

CROSSTALK

APRIL 2017 ISSUE #05

www.ttparliament.org

M A G A Z I N E



COMMITTEES AT WORK

A CLOSER LOOK AT

FINANCIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES



110 years since the Reopening of the Red House

FEATURE INTERVIEW

Democracy 2030
Professor Rhoda Reddock

MILESTONES

10th Anniversary
Parliament Channel
Parliament Channel Wins CBU Awards

INTEREST

The Legislative Agenda





STAY TUNED TO THE
PARLIAMENT CHANNEL

REDEFINING DEMOCRACY



CHANNEL INDEX

FIND US ON YOUR NETWORK

We know that finding us on your network can be a challenge-
so here is the list for the networks that do carry our channel.

Digicel Play - Channel 11
Green Dot - Channel 11
Free to Air - Channel 9/29
Trico Tobago - Channel 104

Massy - Channel 110
Flow - Channel 11
Flow AVS - Channel 109



DEMOCRACY DAY- 2030

DEMOCRACY 2030 focuses on youth involvement in democracy;
the sustainable development goals; and what democracy will look
like in the future.



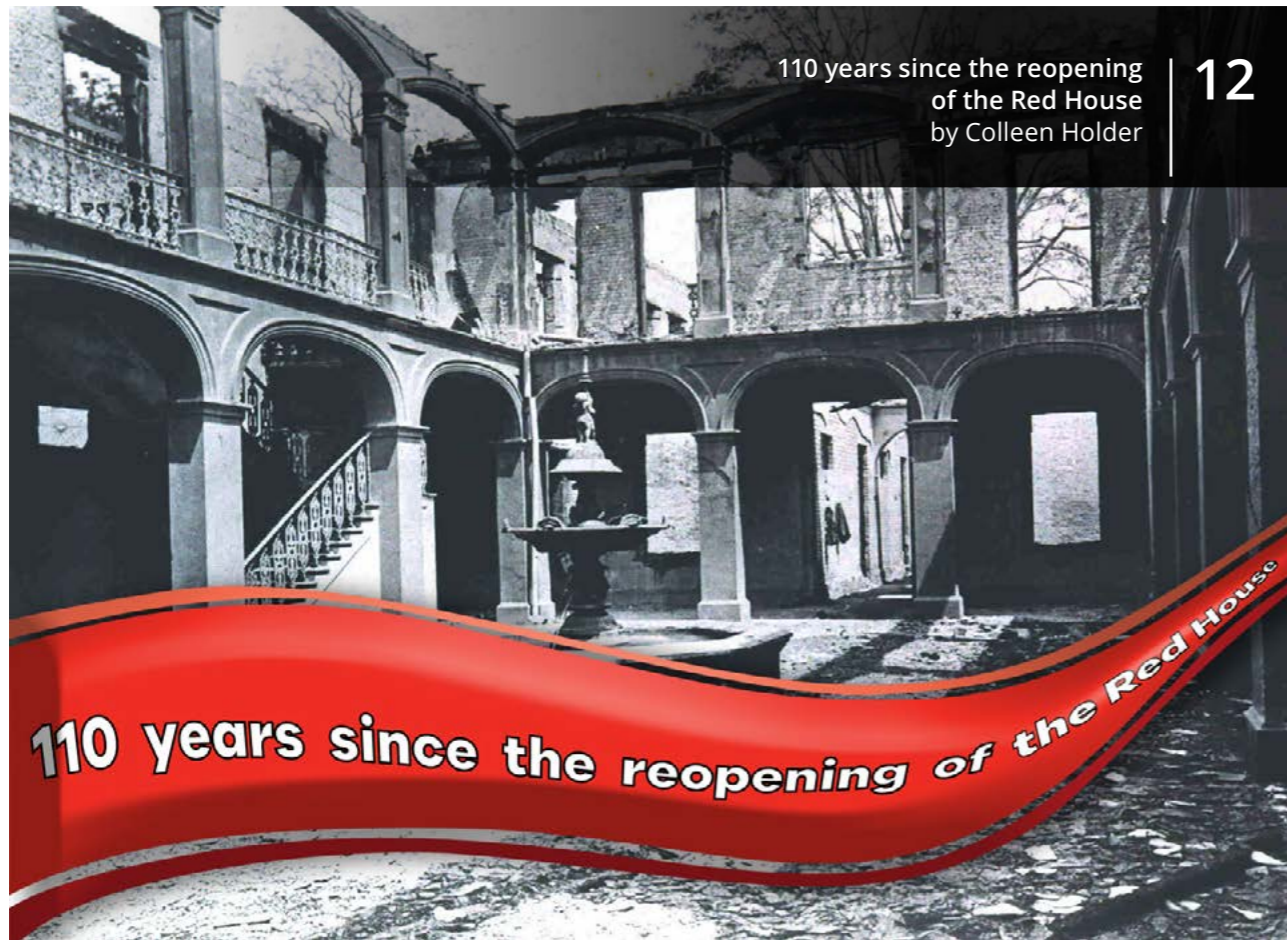
WEST INDIES AT WAR - PART 1

Episode 1 of the West Indies at War, a four part feature created for
the Parliament Channel by Savant Films highlighting the perspective of
West Indians who participated in World War 1. This episode premiered
on the Parliament Channel on Wednesday November 11, 2015.



THE VOTE AT 70- DOCUMENTARY SERIES

A brief documentary on the Vote at 70 as we celebrate 70 years of
Universal Adult Suffrage in Trinidad and Tobago.



110 years since the reopening of the Red House
by Colleen Holder | 12



11 Parliament Hansard Makes Technological Advancements
by Danielle Williams & Jason Elcock

Parliament Channel Wins CBU Awards
by Colleen Holder | 13

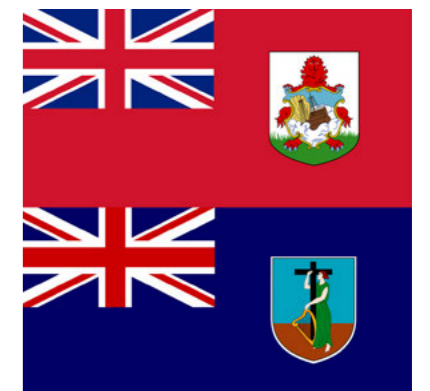


14 Parliament Channel 10th Anniversary
by Marion Sutherland

Constituency Highlight - Diego Martin Central
by Danielle Williams | 16



Our Region, Our Parliaments - (Bermuda & Montserrat)
by Mark Peterson | 18



20 Connecting to Parliament
by Mark Peterson

CONTENTS

Channel Index | 02
Find us on your Network

COVER STORY | 06
Committees at Work
(Financial Scrutiny Committees)
by Mark Peterson

Democracy 2030 - | 08
Professor Rhoda Reddock
by Ayana Holder

The Legislative Agenda | 10
by Atiba Wiltshire

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE OF **CROSSTALK** MAGAZINE



COMMITTEES AT WORK

FINANCIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

COMMITTEES AT WORK COMMITTEES AT WORK COMMITTEES AT WORK COMMITTEES AT WORK
 FINANCIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES FINANCIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES FINANCIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES FINANCIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

by Mark Peterson



According to the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Parliamentary Select Committees are the “engine rooms of Parliaments” and prove to be an important means of holding governments to account.

The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago inherited the Westminster system of governance from the United Kingdom. As a result of this, Parliament adopted and adapted the committee system to execute one of its mandates - oversight. Oversight is a necessary part of the parliamentary system and should not be taken lightly. Parliamentary oversight seeks to ensure the Executive is kept in check. Further to this, financial scrutiny aims to ensure government is held accountable for its spending of tax dollars especially during periods of economic hardship.

According to the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Parliamentary Select Committees are the “engine rooms of Parliaments” and prove to be an important means of holding governments to account. Various Commonwealth nations have committees established in their parliamentary practice comprising members from both sides of the divide. Trinidad and Tobago is no different with members from the Government and the Opposition in both the House of Representatives and the Senate making up the members of the Committees. The role of these committees is to ensure public spending is done in accordance with the approved purpose as well as ensuring there is value for money.

The appointment of members to the Committees is outlined in the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives and the Senate as mandated by the Constitution. The matter of financial scrutiny in Trinidad and Tobago is carried out by the work of four committees. According to their function in the budget cycle, these committees are the Standing Finance Committee (SFC), the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC), the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee (PA(E)C).

The Standing Finance Committee is a “Committee of the Whole”, that is, all Members of the House are members. This committee is responsible for the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure, the Appropriations Bill and any proposals for written or supplementary appropriation. The Committee is chaired by the Speaker of the House and the deliberations are held in public. To aid in this deliberation, the Standing Finance Committee sends for relevant Accounting Officers and technocrats to provide information. The SFC is allotted up to 5 days for the examination of the annual budgetary estimates, which are considered first, and the Appropriation Bill second. The Leader of the Opposition has the right to determine the order in which the Committee considers the Heads of Expenditure.

While the PAC and the PA(E)C provide ex-post financial scrutiny on whether expenditure by public sector entities was properly done under Parliament-approved budgets, *the Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations* works to ensure budgetary expenditure of Government agencies is embarked upon in accordance with Parliamentary approval. It also reports on budgetary expenditure of Government agencies as it occurs and keeps Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is being implemented. It also reports on the administration of Government agencies in an effort to determine hindrances to their efficiency, as well as make recommendations to improve public administration.

The Public Accounts Committee considers and reports to the Parliament on appropriation accounts of monies expended out of sums granted by Parliament. Other accounts can also be referred to this Committee by the House or as authorised by any Law. The Committee’s duty is also to consider the reports by the Auditor General on those accounts. The Committee is also tasked with the consideration of whether policy is carried out efficiently, effectively and economically, and whether expenditure conforms to the authority which governs it.

The Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee reports to the House on audited accounts, balance sheets and other financial statements of all State-owned enterprises. Like the Public Accounts Committee, the PA(E)C considers the Auditor General’s report on those accounts, balance sheets and other financial statements.

The presence of these financial scrutiny mechanisms along with other Committees responsible for oversight helps to improve the execution of good governance. Overall, these financial scrutiny committees aim to increase and maintain a high level of transparency and

accountability. With the issues of the Committees under the public gaze, the public becomes involved and is able to contribute to the process through the available channels. This allows for strengthening of the oversight process and improving good governance.

The Chairmen of the financial scrutiny committees are listed below. Correspondence is addressed to the Secretaries of the various committees:

- **Standing Finance Committee, chaired by Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP - email standingfinance@ttparliament.org**
- **Public Administration and Appropriations Committee, chaired by Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP - email paac@ttparliament.org**
- **Public Accounts Committee, chaired by Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, MP - email pac@ttparliament.org**
- **Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, chaired by Senator Wade Mark - email paec@ttparliament.org**



A Standing Finance Committee Meeting in Session

A Public Accounts Committee Meeting chaired by Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, MP



DEMOCRACY 2030:

An Interview with Professor Rhoda Reddock

by Ayana Holder

Democracy, a very ancient system of governance that can be traced back as far as 5 BC in Athens, has, through the years, evolved to the versions used around the world today. The word is commonly translated to mean "power to the people".

Trinidad and Tobago subscribes to the type of democracy referred to as representative democracy. This is where a group of people are elected and assigned the task of making decisions on behalf of the group of citizens that they represent. The system of democracy used in our country is the parliamentary system. In this structure, voters select parliamentary representatives.

This system consists of the head of government and the head of state. The head of government controls the legislative process; while the

head of state serves as the ceremonial representative of the country. Throughout the world, there are more parliamentary systems in the world than presidential democracies.

For the 2016 International Day of Democracy, Cross Talk interviewed Deputy Principal of the University of the West Indies, St Augustine campus, Professor Rhoda Reddock, to explore the relationships between youth involvement in parliament, the sustainable development goals and the future of democracy.



Professor Rhoda Reddock - Deputy Principal of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.

DEVELOPMENT FOR 2030

Q: How can parliaments connect the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with people's expectations of greater participation, inclusiveness and accountability?

A: Well one of the first challenges we face is that these UN agreements are seldom discussed in Parliament, or discussed with the wider population. Our leaders or their representatives sign these agreements, but then there is little effort to roll this out to the wider population. And I think it's a pity because the 2030 Agenda is quite an interesting document. It includes many development related issues; it includes issues related to good governance, to climate change, to equity and equality, to vulnerable groups, to so many issues that affect us. And they also mention support that the international organizations are willing to give countries such as ours, Small Island Developing States, support in terms of strengthening our data collection systems or the kind of aid that countries are willing to give and I think that there needs to be a much more robust discussion of these kinds of agreements to which our governments are signatories.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN 2030

Q: What are parliaments doing to ensure the political participation of young people and prepare the future of democracy?

A: I think that in the past we have had Youth Parliament which was very interesting, but I think that's only the start. I think real youth participation has to do with the preparation that those young people have received through the education system; through the systems of learning outside of the classroom. And I think despite the millions that we have spent on education - that depth, that breath to really make our students aware of what's happening in the world, aware, for example, of the 2030 Agenda, to have issues related to ethics, good governance, the history of Trinidad and Tobago, its geography, its regional issues, CARICOM, OECS et cetera. We need a lot more education of our population in general as well and our young people if they are to make a significant input into democracy. In other words, I think democracy is not just a matter of numbers, it's not just a quantitative matter, it's a qualitative matter. What quality of young people we are bringing so that when they inter-

vene into the parliamentary process, the local government process, as NGOs as activists, moving the system towards greater inclusion, that they have the understanding, the breath, the knowledge, the ethics to really make that a positive input.

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

Q: Will the role of parliament be the same as it is today?

A: Well I hope not. I hope that they will be a bit more than they are [at] present. Not that I want to give parliamentarians more work, but I wrote a paper where I looked at the ways in which Parliament as opposed to Government can really become an institution for change for advancement. For example, I noted how parliamentary caucuses, parliamentary committees, focusing on specific areas, have been very important. These would be bipartisan committees, working on some critical issues, have been very useful in other parts of the Commonwealth. So that I think that we have to find a way to make parliament more useful in terms of taking our development, our politics, our social issues [more] forward than it is today because parliament has become so partisan in the way in which our matters are dealt with. There must be some common issues that all the political parties believe are important and that they need to work together, even if those issues may not be legislative in the first instance. But maybe developing bodies of knowledge, developing national awareness, and then legislation and other changes could come at a later stage.



On September 15, 2016, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) promoted International Day of Democracy through their Member Parliaments in 170 Countries globally.

THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

by Atiba Wiltshire

With every change in government comes expectations with regard to performance and direction in addressing the affairs of a nation. One of the ways an administration sets the course for its term in office is by setting up a plan which outlines specific legislation the government plans to address and when such legislation would be brought before the Parliament. The document on which this outline is given is commonly referred to as the Government's legislative agenda.

The legislative agenda allows the government, opposition and the public to have an idea of what the country's political climate could be like in the near future. Such agendas allow for a certain level of transparency on the part of the Executive of a country since the government's legislative plans are made open to the public. As such it allows all stakeholders the chance to prepare for their possible involvement in debates surrounding legislation that would be of particular interest to them.

Attorney General, Hon. Faris Al-Rawi, MP, laid the current government's legislative agenda in the Parliament during a sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday April 15th, 2016. This agenda gives an idea of what the administration led by Prime Minister, Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley, MP, has its eyes set on until the year 2020. Among the pieces of legislation to be dealt with, according to this agenda, are the Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill, the Credit Union Bill and The Mental Health Bill.

Having knowledge of what matters the government intends to deal with legislatively allows all concerned bodies the chance to be involved in the drafting, introduction and implementation of such. Here stakeholders have an

opportunity to prepare to take part in stakeholder consultations and to lobby the government for amendments which they wish to see implemented in the proposed law(s). This would have a two-pronged benefit in that it would give the government a greater idea of the public response to a planned piece of legislation and it would help to increase public awareness on what is taking place in the parliament.

Here the public is further able to hold the administration to account since citizens have another tool to measure the government's success in fulfilling promises made in the run-up to elections. The citizenry also have the chance to demand legislation to address issues which may have been left out of the existing agenda.

Another feature of a legislative agenda is that it can be amended to suit the needs of the nation or what conditions the administration may be facing at the time. For example, a matter of national security arises during the time-frame in which the government had planned to address another piece of legislation. Here the government has the freedom to bring the more urgent matter before the Parliament to be dealt with legislatively.

What must be remembered at all times is that a legislative agenda is just a piece of paper if the required action needed for its completion is not taken. It is up to the government in power to complete as many of the items outlined in its legislative agenda by the end of its time in office.



Parliament Hansard Makes Technological Advancements

by Jason Elcock & Danielle Williams

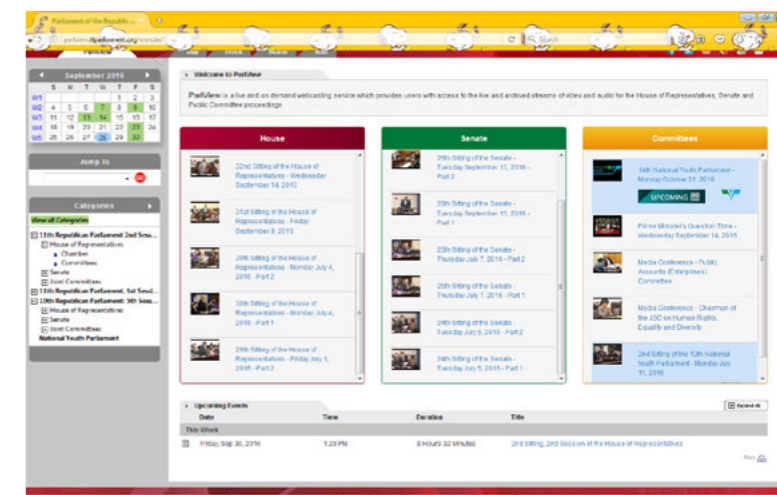
The public now has greater access to video recordings, hansard records and archived material related to sittings of the Parliament and Joint Select Committee meetings. Recently the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago teamed with Sliq Media Technologies of Montreal, Canada, to revolutionize the way the Hansard, the official report of its proceedings, is generated. This involved the implementation of the Sliq Media Harmony Suite (their own software) utilizing a real time method of annotating the sittings. Every speaker, topic area and event is noted by time of occurrence and is synchronized with the Hansard documented by the Parliament's CAT (*Computer Aided Transcription*) Reporters, as well as the recorded video/audio of the parliamentary proceedings.

Trinidad and Tobago has joined older and larger Parliaments like Canada and the United Kingdom and is now the third Caribbean territory, after Bermuda and Haiti to implement this approach. The Parliament's Hansard office has, as of January 2015, officially begun using the Harmony Suite, and this content is now publicly available on our website.

As of October 2016 the Parliament's ParView site has been fully operational. This is a live and on demand service wherein visitors to the Parliament website can gain access to live as well as archived footage of committee meetings that are held in public, sittings of the Senate and sittings of the House of Representatives. It is indeed a new and dynamic way of consuming content from the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The first live broadcast was the 2016/2017 budget presentation.

This new feature is user friendly and simple to navigate. From a calendar on the Parliament's website, a visitor can choose to view a live sitting on that day or choose a day in the past. This allows all our viewers to view sittings and meetings on an on-demand basis and at their own convenience. Visitors to our website will be able to enter a search term such as the name of a Member, a particular Bill, Motion or Question asked and be directed to the Hansard as well as to the recorded video of that part of the proceedings. This new on-demand approach will allow the content to be more readily available, accessible and ultimately will make it of greater use to our audience.

Sources: sliq.com; tparliament.org & ICT Department, Office of the Parliament



A Screenshot of the ParView site which has been fully operational as of October 2016



A Stenographer at work during a live sitting of Parliament

110 YEARS

SINCE THE RED HOUSE REOPENED AFTER THE FIRE OF 1903

by Colleen Holder

The Parliament's iconic home, the Red House, is celebrating another milestone this year... It's 110 years since the Red House was reopened following the Water Riots and fire of 1903. The exact date of the reopening is Monday February 4th, 1907.



The reopening of the Red House - Photo by Ned Levine

On that day, Governor of the colony, Sir Henry Moore Jackson, told members of the Legislative Council and persons sitting in the public gallery that the new buildings were "...infinitely more suitable to the steadily growing importance of the Colony, as well as to the needs of this Council and of the Public, than those they replace..." (Hansard 1907, page 6). He went on to say that a fresh page had been turned in the history of Trinidad and the "evil of 1903" should be left behind forever.

The evil of which Sir Henry spoke was the fire which gutted the Red House, then known as the Government Buildings. The foundation stone was laid on February 15th, 1844 but construction lasted more than 50 years. The buildings were first painted red to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 and the name stuck. Scores of per-

Water Riots - 23rd March, 1903



sons descended on the government buildings on March 23rd, 1903 while debate was taking place on the Water Ordinances Act, which was ultimately aimed at increasing water rates in Port of Spain. Angered that they had been barred from entering the public gallery to hear the debate unless they had tickets, members of the public began throwing stones at the building and eventually it was set on fire.

The entire building was gutted and only the shell of the Red House remained. Sixteen people were killed in the melee after police opened fire on the crowd.



A gutted Red House after the Water Riots, 1903

The task of rebuilding was completed in 1906 at a cost of £7,485. In commending the new buildings for use on February 4th, 1907, Governor Jackson told the Legislative Council Members, "Your work is to be done in this spacious, lofty and well-proportioned Chamber, and shall we not try and mould our policy on the same lines? Let it be broad-minded, with nothing narrow or self-seeking in it, let our aims be lofty, and our measures carefully planned and justly proportioned to the needs of the people. If we succeed in this, then indeed will all bitterness pass from our memories, and the whole people of the Colony will be able to point with pride to this beautiful group of buildings as the seat of a Government holding their confidence and labouring for their good. (Applause.)" (Hansard 1907, page 7)

THE PARLIAMENT CHANNEL WINS AWARDS

by Colleen Holder

For the first time, two of the Parliament Channel's programmes have won awards at the 2015 edition of the Caribbean Broadcasting Awards, staged annually by the Caribbean Broadcasting Union.

"The West Indies at War", which looks at the little-known story of Caribbean soldiers who were involved in World War I and the impact this battle had on the region, won the award for Best Documentary Feature in the television category. "The West Indies at War" was produced for the Parliament Channel by Mariel Brown of Savant Films. The four-part documentary is laced with diary entries from some of the young men who fought on the battlefields of Europe between 1914 and 1918 then returned to the Caribbean to face discrimination at every turn. Their struggles became the catalyst for the independence movement.



of the Senate and Lower House and committee meetings should be carried live on a dedicated television station housed at the Parliament to allow citizens an unfettered view of parliamentary proceedings. One year later Parliament Radio station 105.5fm was launched, and we've recently added a Youtube option for livestreaming and archiving of sittings and committee meetings, Parview. In addition to our live broadcasts, the Parliament

Channel also produces a range of programmes that explain the parliamentary process and highlight former members.

In 2015, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago became the first and only such entity in the region to become a member of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and it's currently the only parliament in the region with a dedicated 24-hour broadcasting unit.

The second feature to claim an award was "I Count", produced by Stephen Doobal of Real Company Limited. "I Count" takes a cheeky look at the history of voting in Trinidad and Tobago from the perspective of a young man who is eager to go into politics. His escapades with his friend take the viewer through a timeline of the voting process from colonial days to the present. The award was sponsored by UNICEF in the category of Responsible Coverage of Children's (and youth) Issues.

The awards were presented at the CBU's 45th Annual General Meeting in Havana, Cuba in October 2016, shortly after the Parliament Channel celebrated its tenth anniversary of broadcasting in August. In 2006, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago mandated that all sittings

POPULAR PROGRAMMES ON THE PARLIAMENT CHANNEL

WEST INDIES AT WAR - PART 1

This programme is a four part feature produced by the Parliament Channel by Savant Films. It emphasizes the perspective of the West Indians who would have participated in World War I. The episode premiered on the Parliament Channel on November 11th, 2015.

PARLIAMENTARY PERSONALITIES - BASDEO PANDAY

Subsequent to the launch of the Parliament Channel in September 2006, in addition to the live broadcast of the sittings of the House of Representatives and Senate, the Parliament Channel's programming included several features, one of which is the Parliamentary Personalities series. This feature presents the profile of Mr. Basdeo Panday, who was the 5th Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago from 1998 to 2001 and has served as the Leader of the Opposition from 1976 - 1977, 1978 - 1986, 1989 - 1995 and 2001 - 2002.

PARLIAMENTARY PERSONALITIES - AMR ROBINSON

This feature covers the life of Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson, TC, OCC, SC, who was the third Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as well as the third President.

WITHIN THESE WALLS PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

The Within these Walls features some of the most iconic buildings and heritage governance sites in Port of Spain. In particular, this episode features President's House.



by Marion Sutherland

“... it is my pleasure to inform you that, as of today, pursuant to a decision of this honourable House, proceedings in this honourable House are being broadcast live on television to the national community via Cable Television Channel 11”

(Barendra Sinanan, Speaker of the House 2006).

The Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago stands as the benchmark for democratic excellence among its regional neighbours. It is synonymous with many firsts in its short history and boasts of significant milestones throughout the years. One such accomplishment is the live and recorded broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings on Parliament Channel 11. This television station – owned, operated and maintained by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago – celebrated 10 years of broadcasting on August 18th, 2016.

With the inclusion of video cameras and microphones into the Parliament’s Chamber and Committee Rooms, citizens can view elected and appointed legislators make decisions which directly affect lives. The Trinidad and Tobago Parliament is keenly aware that broadcasting parliamentary debates makes an enormous contribution to the strengthening of our democratic tradition, as unbiased coverage of legislative proceedings is consistent with the overall strategic direction of the Parliament.

It has also taken further steps to ensure that the national community has access to all parliamentary proceedings by simultaneous broadcast on [Parliament Radio 105.5 FM](#) and a live stream on [ParView \(our YouTube channel\)](#) which were initiated in 2007 and 2015 respectively.

The message of parliamentary democracy is also shared through our various social media channels including the website www.ttparliament.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Background

The ideology of broadcasting parliamentary proceedings spanned almost two and a half decades, notwithstanding the disapproval by some members during this period. In 1989 a Joint Select Committee of Parliament was appointed to consider and report on all aspects relating to the broadcasting and televising of the proceedings of the Parliament. In its report, the Committee suggested several guidelines, among which were:

1. *Coverage should reflect a full appreciation of Parliamentary proceedings, that is to say, the aims and objectives of Bills or Motions and arguments for and against them;*
2. *Roving or reaction shots should be taken, but opportunities to embarrass unsuspecting members, i.e. shots not connected with the proceedings, should not be used;*
3. *As a matter of general practice the camera should focus on the occupant of the Chair whenever he rises; this principle should be applied all the more strictly during incidents of disorder or altercations between the Chair and other members;*
4. *Deliberate misconduct designed to secure television coverage ought not to achieve this aim;*
5. *Interruptions from and demonstrations in the gallery should in no circumstances be televised, as they do not constitute “parliamentary proceedings”;*
6. *Journalists representing the electronic media should be mindful of what is relevant to the business under consideration by the House. It*

is only such relevant material that is intended for public information .

Several years had elapsed since those initial recommendations, and in 2004 to 2006, final preparations were underway to acquire the relevant licenses. The Parliament Channel also sought assistance from recognized engineering companies to complete the technical and transmittal work.

Today the Parliament Channel continues to be manned by the Parliament’s Corporate Communications Department with assistance from the Information Systems Unit.

Programming

In addition to live and recorded broadcasts of ceremonial openings, debates of the Senate and House of Representatives and Committee Meetings, the Parliament Channel has a cadre of other programmes to edify the citizenry. Programmes such as Parliamentary Personalities (which highlight former parliamentarians) documentaries of historic landmarks and buildings, features on regional and international parliaments, reality-type productions such as our quiz show Democracy Challenge, Parliament Apprentice, Parliament Outreach and the National Youth Parliament (Behind the Scenes); shorter productions of interviews of

visiting delegations as well as features geared toward updating the public on parliamentary activities, and several other programmes produced by the Office of the Parliament are also broadcast on our channels. The Parliament Channel also televises informational segments obtained from the United Nations.

Commemorative Activities

In commemoration of the Channel’s 10th anniversary, the Parliament embarked on several initiatives to take you back to where it all started. Here are some highpoints:

- *Media Launch*
- *Parliament Exhibition at the International Waterfront Centre*
- *Public open house to the Parliament Chamber, J. Hamilton Maurice Room and Broadcast Control Room*
- *Special programming*
- *Strategic public relations ventures to bring awareness to the value of the Parliament Channel in a democracy*

Visit the Parliament Channel’s website at www.ttparliament.org for programme schedules.



CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHT: DIEGO MARTIN CENTRAL

by Danielle Williams

The constituency of Diego Martin Central is the smallest of the three Diego Martin constituencies. It is bounded on the left by Diego Martin West and on the right by Diego Martin North/East. It covers part of Petit Valley, Cocorite, St Lucien Road as well as a portion of the Western Main Road. As of the last General Election on September 7th 2015, the constituency has been represented by Mr Darryl Smith, the current Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs and former chairman of the Diego Martin Regional Corporation (DMRC) the current chairman of the DMRC is Katty Christopher. The area has been represented in the recent past by Dr. Amery Browne, as well as the late Kenneth Valley who was preceded in the post by the late Leo Des Vignes, who died due to injuries sustained in the 1990 attempted coup.

In 2009, a new community centre, the Central Diego Martin Community Centre, was opened in Diamond Vale by the then Minister of Community Development, Marlene Mc Donald. Shortly after this, the Diego Martin Highway Extension Project was started in 2010. This project would continue on in phases for four years and be officially opened in 2014. Such an expansion has improved the commute of residents in and out of the Diego Martin area.

While there is representation at the central government level by an MP, the day to day running of the constituency along with the other two Diego Martin constituencies is managed by the Diego Martin Regional Corporation. Services offered to the burgesses include collection and disposal of garbage; street lighting; cleaning of public spaces; disaster management as well as insect vector, rodent and canine control.

For cultural enthusiasts the constituency is home to the world famous Rain O Rama Palace. Located on the Diego Martin Road, this palace was built in the early 1970s by calypso icon Lord Kitchener. Lord Kitchener's family has refurbished the residence and promotes it as a cultural centre featuring a large body of the Grandmaster's work. At the residence there is said to be a walkway likened to the Hollywood Walk of Fame where the names of

Diego Martin Central Constituency Office



calypso veterans and persons who have contributed to Trinidad and Tobago's culture are engraved.

The Diego Martin area has a strong presence of the island's colonial past and remnants of cocoa and sugar cane estates. One such remnant is the River Estate Water Wheel. The Water Wheel serves as a reminder of a time when energy for plantations was supplied by water. Restorative work has been done and there is an estate house with a museum along with park facilities for visitors.

Petit Valley, one of the areas covered by Diego Martin Central is the birthplace of Sir Learie Constantine. Born in 1901, Constantine wore many hats throughout his lifetime which included West Indies cricketer, a barrister, administrator, broadcast journalist, politician, author and an activist.

Important information:

MP Darryl Smith
1 Orchid Drive,
Morne Coco Road,
Diego Martin
637-6056

Diego Martin Regional Corporation
Administration Building
17-18 Diego Martin Main Rd,
Diego Martin,
Trinidad and Tobago
Phone:637-2204-05
Fax:632-2502

Sources:

- * <http://dmrctt.com>
- * <http://www.tntisland.com/kitch31.html>
- * <http://www.ttparliament.org/members.php?mid=54&id=DSM15>
- * <http://www.ebctt.com/wp-content/uploads/Parliamentary-Approved-2014.pdf>
- * <http://trinidad-and-tobago.cityseekr.com/venue/284479-river-estate-water-wheel>
- * <http://historicalgeographies.blogspot.com/2011/09/biography-learie-constantine.html>



On the 25th of each and every month,
Join the Parliament
in its commemoration of its campaign
“Orange Day”,
a day chosen to increase awareness of
as well as take action to end violence
Against Women and Girls.

Every month, look out on
the Parliament Channel
& Parliament Radio 105.5 FM
for special programming
on the campaign to end violence
against women and girls.



105.5
FM RADIO

OUR REGION, OUR PARLIAMENTS

BERMUDA & MONTSERRAT

by Mark Peterson

The Parliament of Bermuda

Bermuda is the oldest and most populous British Overseas Territory with a population of about 70,000. It has also been self-governing since 1620 by means of Royal Assent but was first settled in 1609 when English colonists got shipwrecked on their way to Virginia. The Bermudan Parliament has been in continuous existence since its inception in 1620 making it one of the oldest in the world. It is in competition for the title with the likes of the United Kingdom Parliament, the Tynwald of the Isle of Man and the Althing of Iceland.

The initial, unicameral Parliament of Bermuda, was formed by the Virginia Company. The Crown eventually assumed administrative responsibility in 1684. Voting in those times was only allowed to male landowners. Over time, however, non-white land ownership increased causing the creation of a minimum standard. Interestingly, a man could vote in each parish in which he owned sufficiently valued lands.

Bermuda's head of state is Queen Elizabeth II who is represented on the island by Governor George Fergusson. The party system has been dominated by two parties, the incumbent One Bermuda Alliance and the party which previously formed the government, the Progressive Labour Party. The ruling party, the OBA, came into power after winning the majority in the legislative election in December 2012. Craig Cannonier, former leader of the coalition government, resigned as Premier in March 2014 amid allegations of impropriety related to using the private jet of a party financier.

Subsequently, Michael H. Dunkley JP, MP was sworn in as the new Premier of Bermuda.

Bermuda's House of Assembly consists of 36 elected members with each Parliamentary constituency having one elected member. Each Parish is divided into either 3 or 4 constituencies. The Speaker is elected by his/her Parliamentary colleagues. Upon election the Speaker has to renounce all party affiliations and hence does not participate in any debates. The Speaker's purpose is to ensure that rules are observed and that order and decorum are maintained in the Lower House. The current Speaker of Bermuda's House of Assembly is the Hon. K.H Randolph Horton, a former national football and cricket player. Horton was also a former Minister of Community Affairs and Sports as well as Minister of Labour, Home Affairs and Public Safety under Premier the Hon. W. Alexander Scott within the Progressive Labour Party government.

The Senate serves as a "House of Review". This Senate consists of 11 members appointed by the Governor. The Senate is divided into 5 government senators, 3 opposition senators and 3 independents. Government senators are appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Premier, whereas the opposition senators are appointed on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition. The independent senators are chosen on the discernment of the Governor.

Bermuda's Cabinet, chaired by Premier Hon. Michael Dunkley, J.P., MP, is made up of 9 ministries with more than one portfolio sometimes housed under one ministry. The Governor appoints the Premier who then nominates the other members of the Cabinet to form the Legislature.

Bermuda continues to enjoy its self-governance which it has practiced for hundreds of years while at the same time falling within the ambit of the sovereignty of the British Monarchy. With its many varied people the government of Bermuda aims to do all within its power to fulfill the needs of its citizens.



The Parliament of Montserrat

One of 14 British Overseas Territories, Montserrat, lying just southeast of Puerto Rico, is one of the many beautiful islands of the Caribbean. This volcanic island is mostly mountainous with some low lying coastal areas. Being an overseas territory means Montserrat falls under the jurisdiction of the sovereignty of the United Kingdom but does not form part of it. Unlike many Caribbean territories formally under British rule, Montserrat and other overseas territories, opted against independence. As a result its governance falls under the jurisdiction of British MP James Duddridge.

As an Overseas Territory of the UK, Montserrat's Head of State is recognised as Queen Elizabeth II. The current Governor of Montserrat, Elizabeth Carriere, succeeded Adrian Davis as Governor on August 5th 2015. They both acted as civil servants in the Department of International Development, a UK governmental agency responsible for administering overseas aid.

Soufriere Hills, formerly dormant after a period of many years, became active in 1995. This occurrence has had dire consequences on Montserrat in every aspect of Montserratian life. Firstly the majority of the population had to flee the island, with many seeking refuge in the United Kingdom. Prior to the eruption the population was about 13000 inhabitants. After the eruption the population living on the island had dwindled to close to 5000. Nevertheless life has to continue.

The island and its inhabitants still require governance, albeit modified, to suit the new conditions. In addition to having to govern a smaller populace, the Chambers had to be moved to a new location. Plymouth was abandoned in 1997. Interim government buildings have been built at Brades Estate in the Carr's Bay/Little Bay vicinity at the northwest end of Montserrat. As such, Brades has become the de facto capital since 1998.

A unicameral Legislative Assembly makes up the Parliament of Montserrat. The Legislative Council

made up of its 11 seats was replaced by the Legislative Assembly in 2014. This change was brought about by the promulgation of a new constitution in 2011. There are nine elected seats in a single constituency won by absolute majority vote in two rounds. The two remaining seats are ex officio members. The elected members serve for a period of 5 years. The 2 ex officio member positions are the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary. The incumbent party holds 7 of the 9 elected seats in the Assembly.

The Executive Council comprises the Governor, the Premier, 3 other ministers as well as the ex officio members. The current Premier, Donald Romero, oversees the portfolios of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism. The other portfolios such as Health, Social Services, Communications, Works, Energy and Labour, Agriculture, Lands Housing and the Environment, Culture and Youth Affairs are divided among the other members of this Council.



After having much of the island uninhabitable the government has strived to improve the conditions of the persons still on the island and start anew. Due to its drop in tourism the government has had to rely on aid from the UK but has seen strides over the past years to rebuild Montserrat for the betterment of its people.

CONNECTING TO THE PARLIAMENT

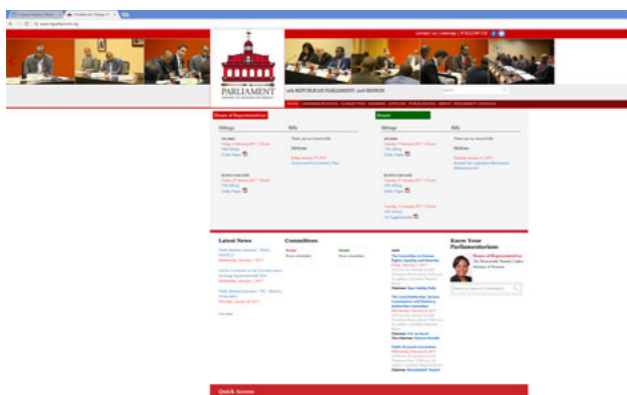
by **Mark Peterson**

The Office of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago strives to connect with the public and educate citizens about democracy. There are many ways in which persons can connect with the Parliament to learn, interact, access help and overall strengthen their understanding of what Parliament can do for you the citizen.

The Parliament's Website

The Parliament's website acts as one of the best tools available to the public to access information about Parliament. At first glance one is welcomed by photos of persons involved in the latest special event or sitting to have occurred within the Parliament. These pictures can also be seen on the Parliament's Facebook page.

Also on display are different tabs that direct you to various sections that provide information on things like the Sittings, Committees, Parliament Channel's schedule, Hansard records, MP information and many other Parliament-related items. It also displays the dates for upcoming sittings as well as the latest proposed Bills in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. There are "Quick Access" and "Latest News" sections that deliver easily accessible routes for new as well as existing information. The website also provides links to the Parliament's various social media platforms.



Social Media

The Parliament recognises the increasing ubiquity of social media as the easiest form of getting information. In a move to further provide the relevant information to our stakeholders, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago has robustly grounded

itself in several social media tools. Facebook is a platform that allows for the easy sharing of content with our stakeholders. With the high number of sittings and committee meetings during Parliamentary sessions, real-time events are shared via Facebook and Twitter. Twitter is steadily proving itself to be the go-to channel for latest news and updates regarding any topic imaginable. The main feature of these social media platforms, and likely their greatest strength, is the ability to garner feedback instantaneously. Persons are able to respond to events in real time as they occur.



Broadcasting

The Parliament Channel, established on August 18, 2006 broadcasts live sittings of the House, committee meetings, as well as original content created solely for the Parliament Channel. Some of the content includes profiles on Parliament personalities, documentaries about Parliament as well as reality shows showcasing the intellectual prowess of the nation's youth. In addition to the television station, proceedings can also be listened to via the radio frequency 105.5FM. Radio broadcasts started in November 2007.



Parlview

Parlview is the 'on demand' service offered by the Office of the Parliament to members of the viewing audience who wish to view a sitting at their leisure. While persons can view previous Sittings, a live stream of any current sitting is also provided. This service is facilitated by the YouTube social media platform. As such viewers are able to comment in real time on issues arising out of the debate, as well as engage in discussion with other views in a civil manner. Public committee meetings are also streamed live and available on demand. During the livestream viewers' comments can be passed on to the Committee Chairman who can then, through his/her discretion, raise issues brought forward by viewer engagement. This service came on stream for the 11th Republican Parliament in 2015.

The Constituency Office

The constituency office represents a brick and mortar entity for persons to connect to Parliament primarily through their representative. Through these offices persons have access to their representative and can take advantage of the services that their MP provides to them. At the constituency office there are staff members employed by the MP to assist him/her in the daily tasks of serving the public. Staff at the offices typically act as intermediaries, consulting persons who need help in areas such as accessing government ministries or agencies or other public services.



Outreach and Parliament Chamber Tours

The Parliament's outreach programme has included reaching out to students across the country to give them an opportunity to interact with Parliamentarians and learn more about the proceedings at Parliament. Video presentations and live lectures have been used to teach the

eager young minds aspects of the Parliamentary process, and students have been offered in-depth responses to their burning questions about the parliamentary process.

The Corporate Communications Department also visits constituencies to chat with residents about the Parliament and share information and booklets which can help deepen their understanding and appreciation of the work of MPs and the entire parliamentary process.

During Chamber tours, information is shared to groups on the history of the Parliament, procedures of the various sittings and meetings, as well as tidbits of interesting information about Parliament. Group members can also participate in a mock debate based on a trending topic. These tours are free of charge and open to the general public.



The Public Gallery in the Chamber

All Parliamentary debates / meetings are open to members of the public who wish to experience the proceedings in person (*unless there are restrictions due to certain sittings, such as the Opening of Parliament*). Members of the public are usually invited to sit in the Public Gallery. Persons interested in viewing sittings are expected to adhere to guidelines of proper dress and decorum.



COMMITTEES AT WORK

CONTACT INFORMATION



| | |
|---|--|
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS | jscfla@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON LAND AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE | jscpia@ttparliament.org |
| PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE | pac@ttparliament.org |
| PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE | paec@ttparliament.org |
| PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE | paac@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON GAMBLING (GAMING & BETTING) CONTROL BILL, 2016 | jscgcb@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS | jscfa@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES | jscgovernmentassurances@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | j schumanrights@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES, SERVICE COMMISSIONS AND STATUTORY AUTHORITIES | j sclasca@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY | j scnationalsecurity@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION | j scspa@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON STATE ENTERPRISES | j scse@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AFFAIRS | j scenergyaffairs@ttparliament.org |
| JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE INSURANCE BILL, 2016 | j scinsurance@ttparliament.org |
| STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE | standingfinance@ttparliament.org |

VISIT TO THE CHAMBER / TOURS OF THE CHAMBER

The Parliament Chamber

located at #1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain is open to all members of the public whether to take a tour and have an opportunity to sit in the Members of Parliament seats or to perhaps take in a live sitting of the House of Representatives or Senate.



Interested parties can call the Corporate Communications Department at 624-7275 exts. 2520, 2318 or 2295 for more information.

Follow us on:

 @ttparliament1 |  @ttparliament |  @ttparliament |  <http://www.ttparliament.org>

 <https://www.youtube.com/ttparliament> and <https://www.youtube.com/parview>



SUBSCRIBE TODAY

CROSSTALK **NOW ONLINE**
M A G A Z I N E

Subscribe to our Mailing List for Crosstalk and other updates from the Office of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

[Join Our Mailing List](#)

