



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

by

THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

on its activities for the year

1998

**(Pursuant to section 10 of the Integrity in
Public Life Act, 1987)**

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

INTEGRITY COMMISSION

OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Mission Statement

The Integrity Commission is an Independent Body established with a view to **promoting and securing public confidence in the Integrity of "Persons in Public Life"** in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and current legislation - **the first step in the process of integrity control** - empowers the Commission to monitor the financial activities of those 'persons'.

"Persons in Public Life" are defined as: Members of the House of Representatives; Ministers of Government; Parliamentary Secretaries; Permanent Secretaries; and Chief Technical Officers. They are required by law to file with the Commission annually, declarations of Income, Assets and Liabilities.

Accordingly, the Office of the Integrity Commission seeks to

- (a) safeguard the accurate recording of the declarations of **'persons in public life'**; and
- (b) ensure compliance with the provisions of the law by such persons.

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## *Vision Statement*

Revised Integrity Legislation which would **further the process of Integrity control by empowering the Integrity Commission to exercise greater control over the financial activities, as well as the ethical conduct, of not only those "persons in public life", but all other persons who are required to exercise public functions;** thereby ensuring the protection and maintenance of the integrity of the Government and its public officials.

It is envisaged that the role of the Integrity Commission under revised legislation would be that of **a watchdog, monitoring corruption, reviewing conflict of interest situations, investigating complaints, advising on breaches of conduct and imposing sanctions where necessary.**

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# ***ANNUAL REPORT***

## **OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FOR THE YEAR 1998**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

*The year 1998 was the eleventh year of the existence of the Integrity Commission. The current term of office of the Commissioners will expire on the 31st March, 2000. One of our Commissioners, Mr. John Ottley tendered his resignation during 1998, and has since migrated to Canada. Up to the time of the preparation of this Report, his position on the Commission had not yet been filled.*

### **ACCOMMODATION**

*We are pleased to report that we are now adequately settled in our new premises on the Fourth Floor of the Industrial Court building on St. Vincent Street, in Port of Spain.*

## STAFF

*Our complement of staff has remained the same, but we anticipate that with any enlargement of the scope of the functions of this Commission, some adjustment of the clerical arrangements will become necessary. The present arrangements, however, are sufficient for our current operations.*

## SUBMISSIONS OF DECLARATIONS

*We regret to report once more that the timeliness of compliance by Declarants in the submission of their Returns continues to be less than satisfactory, as the following record of declarations filed shows:*

### RETURNS DUE FOR YEAR ENDED 1998.12.31

|                                                 | Number | Number     | %          |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|------------|
| Returns required to be filed by 98.05.31        | 104    |            | 87         |
| <b>Total required to be filed by 98.12.31</b>   |        | <b>119</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Returns filed by 98.05.31                       | 19     |            | 18         |
| Returns filed 98.06.01 to 98.09.30              | 38     |            | 32         |
| Returns filed 98.10.01 to 98.12.31              | 27     |            | 23         |
| <b>Total Returns filed by 98.12.31</b>          |        | <b>84</b>  | <b>71</b>  |
| Returns due in 1998 and Outstanding at 98.12.31 |        | 35         | 29         |

**OUTSTANDING RETURNS DUE IN PREVIOUS YEARS**  
**1995 - 1997**

|                                                                               | Number |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Returns due - 1995</b>                                                     |        |
| Returns required to be filed since 1995<br>and outstanding at <b>98.12.31</b> | 02     |
| <b>Returns due - 1996</b>                                                     |        |
| Returns required to be filed since 1996<br>and outstanding at <b>98.12.31</b> | 08     |
| <b>Returns due - 1997</b>                                                     |        |
| Returns required to be filed since 1997<br>and outstanding at <b>98.12.31</b> | 06     |

*We appreciate that persons involved in the conduct of public affairs may sometimes have difficulty in meeting the statutory deadline of 31st May in each year. In such event, we would urge that those persons take us into their confidence so that agreement might be reached on an acceptable date for the receipt of their Return.*

*We also repeat the offer made in previous reports of the availability of our staff to render assistance whenever difficulties arise in the completion of Returns.*

*Unfortunately, however, in some instances, the duty of compliance with the provisions of the Act would seem to have been entirely disregarded, since, even after publication, as required by this Act, of the names of defaulting Declarants, there had been no response from the defaulters, as the figures for Outstanding Returns in the years 1995 and 1996 show. We have already reported this default to the Director of Public Prosecutions, as required by the Act.*

## **THE WAY AHEAD**

*From the very first year of our existence as a Commission, we have held the vision of the further role which a Commission such as ours could perform in bringing about a higher level of integrity in the conduct of public affairs. Our previous Reports to Parliament have reflected our thinking in that regard; and, we have been re-inforced in this view by public utterances on this subject; by the pronouncements by some of our leading public figures; by a Green Paper published by Government in 1995 and laid before Parliament in 1996; and even by developments in some of our sister Caribbean islands which have now enacted Integrity legislation which reflects some of the principles propounded in that*

*Green Paper, providing stronger measures for the safeguarding of integrity standards.*

*We have noted further, that the Green Paper has been examined by a Joint Select Committee of Parliament which made its Report in November of 1997; and that the matter has since been further examined by members of Parliament.*

*We wish to renew the assurance that this Commission is equipped and ready to play its part in putting into effect any new measures for the re-establishment of integrity legislation that Parliament may wish to introduce.*

*Our Commission therefore, lends its support to the proponents of a stronger Integrity Commission, which would be geared to making more positive results in the safeguarding of integrity in public life.*

*Our Report is respectfully submitted to Parliament this 29<sup>th</sup> day of March  
1999.*

**GEORGE COLLYMORE  
CHAIRMAN**

**JAMES O'NEIL LEWIS  
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

**JOHN MARTIN  
MEMBER**

**BRIAN DES VIGNES  
MEMBER**