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Portrait Report
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Portrait of Canadians in Trinidad & Tobago

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Portrait of Canadians in Trinidad & Tobago¹

Executive Summary:

Conservative estimates of the number of Canadians in Trinidad & Tobago (TT) put the range between 3,700-5,000; however, it is very likely that the number of Canadian citizens resident in TT is much higher. Available data sources are to date limited; however, the TT Census 2010 will prove to be an excellent resource as it will ask respondents to list countries of citizenship and places of past residence.

Canada and TT have had long-standing relations, built initially on commerce and religious organizations from the late 19th century onwards. Today, Canadian organizations such as RBC Financial Group as well as Presbyterian and Christian missionary groups remain a visible force in the Trinidadian socio-economic make up. The recognition of dual citizenship by Canada (1977) and Trinidad (1986) has both deepened the bilateral relationship between Ottawa and Port of Spain at the national and people level, but also made it difficult to track Canadian-Trinidadian citizens as many integrate seamlessly into both societies. Indeed, many Trinidadians live transnational lives, especially between Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Today many leading professionals in the country have Canadian roots as well, representing high levels of politics, law, diplomacy, education, commerce and especially in the NGO sector. Canadians have served as independent and partisan senators in the nation's parliament, top executives/CEOs in the nation's bureaucracy and private sector organizations, and are also involved in representing TT at various regional and international forums. The organizations these and other Canadians are involved in are diverse, representing religion, media consultancy, finance, oil/gas, education and more.

Immigration, citizenship, and tax laws in TT make emigrating an attractive and relatively easy process. With special consideration for British Commonwealth citizens, Canadians can achieve permanent residence status in five years (eight years required for non-Commonwealth residents), and can vote as well. Ottawa and Port of Spain also signed a bilateral tax treaty in 1995 in part to avoid double taxation of citizens in either country.

Canadians living in Trinidad profiled in this piece speak to a global conception of citizenship. Whereas Robin Montano remains deeply attached to Canada by his family and foundational experiences/education in Canada, others like Gordon Creasy remain attached by living significant portions of their lives in both countries. Others, like Angela Cropper, engage in both TT and Canada through international work, seminars and frequent trips.

¹ I am grateful for the valuable insights, guidance, and assistance offered by Dr. Hamid Ghany (University of the West Indies) and Mr. Jai Parasram (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation).

Introduction:

This country profile seeks to establish the long lasting people-to-people relationship between Canada and TT that predates both the independence of TT and Canada from colonial rule. Best estimates of the size of the Canadian population in TT today are offered in section A before delving into the section B which seeks to illustrate the diversity of activities Canadians and Canadian organizations undertake in TT. Section C then explores government policies in Trinidad that affect Canadians before concluding in Section D with outcomes and issues emerging from the research project.

TT is a complex, multiethnic nation at ten degrees north latitude, a few hundred miles from the shores of Venezuela. Rich in oil and gas, contemporary trade relations between Canada and TT are influenced by the common interest in petroleum and resource extraction.

The relationship between Canada and TT runs deeper than oil, however. Both Canada and TT are former British colonies, related through Maritime trade between East Coast Canada and TT since at least the beginning of the 20th Century when the Union Bank of Halifax (taken over by Royal Bank of Canada in 1910) established a branch in Port of Spain in 1902. Even before this, trade between Halifax and Trinidad was strong. A Halifax-based group which went on to form the Merchant's Bank in 1864, was engaged in marine trade in the West Indies, carrying cod, timber and flour, bringing back sugar, rum, cotton and spices. Though banking would continue to be an important linkage between Canada and TT, the first major milestone in the building of the Canadian presence was related to the Presbyterian Church, specifically the Reverend John Morton. Morton and his colleague Kenneth Grant are key historical figures in the Canada-TT relationship and will be explored below.

Trinidad's two largest ethnic groups are citizens of Indian and African descent. The Africans were brought by the British as slaves to work the sugar plantations beginning in 1797. Though Britain officially ended slavery in 1833, insidious practices such as 'apprenticeships' maintained the de facto slave-master relationship until 1838.² Understandably, the freed slaves were reluctant to return to the plantations of their former masters, and a source of cheap labour was required. Following the end of slavery there were subsequent migrations of Asians, mostly Indians, to work the plantations as indentured labourers.

The first Indian indentured servants arrived in 1845 and waves of immigration continued well into the 20th century. In 1866, the Canadian Reverend John Morton arrived in TT to recover from illness on a physician's advice. Morton was deeply disturbed by the social conditions facing Trinidad's indentured Indians, and sought funding from the Maritime synod to establish a mission in Trinidad. Joining him shortly after was the Reverend Kenneth Grant, who in 1883, taught the first secondary school classes for children of the parish (including his own son) under a samaan tree in San Fernando, TT. Established in

² Bridget Brereton, 1996. *Introduction to the History of Trinidad & Tobago*, Great Britain: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

1894 and gaining official recognition in 1900, the *Canadian Mission Indian School* (now Naparima College) quickly became a prestigious secondary school and has since educated scores of leading Trinidadian scholars, artists and professionals.

A.) Estimates of the Canadians in Trinidad & Tobago

The World Development Indicator notes that approximately 37,564 foreigners reside in TT, which is in line with World Population estimates that place the figure at approximately 38,000. This comprises approximately 3-4% of the population of TT, and thus is a relatively small subset. Of the 38,000, best estimates put the range of Canadian citizens living in TT at approximately 3,700 – 5,000 in 2009. During next year's TT Census, respondents will be asked to name their other countries of citizenship which will provide a useful research tool. Regrettably, previous Census' do not have this information for persons born outside of the immediate Caribbean region. The Canadian High Commission in Port of Spain confirms that of the 3,700 Canadians listed on the Registry of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) database, 92% of them are dual citizens of TT and Canada. With such a large number of dual citizens, presumably traveling on multiple passports, tracking a precise figure becomes difficult as ROCA is not mandatory. Indeed, anecdotal conversations with one knowledgeable source on the Canadian population suggested that 5,000 is a gross under-estimate, proposing that a significant portion of Trinidad's professional class is Canadian.

The Canadians living and working in TT are diverse, with many anecdotally reporting that they are very well connected to both Canada (concentrated mostly in the Greater Toronto Area) and Trinidad. They represent a spectrum of fields, including professionals, politicians, educators, missionaries and business people.

According to Canadian Census data, there were 65,000 Trinidadian immigrants in Canada in May 2006.³ After the 2010 Trinidadian Census is complete, we will be in a better position to estimate the number of Canadians residing in Trinidad; but more than other countries, TT draws into stark focus the importance of dual citizenship in the fluid movement of peoples in an increasingly transnational world. Many dual citizens blend in seamlessly in both TT and Canada since the opening up of Canadian immigration policy in 1977 and the liberalizing of Trinidadian citizenship policy in 1986. Prior to this, TT did not allow their citizens to have dual citizenship. It is fair to assume that many of those who immigrated to Canada after 1986 would have likely maintained their citizenship.

³ "Place of Birth of Immigration Population" *Statistics Canada* available online at <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-557/T404-eng.cfm?Lang=E&T=404&GH=4&GF=1&SC=1&S=1&O=D>.

B.) Personalities and Organizations

Professionals:

Robin Montano⁴:

Robin Montano is a leading lawyer, hailing from one of TT's most prominent political families. His father was a founding member of the People's National Movement (PNM), the party that has dominated electoral politics for most of TT's post-independence era. Robin gained Canadian citizenship by right of birth, as his mother is from Montreal, Quebec. Growing up, Robin traveled back and forth between TT and Canada annually, spending his summers in Sherbrooke/Montreal with his mother and family. He went to boarding school in Canada as a teenager, and continued his post-secondary education at St. George's College (Concordia University) for his first degree before travelling to England where he was called to the bar as a lawyer. He returned to Trinidad in 1976 and developed a reputation as outspoken lawyer responsible for several landmark legal changes surrounding ethical practices in the banking industry in TT.

Robin sat as an opposition senator for the PNM from January 1987-September 1990. His politics led him to break with the family's party, and he became an active member of the United National Congress (UNC). In the election of 2001, Robin ran in the historical constituency of San Fernando East. This riding is of great importance, because Trinidad's sitting Prime Minister, Patrick Manning, has represented the seat since the 1971. Prior to Mr. Manning, the seat was held by Gerard Montano, Robin's father. Though he was unsuccessful in his bid to dethrone the Prime Minister, Robin was appointed to the upper house as an opposition senator representing the UNC from 2002-2005.

Though he has no plans to return to Canada, he remains deeply emotionally attached to Canada and describes himself as a child of the Atlantic Ocean. He travels to Canada regularly, and his brother Andy has been living in Quebec for 40 years.

Liz Brown⁵:

Liz Brown is a senior development officer with the Canadian High Commission in TT. She spent 2/3 of her working life in Canada as a federal public servant. Liz originally moved to TT from 1980-1983, and then returned in 1988 – and has never permanently left. She has very close linkages to Canada, with most of her family living there as well as frequent business trips to Ottawa. Her mother's family lived on historic Spark Street in Ottawa since at least 1805, and her relative William D. Ogilvie served as the Commissioner (Premier) of the Yukon Territories from 1898-1902.

Liz is married to the Trinidadian General who helped quell an attempted coup in 1990. She believes that despite strong ties with both Canada and TT, it is unlikely that she will

⁴ Robin Montano, personal interview on August 24, 2009.

⁵ Elizabeth Brown, personal interview on August 26, 2009.

return to live in Canada unless the security situation deteriorates. Liz has a very open conception globalization, welcoming the increasingly free flow of peoples around the globe. She believes a core issue of transnational migration is the integration policies of governments rather than anything being inherently wrong or problematic with global migrations. She notes that the construction of taxation policy creates an incentive for Canadians living abroad to demonstrate that they have severed all ties with Canada, which may not be the best way to orient policy.

Commerce/Industry

John Calder Hart⁶

John Hart is the Executive Chairman of the Urban Development Corporation of TT and has held several important prior positions, including: Chairman of Trinidad & Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited, Chairman of the National Insurance Board, CEO of the Home Mortgage Bank and Chairman of the National Insurance Property Development Co.

Mr. Hart was born in Sydney, Nova Scotia and was formally educated as an economist, though through work experience at the Canadian provincial and federal level, is a technocrat/public sector manager. He moved to TT in 1982 and was naturalized as a citizen of TT in 2004, thus making him a dual citizen. In Canada, he worked at Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and served as Regional Director, Atlantic Region. John has also served as President of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Chairman of the Saskatchewan Securities Commission, Chairman of the Canadian General Standards Board and worked for eight years in private real estate development.

Though not a member of a political party and having held positions of prominence in TT, Mr. Hart is at the centre of a Commission of Inquiry that is a core issue of contention in the TT parliament.

Diana Mahabir-Wyatt⁷

Diana Mahabir Wyatt, is a founding partner of Personal Management Services Limited in TT. She has developed performance management systems, managed human resource aspects of organizational change, and worked in the assessment of training needs and development training programs appropriate to the corporate cultures.

⁶ “Board of Directors” *Trinidad & Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited* available online at <http://www.ttmf-mortgages.com/applicationloader.asp?app=articles&id=760> ; “Ramesh Drops Calder Hart and UDeCOTT Bombshell” *Hotlikepepperradio.ca* available online at <http://www.hotlikepepperradio.com/cms/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1918> ; “Witness Statement of Calder Hart to the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Industry,” *Government of Trinidad & Tobago* available online at <http://tiny.cc/P3s7B>.

⁷ “Diana Mahabir Wyatt” *Caribbean Child* available online at <http://berdina.tripod.com/mahabirD.htm> ; “Diana Mahabir Wyatt” *Trinidad & Tobago Parliament* available online at <http://www.ttparliament.org/members.php?mid=26&pid=10&id=DMY05> “Professional Staff” *PMSL* available online at <http://69.65.121.34/~pmslorg/diana-m-w.html>.

Born in 1941 in Toronto, Diana was raised in northern Quebec. Prior to earning her BA from McGill University in 1962, Diane worked as a kindergarten teacher and primary school teacher in Quebec, as well as at Lady Hochoy Home for Handicapped Children in TT. Having been raised in post-World War II Canada, Diana was exposed to refugees from around the world which helped prepare her for her transition to multi-ethnic Trinidadian society. By 1966, Diana and her husband divorced, leaving her to raise four children as a 25-year-old Canadian in TT.

Working extensively in training, in 1969 she was appointed director of the association responsible for industrial relations consultancy, statistical research and publication, government relations, guidance to employers in labour and social security legislation, workers' participation in management and supervisory and management training. Diana has written extensively identifying trends and developments in social, economic and labour matters in the West Indies, Latin America, and worked on small business development, and the advancement of the position of women, and served as a lecturer at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Internationally, Diana has served on a committee to advise Ministers of Labour of the OAS and CARICOM. She has been involved with the International Labour Organization where she represented TT as the Vice-Chairman of the ILO's Conference Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in Geneva.

Diana was a weekly columnist on social, economic and political matters for 15 years and has produced/presented a 12-segment TV series on violence against women and children in addition to serving as the anchor on a daily news talk-show. Deeply committed to social development, Diana has served on the National Self-Help Commission and the TT Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She is the founder and patron of The Shelter: a Home for Battered Women and Children. She is a member of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research, the National Caucus of Women, and the Network of NGO's for the Advancement of Women.

An enthusiast for cultural development, Diana has also served on the boards of directors of The Tent Theatre, the National Carnival Commission and the early Trinidad Theatre Workshop. She served as House Manager of the bi-annual Steel pan festival "Pan Trinbago" throughout the 1980s and has published several original works of poetry in *Washerwoman* – the first anthology of poems by women of TT.

Politically, Diana has served as an independent senator championing TT's Domestic Violence Act and continues to promote legislation dealing with social, educational and economic issues as well as the protection of women and children from abusive situations. After 12 years in the Senate and the passing of several milestone bills on the subject of women, children, sex offenders, etc, Diana became disillusioned by an inability to enforce legislation and resigned her position as senator to join the NGO ranks pushing for the implementation of the legislations she worked to pass.

Politics

Danny Montano⁸:

Danny Montano is the President of the Senate of TT and Acting President of the Republic in the absence of the Head of State. A chartered accountant by training, Danny served as an opposition Senator for the PNM from November 27, 1995-November 3, 2000 and again from January 2001-October 2001. When his party assumed office in the election of 2001, Danny became the Minister of Public Housing (December 26, 2001-October 9, 2002); Minister of Science Technology and Tertiary Education (October 15, 2002-November 9, 2003); Minister of Legal Affairs (November 10, 2003-13 May, 2005); Minister of Labour and Small and Microenterprise Development (May 14, 2005-November 7, 2007) and was elected President of the Senate starting December 17, 2007 to present.

An accomplished parliamentarian, Danny is the younger brother of Robin Montano, both of whom are sons of Gerard Montano who served as the Member of Parliament for San Fernando West from 1961-1971. Like Robin, Danny spent his summers in Canada, attended Canadian boarding school, and attained his citizenship at birth from his mother.

Angela Cropper⁹

Angela Cropper is a Canadian with deep roots in TT and the Caribbean region. She was educated at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine (development economics) and University of the West Indies, Barbados (international law). Angela began her career as an economist with CARICOM and the World Conservation Union, and has worked extensively at the national, regional and international level in the promotion of sustainable development and environmental policy.

Angela has worked in the sphere of equitable, environmentally conscious development, leading teams in Trinidad's northern range mountain chain, Guyana's rainforests, and elsewhere. She has been recognized for her outstanding public service around the globe, having been appointed as an independent Senator in TT (2005-2008), Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme, and several other positions. Now retired from institutional work, Angela is the President of the Cropper Foundation, an NGO devoted to sustainable, environmentally conscious development with projects in Trinidad and the Caribbean.

⁸ "Danny Montano," Trinidad & Tobago Parliament available online at <http://www.ttparliament.org/members.php?mid=26&pid=6&id=DMO95>; Robin Montano, personal interview August 24, 2009.

⁹ See: "Angela Cropper Wins Environmental Award," International Development Research Council of Canada available online at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-94875-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html; "Angela Cropper of Trinidad & Tobago Named New UNEP Deputy Director by UN Secretary General" *UNEP News Centre* available online at <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=521&ArticleID=5696&l=en>; Angela Cropper, "Relating International Sustainable Development Goals to National Agendas," Environment Canada available online at http://www.ec.gc.ca/seminar/Angela_Cropper_e.html.

Angela remains connected to Canada and is well known at Environment Canada and the International Development Research Council in Ottawa, where she sits on the Board of Governors.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Gordon Cressy¹⁰

Gordon Cressy first moved to Trinidad in 1963 working with the YMCA where he ran a youth hostel, managed a swimming pool, and managed/facilitated cultural exchange and fundraising programs, including the sale of 1500 Canadian Christmas trees in TT. Gordon left TT to pursue studies in Chicago and Toronto (Master's in Social Work) where his interest in cultural and youth engagement/exchanges was further strengthened. In Toronto, Gordon was a member of the Toronto Board of Education from 1969-1976 and chaired it for his final two years. He spent much of his time on the board prioritizing school nutrition programs, and eventually became an elected member of both the city of Toronto and Metropolitan Toronto councils.

In 1982, Gordon became the President and CEO of the United Way in Toronto, where he worked to re-establish the organization's relevance with the increasingly multi-cultural society. With Dr. Joe Wong, Gordon started the Harmony Movement aimed at bringing diversity training to Canadian schools, and is a founding member of the Mandela Children's Fund Canada. In his capacity as President of The Learning Partnership, Gordon started the "Take our Kids to Work Day" in Canada. While still in Toronto, Cressy served as Vice President for Ryerson University and the University of Toronto before moving to Canadian Tire where he was tasked with shaping its Corporate Social Responsibility policies. Devoted to community service, Cressy has since returned to TT working once again with the YMCA to create a new centre.

John Morton (Historical)¹¹

In 1866, the Canadian Reverend John Morton arrived in TT to recover from illness on the advice of a physician. According to the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad & Tobago, Morton observed the plight of the Indian sugar workers (approximately 20,000 at the time) who were in a "state of neglect." He returned to Nova Scotia and secured the support of the Church to set up a mission aimed at educating Indian children of sugar worker.

Morton is credited thus with the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad & Tobago which is key influential religious organization in TT today. From the mission developed the Canadian Mission Indian School in the late 1890s and the legacy of

¹⁰ "Biography" Gordon Cressy.ca available online at <http://www.gordoncressy.ca/index.php/bio>.

¹¹ "Founding of Naparima College," Naparima College available online at <http://www.naparima.org/ncfound.htm> ; Jai Parasram, personal interview, August 13, 2009; "Our History" Presbyterian Church of Trinidad & Tobago available online at <http://presbyterianchurchtt.org/aboutus.aspx>.

Canadian involvement in religion and education in TT. Morton and his colleague, Reverend Kenneth James Grant, remain relatively controversial in Trinidad. On the one hand, their mission helped to educate scores of children who would otherwise not have had access to primary education and can be seen as helping Indians attain social mobility through access to education. On the other hand, attendance at the Canadian schools required conversion to Christianity and conformity to certain practices. This effectively amounted to Hindu and Muslim children being converted to Christianity to seek higher education, and other cultural requirements such as the consumption of pork and beef.

Education:

Timothy Shaw

Professor Timothy Shaw is an accomplished Canadian academic serving as the Director of the Institute for International Relations at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. Educated at Sussex (BA), East Africa (MA) and Princeton (PhD), Timothy is an expert on issues of governance, development and peace-building with extensive experience in Africa. He writes on regionalism, the Commonwealth, African/Global Development and governance.

Though he is located in TT, Timothy remains well connected to Canada and the Canadian academic community through his extensive involvement with Canadian publications and organizations. Timothy is the editor of Palgrave MacMillan's International Political Economy (IPE) Series; Ashgate Publishing's IPE of New Regionalism Series; and is on the advisory board of New Millennium Books (Rowman & Littlefield). He sits on the editorial boards of: *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, *Globalizations*, *Journal of Global Ethics*, *Roundtable*, *Third World Quarterly*, and is also a Senior Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation at the University of Waterloo in Ontario.

Kenneth James Grant (Historical)¹²

Kenneth James Grant, a Nova Scotian missionary and educator, joined John Morton in TT a few years after Morton established the Mission. In 1883, Rev. Grant taught the first secondary school classes for children of the parish (including his own son) under a samaan tree in San Fernando, TT. Established in 1894 and gaining official recognition in 1900, the Canadian Mission Indian School (currently Naparima College) quickly became a prestigious educational institution and remains so today. The legacy of Canadian education is far reaching in TT and many prominent Trinidadians are alumnus of Rev. Grant's Naparima College including: Dr. Winston Dookeran (leader of the Congress of the People, former Central Bank Governor); Len Traboulay (former Mayor of Port Coquitlam, BC); Horace James (comedian, playwright, actor in Britain and TT); Noor Hasanali (former President of TT) and many more.

¹² Ibid.

Snapshot of Canadian Corporations and Organizations in TT

Financial Services

- RBC Financial Group¹³
- CIBC
- Scotia Bank

Services:

- Stitt Feld Handy Group (dispute resolution)¹⁴
- Jyoti Communications (media consultancy)¹⁵
- Angels of Flight Canada (medical services)¹⁶
- Export Development Canada
- Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
- Canadian International Development Agency

Education:

- Maple Leaf International School¹⁷
- Trillium International School¹⁸
- Canadian Foundation for Child Development¹⁹
- VB Walls Bursary Fund²⁰
- Graduate Students Exchange Program (Federal Government)²¹

Energy:²²

- Atlas Methanol
- Cleghorn & Associates Ltd.
- EnEco Industries Ltd

¹³See: “For Canadian Companies, Trade Flows to the Caribbean,” RBC Financial Group, available online at <http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/RBC:Sn8OlawWAA8AKpBE5Hw/commercial/global/pdf/caribbean.pdf> or <http://www.kpmg.ca/en/news/pr20090112.html>.

¹⁴ Stitt Feld Handy Group, available online at: <http://www.sfhgroup.com/ca/>.

¹⁵ Jyoti Communications, available online at <http://jyoticomcommunication.blogspot.com/>.

¹⁶“Angels of Flight Canada Inc. – Complete Profile,” Industry Canada available online at: <http://www.ic.gc.ca/app/ccc/srch/nvgt.do?lang=eng&prtl=1&sbPrtl=&estblmntNo=234567051662&profile=cmpLPrfl&profileId=1488&app=sold>.

¹⁷ Maple Leaf International School, available online at <http://www.mapleleaf-school.com/about/default.php?id=58>.

¹⁸ Trillium International School, available online at <http://trilliumtt.com/index.asp?Page=About/>

¹⁹ Canadian Foundation for Child Development, available online at <http://cfdontario.tripod.com/>.

²⁰ Canadian International Charities By Country of Operation” *Global Philanthropy*, available online at: http://www.globalphilanthropy.ca/images/uploads/CRA_t3010_2006_Program_Countries_-_part_3_-_S_-_Z_www.globalphilanthropy.ca.pdf.

²¹ “Graduate Students Exchange Program,” Government of Canada available online at <http://www.scholarships.gc.ca/AcademicInstitutionsGSEPCdn-PEECSCdn-Eng.aspx>.

²²“Canadian Corporations in Trinidad & Tobago,” Government of Canada available online at: http://www.cleanenergy.gc.ca/international/listitems_e.asp?cnt=142#com_act.

- IRIS Environmental Systems Inc.
- Jaques Whitford
- Power Measurement Ltd.
- SENES Consultants Limited
- Canadian Superior Energy Inc²³

Social/Religious²⁴

- Canadian Women's Club of Trinidad & Tobago (formed in 1907)²⁵
- Community Church of Charlottetown Inc
- Harvest International Ministries
- Saint Catharine's First Netherlands Reformed Congregation
- New Beginnings Baptist Fellowship Church
- Canadian Board of Fundamental Baptist Mission of Trinidad & Tobago
- Global Christian Ministries
- Go and Tell the World Ministries
- Agincourt Pentecostal Church

C.) Summary of Trinidad & Tobago Citizenship and Immigration Policies:

Under the Citizenship Act of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago (1976) and amendments in 1981, a person can attain citizenship by birth as well as by descent so long as the adequate application is made before one year after the age of majority.²⁶ This applies to adopted children where one or both parents are citizens of TT. The Citizenship Act draws a distinction between foreigners and foreigners from within the Commonwealth, with the latter having voting rights after a prescribed residency requirement whereas other permanent residents of TT do not.

From 1976-1988, TT did not allow voluntary dual citizenship. If a citizen of TT naturalized as a citizen of another country, he/she would forfeit their Trinidadian citizenship. Where an individual became a citizen of another country *involuntarily* (by birth or marriage) that person would not lose their TT citizenship. This clause was popularly referred to as the “Erica Williams” clause in 1976, named for the daughter of Prime Minister Eric Williams who married an American.²⁷ However, under the

²³Canadian Superior Energy Inc. – Block 5C Trinidad & Tobago, available online at: http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_CA/ca/specialsections/insolvencyandrestructuringproceedings/canadiansuperiorenergy/index.htm

²⁴Canadian International Charities By Country of Operation” *Global Philanthropy*, available online at: http://www.globalphilanthropy.ca/images/uploads/CRA_t3010_2006_Program_Countries_-_part_3_-_S_-_Z_www.globalphilanthropy.ca.pdf

²⁵Famous Canadian Women Timeline, available online at <http://famouscanadianwomen.com/timeline/timeline1900-1909.htm>

²⁶“Trinidad & Tobago: The Acquisition of Citizenship, Including Amendments to the Citizenship of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago Act”

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/type,LEGISLATION,,TTO,3ae6b4d028,0.html>

²⁷ Professor Hamid Ghany. Personal Interview, August 24, 2009

citizenship act amendment of 1988, TT dropped this policy in favour of dual citizenship. There is an important nuance in the law, as only citizens of TT can hold elected office, that is to say, be a member of parliament in the House of Representatives. There have been instances where elected MPs' status has been challenged on the basis of their dual citizenship, however this requirement does not extend to members of the Senate who are not elected, but rather appointed by the Prime Minister, President and Leader of the Opposition.²⁸

TT has different policies for ascending to citizenship depending on where the applicant is born. For non-British Commonwealth citizens, applicants must have eight years Permanent Residence (PR) status; for British Commonwealth citizens, the PR status is five years. There is no residency requirement for individuals seeking the restoration of their citizenship that was lost through naturalizing in another country.²⁹

TT has fairly liberal immigration policies, allowing most people who can make an argument that they will be self sufficient in Trinidad or are coming as the parent/grandparent/spouse of a citizen/PR.³⁰ PR is lost if the person in question is away from TT for a period longer than 12 consecutive months.

The Canada-Trinidad & Tobago Tax Convention (Bill C-105) came into existence in 1995 with the purpose of avoiding double taxation, fiscal evasion, and promoting international trade and investment between the two countries.³¹ Three years later, Canada developed the "Deemed non-resident" category for income tax purposes that allows a factual resident of Canada and another country to be considered a non-resident of Canada.³²

D.) Outcomes of Interviews/Issues Raised:

The research, interviews and conversations that inform this case study identify a few key considerations for the direction of Canadian public policy as it relates to its growing diaspora. Fundamentally, it was identified that it is difficult for expats to make clear their desire to remain connected with Canada as taxation policies create an absolute incentive to sever all ties with Canada. Canadians living abroad pay taxes on Canadian earnings, including pension, investments, Canada Pension Plan, Quebec Pension Plan and Old Age Security at differing rates depending on their country of origin. For Trinidad, the rates

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Application for Citizenship of Trinidad & Tobago," Immigration Division, Ministry of National Security available online at <http://immigration.gov.tt/applicationloader.asp?app=articles&id=699>.

³⁰ "Resident Status Application," Immigration Division, Ministry of National Security available online at <http://immigration.gov.tt/applicationloader.asp?app=articles&id=700>.

³¹ "Convention Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago For the Avoidance of Double Taxation, the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and the Encouragement of International Trade and Investment," Parliament of Canada available online at <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=2328219&Language=e&Mode=1&File=77>.

³² Kenny Zhang, "Canadians Abroad: Policy Challenges for Canada," forthcoming 2009.

vary between 15-25% for these benefits; rates that are often higher than those paid by Canadian residents.³³ Consequently, some respondents noted that tax contributions of this nature ought to ensure access to Canadian services and resent the feeling that they are not contributing. Indeed, as Zhang notes, Canada earned C\$6.9 billion in tax revenue from Non-Residents in 2007.³⁴

It was noted by one respondent that feelings and policy often go together, but should not. For example, this respondent noted that one *feels* more entitled to Canada's services abroad if they are born in Canada vs. a naturalized Canadian. Another respondent adamantly disagreed, stating that "you either are a citizen or you are not, do not tell me to go to the back of the bus." While it was acknowledged that sovereign states have the right to design their citizenship policies to deny some from abusing the rights of citizenship, the above respondent questioned the constitutional basis of Bill C-37³⁵, noting that if he were living in Canada, he would argue against it.

It was noted that in a world of increasing globalization and transnational migration, national governments are slow to keep pace. Without a well defined sense of what defines a Canadian, or Trinidadian, it is difficult for an incoming immigrant to understand the cultural dimensions of the society he/she is supposed to fit into. The government (s) ought to take responsibility for the integration of immigrants in order to help avoid the concentration of ethnic groups in urban pockets and the associated problems of non-integration. This, it was proposed, is related to immigrant's desire to continue to move.

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