



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

by

THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

on its activities for the year

1997

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

THE TENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

INTEGRITY COMMISSION

OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
INTEGRITY COMMISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
FOR THE YEAR 1997

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**INTRODUCTION**

This Report reflects the activities of this Commission in the tenth year of its existence. Our term of office expired on the 31st March, 1997, and was renewed by His Excellency the President for a further term of three years from that date.

**ACCOMMODATION**

We moved from rented offices at the Furness Building on Independence Square, Port of Spain, on the 22nd May, 1997 into offices prepared for us on the Fourth Floor of the New Industrial Court Building on St. Vincent Street. While the space allocated to us is adequate for our present purposes, yet, looking into the future, if the powers of this Commission were to be expanded, as is anticipated, then it would become necessary for more space to be allocated to us. We

pointed this out to the President of the Industrial Court, His Honour Mr. Leo Ramchand who kindly offered us a part of the vacant space on the Fourth Floor, and arrangements have already been made for the laying out of offices in that area for our occupation. We anticipate that these additional offices will suffice to meet the needs of an expanded Commission.

### **STAFF**

Our complement of clerical staff has remained the same. In December last our Secretary, Miss Angela Brathwaite went on long leave, and Miss Rose Marie Johnson, an Administrative Officer in the Prime Minister's Office has been seconded to act as Secretary. Miss Johnson has acted in this office on a previous occasion, and is well familiar with its operations.

### **SUBMISSION OF DECLARATIONS**

We revert to this topic once more to record that the timeliness of the submission of Returns by "Persons in Public Life" continues to be less than satisfactory. Only a small percentage of such persons, we regret to have to report, are diligent in complying with their obligations within the time limit set by Parliament, as

shown in the paragraph below, and in the majority of cases, reminders need to be sent to bring about compliance. When persons burdened with the affairs of State experience difficulty in meeting the deadline, it would assist if some information be given of an anticipated date on which we could expect to receive their returns, so that we might grant an appropriate extension of time. In many instances, however, we are left with the impression that the fulfilment of this obligation lies low in the order of priority of many persons. Evidence of this is not only the tardiness in the submission of returns, but also the fact that we still have on our records persons who have not submitted returns for previous years dating as far back as the year 1995, (as shown in the paragraph below) who are yet to comply, even though their names have already been published in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Act. My Commission will continue to publish those names so long as there remains non-compliance. We have since submitted those names to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and that is as far as our responsibility can go.

## **RECORD OF RETURNS**

The number of declarants on record who are required to file Returns for the year 1996 is 114.

Our record of declarations filed is as follows:

31st May 1997 (The deadline for 1996 Returns) - 23

1st June - 30th September 1997 - 35

1st October - 31st December 1997 - 24

Since 31st December, 1997 our record is as follows:

Outstanding since 1995 - 11

Outstanding since 1996 - 10

Outstanding to date (28th February 1998) - 21

## **TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL**

On the 14th November, 1997 we held talks with representatives of a body known as Transparency International (TI) who are planning to establish a National Chapter of that organization in Trinidad. This is a body with headquarters in Germany that was established in the year 1993 for the purpose of fighting global corruption, and has now spread world wide with National Chapters in most countries. We quote from one of its publications, "*The Fight Against Corruption 1997*" as follows:

*"TI builds national, regional and global coalitions, embracing the state, civil society and the private sector, in order to fight domestic and international corruption;*

*TI coordinates and supports National Chapters to implement our mission;*

*TI assists in the design and the implementation of effective integrity systems; and*

*TI collects, analyses and disseminates information and raises public awareness on the damaging impact of corruption (especially in low-income countries) on human and economic development."*

While we can applaud the high ideals of this organization, yet we have kept in mind that our Commission is a creature of Statute, and is empowered to perform only such functions as Parliament may prescribe. We, therefore, consider that we are not authorised to become a member of this organization, even though we may benefit from its operations by any assistance they may render, for example, by participating in any educational programme, by the mounting of Seminars and Conferences, and also by their pronouncements on ethical issues. We see no difficulty, therefore, in our welcoming this organization to share with



us their ideas and experiences in the fight against corruption.

### *ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER*

This year we were pleased to host a Christmas Dinner, as we have done in previous years, to which we invite a select group of those persons, and their spouses, who are concerned in some way with ethical standards. This year we were honoured with the presence of their Excellencies President, the Honourable Mr. A.N.R. Robinson and Mrs. Robinson, and we were also very pleased to have with us the Honourable Chief Justice, Mr. Michael de Labastide, The Honourable Attorney General, Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj the representatives of the Commissions in the persons of Mr. Kenneth Lalla, S.C, and Mr. Mortley de Peaza, the President of the Law Association, Mrs. Stephanie Daly, the President of the Industrial Court, His Honour Mr. Leo Ramchand and the President of the Inter-religious Fellowship, Brother Harrypersad Maharaj. The thrust of our gathering has always been to stress the relationship which we all have to each other in the maintenance of ethical standards, and to keep alive the realization of the need for progressive measures in the fight for the establishment of integrity in public affairs.

### **THE WAY AHEAD**

What of the future? Our Commission has always projected the point of view that there is a larger role which can be performed by this Commission in the protection of standards of integrity, as we have propounded in all our Annual Reports to date; and the findings of the official Working Party in their Green Paper published in 1996 support that view. The Chairman of the Law Reform Commission requested us to prepare a First Draft of legislation based on the Green Paper, and this we have done. We were also consulted on the refinements of this legislation as prepared by the Ministry of the Attorney General, and we were heartened by the observations of the Attorney General the Honourable Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, that his government has in mind to introduce this legislation into Parliament in the near future. As we pointed to the Honourable Attorney General on the occasion of our Annual Dinner, our Commission has addressed its mind to the requirements of an expanded Commission in anticipation of the expected new legislation, and we stand ready to assume any additional responsibilities that may be cast upon us.

Our Report is respectfully submitted to Parliament this *27th*  
day of March, 1998.

GEORGE COLLYMORE  
*CHAIRMAN*

JAMES O'NEIL LEWIS  
*DEPUTY CHAIRMAN*

JOHN MARTIN  
*MEMBER*

JOHN OTTLEY  
*MEMBER*

BRIAN DES VIGNES  
*MEMBER*