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SIXTH FORM

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The Commonwealth Head of the Canadian Government.
Dear Sir,

Hello again Mr. Minister! How have you been coping? I am Celeste Augustine, one of the students who participated in the Mock Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. I recall, from our conversation at the meeting, your dismay after discovering that the 'correct' procedure for eating Roti is without a knife and fork. Your considerable interest in absorbing everything that Trinidad and Tobago had to offer was the driving force for my writing this letter to you. I feel very honoured to expose you to the lessons that Trinidad and Tobago can teach the world. If our conversation at the summit was hair-raising, this revelation stunned you as you see how our very way of life parallels some of the objectives of the Commonwealth namely human rights, individual liberty, peace, unity, egalitarianism and multilateralism.

During our conversation, you revealed your extreme admiration of the cultural displays which you witnessed first hand in Trinidad and Tobago. The heterogeneous nature of our culture is always a shock to the outside world. The real eye-opener, though, is the human rights given to each cultural group. Throughout the slave trade, African, Indians, the French, Amerindians, Chinese, the British, Spanish, Portuguese, Venezuelan and Caribbean Immigrants, all had some interaction with Trinidadian soil. All of them thus brought their language, cuisine, clothing, architecture and general way of life as they settled into their new home. Presently, each cultural group exercises their freedom of expression and right to practice their culture equally. Over the generations, the line between each culture has merged into one Trinidadian and Tobagonian culture. Each individual, although they have the ability to exercise their individual liberty, chooses to participate in a culture other than their own for the sake of support and unity. For example, you told us that this was the first time you ever heard the word Divali. As you were told, it is a sacred Hindu festival which is celebrated by Indians. However around Divali time, Africans and Indians alike wear the traditional Indian attire and indulge in Indian cuisine. Therefore, I like to describe Trinbagonians (which is our abbreviated word for Trinidadians and Tobagonians) as the pieces of a puzzle. No two pieces are alike, yet when interlocked, they harmoniously link to form one picture.

Mr Minister, please tell me, in which other country has "The gender revolution...[been]... combusted within the bands" as Green and Scher described in **'Where Is the Carnival Madness?'**. I believe the answer is none, other than Trinidad and Tobago, of course! Carnival, often called the greatest show on earth, is not only a portrayal of heavily decorated costumes but it also showcases our designer egalitarianism. Jouvert or dirty mas allows both the affluent and the destitute to drench their status in mud and stand on equal ground. Each man is treated equally as they parade their costumes through the streets. Foreigners flock to experience and partake in this festival that yet again unites not only different cultures but also those from different economic backgrounds- a feat that has not been accomplished since the beginning of human society.

"Go Green!" is the new worldwide campaign for a better environment as highlighted in the meeting. Can you imagine that Trinidad and Tobago had a similar idea in 1938! Mr. Winston Spree Simon saw the value in a dumped, 44 gallon oil drum and invented an instrument. What a remarkable act of recycling! In 2009, this instrument is still circling the world and his idea is circling even faster.

You see, Mr Minister, even though Trinidad and Tobago is 1/32 the size of your country, we can contribute to your knowledge of world issues. And even though, we remain a mere dot on the world's map, some of the major issues that have troubled mankind for centuries, Trinidad and Tobago have experienced the solutions to some extent. Through our culture, we are able to enjoy the fruitage of human rights, individual liberty, peace, unity, egalitarianism and multilateralism. I hope that Canada and we can continue having this flow of positive interaction. Enjoy the rest of your stay!

Yours Respectfully,

Celeste Augustine.