

Coalition

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Moulton's District Seat G.

Presently, Johnson's district is over 46 percent minority. Under redistricting this figure will be reduced to 35 percent. Moulton's district will remain around 38 percent minority.

If minorities worked together to support candidates in these two districts (and if Shirley Barber and Larry Mason retain their seats), they could then be a part of the coalition that is needed to bring about changes in how education dollars are used to provide equal access to quality instruction.

As bad as things are in the school system, the picture is even bleaker for minority businesses when it comes to securing contracts with the NDOT.

During the last year in which figures are available, NDOT, utilizing federal highway funds, spent over \$150 million.

Get this: on all this construction work, not one prime, and only one subcontract, was for \$500,000- which is just one-third of one percent of the value of all the contracts that were issued.

Further, this subcontract was awarded to an allegedly African-American, female paving firm based in a small town in California. Do you suspect this is probably a "front company?"

The picture for Hispanics is not much better. In fact, speaking to a gentleman who is very active in the Hispanic community, I discovered that he did not recognize the names of four of the seven Hispanic firms listed as receiving contracts.

This dismal record of performance is directly traceable to two facts.

The administrative division within NDOT responsible for monitoring the program for involving minorities is based up north, in Carson City, whereas most of the highway work is taking place down here in Clark County. However, the biggest problem is that NDOT has an ex-cop in charge who does not have a clue, or for that matter a concern for the issues of equity and diversity.

If a coalition of brown and black people comes together to successfully challenge the inequities that exist in education and highway contracting, then it directs its efforts toward impacting the really "tuff nuts" of discrimination in the criminal justice system and equal access to health care.

Trinidad

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have prompted Panday to ask Education Minister Kamla Persad Bissessar to act for Maharaj, who left this week for Europe to attend a conference.

In the past, Gillian Lucky, Maharaj's junior minister, has served as acting attorney general.

Lucky, as it happens, was a member of Maharaj's slate during the internal

party elections, when Maharaj beat John to become the UNC deputy leader.

Energy Minister Lindsay Gillette told the Senate that he had recommended to government that the board of directors of the state-owned oil company be "reconstructed," a statement interpreted by those in the energy sector as allowing for the Board's replacement.

Gillette said that some of

the reports he had seen on the company contained "disturbing allegations about activities within the energy sector."

"As a government member sworn to integrity and transparency in public affairs, I'll spare no effort in investigating allegations of impropriety," he added.

The recent disclosure by Communications and Information Technology Minister

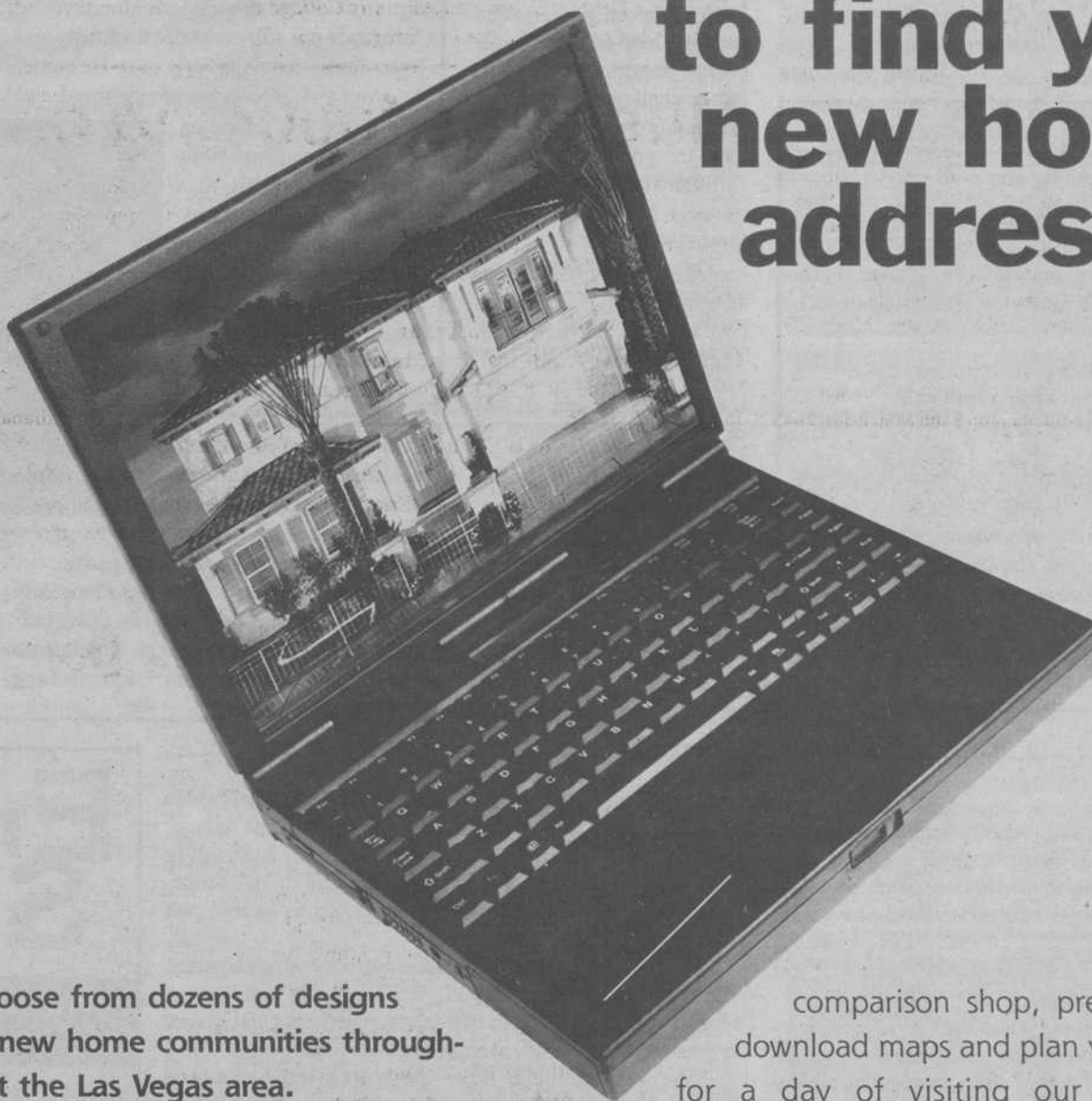
Ralph Maraj that he was prepared to step down from the government if allegations of corruption were not dealt with in a transparent manner has given rise to further claims of a division within the Cabinet.

"I want to see an objective, open, transparent process. Whatever the model that is used, it must be open, objective, transparent where people are held to account for

any wrongdoing," Maraj said, apparently backing calls by the opposition for a public Commission of Inquiry into all the allegations of corruption.

"If I am not satisfied in the final analysis, with how we're dealing with these allegations of corruption, I am prepared to resign my post as a Cabinet minister of Trinidad and Tobago. (See Trinidad, Page 18)

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