

# Water thief fined \$300

By STACY MOORE

WATER is precious, but even so, stealing it is against the law as Suresh Ragoonanan found out on Tuesday when he was hauled before a San Fernando magistrate and fined \$300 for such a crime.

Ragoonanan was charged with connecting a 100-metre long hose to a Water and Sewage Authority (WASA) hydrant for an illegal connection. He has been getting water this way for the past 15 years.

Ragoonanan, 45, of Harmony Hall, Marabella was given three days to pay the fine. If he fails to pay, he would spend three months in jail, ordered by Magistrate Rehanna Hosein.

Ragoonanan appeared before Hosein who read to him the charge which alleged that he used a fire hydrant belonging to WASA, without consent contrary to Section 39 (2) of the Fire Services Act Chapter 35:50.

Ragoonanan pleaded guilty to the charge laid by police estate constable Larry Bhagwadin of WASA Estate Police, San Fernando. The connection was made from a hydrant in the vicinity of Altima Drive, Harmony Hall, Marabella. Police court prosecutor Sgt Rudy Ali, told the court that about 12.30 pm on July 12, Bhagwadin was on patrol along Harmony Hall, Marabella, when he observed a green hose connected to a hydrant belonging to the Water and Sewage Authority (WASA).

Ali said that the connection of the hose was traced to Ragoonanan's yard where water was seen pouring.



**ILLEGAL CONNECTION:** WASA Estate Constable Larry Bhagwadin with the 100-metre-long water hose which Suresh Ragoonanan used to make an illegal connection to a WASA hydrant. Ragoonanan appeared in court on Tuesday.

Hosein also heard that Ragoonanan was questioned whether he had received permission from the Authority to use the hydrant and he replied: "No". He was served a summons to attend to court. The 100 meter green hose was produced to the court. When questioned by Hosein, the accused man said, "Ma'am, is twenty years I squatting here. I don't have any pipe connection. So I decided to use the hydrant to get water to my home."

But Hosein told him, "That is the problem today... people act like they have a right to certain things... People need to get up and get things the proper way. In future, try not to do these things you have been doing sir."