age of the bones. Those tests confirmed that the skeletal remains were indeed human, Native American and that the age of the bones dated from 430 AD to 1390 AD.

Mr. Jaggassar told "CrossTalk" that there are indications that may suggest that the Red House may have been built on what used to be an Amerindian burial site. Historical accounts show that the First Peoples would bury their dead, first in a foetal position, with a layer of shells and then cover the grave with dirt. Mr. Jaggassar added that, judging by the way in which some of the remains were positioned, this could be one possible explanation.

However, at this moment, there exists no conclusive proof that the Red House area was formerly used as a burial site of the First Peoples.

He explained that there are several other factors that could explain the presence of bones and shells at the site. This includes the fact that prior to 1787, the St Ann's River ran very close to where the Red House is currently located.

Mr Jaggassar added that the Red House Restoration Team also came across a newspaper advertisement dated 1844, requesting cart owners to provide services to fill what

would later become the new Government House with dirt. Mr. Jaggassar added that persons undertaking this project would have most likely brought dirt from the Lime Kiln in the area of Rock City, Laventille as well as from the shoreline of the Foreshore area which, at that time, had not yet been reclaimed. In addition, he stated that bones have also been found in areas of the Red House which would not have been disturbed during the land-filling exercise of 1844.

The skeletal remains and artifacts unearthed at the Red House represent one of the most significant archaeological discoveries ever made in our country and within the Caribbean region. As such, an Archaeological Research and Rescue Excavation Team was assigned from July to December 2013, on a full time basis, to ensure careful excavation and storage of any historical material recovered. During this period, the actual Red House Restoration Project will focus on the completion of essential surveys and designs ahead of construction works scheduled to commence in February 2014.

The Archaeological Research and Rescue Excavation Team is now headed by Dr. Basil Reid, Lead Archaeologist, and includes a site manager, two (2) assistant site managers, four (4) site processors, one (1) site processing manager and thirty one (31) field assistants. Specialists in the areas of Amerindian and European Pottery, Zooanthropology, Human Anatomy and Soil Testing have also been brought in to enhance the composition of the team.

In June 2013, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago established a Red House Cultural Heritage Team to manage all aspects of the Historical find and to ensure conformity with best practices and international protocols for such material. The Committee is chaired by the Speaker of the House, the Honourable Wade Mark, MP and includes Senator the Honourable, Timothy Hamel Smith, President of the Senate as Vice Chairman, as well as representatives of the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago.

A publication of:
The Parliament of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Levels G-7, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain
www.ttparliament.org

