

*Distinguished Visitor**Tuesday, May 23, 2000***SENATE***Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

The Senate met at 1.33 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**DISTINGUISHED VISITOR**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Members, sitting in the Distinguished Visitors' Gallery on my left is the Hon. Justice P. N. Bhagwati, a former Chief Justice of India, head of the Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, a distinguished international jurist and currently Vice-Chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Committee. We welcome him to the sitting of this Senate. [*Desk thumping*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. President:** Leave of absence from sittings of the Senate has been granted to the following Members: Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung during the period May 18 to June 11, 2000; Sen. The Hon. Lindsay Gillette from May 23 to May 25, 2000; Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt and Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams from today's sitting.

**SENATORS' APPOINTMENT**

**Mr. President:** I have received the following pieces of correspondence from His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, T.C.,  
O.C.C., S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief  
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson  
President.

TO: MR. DAVE COWIE

WHEREAS Senator Brian Kuei Tung is incapable of performing his functions as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, DAVE COWIE, to be temporarily a member of

*Senators' Appointment*  
[MR. PRESIDENT]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

the Senate, with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2000 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Brian Kuei Tung.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2000."

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, T.C., O.C.C., S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson  
President.

TO: GEORGE DHANNY

WHEREAS Senator Lindsay Gillette is incapable of performing his functions as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, GEORGE DHANNY, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2000 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Lindsay Gillette.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2000.” “

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, T.C., O.C.C., S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson  
President.

TO: KENNETH AYOUNG-CHEE

WHEREAS Senator Diana Mahabir-Wyatt is incapable of performing her functions as a Senator by reason of her absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, KENNETH AYOUNG-CHEE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2000 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Diana Mahabir-Wyatt.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2000."

**VACANT SEAT**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have also received the following correspondence:

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, T.C.,  
O.C.C., S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief  
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson

President.

TO: SENATOR CAROL CUFFY-DOWLAT

WHEREAS by the provisions of paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 43 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, is empowered to declare the seat of a Senator to be vacant:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by the said paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 43 of the Constitution do hereby declare the seat of you, Senator Carol Cuffy-Dowlat to be vacant.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May, 2000."

*Senators' Appointment*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

**SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT**

**Mr. President:** I have also received the following correspondence.

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, T.C.,  
O.C.C., S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief of  
the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson  
President.

TO: MR. CARLOS JOHN

In exercise of the power vested in me by paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I, ARTHUR N. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, do hereby appoint you, CARLOS JOHN, a Senator.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the  
President of the Republic of Trinidad and  
Tobago at the Office of the President, St.  
Ann's, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May, 2000.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE  
(MEMBER'S RESIGNATION)**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have received a letter dated May 12, 2000 which reads as follows:

“Senator the Honorable Ganace Ramdial  
President of the Senate  
The Senate  
Parliament  
Red House  
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Mr. President

I am writing to assure you that my absence from the various sittings of the Senate in recent times has been regrettable but due to circumstances beyond my control. Within the past few months with the integration of the Ernst & Young firms throughout the Caribbean, my specific responsibility as Deputy Executive Chairman is to undertake reviews of our offices throughout the Caribbean, normally two to three days' duration.

*PA(E)C (Member's Resignation)*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

This has prevented me from attending sittings of the Senate and meetings of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.

Based on this work load I will not have the ability to continue and wish to tender my resignation as a member of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, as it will not be possible for me to attend meetings with my current schedule.

Yours sincerely

Senator Philip A. F. Marshall.”

A replacement Senator will be announced in due course.

**RONALD J. WILLIAMS  
(CONDOLENCES)**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, we will now pay tribute to the late Sen. Ronald J. Williams. The late Ronnie Williams, as he was very affectionately known, was very involved in basically three areas: business, culture and politics. Soon after graduating from Toronto University, he joined his late father's firm where he served in the insurance division and other areas where the company did business. In 1958 he became a member of the now defunct West Indies Federal Parliament until its dissolution in 1961. Soon thereafter, he became a member of this august Senate, the first Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, where he served with great distinction until 1970.

He entered his father's business again, had a short respite from politics, became very involved in the culture of the country and then in 1981 fought the general elections and won the Port of Spain South seat and became thereafter the Minister of State Enterprises. At the end of 1986, he gave up active politics and continued in the pursuit of the business, which his father had set up, and the reports indicate that under his stewardship that business grew tremendously. The late Ronnie Williams passed away on Tuesday, May 16, 2000 and was interred on May 20, 2000. I offer my condolences to the family of the late Ronnie Williams and the Clerk of the Senate has been asked to send an appropriate letter of condolence to the family. Members wishing to pay tribute may do so now.

**The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark):** Mr. President, on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and my senatorial colleagues, I wish to express our heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family of the late Ronald J. Williams, a former government Minister and businessman. Mr. Williams departed this life on Tuesday, May 16, 2000 at the age of 72. I know

*R. J. Williams (Condolences)*  
[HON. W. MARK]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

that it is not only the members of his family who will miss him, but also his colleagues in the business community and members, of course, of the People's National Movement of which he was a member since 1956.

**1.45 p.m.**

While it could be said that Mr. Ronald Williams was a business tycoon, he will be remembered for the contribution he made at several levels of the society including those at the political and economic levels. As a businessman, Mr. President, his career spans several decades and dates back to as early as 1952 when he joined L. J. Williams as an assistant to his father, who was the Managing Director of the family business.

In 1996, he took over as Managing Director of L. J. Williams Marketing Limited. His career as a politician dates back to 1958 when he was first elected a Member of the House Representatives of the Federation of the West Indies, that is for the Port of Spain West/Diego Martin area. He was a Member of the Senate from 1962—1970 and the elected Member of Parliament for Port of Spain South from 1981—1986. Mr. Williams also sat on a number of parliamentary committees, including the Public Accounts Committee and the Regulations Committee of the Senate.

He was an ardent lover of the theatre and is remembered for his contribution to the art form. He earned the nickname of the "Chinese Chopper" during his administration following the crash of oil prices after the boom years. His colleagues will remember him as a man of foresight who was well respected for the manner in which he treated and dealt with other people. It is, therefore, with great respect that we on this side pay tribute to Ronnie J. Williams. May his soul rest in peace.

**Sen. Mahadeo Jagmohan:** Mr. President, we too on this side join in expressing condolences to the late Ronald J. Williams. He was born on January 28, 1928. He was married to Winifred Lownie Galt and they both bore seven sons. He was educated at the Western Boys' R.C. School, the Belmont Boys' Intermediate School, St. Mary's College and the University of Toronto in Canada.

Between the period 1952 and 1965 he became the Manager of American Life Insurance Company and also a director of L. J. Williams Marketing Limited, and Gibbons Fields (West Indies) Limited. In 1966 he became Managing Director of L. J. Williams Marketing Limited. Between the period 1958 and 1961 he was elected a Member of the House of Representatives of the now defunct Federation of the West Indies, representing Port of Spain West and Diego Martin, Trinidad.

He returned at general elections, the national level, on March 25, 1950 and was also a Member of the Senate between 1962 and 1980. He was elected a Member of Parliament for Port of Spain South and made Minister of State Enterprises where he had a very successful tenure. He was a Catholic by religion and headed the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago with a great measure of success. He was a member of the Public Accounts Committee where he made very valuable contributions because of his experience in financial matters. He was also a member of the Regulations Committee of the Senate.

We extend condolences to his family and his fiancée. We hope that members of his family will not be overcome by undue emotional strain, but that they will allow graciousness to prevail and after the mourning period return to normal activities. May his soul rest in peace.

**Sen. Prof. John Spence:** Mr. President, the number of outstanding Trinidadians who we have had to mourn for the last two weeks, I think, brings home dramatically that the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is over. Most of these people made outstanding contributions during that century.

Mr. Ronnie Williams was able to build on the opportunities provided by his father, a successful businessman of Trinidad and Tobago. He was able, not only to carry on, expand and build on the family business, but he also was thereby allowed the opportunity to make contributions in other spheres of life; his contribution in politics, in drama—I read recently in the newspaper, I had not realized that in his youth he was into drama—and, of course, in culture in his chairmanship of the Carnival Development Committee.

Mr. Williams had seven sons, an outstanding achievement on its own. I am sure in China he would have been as much of a hero as he is in Trinidad and Tobago.

On behalf of my Independent colleagues, I would like to extend our condolences to the family of Mr. Williams. May his soul rest in peace.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, we ought to have a minute's silence for the late Senator and Member of Parliament, Mr. Ronald Williams. Shall we stand in silence as a mark of respect for one minute?

*The Senate stood.*

#### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

*The following Senators took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law:*

Carlos John, Dave Cowie, George Dhanny, Kenneth Ayoung-Chee.

*Taking of Photographs (Media)*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

**TAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS  
(MEDIA)**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, before proceeding to the next item on the Order Paper, I just wanted to raise an important point, and this is to the media. While it is customary not to decline permission for photographs to be taken on an occasion like this, I find it quite distressing that the courtesy of a request for permission to take photographs was not requested, while everybody took their photographs. Please be advised that courtesy demands that the consent of the Chair be received before photographs are taken.

While on my feet may I take this opportunity to welcome Sen. The Hon. Carlos John to this august Senate. I look forward to his active participation in the deliberations of this Chamber. May I also take the opportunity to say that we shall miss Sen. Carol Cuffy Dowlat—[*Desk thumping*]*—*who made a very sterling contribution, and sometimes very provocative contributions to the Senate.

On behalf of all Senators, I wish her every success in her new assignment.  
[*Desk thumping*]

**2.00 p.m.**

**PAPER LAID**

Trinidad Nitrogen Company Limited Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 1999. [*The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark)*]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny:*

**Queen's Park Savannah  
(Extension of Paved Area)**

- 12. A.** Could the Honourable Minister of Culture and Gender Affairs inform the Senate whether the National Carnival Commission was granted approval to extend the paved area in the Queen's Park Savannah to the west and south west of the Paddock Area by the Town and Country Planning Division as required under the Town and Country Planning Act, Chap. 35:01, Section 8?

- B. Could the Honourable Minister also inform the Senate:
- i. Whether the National Carnival Commission was granted a licence under the State Lands Act, Chap. 57:01, to dig and remove material from the Queen's Park Savannah;
  - ii. Of the estimated volume and commercial value of the material dug and removed and the details of its disposal?

**Queen's Park Savannah  
(Boundaries of)**

13. Could the Honourable Minister of Culture and Gender Affairs state:
- (a) the precise boundaries of that portion of the Queen's Park Savannah over which the National Carnival Commission has been given authority;
  - (b) the nature of the transfer of authority and the terms and conditions of the transfer of authority;
  - (c) whether curbs and drainage systems have been incorporated into the newly paved area;
  - (d) the total area now paved and the costs of this paving?

**The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Wark):** Mr. President, I would like to sincerely apologize. I had indicated a little earlier that the Government is seeking at least one final week to have this matter addressed formally and finally. We are seeking a deferment of one week for questions Nos. 12 and 13.

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

**UNIT TRUST CORPORATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
(VESTING) BILL**

Bill to repeal the Unit Trust Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Act, Chap. 83:03 to vest the undertaking, specified assets and functions of the Unit Trust Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago in UTC Holdings Limited and UTC Trust Services Limited, companies incorporated under the Companies Act, 1995, and for connected matters. [*The Minister of Finance, Planning and Development*]; read the first time.

*Motion made,* That the next stage be taken at the next Sitting of the Senate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Community Mediation (Amdt.) Bill*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

**COMMUNITY MEDIATION (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Community Mediation Act, 1998. [*The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**PATENTS (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Patents Act, 1996. [*The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**BAILIFFS BILL**

Bill to provide for licensing of bailiffs and for other related matters. [*The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**MINERALS BILL**

Bill to repeal and replace the Mines, Borings and Quarries Act, Chap. 61:01 and to provide for the development of all aspects of non-petroleum mineral resources in Trinidad and Tobago, whether on State lands or private lands. [*The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**EDUCATION  
(PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE)**

[Second Day]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate* [April 04, 2000]:

*Be It Resolved* that the Government explain its philosophy of education with special reference to the question: "What is Education?" and "What is Education for?" [*Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand*]

**Mr. President:** On the last occasion, Sen. Prof. Ramchand had concluded his presentation, so before we move on to the proposal for debate, a seconder is required.

*Seconded by Sen. Prof. John Spence.*

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Tobago Affairs (Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job):** Mr. President, this Motion is of great moment to the development of Trinidad and Tobago at this time. I do believe that properly dealt with, in a non-partisan, which is to say in a bi-partisan manner, great good can come to each and everyone of us because by the end of my contribution, I am certain I will demonstrate that most of the problems that we have in this country, those issues that bedevil us: be they crime, domestic violence, problems of ignorance, the little man sledge-hammering innocent, helpless women to death, burning children, whether it is a problem of drug muling—most of the issues we have: bad driving on the roads, the low productivity in the economy, the failure of the society at large to ask the appropriate questions with respect to the education system—all these issues have to do with education. I will demonstrate that in the process of saying what the Motion asked, which is what is the philosophy, or to quote:

*Be It Resolved* that the Government explain its philosophy of education with special reference to the question: “What is Education?” and “What is Education for?”

Before I proceed, as prolegomena, I find a bit of difficulty with a request that the Government explains its philosophy of education. I mentioned that to the good Senator when we had a slight conversation, and there is a reason for that, because I do believe it is tendentious in the sense that someone listening to this question would presuppose that the burden of responsibility is on the Government to articulate a philosophy of education for the rest of us. There is a reason I, as an individual—I do not think I speak for the Government here as much as I would like to do—speak for myself when I say that there is a problem in this society where very often we abandon our individual responsibility and engage in blame placing as if to say that our responsibilities as parents and as citizens are really responsibilities of the Government, some nebulous thing called the Government.

Mr. President, each and every citizen of this country has a burden of duty to articulate within himself, for himself, within his family, within his church, whatever organization he belongs to, a philosophy of education and in that consensus should come out the workings of the education system whether it be in denominational schools, technical schools, tertiary, primary, pre-school, whatever. The Government has a role to play, but I do not believe, and I do not think it is the belief of this Government, as I will show later on, that it is entirely up to the Government to articulate a philosophy, a single hegemonic vision of wisdom with respect to what the education system is like.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

Mr. President, the question also presupposes—and I do not think this is the intention of the Senator, I think he wants the Government to articulate its philosophy, I just dealt with that, but I think more than that, someone, not the Senator of course, might listen to the question and say the Government does not have a philosophy, it does not know what it is about, it is trying to run an education system and is not guided by any set of leading ideas. In order to dispel that doubt, I will quote liberally from a document which was sent to me by Dr. Theodora Alexander from the Ministry of Education, who was the secretary of what is the subject here “Curriculum Task Force, Notification of the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting” dated October 08, 1998. On page 24 of the draft. This was not the final document.

Mr. President, if you will permit me, before I go there, I should enlighten the Senate as to the membership of this Curriculum Task Force Committee. It started off with nine members as follows: Dr. The Hon. Adesh Nanan, Minister of Education who was the chairman; Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job, Minister of Tobago Affairs; Dr. The Hon. Rupert Griffith, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister; Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, Deputy Chairman, National Advisory Committee to the Minister of Education; Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Executive Director, Institute of Business, University of the West Indies; Prof. John Spence, retired professor, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, University of the West Indies.

I would say that Sen. Prof. Spence did not attend any meeting which I attended. I would think he had some good reason why he did not.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Mr. President, may I make a correction because it is rather important. I was never a member of that committee. I was asked to be, and I declined. If I did not attend meetings it is because I was not a member.

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** Mr. President, that explains it. I thought he declined because of health reasons. I did not know he did not accept it. Prof. Gurmohan Kochhar, Dean, Faculty of Engineering, University of the West Indies. When the committee met, it co-opted some other members whom I shall name. I think it is good for the completion of the record.

The following persons were invited to sit on the task force: Mrs. Pamela Benson, Director, Library Services; Mrs. Maureen Taylor-Ryan, National Parent/Teachers’ Association; Mrs. Jennifer Lavia, First Vice-President, Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers’ Association; Mr. Finbar Sebro, Representative, Tobago House of Assembly; Ms. Wendy Williams, representative, Ministry of

Culture and Gender Affairs; Mr. Peter Thomas, Representative, National Primary Schools' Principals' Association.

Mr. President, I am quoting now from page 24 of this preliminary report.

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** Mr. President, I do not think I heard my name as being a member of that committee. I was, but even if you had called my name I would still have had to get up and say that I submitted a minority report severing any connection with the body of the report because I thought the committee did not address the questions.

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** Thanks for the correction. I was reading from the report and I did not see his name, I do not know if they did not print his name because he sent a minority report.

However, I shall continue to read on page 24 of the preliminary report, there is a heading: "Underlying Philosophy of the Proposed Primary Education Curriculum".

"The notion of sustainable development for our nation lies at the heart of this curriculum which aims to create—

- (i) a gender sensitive citizenry which is rooted in the culture of this multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society and appreciative of its individual components, but which is also outward looking;
- (ii) school-management capability and a teaching force equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to give the country a competitive advantage and to ensure that both teachers and students possess the competencies for lifelong learning.

**2.15 p.m.**

- (iii) individuals who can adapt to the process of change in production, service and technology, and who can contribute to them by the ability to locate information, access the information physically and intellectually, use the information appropriately, create products from the information gathered and evaluate the information.
- (iv) Life-long learning: learning to know; learning to do, learning to live together with others and learning to be;

The curriculum also aims to develop in citizens the attributes of resilience, creativity and innovation, implementation skills and commercial acumen, and the ability to adjust to other cultures and societies;

Within this context, the main objectives are to integrate, widen and deepen the scope of the curriculum as the foundation of further human resource development, the provision of more improved 'quality education' and to achieve excellence at the institutional and individual levels as key characteristics of the system. Quality education here is viewed as being characterized by:

- (i) effectiveness, appropriateness, coherence and relevance;
- (ii) bridging the gap between school and home; School and work; and school and society;
- (iii) Teaching learners how to learn; encouraging mature and critical thinking, and freeing the learner from social and cultural prejudices.

Quality education also deals with curriculum delivery and the structure of the teaching and learning process.

Most of all, the goal is effective education—effective with regard to value added and performance in relation to cost; effective delivery, its impact on society and in motivating students to achieve. Such education is student focussed with the related teacher-education being teacher-focussed. It treats as a high priority the development and maintenance of a high-calibre teaching establishment in an appropriate mix of disciplines.”

It goes on to talk about:

“In promoting these objectives of quality and excellence, the system of education provides for:

- (i) increased equality of educational opportunity, including 'second' chances for youth and adults to benefit from education;

If people have been following the Ministry of Education in recent months—all these things are now being manifested in implemented policy.

- (ii) a sound basic general education with a strong technological focus, as the foundation for further training, retraining and lifelong learning;

Indeed, Mr. President, there are processes in place: there is the National Energy Skills Centre; there are Adult Literacy Programmes; there is a host of other initiatives that are putting this focus into practice.

- (iii) Strengthening of spiritual and moral values via the curriculum and the curricular activities.

Indeed, in the media I have seen where the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education, and leaders of denominations were talking of getting together to see how they could implement this aspect in terms of the curriculum, in particular, in the non-denominational or the state-dominated sector. It continues:

“Among the outcomes at which this thrust is directed are:

- (i) Equipping citizens with the capabilities (i.e. knowledge, skills, attitudes and qualities) required for purposeful living and personal fulfilment;”

Indeed, I think I should, in comment, say that many people do not see education, with a disastrous consequence, as consumption. They do not see education as preparing people to enjoy the good things of life. There are too many of us who see education as preparing people to get a job. Indeed, in that sense, if you did not get your 5 CXC passes, your A’Levels or some accreditation from a technical institute, well, you have failed. You are a nobody and that is partly to be blamed on the fact that from early, people are not led to understand that one of the important aspects of education is that cultural immersion in using your mind. You know, when Socrates said, “the unexamined life is not worth living,” that is a manifestation of the problem of using education as consumption for personal fulfilment: the kind of music you enjoy; the kind of plays you might want to go to, or create yourself, with the kind of art that you would find satisfaction in.

- (ii) releasing the innovative and achievement-oriented potential of the population and strengthening its capacity to implement, and ensuring a stable democracy characterized by a citizenry who is adaptable, self-reliant, trainable and productive.”

If I might go back when I say “and strengthening its capacity to implement,” Mr. President, it is not a trivial matter. Different societies, different countries, different ethnic groups—you look at them now, and you look at them in the past—there are different outcomes in terms of how they interact, in the sense of commerce; in the sense of military endeavours; in the sense of artistic endeavours.

It is not just trivial to say that Spanish music is different from Mexican and both are different from American, and all three are different from Russian or Japanese; the way people implement, the way people do, the way they verbalize are important aspects of their cultural formation.

Indeed, some societies like for example, after Napoleon, the evolution of what was then the Prussian State into North Germany and then into imperial Germany after 1871, as a very militaristic implementation-oriented society has to do with a deliberate wilfulness of the Junkers in North Germany to do that. Even today

people are skeptical about the Germans still feeling that they have hegemonic ambitions with respect to Europe. We all know about Hitler and his ambition to dominate the world. But what I am trying to say is that there is a lot of difference between a culture that a child is immersed in early in that Prussian sense, and a culture like ours in Trinidad and Tobago, in the Caribbean, in Nigeria or elsewhere, where there might be a cultural preference for talking, for articulating one's self, rather than getting something done. So it is important to see that at the school level one has to start to focus people on the fact that at the end of the day you have to get something done, you have to implement it.

“Underlying this therefore, is the intent to enable the education system to prepare students to—

- (i) deal with the challenges of present society;”

When I say challenges of present society, I am saying that one of the faults of our education system, because of the way teachers are trained; because of the fact that it is a system dominated by politicians and syndicalist monopolies, is that it does not really focus sufficiently well on preparing a child to become a citizen in a world of inequality. The real world, as in nature, abhors equality. If you look up at the sky you do not see uniform rows of stars; if you look up at any field or forests you do not see trees looking uniform; the animals and every one of us are a different copy, a different fingerprint. The world is about asymmetry; it is about lack of uniformity; it is about challenge; it is about how you deal with that. But the schools that we have evolved—not only in Trinidad and Tobago—they are passionately engaged in a process of making everybody equal!

Some of us in Trinidad and Tobago who have lived through the colonial period—like I have done; like Sen. Prof. Spence has done, like Sen. Dr. St. Cyr and most of us have done—when you were at primary school you took an examination at the end of the semester, and those who passed would be above the red line in the teacher's book and those who failed would be below the red line, and they would have to stay in that class and take the examination again. When we achieved Independence we abolished all of that, because we did not want to cause these people who were below the red line to suffer a loss of self-esteem, so we sent them up.

We encouraged that will to equality; which is really a will to equality in the gutter of mediocrity. That is what we did. So that in the real world outside there you have to prepare children from early, to understand that life is not about everybody being Brian Lara, or Curtly Ambrose or Courtney Walsh; life is not

about everybody being Dwight Yorke. But life is about giving every child the opportunity—if he or she is endowed—to be a Dwight Yorke, or a Curtly Ambrose, to be a Rudranath Capildeo or an Einstein, or an Ernst Schoedinger. That is what it is all about. You do not tell the child that there is something shameful about not coming first in class.

**2.25 p.m.**

You set up a system that allows the child to understand that everybody will not be musically inclined and some of us will be tone deaf or colour blind. In that system you endeavour—as the child is progressing—to cause him or her to learn to deal with his or her own defects, lacks and inadequacies, the better to overcome them, but that is not what our education system does.

Mr. President, so when we are saying to cause the education system to work for us to encourage people to be able to adjust in a future society and to function in their rightful roles, one of the important things that schools have to do is to create that cultural and intellectual environment where children must learn to live in a world of inequality, without necessarily being burdened by envy and jealousy. They must learn to cope with change. Change is a permanent condition. I think it was Heraclitus who said you never step into the same river twice. So that people have to learn to deal with that.

Much of the stress and distress in the world that comes about, say from unemployment, is because people have not been able to adjust and adapt themselves to change. They were not prepared to do that. So when the company closes down or the state enterprise is sold and you have to adjust, people cannot cope with that because they have been educated and acculturated to believe in lifetime employment in the same place.

So when you live in a world with the kind of vertiginous changes that are there, people cannot cope with it. They drink grammoxon; they suffer from stress; all kinds of things happen and that is because they were not accustomed or had not been trained to deal with those dimensions of real life of which change is a necessary part. So that the approach to this task of a philosophy of education that is grounded in all these ideas is informed by the recognition that education has both a social and an individual dimension; both a consumption and an investment aspect in relation to each of these dimensions.

Mr. President, if I might divaricate again, too many people are willing—even professional educators and politicians—to focus on this education only as

investment. They want to be like Singapore; they want to be like Japan; they want to do a Germany on us—everybody. “Education is investment”. Nothing is wrong with that.

Mr. President, that is why I say, within the last generation or within the last 30 years or so, the whole school of research, our own Arthur Lewis was one of the early pioneers. Both Lewis and Schultz, I think, shared the Nobel prize one year for their work on development and, in particular, on this question of human capital development, and that is all good. I think we need to go back to those years under colonialism when, for some of us, education was a joy for its own sake.

You went to primary school and you went on the concert stage and you said your poem. You were in primary school; you were in standard IV, VI or III and that night when it was the concert, you could have got up there and say whatever the poem was, you know, “The day is done and darkness falls from the wings of night as a feather is wafted from an eagle in his flight”, whatever it was. It was part of your training to live in the world; it was part of the understanding that poetry is a necessary part of life, that you do not necessarily only go to school because you want to get a “wuk”. That is part of the tragedy we have now.

Mr. President, most of the people who are just glued to the television and cannot help themselves become a kind of moronic manifestation of the worst that technology can do to human society. They have functioned in a kind of education system where they had not been educated to understand that reading is a thing of joy, that even the poems that you would have learned in standard III, “I lived first in a little house and lived there very well, the world to me was made of straw and all covered by my mother. I lived next in a little house and lived there very well, the world to me was small round and made of pale blue shell”—I forget some words there—“...and then I flew beyond the nest to see what I could find, I said the world was made of leaves, I have been very blind. And then I flew beyond the trees to see the sky so blue, now what the world is really made of, I cannot tell, can you?”

Now, when you get a child and the teacher is explaining to that child that progress, that idea of development, that is what life is all about. That is what you are about. Every day you are learning; every day you will be in a state of discovery. The child learns that from poems. They learn to love words and they learn to love language. When I heard Pat Bishop at Kitchener’s funeral, I think it was she who said that Kitchener’s demise marked the pass of a generation, a generation of goodness. I consider people like Lord Kitchener and those that went

before him—they wrote their own calypsoes. There is a situation now where most of these so-called calypsonians are buying a song. Kitchener and the one that died before him—*Netty Netty*—what is his name again? I cannot figure it out right now.

**Sen. Shabazz:** Lion.

**Sen. Dr. The Hon M. Job:** Lion and these people. They went to school and they probably read Cutteridge's book and the *Royal Reader*. They understood rhyme and rhythm is the beauty of language. They would have been reading their *Bible*, like I did; I am sure Sen. Mc Kenzie did. They were immersed in that world where education was not merely a matter of trying to make sure you got passes so you could get a job. All of us—Kitchener, Lion and all these kinds of people—are functions and products of that society, even if it was colonial, even if colonialism had something brutal and bad about it. There are lots of things that we cannot change and the philosophy of education must deal with all that.

Mr. President, I cannot spend all afternoon ruminating on those aspects, which I would love to do, so I want to move on a bit because there is so much I need to quote to demonstrate my point that, indeed, we have a philosophy of education and that philosophy is to the extent that the Government is guided by the wish of the people; is guided by what the nature of the circumstances are demanding. We are doing the best we can to ensure that the education system that is evolving is adequate and appropriate to the needs of a developing Trinidad and Tobago.

On page 37, I will quote fully: "Implications of Implementation of the proposed Social and Cultural Studies Curriculum."

"The environment created by colonialism does have lasting effects and they are not all perverse."

Mr. President, I am speaking to an audience of English speakers and they understand me very well. That is a consequence of colonialism. Had I been in Algeria, I would very likely be speaking to an audience of Arabic speakers. As I speak to you today, Mr. President, one of the benefits that we have had is that with modern technology and the explosion of the internet 80 per cent or more of all the information on the net is in the English language. One of the big industries in the world today—a multibillion-dollar industry—is the learning and the teaching of English. People from India—notwithstanding the passionate intensity of the obscurantist fervour of some of the journalists in the *Express* and other newspapers parading their ignorance as a flag of their own emancipation, so they say, trying to tell us that the Cabinet of this country is encouraging and using

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

taxpayers money to teach Hindi because the Cabinet and the Government of this country want to end the colonialism, ethnic and cultural banishment of Indians and Hindus. Nothing could be further from the truth. I was in the Cabinet, and not only because of collective responsibility, but because of my own understanding, I went along with that decision and encouraged it; endorsed it; and supported it.

I am saying this because I think people in this country ought to understand that one of the reasons why India is one of the fastest growing exporters of computer software; why it is anticipated that maybe within the decade, most of the multinational work for insurance companies and many other kinds of service firms would be done in India, is because they speak English in India. All those people are there speaking English from early.

I was in India at the Taj Mahal, and there was a group of little school girls who came from New Delhi. I asked the little girl how old she was. She was six years old and she was speaking to me in perfect English. They all learn English from early, and that explains their immersion into the scientific culture which gives them an advantage. So the reason that we should learn Hindi or learn Swahili, whatever else you want to do, should have nothing to do with these kinds of parochial, provincial and narrow-minded intensities of passion that are very divisive in terms of what we need to do in Trinidad. That must be based on some objective and dispassionate understanding of the world we live in, which is why I am quoting what is here.

“The environment created by colonialism does have lasting effects.”

**Sen. Shabazz:** Just for the record. You talk about there was a Cabinet responsibility because it must be based on an objective. Could you explain that so that when I get up to speak, I will know what really is the objective? I will be grateful.

**2.35 p.m.**

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** Mr. President, we teach Spanish and we teach French. I propose, and in this document somewhere—I do not know if I will find it to quote it—I did recommend that at primary schools in Tobago they should teach German. I, myself, have learned a smattering of Sanskrit. I am also literate in French, Spanish and Portuguese. This morning I was meeting some foreigner from which one of those was named Njoroge. I told him that it sounded like Kikuyu, and he said yes, and I started carrying on a conversation with him in Swahili to the astonishment of everybody, because I also speak Swahili.

The objectivity I am talking about is where one lives in a world where Hindi is a language. There might be some children here who may want to learn Mandarin. Some may want to learn Portuguese. We do not teach Portuguese here and Brazil is right down the road. Why not, if there is a sufficient community of interest that they could teach Portuguese? That objectivity has to do with all of these things.

*[Sen. Prof. Ramchand on his feet]*

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** Am I getting additional time, Mr. President?

**Mr. President:** When the Member stands, he can stand on a point of order in which case, you must take your seat. If he stands and asks for a point of clarification, you may not give way. I will ask Sen. Prof. Ramchand whether he wishes to stand on a point of order of for a point of clarification.

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** Clarification.

**Mr. President:** In which case, you are not obliged to give way.

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** I will be graceful.

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** I will give the Member a greater chance to be graceful. I was a bit puzzled. Was the Member saying that if there were 1,000 Finnish bastard children in Trinidad, we should teach the Finnish language in our primary schools?

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** Mr. President, I do not think I need to respond to that. The environment created by colonialism does have lasting effects, and they are not all perverse, yet the current social context cannot be explained without recognizing the persistence of culture; that is to say values, ideas, mores, beliefs and ambitions which antedate colonialism. That would explain a lot of the cultural retention we have in Trinidad—some from Africa, some from India, some from parts of Europe.

Both the individual and the ethnic group are shaped by environments which have long ceased to exist, but which manifest themselves in the cultural patterns practised by descendants of people whose ancestors created the culture which their descendants now cherish. It must be understood, therefore, that the social and cultural outcomes depend not only on what Governments do now, or what power was used in the past to force outcomes in income distribution between ethnic groups of this country, but depend very much on how culture predisposes the individual or the group to respond to current reality.

Mr. President, the current reality in Trinidad is that there are people who came from Africa and India, and I think objectively and dispassionately, that is a fact we need to deal with, notwithstanding the propaganda again concerning the Hindi antecedents of the population we have in Trinidad and Tobago. The reality is much more difficult to assess, because many of the people who came from Bihar and Uttah Pradesh did not speak Hindi. Their mother tongue was a language called "Bhojpuri", and Hindi was the aesthetic language, the language of Ramayan. Indeed, many of the descendants of the people here spoke Canarese, Telugu, Marathi, Malayalam, and a whole lot of languages that have nothing to do with Hindi.

We need to have these things in mind, but I am saying here that in terms of the curriculum we need to deal with all these things in a sense which gives poignancy to our need to understand the reality with which we live in terms of questions we are asking daily. Many of the issues concerning race and ethnicity in Trinidad and Tobago are nothing but manifestations of ignorance, manifestations of that passionately intense insecurity which showed itself 50 years ago as gas chambers, as Auschwitz, as Bergen-Belsen, recently in Bosnia, we have seen it in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, we all know about Foday Sankoh, and Somalia. We have seen it in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Chechnya. We have seen it in Fiji. It is all over.

What we need for the child in Trinidad and Tobago to understand, Mr. President, is what is common about all of that. Why do we think Trinidad and Tobago is so peculiar and so particular, when in fact, if the education system was training people properly, they would see what is common to Trinidad and Quebec, to Trinidad and Belfast, to Trinidad and all over Africa, which I have called a vast continental slaughterhouse. It has nothing to do with the blackness of one's skin, but with the level of social development.

In Europe 2000 years ago it was like that. Less than that, when in 1618, the 30-year war started in Europe, Mr. President, there was a similar kind of situation. The nation states were not solidified enough to establish their writ over large enough areas. There were in what is now Germany, four hundred little princely kingdoms; a whole smattering of little tribal divisions in language. We still see some of them today.

In that vacuum of centralized power, there was disaster going on, people were dying like flies, killing each other, poisoning, raping, murdering, gouging eyes, and so forth. So, it is not a question of Sierra Leone and an African problem. It is a generality that children need to understand that they are not being taught by their teachers, because these teachers themselves have been warped and damaged

and mutilated in their minds by the kind of post-colonial rubbish and drivel that they learn at the University of the West Indies and elsewhere. All of these things are what we need to deal with, Mr. President.

[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

In terms of talking about philosophy, I will take off from there by saying that one of the things an education system must do is allow people to understand how to think in terms of probabilities. One does not have to be an Ernst Schroedinger to understand that reality and the real world is not about certainty. There is none of us who will have certain knowledge or information about anything, even in the area of our expertise.

Anybody who has been trained as a scientist ought, by the time they get through sixth form, to understand all of that. Unfortunately, most of the debate and discussion that goes on in Trinidad manifests and demonstrates a total lack of comprehension of this simple and elementary fact. Many of our discussions and debate are bedeviled by that immersion in that intrusion of ignorance, a kind of poetic imagery that disguises itself as truth and prevents people from understanding things.

In order to carry on that part of the discussion, I quote two things here. First of all, this is a quote from a famous French mathematician writing an essay on probabilities in 1814, Marquis de Laplace who said:

“Strictly speaking, it may even be said that nearly all our knowledge is problematical, and in the small number of things which we are able to know with certainty, even the mathematical sciences themselves, the principal means for ascertaining truth, induction and analogy are based on probabilities, so that the entire system of human knowledge is connected with theory set forth in this essay which is the theory of probabilities.”

I said it sometime when I was here discussing the Motion by Prof. Kenny, that someone wrote an essay at the turn of the century saying that when we talk about literacy, we have got to talk about mathematical literacy and an understanding of probability. Laplace is saying the same thing here 100 years before in 1814.

I am talking about the philosophy of education and how important the media is in terms of the philosophy of education for this country. Mr. Vice-President, when I started my discussion, I did say that there is a curriculum and, in fact, this thing was about modernizing the curriculum of the primary school. Many people are of a belief that a curriculum is a thing that one has between the covers of a

book and one reads up this curriculum and implements it. Nothing can be further from the truth. I do not know if the media will assist me. They do not seem to have been doing so in all my life, except to misrepresent what I say.

I think it will be a great favour to this country if the media can report what I am saying now. The effective curriculum for most children has nothing to do with what goes on in school. It has absolutely nothing to do with it. For most children, the effective curriculum is what goes on, on video, on cable television, what the calypsonians, dub singers and rap singers say, and perhaps marginally, some of the things that politicians say. It has nothing to do with what teachers say. They are not sufficiently well respected in this country to have the kind of influence that calypsonians, rap singers, dub singers and some gang leaders have. So, the curriculum, the understanding of the word “curriculum” has to be broadened in the context of modern technology.

Television is one of the most important sources of the curriculum for most children. Indeed, I have absolutely no doubt. I used to have a radio programme, and night after night, I used to argue, imprecate and say that if one cannot decide what one’s children will see—I went to Speyside recently and told them that—pitch the television in the sea. I used a kind of versification of my idea. If one cannot control what the children see, pitch the television into the sea.

Mr. Vice-President, there is no question. The evidence that is coming in from the people who have been doing that research is that a lot of the crime and deviant behaviour in the world today is accountable to television. There is an important reason for that that people should understand. I learned English because all I was hearing around me was people speaking a version of English, which was the Tobago vernacular. Then I went to school and studied English formally.

Most of us are completely unaware of a simple fact that is glaring us in the face, which is that the most important and efficient mimic machine that nature knows is a child. It is amazing what children, all of us, could have learned, and most of us have not achieved what we could have because our parents and the people who influenced us as children were not aware of just how fantastic we were as mimics. We were stymied and suppressed. Fortunately, we still managed to break through those bonds and achieved something.

If one understands that fact, there is no problem in appreciating that when children see murder after murder on the television from the time they could creep and crawl, that becomes part of their understanding of life. So, murder is no big thing. I am telling you the truth, Mr. Vice-President. I have been to all the schools

in Tobago. This is not a boast. I do not think there is any other politician who has done that. I have been to all the classrooms in Tobago, and one day I was in a school talking with primary school children about the influence of television on their behaviour. I asked, "Could anyone tell me when they see a man and a woman on a bed on television what they are doing?" A little boy got up in front of me and said, "Dr. Job, they do so and so...". Proceeding to simulate feeling of his breast, thighs, pubic region. I said, "How old are you?" The boy said he was seven years old. And I got a demonstration of petting, necking and everything else. He might have been able to do that at six or five years of age.

I am saying that the media, which includes television and the newspapers, are part of the curriculum. I want to quote here because I want to spend a few more minutes on that. I see myself running out of time.

**Mr. Vice-President:** I just want to let you know that you have three more minutes.

**Sen. Daly:** Three minutes to deal with the Motion! *[Laughter]*

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** *[Laughter]* Mr. Vice-President, I am saying that the newspapers, the calypsonians, the television and the video; one of the most important aspects or elements of the effective curriculum for children in Trinidad and Tobago—and we need to factor that into any philosophy or any programme for the future. I am quoting from the *Sunday Express* of May 21, 2000 and I will just read a few lines.

**2.50 p.m.**

It is an article written by Kim Johnson.

"Umbala's belligerent ranting called to mind Morgan Job. There was a similar indifference to popular opinions, a similar smattering of self-taught erudition, a similar rambunctiousness.

But whereas Job's opinions aspire to philosophy, Umbala's quotes are simply to tart up his eccentric ideas of common sense."

Now, some child reading this who does not know me and did not listen to my radio programme, will never understand that I had spent three years on the radio trying to get people to understand that there are certain unhappy facts, certain unhappy realities that you have to deal with; that in dealing with these things, you deal with them in a probabilistic sense, in the sense that if I say the probability that the writer of this article never did any statistics in his life, does not

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

understand what econometrics is—if you ask him what a population is or a chi-square test is, he probably would not know. If I said that the probability of that is probably 0.9, I am probably speaking the truth because I can test that.

I can take the sample of all the people who are writing newspaper articles and find out in the sample that I have now—and if I have records from the *Guardian*, the *Express* or anywhere, of their CVs when they applied for the jobs—what was the background, if in fact, they did statistics, mathematics or calculus and if they understand what those things are. I am sure, when I say that the probability is that most of these people do not understand anything about probability, do not understand anything about econometrics, do not understand anything about thinking scientifically and probabilistically, and that there is a difference between inductive truth and deductive truth and truth in the sense that you say the Blessed Virgin Mary was a virgin. The fact is that I can say that they are ignorant of statistics—

**Mr. Vice-President:** The speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Hon. J. Theodore*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr. The Hon. M. Job:** Mr. Vice-President, I am saying this not with any sense of malice. I am saying it in the sense that I have always dealt with matters dispassionately and objectively, which is what we have to deal with if we are going to deal with education and deal with curriculum in a—[*Interruption*] Please! [*Interruption*] I will give you the government plan.

Mr. Vice-President, I started off saying that I did not want to be partisan and for the next 15 minutes, I think I will have to do something. [*Interruption*] Very ready.

In the sense that I was saying before I was rudely interrupted and interfered with that we have to deal with a language, with a set of ideas, which impinge themselves on what we call the facts, the evident circumstances. We have to look at why we got to where we are. So I will quote from *Forged From The Love Of Liberty—Selected Speeches of Dr. Williams*, because it is necessary that if we are going to deal with this debacle that is education, we understand in a very honest and dispassionate way that we have to change the ideas that we bring, to understanding where we are.

Mr. Vice-President, the people who are now in Opposition that was formerly the government, for many, many years, for decades almost in this country, have

not been bereft of the facts. I will quote from a document HOW LITERATE ARE WE—A Report on the IEA Reading Literacy Study Conducted in Trinidad and Tobago 1989—1992, prepared by the National Research Committee. This would have been in the hands of the former Prime Minister, Mr. Patrick Manning. It says, if I might quote here:

"The urgent development of national policy which will require that teachers assume a large measure of accountability for literacy outcomes of our schools..."

In other words, they are saying we have to admit that teachers are part of the problem of illiteracy that goes on.

"...(It is no longer privileged information that a number of children who swell the ranks of the high-performing private primary schools in the sample of this study are the progeny of teachers who are employed in our government primary schools.)"

So, they stay in the government primary schools and damage poor people's children but send their children to private primary schools. This is what it is saying. I did not do the study. It went on to say:

"The prompt revamping of the Ministry's measurement and evaluation mechanism with its present emphasis on post-testing. The belated stage at which delivery is scheduled must now be regarded as a major contributor to cause and effect of perpetuated reading failure in the primary school. There is now convincing evidence of the urgent need for diagnostic focus on the potential-, instructional-, independent- and..."

I think this is a wrong word here.

"...performance-reading levels of our younger children. The intimate relationship between reading failure and crime can no longer be disputed.

These documents were in the hands of the PNM government while they were telling people that we are 98 per cent literate which forced me at one time to say if indeed we are 98 per cent literate, the 2 per cent illiterates are in the PNM cabinet.

There was another piece of work that was done in January 1994, a Cabinet-appointed Committee to Examine the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime Situation in Trinidad and Tobago. It said, among other things, that:

"Many of these children..."

—that are criminals—

"...are living and developing in neighbourhoods where there are limited positive role models for appropriate social behaviour. Frequently, the only

adults they see who are making a decent living are ‘making it’ at illegal activities. The resulting problems due to student frustration, unrealized expectations and low self-esteem are visible within the nation's schools.”

Every day in the schools of this country there is maiming, stabbing and all kinds of nonsense going on there. The fact is these things were long in the making. They were long in gestation. I do not have enough time to read all the evidence that is documented here, but I think what I have said is sufficient to force you to understand that what we have done is to live in denial to cover up the problems but they have a long history.

From *Forged From The Love Of Liberty*, I do not have the time to quote verbatim so that I will just explicate. On page 241, there is an argument that says most of the schools in Trinidad and Tobago are, in fact, ethnically mixed. As we would say, racially integrated. This is Dr. Williams saying that. Maybe I should quote a bit.

“...of every hundred children in primary and intermediate schools, 44 go to denominational schools of the faith to which they belong—44. The percentage is highest with the Presbyterians: 61 per cent of the Presbyterian children go to Presbyterians; 60 per cent of the Catholics; 48 per cent of the Methodists; 44 per cent of the Anglicans.”

—and it goes on like that.

“56 out of every 100 Hindu children do not go to a Hindu school, they go to a religious school operated by another denomination.”

The whole argument is that the school system, he says here:

“I can’t think of another country like this where the picture is what we present here in Trinidad and Tobago.”

Which is to say of the school system as ethnically and racially integrated. That was said sometime, I think, in August. Three months after, we are still living in Trinidad and the same author in debate on the Education Act said that he had to pass the Bill because if he did not do the Education Act, we were going to have racism rampant in this country because the schools are the breeding ground for racism and he had to decapitate the—people are not aware of these things.

On page 248, where he was targetting destruction of the denominational schools, I quote:

“The conversion of the existing secondary schools, Government or denominational, either by lopping off the lower forms and converting them

into senior secondary schools, or by removing the higher forms and converting them into junior secondary schools."

We have a whole rambunctious polemic of vituperation against the denominational schools and favouring as a programme and as a policy, the setting up of a communist state school system. As I stand before you here, you all know what is the consequence of the government run system in education. If Dr. Williams had his way, if we think that we have a bad system, God would have had to be called in to help us from the morass and the debacle that we would have had. I do not have enough time to go through all the details except to say that this country should deal with the kind of obscurantism that I heard from the other side, that wilful denial of truth and reality, so that we could come to terms with the fact that the education system has been the breeding ground, has been the provenance, has been the source of all the malaise, of all the incompetence, of all the irresponsibility, of all the inefficiency that we have.

As I speak to you here now, in 1977, Singapore and Trinidad and Tobago had about the same per capita GNP which was about \$2,000 per month. By 1996, Singapore had more than US \$30,000 per capita in GNP, while Trinidad and Tobago was just hovering merely to \$4,000. What makes the difference? What makes the difference, Mr. Vice-President, is the deliberate policy of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who says that:

"To maintain its competitive position Singapore is investing millions of dollars in its educational system and in training programs to ensure a supply of skilled workers. Singapore Economic Development Board's Chairman Phillip Yed says that they put into education whatever money can buy, including the retraining of older workers."

This is what this Government is trying to do as a programme. We are lecturing; we are talking; we are irritating. We are saying, in fact—and I want to put it on record—I have heard the Prime Minister say it, repeating what I have said. I had a seminar. I used to do these things and I did say that one of the things that we needed to abandon in this country is the Concordat. The Concordat came out of the idea when Count Finbar Ryan and the denominational boards recognized what Dr. Williams was planning to do. They lined up behind Count Finbar Ryan and the Concordat came out of that as a clarion call on the part of the denominational boards to prevent that mad imposition of a statist/socialist/communist type of education system which Finbar Ryan knew would have led to the consequences that we are seeing every day in the state schools.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

So, what I am saying is that a philosophy of education has to deal with the kinds of things that I am saying. We have to deal with the question of living in the modern world where change is the permanent condition, as I did say. We have to understand, as I did say, that we cannot have teachers and we cannot have a system that is set up to create equality when the real world is about inequality. We have to re-educate teachers to understand all that. We have to understand that we are talking about privatization and I did say the first thing we should have privatized was the education system. Because you can sell out a business; you can close it down; you can restructure it; but when you destroy a child, you destroy the child for life, which is what we were doing.

The education system is about the only system in this country which is so supply-dominated, where the consumers of the output have no choice in the matter, where you are being given a combination of a syndicalist and political monopoly's product and they have nothing to say about it. There is no accounting, no input/output analysis to see how much money we are spending and how much we are getting out in terms of quality.

It is not that it cannot be done. It is not done because of the structure of that sector because it is just as what happened in communist Russia and what happened in East Germany, where the state dominated everything and you could not ask questions. If you asked questions, you went into the Gulag. Anybody who dared to ask about education became an enemy of poor people, became an enemy of black people. "You do not like teachers". In some way, they will denigrate you and destroy your character, when the people who are suffering are the people from Waterhole and Red Hill, Morvant—the lower classes of society.

The better off people of this country, many of them are in the Senate here. Their children do not have that problem. They would have had pre-school; they would have had prep school; they would get lessons; they would win scholarships. They are not the problem. It is not that they are brighter or naturally better endowed than people who are Senators; people who went to university and have a degree; that they are born to be geniuses. No. What has happened is that they are able to exploit the opportunities that the market has to offer so we need to rethink all we are doing in terms of education and the role and management of the system as a state-driven socialist supply system where we are not responding to the market.

We are still on chalk and blackboards. Nobody is talking about laptop computers for children. Nobody is talking, as a policy, to make sure—except this

Government recently—that children are literate when they are moving from grade to grade.

**3.05 p.m.**

In fact we need—as the Minister of Education is now doing, partly from my prompting in this committee report—to find some way to integrate into the system of primary education a kind of, what I would call, surrogate mothering. Let me explain what I mean. It is not the fault of a child, that her mother is 15 years and has two children for three different men. The child is not at fault, but that little girl has not been properly parented, she does not know anything about parenting, but she has two children. Fortunately, we still have an opportunity for many of the children go to primary school. When they go to primary school, the teacher there is not one who is properly trained or properly educated. She cannot understand that those two little children need mothering, hugging, cuddling and playing with, so they come to school and they are like “poor me ones”, they are distraught. They come from an environment where there is noise, boom and “katankang”, fight and bad words for the entire day, so they cannot pay attention to what the teacher is teaching. The teacher does not understand that, so she ignores that child.

One of the things that this Government is trying to do, is to graft on to the system a necessary input where many of these children at risk in these situations, where they are not to be blamed for their social circumstance—there would be people going to the schools and doing what they are not getting at home and trying to ease them into the formal system of education so that they might better benefit from it. All these issues—Mr. Vice-President, it is a pity that I do not have the time to go further to explain. I think I have said enough to indicate that, indeed, in terms of the questions that the Motion has asked: whether or not the Government has a philosophy of education and what this education is all about. I did not say much about what education is, but I did mention that it has both consumption and investment aspects and, indeed, we need more, as a society, to focus on the consumption aspects even if we need to do immensely more, Mr. Vice-President, in terms of making that investment aspect efficient.

What we are doing now is spending more than \$1 billion of our budget—a large proportion of the budget—we are just throwing money at education and nobody has been evaluating what this money is doing in terms of output and productivity. The time has now come for us to do that. This Government is interested in doing that. We are understanding that. We are talking to the population.

I have told the Prime Minister, if there is one issue that he should be going to the election with, if there is one issue that he can unite the people behind him, if there is one issue that he needs to focus the minds of the population is the debacle that the PNM has made of education; the course they have imposed on their own clients when they say “We care”. Those are the people who have suffered: those people who want to die PNM, those are the people who have been most disadvantaged, who have been most destroyed, who have been most pressed down into the equality of slime and crime and the pit of despair and degradation, because of the PNM education system, all the while when they were telling them that they have given them free education.

I have some quotes from last Sunday. This is a newspaper report—the teachers—somebody is saying stop free education. I spent years on the radio programme trying to educate those very people to say that we do not have free education in Trinidad, we have the most expensive education, especially for the poor people, because they are not getting any benefit out of it.

I understand that my time is up, Mr. Vice-President. I would say thanks for the opportunity.

**Sen. Tota-Maharaj:** Oh God, sit down now!

**Mr. Vice-President:** Your extended speaking time has expired.

**Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny:** Mr. Vice-President, when one is educated, one is educated to the norms of a civilized society. In accordance with these norms, I would like to congratulate Sen. Carlos John on joining this House.

Mr. Vice-President, he cannot be blamed for this one thing, but I think that there is a kind of parliamentary Freudian slip here in that, the largest text of a name, he has not seen, is Carlos John, it is larger than the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries. I do not know what this means. *[Laughter]* But he will see what I am driving at in due course.

Mr. Vice-President, I was also very much reassured to hear the good Senator recite his oath of office; to uphold the Constitution and the law and this reassured me. *[Desk thumping]* He is now one of us, who will uphold the Constitution and the law in all respects.

I am a bit disturbed at what has happened to this Motion which, in my view, is one of the most important Motions which has come before the Senate in the past four years, or almost five years. My disappointment arises from the fact that the

previous Private Members' Motion was treated in a sense, to me, with a rather cavalier approach. We had almost every one of the Independents speak. We had all the Opposition speak and we had rather indifferent offerings from the Government's side.

This is not a Motion on science. This Motion is not a controversial one. A parliamentary debate is meant to have an exchange of ideas so that at the end of the debate, when the Senator who has moved the Motion is summing up, he can get the consensus of this House that goes beyond parties and calling this one names and so on. I think my disappointment is that we have started out, and I have listened to the commencement of the Government's presentation and I became very confused because the Motion, in fact, was very carefully crafted by Sen. Prof. Ramchand. If we forget all the recitals the resolution calls for the philosophy on education, with special reference to what is education, and what is education for. This, certainly, did not come across from the Government's side.

My disappointment is also to observe that the Hon. Minister of Education is not here. I would have thought that on a Motion of this kind, there would be a heavy presence of frontbenchers drowning us out, so that after we have heard we could then join the debate. We have Sen. Tota-Maharaj who is an eminent educator. We have Sen. Dr. The Hon. Daphne Phillips who is an eminent educator. Sen. Prof. Ramchand has made the observation that primary education is the foundation of all education. We have a past principal of a primary school. Surely, there ought to be a plan, there ought to be six or seven speeches from the Government's side so that we, who are not part of the executive process, would be in a position to explore and possibly assist the Government, give them some guidance possibly, on how we evolve our educational system.

Mr. Vice-President, I have answers, in my own simple way, to the questions. I will address them in due course. The answers are to what is education. It is basically development of awareness. I will return to this in a minute. What is it for? It is to fit the individual in society. This is—I know this may sound like a simplification—essentially, in my view, what it is all about.

Occasionally, when Motions or subjects of this kind come up I like to expound a bit on my slight knowledge of biology. I would like to just give a little background to why this thing is so important and why we must understand what the human brain is, so that we understand how we programme this brain, because that is an essential feature of developing awareness. It is an essential feature of developing skills.

**3.15 p.m.**

The human brain is not necessarily the largest brain in the animal kingdom; it is certainly the largest of the great apes. We are most closely related to the chimpanzee and I keep reminding people that the chimpanzee's behaviour is an indication of our genetically programmed behaviour. [*Laughter*] I am dead serious.

**Sen. Daly:** We had a recent reminder.

**Sen. Prof. J. Kenny:** The basic primate society of our kind is a small mini tribe with one top dog, a few females, subdominant males and some children. The chimpanzee tribe is a big family; it probably gets up to 30, 40 or 50 individuals and they demonstrate all the aspects of human behaviour. In fact, if you read Jane Goodall's book entitled *Reason for Hope* she lets us know all about the chimpanzee's behaviour and she shows us how human behaviour patterns this.

What education does is take the human brain, the individual, and forms that individual brain or mind into something which fits into society; and I will come to these in due course. One of the interesting features of the human brain, as opposed to the other chimpanzees, is that we have what is called an asymmetry of our brain. If you are right handed, the right side of your brain does a certain function, the left side does another function. We are the only one of the mammals that has this kind of brain. One of the interesting features of this is that there are certain senses like space, sound and sense of music, rhythm and things like that, that are right side functions, but the analytical functions of the brain are purely left side. If you have your left temporal lobe damaged with a stroke you are going to lose your speech. You can retrain speech using the right temporal lobe asymmetry. This asymmetry helps us to develop language and this is what has made the human species.

Apart from this asymmetrical function, there is a very important aspect of brain function that we must all bear in mind. There is immense variability in the powers of the individual human brain, this is determined by our genetic background. Although the basic function is genetically defined, the development of all the other functions of reasoning is that we are given certain basic equipment and the educational process allows us to develop these to varying degrees, depending on the system which we employ.

Mr. Vice-President, let us look at a very important point made by Sen. Prof. Ramchand. I am surprised that the Government did not focus on this right away.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand observed that there is a distinction between training and education. Much of what happens in the course of the development of the individual is really training; it is programming of the brain. So that when we sit in a family as individuals growing up, our first experiences are with a mother and the first noises or language that we learn is from a mother; or a father for that matter. This develops the language centre which allows us to communicate, allows us to accumulate knowledge as well as to communicate with others. A lot of development of the human personality is, in fact, training.

I am using the other extreme now, because training and education are not inseparable; they are not separate entities. In education what is happening is that we are developing through learning speech, space and sounds. We are, in fact, developing an awareness of our surroundings and our immediate surroundings when we are infants are, of course, the home, the mother. You know how you pacify a newborn that is separated from his or her mother; you could, in fact, use an external artificial heart that pulsates. You lay premature children against this instrument and they feel the maternal heart beat even before they can fend for themselves; they are premature children. You can also have machines that make sounds.

So the individual is born into this world with a genetic background which is his or her potential to develop, and the individual then goes through a process of education which is awareness of immediate surroundings, that is the immediate environment, awareness of the broader environment and of time. In due course, with exposure to formal education, awareness of history, culture and accumulated knowledge. The broader environment, of course, that the human is exposed to or becomes aware of, is the environment beyond the home. When you are young you become aware of the school and the dean of discipline—as I am sure Sen. Daly was most aware. [*Laughter*] You become aware when you are riding a bicycle home—as he used to tell us—of the girls and so forth, then you are aware of music.

As you develop as an individual, you become aware of more and more around you. Some of us may develop a particular interest in the natural environment or the cultural environment. Some of us may develop an interest in the law. In the past few months, Mr. Vice-President, some of us have been sensing that the rule of law in this country is coming under pressure and no society can function except it functions according to the law. I am not going to refer to particular examples, but for a few weeks now I have been trying to get simple answers to two questions. I already know the answer to the questions and I know the remedies as well.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

The point is, as individuals developing in society, if the society is to become integrated, if it is supposed to function in an orderly fashion, it can only do so by every citizen, whether it is a minister, a Prime Minister, Member of the Cabinet, a chairman of a state board or a Member of the Senate, as we are, unless we all accept that we must have the rule of law, then I am afraid that whatever the millions of dollars being invested or billions in gas extracted, whatever the plans for paving roads or building schools, the society will come to nought. We will continue to be like a bunch of crabs in a barrel, and that is what education is all about. Education is about fitting the citizen into the society. I realize that there are problems with education.

Mr. Vice-President, I would like to make a few comments on secondary education. Before going into this, I think that it did not really come out as strongly as it might have come out, but I have always regarded education as partly structured in the sense that as one becomes socialized through state organizations such as schools, universities, training schools or what have you, that you get certain aspects of your skills and personal development. But education is not just simply exposure to a structured educational system, that is only part of it.

I am of the view that there are many individuals, many persons, who are perfectly capable of educating themselves. There have been people who have been major contributors to society in the absence of any formal education, and this refers to people who become eminent scientists, writers, or musicians. So when we are discussing the philosophy, we have to bear in mind structural education and self-education and this should inculcate into the individual some sense of awareness of self and some sense of responsibility to the society.

Let me just go on to secondary education. It has been many years since I have been exposed to primary education although, in a sense, I have had a long exposure to primary education through my wife who was a principal of a primary school for many, many years. I must note that, in fact, some of the views that I am expressing are reflections of many evenings of discussing education. But I am more intimately concerned with secondary education and, of course, with tertiary education.

In secondary education when you start going through—I am taking the structured part of it—the initial phases at the lower end, is really training and vocabulary. You do not go to a first former and try to explain complex ideas. I notice, for example, that there was a flyer put out that astronomy is going to be introduced into the schools; this is all very fine, but before you get involved with esoteric branches of science, I think it is essential that you get the basic

vocabulary and series of ideas in science, arts and literature. It is absolutely essential to recognize that the early phases are really training in vocabulary on which you build.

I think that the structured secondary education aims at attempting to develop in the student an understanding of the range of disciplines. It is patently clear that when the student goes into secondary school, apart from the examinations—grades and so forth, or the Common Entrance Examination, which we are told is abolished, but is coming back in another form—the individual child going into a primary school will have certain internal interests that are undeveloped. Some have natural musical ability; some have natural interest in science; some are slow. This is all within the variability of the individual human species. So secondary education at that level is a progression of development, of experience and knowledge of the disciplines.

Some people have no long language skills at all. Mr. Vice-President, I learnt German four times and forgot it all. I learnt as an adult. I learned it because it was necessary in my doctoral work to be able to translate German, but I also learnt it at university because it was compulsory for any science graduate. Then I taught myself after university. So some people have absolutely no language skills, some have natural language skills. In the secondary education we are recognizing that we are developing this experience of the individual to a range of disciplines and we permit a certain amount of concentration, once they get to the advanced levels.

In the secondary schools, the method of delivery is remarkably varied. It is, of course, the norm: classroom, you go through, you write examinations, you write it at School Certificate or Caribbean Examination Council and you stay on and do something at advanced level. The delivery of it is extremely varied. It depends on where you go. One may talk about elitist education, but there are some schools where there are more dedicated people, they have better training, and there are some schools where the teacher is not there a great deal of the time, and the poor individual student who is into that system is in a sense disadvantaged.

### **3.30 p.m.**

One of the things that distresses me about the secondary education is something of which I have had, a personal experience. My son went to one of the elite schools, St. Mary's College, and for some reason, the teachers recognized that he probably had some abilities and he did A'Levels chemistry, mathematics and physics. The entire A'Level syllabus was done in one year and then they came back the second year to redo the syllabus in preparation for scholarship

examination. So he got three A'Level subjects and he got a national scholarship and went abroad to do his degree.

What is wrong with our system when you take a system which is meant to be for two years, deliver it all in one year to the disadvantage of the others in the class who do not necessarily have the ease with which they develop their knowledge of the subject. We have a very serious problem and I understand it is still done in the secondary schools. This is a problem related to our structural educational system which I hope the Government—

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Mr. Vice-President, it is even worse than Sen. Prof. Kenny maintains, because in some cases a bright student does the syllabus four times.

**Sen. Prof. J. Kenny:** This illustrates my point, and this is an issue which has to be addressed. So at the end of this period of structural secondary education, they go through an examination system and on the basis of this, some of them go on to tertiary education and I am told that the percentage which go on to tertiary education is comparatively small.

Mr. Vice-President, I would like to make a few comments about tertiary education and it is a bit disturbing to see what has happened over the past few years. Let us make it clear what tertiary education is. Again, tertiary education, for want of a better word, I would say, is adult education. Some are capable of following a particular route, others would go another route, but generally speaking, tertiary education may be grouped into the academic leading to the university degree type of programme in which training there is the first degree or the BSc. or the BA or what have you, and then there is the post graduate. I will refer to these in a minute.

Also at tertiary levels there is technological education about which Sen. Prof. Spence has been talking for many years. Sen. Prof. Ramchand has also been supporting this idea of developing technological education at university level. That had actually been debated in this Senate. In tertiary education, there is also the new offering which is distance education which is pure and simple business, and one can do a range of degrees. One does not have to go to the University of the West Indies to do it, one can go along the Eastern Main Road and do certificates, diplomas, advance diplomas, BSc., associate degrees and Masters degrees. And it is done at no cost to the state. It is done at a cost to the person who wishes to get these qualifications. This, in a sense, is distance education where the producers of the material are way off and they deliver it through agents, through computers, but you can also do it by getting on to the Internet.

Distance education, in fact, in my view, is more training to a particular range of skills than it is to developing a full awareness in the individual. There is also skills education. I use the term very broadly. If you take persons with very limited experience and you train them to be plumbers, or they want to be plumbers, or welders, these people can be trained when they become adults. Seriously, this is not beyond the abilities of any individual once you are an adult and if you want to become a welder or you want to do plumbing, you can actually go to a skills centre like John Donaldson Technical Institute and learn it, or you can do it yourself. So skills now are something you can learn and it is very narrowly job-oriented.

I turn next at the tertiary level to creative arts education. I do not mean of a structured kind, but at tertiary levels if one wishes to develop some sort of awareness of what our society has produced, of what different societies in the world have produced, then it is possible that one can develop this awareness by doing courses of one kind or another, or simply by educating oneself.

Indeed, if one wishes to have an understanding of the visual arts in this country, there is really only one way to do it, you have to go around the galleries. You are not going to learn the experience of creative art, except you get there. You can get a little formal instruction, but you can only do this if you go to—Do you know Sen. Dr. St. Cyr's daughter is an eminent artist? There are several galleries in Port of Spain and there are some developing. There is a gallery in Tobago and there are certain aspects of our education.

Sen. Daly has been trying to educate me on the steelband by dragging me out to a pan yard. It has been many years since I had been physically exposed to that kind of sound, but I assure him that in the coming carnival season, I will go to the pan yard with him. My interest is in other kinds of music, but I assure you that my years in this Senate have been an immense education to me. It has made me aware of environmental law. I think I can speak with a great deal of awareness about the law of this country with regard to the environment.

I have also become quite aware of the role that we have to play. For example, from time to time, we pass laws here that are rubbish, and although it is passed with a majority, it nevertheless remains rubbish. We passed an amendment to the Forests Act which was total rubbish, you can go to the North Coast Road and see a patch of hill land over a critical valley, the Santa Cruz Valley, where hectares of land have been clear felled. So I am aware that the Legislature passes laws, and I am aware that a lot of legislation is rubbish. For example, we passed the Squatters Regularization Act and to my consternation, I discovered that on the Schedule, the

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

Aripo Savannah Scientific Reserve is now a squatter site. It is a scientific reserve because it is the last of the natural savannahs, and I am sure that Sen. Brig. The Hon. Theodore will acknowledge that I have contributed to our understanding of the law regarding driving and parking in the savannah which is broken each day and he is fully aware of it and has actually gone so far as to suggest an amendment which Cabinet can make at its next meeting.

Mr. Vice-President, I make this point because education is lifelong. We are exposed to everything around us, so we become more and more aware of everything around us, and the more aware we become, and the more responsible we become, the better citizens we are and we have a better Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. Muhummad Shabazz:** Mr. Vice-President, I start off by saying that this Motion is indeed an important one. Not only is it important, but it asks some specific questions.

It is indeed sad when I listened to the first presentation from the Government's side that no real position was presented as to how we will develop or what we would do about the education system. As a matter of fact, the position that was really presented is one which that side normally takes. They speak around everything, they take no real position and then they blame the PNM for what was not done. That is their position all the time, and that is what happened today.

It was enlightening when the hon. Minister said they will take a bi-partisan position. We thought that the debate would develop along a line with the Government presenting their position so we could have something to speak about. They did no such thing. As a matter of fact, they have not done it as yet and it is sad that most times when they present—I do not want to target the hon. Minister, but most times when it is done—many times as though, this is what the problem is. I am not part of the problem, or it is this way because of what the PNM did or did not do and things like that. I think to take this line in this debate was indeed very sad.

What does the Motion require us to do? It requires that at the end of the day we will say—

*“Whereas* the role of education in the development of human societies has been recognised in all countries; and

*Whereas* the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has committed funds to the provision of places in primary and secondary schools for all children; and

*Whereas* the Government has undertaken to improve the entire education system from Early Childhood Education to the Tertiary Level;”

About which the Minister hardly said anything, anyway.

*Whereas* there is by means of the SEMP program a special emphasis on the modernisation of the Secondary School System;

*Be it resolved* that the Government explain its philosophy of Education...”

which has not been done, and which we hope will happen.

“...with special reference to the question “What is Education?” and “What is Education for?”

Mr. Vice-President, we have had a definition of what is education and Sen. Prof. Kenny in speaking, explained that education is really to prepare you for the society in which you have to live. Of course, education could be divided into two ways; academics which is mainly what we see. You get many academics, but no real knowledge, or nothing happening because there are two differences. People who have this academic education which is wonderful and which we have to make our whole society strive towards, but you can also have specialized education in which you did not have any kind of academic training.

### **3.45 p.m.**

Take, for instance, our sports people; a lot of our arts people; a lot of our cultural people; Brian Lara, Sir Clyde Walcott, or Sir Frank Worrell may have a lot of knowledge about cricket but they had no real formal education about it. So that is an important aspect of education too. And in providing or in educating somebody, you are not only interested in them becoming academics, becoming people who are academically inclined, but making them a rounded type of person that will help to take this society to a better level.

I would like to talk about this gentleman, “Alpha and Omega”, who was in prison and spent all of his life committing crimes, but with the knowledge and education that he gained while in prison about what happens with prisoners and people in systems like this, he now has a place that helps to rehabilitate and to help people who came out of prison, lift their standards and become far better than they were before they went into prison. All of this is part of what our education process should be about. Education should be able to train you and teach you, not only to become an academic, as I have said, but to be well-rounded for this society. And we should place value on what everybody’s contribution is, as far as the education or the development of this society or nation is concerned.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

Mr. President, of course, the mover of the Motion's point here is well taken because he started off by saying, that nowhere in any of the plans and statements of this Government, can you find either a direct statement or philosophy or a set of statements which you can put together and construct into a philosophy.

The mover of the Motion was and still is correct. Not only that, he says,

“That is a kind of censorship; that is a kind of repression; that is a kind of selling the society short; because you are peripheralizing many concerns which may be important but which, at the given moment, do not suit the Government's agenda or policy for the development of certain aspects of the society.”

Again, that is true, but I would develop on that as we go along. He said “education is about giving people the atmosphere and environment to do what they came in the world to do; to fulfil themselves, to be secure, to be happy; to be doing in the world.”

Education is to give people the opportunity to do that which they could do; that which they like doing and when we look around at what our society is, it is our duty to ensure that we could provide that type of atmosphere for all. To hear the hon. Minister of Tobago Affairs, in his contribution, start off by saying that the burden of the responsibility to articulate a position is not solely on the Government, everybody has a responsibility, the answer to that is true. Everybody has a responsibility but, in any event, the Government of the day will have, in its mind, a direction for its people; whether it is by consensus—whatever it is—but they will, indeed, be the people mainly responsible for structuring the direction of our education system, and what happens to us on the whole in education. [*Desk thumping*] It must be their duty; it must be their obligation; it is nobody else's and if even the professors, the brilliant people and everybody made a contribution it is for the Government to take this information, to understand it, and to direct the society in the direction in which it wants it to go and where it should go. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Dr. Job:** Mr. President, I wonder if the hon. Senator would care to comment on the implications of modern technology, such as the internet, and my statement concerning the wider curriculum? What do those things have to do with the current centrally directed state dominated system of education?

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** Mr. President, I will. Yes, he felt that people should not only be educated to get a work—perhaps there might be some rationale in that but, at the end of the day, education must be able to allow people to sustain

themselves too, by some means or the other, and most likely it is by drawing an income or getting some sort of reward or compensation for that which they do.

I want to point out though—you see when we talk about education it is extremely difficult—and I do not know—this is what is frightening, maybe, sometimes about the politics and the whole body politic—because how can anybody in this country talk about education and do not talk about what the people's national policies and philosophies have been about education? I want to be very honest. I recognized Dr. Capildeo as a great educator in this country and nobody could take away from that, but if I am to call eight great educators and call Dr. Capildeo, somehow I must say Dr. Williams. Because they were the main educators in that period

When I heard the hon. Minister say Dr. Capildeo and did not say Dr. Williams I know that it is an orientation that he is now being a part of and he must not say certain things, or at the end of the day—just what he did—pick up Dr. Williams' book and try to say negative things about Dr. Williams. This is exactly what he did at the end of his speech. This is why he could not call Dr. Williams: one of the great educators; one of the great persons who have helped to develop—he did not say it. *[Interruption]* He picked up Dr. Williams' book and he quoted speeches and tried to show where Dr. Williams and the PNM were so negative about the system of education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Again, I recognize Dr. Capildeo and a whole lot of other people as leaders and educators in this country of mine and cannot talk without talking about Eric Williams and the PNM's philosophy for education. *[Desk thumping]* They do not have the strength to do it. Not only that, for 40 years the National Task Force on Education was presented—you see they could always go back and say what we did not do because we had a policy about what we intended to do. Since they have none; since they wrote none; since they just talk and do not present any, nobody could really say that you had promised to do that.

We have a White Paper that was presented here on education. And in this White Paper we did not leave it up to the people to decide. We called the people together and we said that the policy paper recommends for adoption as a guiding philosophy for educational development in Trinidad and Tobago over the next decade, some principles and commitment which guided the National Task Force on Education in its assessment of past or current educational development in our nation's state. These principles and commitments were arrived at after careful

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

study of the many documents on social and educational development which have been produced by groups, organizations, major political parties, all of them and other institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. This is where the philosophy was coming from. We were going to have a philosophy and call everybody.

Again—I should not be bothered by the “steups” on that side—the PNM education philosophy. People tend not to remember that everything happens in a certain time and in a certain era. You may do something at a certain time—what we did in 1956 coming right on to 1961, was very, very important to the development and the upliftment of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly, the underprivileged because we saw education as a way to free us from colonialism and to open up new doors and new avenues to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

I could stand and boast proudly that the freedom, the democracy and the type of understanding that we appreciate in Trinidad and Tobago is mainly because of PNM philosophy and PNM education. Nobody could try to wipe that out. The Government could bring nobody from the United States of America, Germany or Canada to try to wipe that out of the minds of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We are going to continue to tell them that. [*Desk thumping*]

### **3.55 p.m.**

Mr. President, the PNM understand what was education. I could say that too. I am a product of that. I was born in 1949 and I am 50 years old. In 1956 I was seven years old. My father drove a taxi and my mother was a domestic worker and it is under the PNM government my father had hope for all of his children and all of us had a secondary education. My father knew—and he told us that up to before he died—that it was only under the PNM or the coming of the PNM. I am not saying that nobody else would have done it, but I am saying that the PNM did it and let the Government not be dishonest. Let the Government face that as a fact, as the truth and as the reality. It is the People’s National Movement that created that environment for all peoples in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, some of them who talk on that side may not have had the opportunity because they came from situations similar or even worse than mine and they got the type of education that was necessary and available because of the People’s National Movement. [*Desk thumping*] Let the Government understand clearly and do not try to brainwash or hoodwink people in this nation and try to make it sound as though it is different.

The PNM had a vision and a document. We had something that said all people in Trinidad and Tobago must be educated. I do not care what the Government says. I do not care who come and say that the people here are criminals, who are not criminals, and the people from this area all they are doing is making babies and all kinds of things. All of that may be true but I want to tell the Government that the people are very educated; very knowledgeable; and very intelligent and this why today the people have not been fooled and hoodwinked by the philosophy that the Government try to present to them to make them feel nothing was done for them; nobody cared about them; and nobody thought about them. The PNM knew that there were people in that bracket who could not have gone to colleges; could not have gone to secondary schools; could not have got tertiary education; and go to university and that happened because of the People's National Movement.

Mr. President, the Government wants to blow our trumpet for us, but we will blow it for ourselves now because what we find is the Government takes a kind of position like what Goebbels used to take, that is, say one thing and keep saying it over, say it in the press and say it everywhere to make it sound as though it is not true. We must now speak out. The PNM, under Dr. Eric Williams, has created that situation for all peoples of Trinidad and Tobago and we are proud of it. [*Desk thumping*]

The importance of the human resource has long been recognized and throughout our history efforts have been made to promote their development through education but the task remains urgent and unfinished which is what we knew. We knew that no matter what level the Government takes it to it will have to continue. We know that when we put certain things into effect we will aim for 100 per cent. We may only get 60, 70 or 80 per cent but, at least, we are big enough to come and say we could not get all, we will only get "X" amount, we are sorry. We are not just coming to tell you that we will give you "X" amount and when we do not give it to you, we just come back and say we are only giving you this and you have to be pleased with it. We were strong enough and we are still strong enough as a political institution to stand up and defend and to say what we mean and our record speaks for itself.

What do we want from our education system? We all hope that our education system would establish and maintain, the ethical and moral values necessary for civilized interpersonal and inter-group relationships in our multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

Mr. President, I want the honourable Minister to hear this. The Minister said that he has been part of a Cabinet decision. I have absolutely no objection to teaching Hindi in the schools of Trinidad and Tobago. None at all. As a matter of fact, the way Trinidad and Tobago is, I think we should teach some Chinese because sometimes I want to go into the grocery and understand what the two people in the grocery are saying when I am in there. So I feel at some time we should learn some Chinese. I feel there should be some Syrian language being taught in schools.

**Hon. Senator:** Arabic.

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** Or Arabic taught in schools, sorry. I also believe that there should be some African language taught in schools and the language of the Syrian should be taught in our schools.

**Sen. Tota-Maharaj:** What is the African language?

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** Mr. President, they are asking: what is the African language? There are a number of different languages. Dr. Job alluded to the fact that there are many different East Indian languages and dialects that came to this country, so I have no objection to Hindi being taught in schools. Of course, it says something about where we are taking our society. Why are we not pushing for primary education in primary schools that we should teach some Spanish because we are close to Venezuela? Why is that not of more importance than teaching Hindi in schools? I have no objection to Hindi being taught! I want it to be clear on this side that it is another language and we should be willing to talk and learn, since the more knowledge the better. Why are we not going in other directions or why are we going in that direction? I got up and asked the Minister to explain and for some reason there was no real explanation. It is a pity that the Minister does not have to wind up so as to tell us what is the real explanation for going in that direction. What is it? Why?

Again, it is a lot of things like this that make me stop and wonder, where is this Government going? Of course, there is no White Paper and they have no vision. This is our vision: "Positioning Trinidad and Tobago for the Global Age". This is the People's National Movement vision for the next 20 years. The Government does not have one. As a matter of fact, the Government does not have an executive sitting together to write a vision. The Government does not have it. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, let us go a little further—I am not going there. On page 19 the PNM talks about education and skills.

“One of PNM’s most cherished achievements has been our commitment to education;...”

I want the Government to hear it again through you, Mr. President:

“One of PNM’s most cherished achievements has been our commitment to education; our commitment to provide a free education for every member of the society at primary and secondary school levels.”

Mr. President, when we say a free education we are not coming to tell people that everybody will have free secondary education next year, by putting 10,000 children in primary schools or 5000 in primary schools and saying that they are going to the primary school and that is the beginning of the start of free secondary education for all. When we say secondary education we mean that. When we say computer in schools, we mean that. If we fall short remember what we say we mean because we are developing a society for all without discrimination. [*Desk thumping*] The Government does not seem to understand that and it gets vexed when we stand up and speak like that because it does not like us speaking like that. It is not a government that encourages speaking out. We saw it with the calypsonian; we heard his comments on the media; and we see what the Government is doing when people speak out—I do not even want to go to Tobago, but speaking out is not encouraged.

Mr. President, I hope to hear the hon. Senators from Tobago say something today on education even if it is to defend Tobago’s position.

“It is not too much to claim that one of PNM’s major contributions has been our dedication to education as the cornerstone of national development.”

The truth again, a statement of fact.

“Today, Trinidad and Tobago stands preeminently as one of the most formally-educated societies in the world.”

Mr. President, that is the truth. This is our vision.

“It is vital that education is linked to marketable skills and training, rewards innovation and encourages critical thinking. In the past, a colonial education emphasized things and ideas that were foreign while a postcolonial education encouraged a mimicking of corporate and popular cultures of the developed world. In the global age...”

This is the third phase. We went through two stages already, the colonial and the post-colonial, and Dr. Job spoke about the question of mimicking and all of that but we are not talking about that.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

“In the global age, it is essential that we place a greater emphasis on the history and culture of Trinidad and Tobago and encourage all positive manifestations of the varied strands of our cultural heritage. We must also emphasize the importance of technical education...and transform the skills of people. This will create a fertile environment for the development of our new ideas and new ways of doing things.”

**4.05 p.m.**

We sit here and do not condemn what happened in the five years we were out of power. Even this one. We take it and go along with it until they come out of power. We do not condemn it to that level. We see what is happening but we just wait because we know that the people of this country are sufficiently educated not to be fooled by them, and to deal with them effectively.

Mr. President, something sad touched me this weekend. We are talking about education. This is a Government which came into power, took the reins of this country, and one of its philosophies was to really deal with squatters; to ensure that people's homes were not broken down.

I was in Grenada, and when I read the *Sunday Express* I was saddened. They will tell us that it was on private land and that it was not the Government which broke down the houses, but these people have been appealing to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for over two months. The representative for that area has been talking to them. For a government that is not for breaking down people's homes, it is sad to see ten-year-old Adrian Philip doing his homework in front of his demolished home at Paltoo Trace, South Oropouche. Is that not a sad indictment on this Government? And they have come here to talk about education today and the little fella is sitting on his steps because he understands what PNM education is all about—that he still has to learn his work.

They talked to them but they did not even try to get housing for them. There are many unoccupied houses to which these people could go, at least for the while, until they provide some kind of accommodation for them. When we do that, they say we are giving it away, but we understand how important it is to have families together and children in their homes studying. On seeing this little fella, I thought the person who would have been touched most would have been probably the honourable Sen. Sadiq Baksh.

What are they doing? This is sad. A little fella doing homework on the steps because his house is broken down. This little fella wants to get an education. They

walk through Laventille and pick up little boys and say, “We are going to educate you,” and nothing happens. Then they come back and blame it on the little people, because they cannot be good parents or they cannot administer what they say they are going to do. This is what has been happening to us throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

We really revolutionized the education system in Trinidad and Tobago. We kicked open the doors to free education and made phenomenal increases in awarding scholarships throughout the island, regardless of race, class, colour or creed. We did it. The PNM. We continued to expand on a solid foundation which was laid in 1992—a comprehensive education system.

A total of 16 new primary schools was constructed in the following areas under the last PNM administration—but they make one believe that we did nothing—Sangre Grande, Matura, Gasparillo, Roxborough, Mason Hall, Parlatuvier, Black Rock, D'Abadie, Siparia, Mohess Road, Spring Vale, Tunapuna, Charlieville, Carapichaima and Newtown.

Six more schools were under construction when the PNM demitted office. Of course, they probably cut ribbons for one or two that they finished and said that they did it. We are cool with that. Computers were provided for 150 primary schools. The first phase of the St. Michael's School for Boys was almost completed. Post-primary centres were established. All of this is the new plan.

While I am reading this, I am again coming back to the point of the mover of this Motion. Nowhere in any of the plans and statements of this Government can one find either a direct statement or philosophy or a set of statements which one can put together and construct a philosophy. That is important and still the truth.

With respect to the School Feeding Programme, they brought breakfast into it as though it was their brainchild. The School Feeding Programme was extended because we understood how important it is for people to have meals. We understood how important bus passes were and we understood how important it was for children to be in a proper atmosphere to gain the education that was necessary. In 1992, there were 54,000 meals three times per week, and there are now 77,000 meals on a daily basis. Why are they boasting about that? Approximately 40 schools were refurbished at a cost of approximately \$50 million.

Scholarships were awarded to teachers to pursue the Bachelor of Education programme in geography. Now we are seeing that the teachers are accused of

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

being criminals. They are now being told that they must have a professional body to represent them, whatever that means, and that they should move away from the Public Services Association (PSA). The Prime Minister went on to say that if he went on to increase the people at the top, he would have to increase everybody throughout the civil service, and that would not be. Somebody will stab him in his back for attacking the media, because the media is his favourite whipping boy.

A number of sixth form places were increased and a complete review of Tech-Voc education was taken. When we talk about education, what do we see? The Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) is gone, Conservation Corps is gone, Youth Camps are gone. What is their philosophy? Why are they educating people? They move all of these systems away and then they come to tell people that because 10,000 youths are not getting 10,000 school places, they are becoming criminals.

I want to deal with that situation. Before I go there, many people say that television causes many children to become criminals. That could have some truth in it, but I look at the same television, the same criminal programmes, all of them, and that made me not want to become a criminal, because that life has no good end to it. The end is bad. The criminal always gets caught, so I choose to be the good guy. When I was young, I wanted to be the sheriff when I was watching Westerns because I felt that was the man who kept up the town. I also wanted to be the priest. I did not want to be the man drawing the wrong gun and looking to aim and shoot.

What are the youths saying now? That the criminals on the streets are because of Common Entrance. I say it is nonsense because, in any event, many of these children are absorbed. Many of them who do not pass Common Entrance want to learn a trade or do something else. They do not want the book education. When we take away the programmes that will absorb these 10,000 people, the programmes that will teach them; when we remove the vocational training from the schools, we make it harder for these youths. So, when their record is to remove YTEPP and the Conservation Corps and to close down the youth camps that are to train and educate the children of this nation, where does one expect them to go? Nowhere. That is what they are doing.

Where is the community service? Where is the development of the community centres? Where are all of these things? I do not like to keep saying that we were going to put it into effect, even though it is true, because they are trying to use that now to trivialize it when we say that. Where are the centres that

will absorb these little children and bring the elders and the youths together? That is an important aspect of education, Mr. President.

We were educated and had a different type of teaching, because where we went, the elders were always there sitting and when we made mistakes, they were quick to point it out. That is why we set up programmes like the Geriatric Adolescent Programme (GAP), so that we would bring the young people and the elders together; programmes that they have removed. They want to come and tell us about how they are trying to improve the youths. Those were the ways to keep the youths out of crime. Where is that system?

Remember our record is that we built community centres throughout the country. All over! What has happened and what we have to correct is that the community centres that we built, we built them maybe for crochet and for what our fathers were doing: Draughts and All Fours. The community has now reached to where it is playing basketball, volleyball and badminton, so we have to upgrade those centres to bring it to that, and we will do that soon. They completed one or two that we started, they cut a few ribbons, did a lot of things around it, and did nothing more after that.

The question of the school board is in our report. Mr. President, they come and tell us now that there will be no more common entrance. They came with their one book system which, again, I think caused some sort of problem with the mover of this Motion. When they spoke about their task force, many people did not want to be a part of it. We are now hearing that other people are resigning from the task force that was set up.

They talked about the Common Entrance Examination, which we talked about early, and we said that the Common Entrance Examination in its present form should continue until the prerequisites for change are fully implemented in the primary schools by 1998, and that a team of officers in the Ministry of Education should be set up no later than September 1993—because we thought that it would have been in effect by 1998—to give effect to the recommendation. After this, placement to secondary level should have been on the basis of both continuous assessment and a national examination. We are hearing that all of the time now, as though they invented that, and they did not.

When they came to this House with that Common Entrance Examination matter—Mr. President, Thursday March 26, 1998 in the *Trinidad Guardian*:

“Shabazz sceptical on CE promise.”

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

[SEN. SHABAZZ]

I told them that.

“Opposition Senator Muhammad Shabazz has called on Government to ensure that it does not “hoodwink the nation's children” regarding its promise to end the Common Entrance Examination.”

They tell them that they are moving the Common Entrance Examination and everybody is going to secondary school, that everybody should get ready for no examination. Before they moved it, they said they are giving them an examination which is a little different. It might not be the Common Entrance Examination. It might be some other name, but it is the same as a Common Entrance Examination. It is a placement exam. It is an exam! At that exam they are going to decide, just as the Common Entrance Examination assessed, who would go where, there must be a way.

**4.20 p.m.**

I do not even want to quote "Cro Cro" because they do not like to hear calypsonians, but that Common Entrance Examination thing with them could have problems, where they send who and who they send where. But I am going on.

"...does not ‘hoodwink the nation's children’..."

The article went on to say:

"He said the People's National Movement supported the Bill. All the problems the Bill seeks to address, he added, began in the five years that the PNM was not in power. He accused some members of the Government side of being part of the process that created the ‘confusion’."

The confusion goes on and on and on. Since 1998, they have been told that. They still come here with no real plan to talk about education.

"He accused Government of making promises to keep itself in power."

That is what they are doing, promises to keep themselves in power. That is all they are about, Mr. President.

Do you remember when they promised computers for every school in Trinidad and Tobago in every class? Nothing. Single parents—\$10,000 to single mothers. Nothing. That might have been a way to keep mothers cool and calm and be in a better position to direct their children away from this life of crime that they are admitting.

What about all the vehicles? They talked about crime. They are not solving crime. Why are we having crime? When the youths tell you, Mr. President—and I

often like to quote them—that it is too much prayers, they really mean too much prayers and too much talk from people like politicians, particularly those government politicians. The youths are now saying, if you understand the education, it is pure hate and acting normal. The youths are saying they are doing like them, pure hate but filling their pockets and when they tell them too much prayers, what they mean is: they are like some preachers, plenty talk, collecting all the collection and the people are not getting back any. So, the youth are saying pure hate and acting normal because that is what you all are doing, pure hate and acting normal.

How will you now be able to come back and transform these youths? It is by not "mamaguying" them. Do you know how the youths feel today? To think that there was going to be no exam and free secondary education; they would have been assessed from school and sent over. You fool them; you "mamaguy" them; you do something else. Mr. President, it is here. The words go on and on and on.

Mr. President, let me take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Carlos John—

**Sen. Tota-Maharaj:** Senator.

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** Sen. Carlos John. Well, Mr. John, to the Senate as a Senator. I take the opportunity to welcome him as a Senator.

On picking up today's newspaper, the headline said "John saddled with airport, interchange and library". If we are talking education, this library is important.

**Mr. President:** Senator, whenever you are reading from something—I have said this so many times—please identify the document from which you are reading.

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** Mr. President, I am sorry. I thought I quoted. The *Newsday* of Tuesday, May 23, page 4—"John saddled with airport, interchange and library". You walk around Port of Spain, maybe more than many of them. There is a big hole somewhere right down in town there with steel, water, mosquitoes and it has been there for over four years. It is a library, Sen. John.

We have spoken, hon. Senator, to the Senator before you. Nothing really has happened. A thing like a library which is important for the minds, for educating the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It is important. Finish it, especially for the youths in the same environs that the hon. Minister and your people are talking about, who are really committing more crime than anybody else. Finish that library so that they will go some place. I ask, before you pave all the roads, because your record as a paver is good, [*Laughter*] but before you go into all that

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

[SEN. SHABAZZ]

paving, let the library be properly done and pave the library yard in such a way that it is one of the best paved yards in downtown Port of Spain. I want you to do that. I wish you could promise. Even if you do not promise, you could do like the hon. Sen. Brig. Theodore when he says he will deliver. I say that every time he says it, he has worked and delivered. Some of the things are still in the pipeline but I believe he will deliver.

I ask, through you, Mr. President, that this hon. Minister get the library going because that is one of his responsibilities. Do not make that unimportant because they have made it unimportant and all they are saying, that library is important.

When you paved the ground up there, you said it would allow the children from the environs to play cricket and football and that might be happening because I pass and see cricket being played there, whether I agree or disagree with it is not important. When you are paving this one, do it for the children of the environs.

Do not do like them and bad talk Laventille and talk about what is wrong and feel it has nothing positive. Bad talk the children of Laventille and say what is wrong and not understand how educated they are. Bad talk them as though you are part of the solution and not part of the problem, because if Laventille people have problems, all of us, people like the hon. Minister and myself, have a problem, too. So do not talk like—

**Mr. President:** The speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. D. Montano*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. President:** The Senator may continue, but after the tea break.

The Senate is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

**4.27 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.01 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** Mr. President, thank you again, and thanks to all the other Members of the Senate for the extra time given.

Mr. President, I would just like to wind down by saying that really and truly there was a time when in the secondary schools, and moreso the junior secondary schools, there were other types of training in the school. All children, really, may

not want to go to secondary school. It is time our education system—rather than going about boasting and using the old public relations that secondary schools are for all children—look at a way for those children who do not want to go to secondary school. There are some children—I am not saying this, looking down at the children—that it really does not make any sense sending them just for a secondary education to get O' and A' levels and go to tertiary education. We have to look for a way to deal with those children; let them feel acceptable.

What this Government ought to do at this point in time is develop the sporting and cultural facilities and give children more room. There should be whole day schools for music. There should be whole day schools of the arts. There should be whole day schools for sports and other activities like that, because these things are very important, and pay very much more money. Dwight Yorke, as a footballer, makes more money than probably 10 or 20 doctors put together in Trinidad and Tobago. That is important.

We have calypsonians and musicians travelling around the world making more money than anybody. We also have Brian Lara. Let us find ways to develop these cultural things and to educate the people in these ways so as to make the thing go better. Everybody will not be able to go to secondary school, and our system must not make children feel that if they do not pass exams they are failures, if they do not have three or five O' levels, they have failed. This is the progressive thinking. Rather than compete with the People's National Movement education system, let them do something, bring something new to say yes, we have looked at it and we have found a way to develop it and to make it better. Let us go this way, Mr. President.

Let us try to get tertiary education back to where it was; where more people were able to access it at very little money or possibly going for free. Let us look at that. Let us widen it. Let us try to instil a better kind of esteem in the teachers of our schools. Let us not be fighting them. Let us not try to make them feel that they are worthless or useless. Let us try, on the whole, to develop the teachers at all levels; from primary school to university and give them better conditions, and reach out to them, let them come together and set up a policy to move forward to help the nation's children. This will indeed be better. Let this Government be involved in more consultation and discussion. Let them not just get up and, because they want this, say we want that. Let them be more involved in consulting with the rest of the people as the PNM did throughout its years, in order to keep peace and know that really and truly what they are doing is the will of the people.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

Mr. President, I am one of the people who feel that these parliamentary debates, really, should be on the television. I feel that—governments have come before, I have heard it spoken under one government—maybe we should put these debates on the television. When we hear these debates—many times we hear contributions coming from the Independent Benches, even from the Government Benches and, of course, from this side—what we need to do is to let other people hear them. Let them understand, because I have met people 60 and 70 years old who talked about what the Government did, and they have never attended Parliament. Let it be put on the television. Let it be there so that people can see. *[Desk thumping]* We have nothing to hide. We are not afraid of anything. We will do it in the next five years when we get back, after this year, Mr. President. Let it be done. Let it be put on the television so that people could see what happens and people could hear and understand.

Mr. President, I want to make an appeal for a school in Icacos. I think the Icacos Government School is in a church. It has been in a church for the longest while. It is a school in one of the constituencies of one of the Government Members. Let them do something about that school. There is no ventilation in that church. The children are really under pressure and bawling. Let them take things and look at things like that, and let us develop—again, my plea—this society in a holistic way.

Let the education system not just be about common entrance. Because the PNM went there they are only focussing on common entrance and free secondary education. Let them know that that is not what it is all about, Mr. President. Let them understand. It is nice to hear Sen. Prof. Kenny say that by coming to the Senate he has learnt a lot. Let people understand what is happening in here. Let them know that education is not solely about common entrance and three and five O'levels. Let them work on it. Let them do their best, and we will support them for the next few months while they are in power. We are very much willing to support them but let them work on it and work on it from that angle.

Another point I want to appeal for, Mr. President, and it is a final point, is religious education in schools. I feel the whole question of religion, in the last four years, has become an issue that should not be. Whatever religion people belong to, let their religious instructions be taught in school. *[Desk thumping]* Because we really cannot develop a society without teaching our children and the people about God.

**Sen. Alfred:** Thank you.

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** Whatever form they see God, however they believe or know God, as long as it is not something negative and it is something positive, let religious instructions be taught and let the schools and the children be taught to pray. [*Desk thumping*] As a matter of fact, I feel a way to develop this school—I feel we have reached a kind of stage in this country because really and truly while the PNM walked with God, some people chose to sleep with the devil. While they are sleeping with the devil, let us continue to walk with God, and let us ask those people who chose to sleep with the devil to walk with God, and walk with God in the kind of a way—because I feel that right now we should call on all the 60 and 70 year-olds in the nation to say a prayer at a certain time of the day. You cannot talk education—when you look at the type of crimes committed in this country, it tells you that something is affecting the minds of the people.

**Sen. Alfred:** That is right.

**Sen. M. Shabazz:** The people are not satisfied with something, and we cannot have this kind of a way that the Government—I must say this—in a way subtly tries to influence your mind to do what they want you to do. There is an important thing in the school system. There was a time when they wanted to put the Prime Minister's picture on every copybook that they sent through the system; they tried to catch the people with that. They have found a new way to get his picture in people's pockets. That is the way they like to go and that is a frightening thing for what is going to happen in Trinidad and Tobago, if they keep chipping at that free system and the educational system.

**5.10 p.m.**

It is fair to say that they are trying to build a new image of themselves or their leader in order to win the next elections, and they are paying millions to do that because their record against ours cannot stand. They are bringing people in to create a new image of themselves; that is not who they really are. Their fear is that the education system will make people understand, but the people are so educated that that will not fool them. [*Desk thumping*] That is what frightens them. It will shock them like July last year. They will even be more shocked, because the people are educated and cannot be fooled by public relations mamaguy. From lyrics to gimmicks, that is where they are now. They were on one set of lyrics, now they are on one set of gimmicks; mamaguy thing.

Talking about education, how could you tell people to make everybody your friend, at least, until after the elections; nonsense! When you know what a man is

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

weak for and you give it to him, you will be able to control him; it is happening all the time. This is not the kind of education and lessons that we want. I heard somebody say—well, that is a whole thing about the system and it is bad education—give your friends what they want, whatever it might be; whatever type of licence, whether it be a bar or cellular licence, whatever, but give your friends what they want. [*Laughter*] Let them have what they want and keep your friends nice and as long as they are happy everything will be all right. I do not want to go to the topsoil issue, because there is a question here. The topsoil has disappeared; we do not know whether it went to friends or family, that is not the point.

The point is, Mr. President, let us not only take care of the people around us; let us not only take care of the people who supported and voted for us. Let us be broadminded and liberal enough to do as the People's National Movement did, continues to do and will continue to do. Let us be a government by the people, of the people and for the people.

If the calypsonians are not for you, leave them alone; let them say what they have to say. Those who are not for you, leave them alone. If the teachers are not on your side, leave them alone; they will appreciate you more. If the media is not on your side, do not only talk about them; leave them alone. All that is part of their scholastic education and the development of all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It is that type of education that will make them know that all of us have a space in Trinidad and Tobago.

Before I sit, Mr. President, I want to tell the hon. Minister that the road from Laventille starting in Chinapoo, going straight up the hill has not been paved. After they painted the tanks and did not get the type of support they wanted, they left. Children who have to go to school, who have to be educated, are passing on rough roads, because the Government no longer cares about Laventille, but they will try to show that they care in the next two or three weeks or the next six months. They have brought a paving expert now to make sure, after they clear the logjams. I have no objection to that, but please, besides the library, look at the road over the Laventille Hill to Chinapoo.

To the hon. Senator for Laventille, the back road has some potholes, look at them. You want to be sure that you are balancing the thing.

Mr. President, with those words, I am asking this Government to know that we are willing to support them. I wish, from here on, that the other Government speakers will now tell us what is the philosophy; what is that Government doing and what they are about as far as the education system that the PNM has provided

and made strong and positive. What are they doing to keep it up or to direct it in a positive way.

**Sen. Jearlean John:** Mr. President, Sen. Prof. Ramchand in his opening contribution made some statements. To put my own contribution into context, I just want to quote briefly when he said:

“...education does not take place in a vacuum: it takes place in a society, and while the educational provision is being made, we have to look at what is going on in the society. Education is about giving people the atmosphere and environment to do what they came in the world to do; to fulfil themselves; to be secure; to be happy; to be doing in the world.”

The Government has been asked by Sen. Prof. Ramchand to outline its philosophy on education. He also made the point that money is being spent, lots of it and, really, to what end.

In my mind the Government had some stated objectives. You do not need a tome of books to say, “education for all”, it is simple, but it encompasses everything that we want to achieve, and no child would be deprived of a secondary school place. I want to quote from the *Trinidad Guardian* of April 25 from the World educators for Senegal forum:

“The major challenge for the years ahead will be to provide quality education for all. New partnerships with parents, teachers and community groups will be needed to achieve this goal.

Poverty is the single most important factor explaining the inability to meet target goals set by governments.

In a world with 700 million people living in 42 highly indebted countries, the primary goal of education must be to overcome poverty. It is the most daunting challenge of all.”

After the Government said “education for all” it dovetailed it into a simple vision of a total quality nation. Mr. President, education and the development of human resources hold the key to economic growth in the 21st Century.

Trinidad and Tobago is at that point when we have to review our fundamentals and we have been doing that. We are, however, not unique in that, because I believe that in looking at the Government’s philosophy, one has to also look at what has happened in various economies, especially the developed economies which we so admire.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. J. JOHN]

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

It was opportune that just after this Motion was presented in this Senate, the *Economist* of April 1st—7th dealt with the American education system. Education, as a matter of fact, has become an election issue, because they fight their election, it seems, on issues. [*Laughter*]

The *Economist* says:

“This election year may finally bring Americans face to face with the failure of their system of public education. The confrontation will be painful: 30 years of decline cannot be easily reversed. But, if the right lessons are drawn, they could make American schools models for the world once again.”

They have gone back to first principles. This is probably one of the most admired countries in the world.

The article goes on:

“America’s education system is in the sort of crisis that Detroit’s car industry faced in the 1970s, before Japanese imports almost destroyed it in the 1980s. Teachers and parents are uneasily aware that something is wrong but have little idea how bad matters really are.”

They went on and on and said:

“Poor education lies behind the looming problem of inequality, between the new economy’s winners and losers.”

We need to be confronted with what is happening with people who have had their independence long before ours, to really understand the extent of the problem that we are facing.

In terms of trying to make a case, I know that the man that is very admired in this Chamber is Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. I want to quote again from a book in his own words. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew asked:

“How do you produce this sort of structure: top leaders, good executives, well-disciplined and highly civic-conscious broad mass?”

That is the rank and file.

“I say it goes back to the school and the teacher. And the school or the teacher is a very personal thing. We have expanded all these schools so fast, you might as well now call these schools by numbers—School No. 75 or School No. 85.

To me just reading the Cabinet paper from the Ministry of Education of our requirements for secondary schools and about there being no need for more

primary schools, my mind goes back to the day I went to school... and the end of life..."

The point was made here that education is a continuum.

The article continues:

"...with the teachers who were in charge of me.

You know, the school must have character; it must belong. You cannot have anonymous schools and anonymous teachers."

You see, Mr. President, we are not unique in returning to the fundamental building blocks. From America to Singapore they are doing basically the same thing, restructuring their education system. So the creation and implementation of the school boards which was before this honourable Senate a few weeks ago, I believe, is a clear indication that the Government recognizes the need for a point of reference and involvement from community at all levels.

In making the point of universal ownership—and I think Dr. Morgan Job also made the point, that it is everybody's responsibility. I refer to my own background. I am from Charlotteville, Tobago, Sen. Shabazz—he is not here. I was born in Charlotteville—I was not born in Scarborough—raised by grandparents in a house with no running water or electricity. I could hardly remember missing a day from the Charlotteville Methodist School, but you knew that when your grandmother sent you on an errand—these were the building blocks—you had to get back before her spit dried. You knew that at six o'clock, all "zandolie" had to find their hole; she did not have to reinforce that every day.

If you misbehaved in school, teachers could punish you and it was expected that they could do that all the time. Of course, very good Samaritan neighbour would go home and carry the news before you got there and you would be punished all over again when you got home. You were left with no ambiguity with regard to your parents expectations for your own good conduct; this was not negotiable. At the Charlotteville Methodist School the motto was "The Heights of Great Men Reached and Kept..." and so forth.

Now this little poem has become one of my own personal guiding philosophies; I never forgot it. There was a library in Charlotteville—who would believe that in that time—under Mrs. Emile's house, with books from wall to wall. Basically, I think that every child in Charlotteville belonged to that library. That was your status symbol, to have a card to that library; that was all you needed. Televisions could not work in Charlotteville because of the hills, but

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. J. JOHN]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

having the books and having old men on the beach every single day debating about life and world leaders, I learnt about Martin Luther, Napoleon Bonaparte and Winston Churchill on the beach.

My grandfather would tell you about it in graphic detail at the top of his voice when he was drunk. Basically, you learnt to think and stretch your imagination. It helped you to develop unparalleled capacity. Finally, my last image that I want to share, the impression of my little village, was of these old men just drumming literature and history into you as a child, informally. So we were educated for life.

In 1998, when I was negotiating on behalf of a company in Philadelphia and the President of the company stopped the negotiation and said, "Miss John you have lived in America." I said, "No." He said, "You have lived in Canada." I said, "No." He said, "But you can negotiate with..." I said, "No, that I got from Charlotteville Tobago." I had skills and tools for living. So education is a life long process. It went beyond the narrow confines of the schoolroom.

Mr. President, there was an interconnectivity and a nexus between home, a strict disciplinarian grandmother, the school, and debating educated village elders. You had no choice but to fully comprehend what made great men reach dizzying heights. You knew, because they imparted that knowledge to you. They linked us all, nurtured and encouraged us. In Charlotteville, the Swahili proverb of "it takes a village" was actualized.

Now the world has since changed and televisions now work in Charlotteville. I am sure that they have computers and access to the Internet. They are now part of a global village; they have become part of it. I think what our education system will have to address now is, how does Charlotteville fit into all of this? How will it compete? How is it affected? In our own philosophy on education we must be able to respond to questions such as: What will we do for work? What are we being educated for?

Tom Peters, that great American management guru, has made the claim in the *Time* magazine last week that he believed 90 per cent of the white collar jobs in the United States would either be destroyed or altered beyond recognition, in the next 10 to 15 years. That is a catastrophic prediction. What is that child from Charlotteville going to do? What are we going to do in Trinidad and Tobago as a whole?

**5.25 p.m.**

Mr. President, the jobs have all changed, it is not a Trinidad and Tobago phenomena, it is a global phenomena because we have just been taken on this

super highway of moving from the industrial age to the information age and I am hearing now that it is changing rapidly into the bio-economic age, because whereas you would see where the technology is going, you can see a woman on the beach sunbathing, very soon you will be able to smell the coconut oil from her suntan lotion. That is where the technology is taking us.

A decade ago, who would have guessed that the web designer would have been one of the hottest jobs? And what would replace the tech economy? These are the questions our own education system must be tailored to respond to.

Mr. President, drastic change is afoot and Trinidad and Tobago must be flexible and upgradeable. I know we are working on getting the education fundamentals right because it is a philosophy, but it is more than that, it goes even beyond that. A philosophy is the underpinning factor, but it goes way beyond that in terms of the right fit. As Sen. Prof. Ramchand said, we cannot educate in a vacuum. Yes, we have to decide where our energies must be concentrated now and move fearlessly. This global village, of course, will not wait.

Again, this week I was reading where the company earmarked to become the No.1 in the Fortune 500 index, Wal-mart, in this fiscal year their revenues will be over US \$200 billion. That is a lot of money, and we are in this little two by four place trying to compete. We have to really move speedily into getting our education system in full gear. Just think for a minute the amount of money that \$200 billion is, and that is the environment in which we are competing.

Mr. President, in Trinidad and Tobago we continue to talk about the possibilities and how infinite they are, and not acting upon them, we are not actualizing them, but again, through this whole aggressive move with education on the part of the Government, I am sure we will be able to do that. We cannot, of course, legislate ambition in this Senate, but we can provide the facilitatory environment which brings together responsible and enthusiastic parents, well-trained teachers, high-quality schools, and a vision of excellence for Trinidad and Tobago tomorrow.

Mr. President, I thank you.

**Mr. President:** Congratulations to Sen. Jearlean John on her maiden contribution. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Laila Valere:** Mr. President, thank you for this opportunity. The main hope of our nation lies in the proper education of our children. That was said by a very wise man, Erasmus, and it is for us to ask now: "Are we providing a proper education for our children?" We need to consider the question which Sen. Prof.

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. VALERE]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

Ramchand proposed in his Motion. What is education? What is education for? And more specifically, what is the policy or philosophy of this Government that is directing and guiding its actions? We need to consider these fundamental questions.

The hon. Minister of Education had stated that the Government is using a holistic approach to education and I want to quote from the *Policy Paper (1993—2003) National Task Force on Education* to see if this is what she was talking about.

“That the educational system of Trinidad and Tobago must endeavour to develop a spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually and emotionally sound individual.”

Is that what holistic is about? Is it about the total development of the individual? That sounds very good. Then there is hope for our nation. Can you just visualize for a moment all our young graduates from secondary schools walking out into society as spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually, and emotionally sound individuals? That would be paradise. Actually, that sounds much more exciting to me than the gas and the oil finds. Because if you visualize a little further, if all these gas and oil finds are managed by these spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually, emotionally sound individuals, then that would really lead us to prosperity. If that is what education is for, and that is the direction in which we are going, then there is hope for this nation. But we are a long way from that, are we not? If we are really serious about a holistic development, then we have much work to do.

Let us look, first of all, at what we are teaching our children in the schools. Let us look at the curriculum. Right now what do we have? We have an elitist, academic, left brain education system—very elitist, and all left brain oriented. As a matter of fact, the right brain skills are all trivialized: the creative, the artistic, the emotional are all trivialized and suppressed. What do we have here? We have a system that belittles the technical and vocational skills. That is not total development, is it? Our curriculum has to be totally changed if we are really going to produce emotionally and mentally sound individuals. We have to look at the curriculum first.

I have to compliment the Government and the Prime Minister for promising—I hope it comes into reality—secondary education for all. That is long overdue, and I think it is a very good move, but it cannot stop there because what we will be doing then would be providing more of what we have now: Children and

young persons coming out of the schools not properly developed where, systematically, their self-worth has been destroyed in an educational system that only focuses on academic, very elitist, left-brain development. We cannot do that, otherwise these new schools will turn out to be like holding units for four or five years for these children who do not have left-brain aptitudes. It will be like one giant national babysitting system. We are going to be having and putting out into the community more children who are unprepared to face the challenges of the society as it is today. So the curriculum has to be changed, that is absolutely essential.

Technical and vocational subjects must be given equal status. Everyone is not left brain oriented, and everyone does not have the aptitude for academia. So are we going to neglect them—more than 50 per cent of our young people? We cannot do that. We are setting these children up to fail by putting them back into those schools and into those same systems. So while we have those schools, we have the opportunity to provide for the needs of these children. I feel that this is an opportunity for us to provide a syllabus that meet the needs of all children there. The whole syllabus has to be revolutionized. I know it is a monumental and daunting task because, like I said, we should not be looking at just left brain education. We should also focus on the right brain, and what is more correct—whole brain education—developing both sides of the brain. The brain works synergistically, so if one side of the brain is ignored, you are having children coming out lopsided, and halfway developed. So we need to go with a system that offers them subjects like music and art—that they can do. There must be an open system where a child can say—and this is in the future—I would like to do science, I want to do physics, but I also want to do art or music.

**Hon. Senator:** Or paving.

**Sen. L. Valere:** Or paving. *[Laughter]* Or whatever. If we are going to teach them paving, let us teach them well, and let us structure it in the syllabus so that they learn from early how to pave well, and when to pave, and where to pave. Whatever we teach them must be structured, but it must be an open system where they can have whole brain development. We do not want lopsided graduates.

That is something I feel is very important and that is why what disturbs me here is the new Secondary Entrance Examination that replaces the Common Entrance Examination. I have spent some time looking at a “Report of the Task Force for the Removal of the Common Entrance Examination presented to the Honourable Minister of Education on September 01, 1998” and I am very

disturbed by some of the things in the report. It says that they are limiting the Secondary Entrance Examination to mathematics and language arts.

I do understand part of the rationale for that, because if you have 50 per cent of the children unprepared in literacy and numeracy skills, then they will not be adequately prepared for secondary school. I can understand your saying: "All right, we need to focus on these subjects a bit more." But does that mean excluding the other subjects as though those subjects do not matter? I am wondering if it is more time they need or a different methodology the way these students are taught? Maybe that is what is causing the high rate of failure. Maybe we do not need to give them more time in it. There are more effective ways of teaching. What it says in the report is:

"The task force is not convinced that the limiting of the Secondary Entrance Examination to Mathematics and Language Arts will automatically mean that subject areas that are not examined will not be taught or that they will be neglected."

These other subject areas are subjects like music and the literary arts and all the other social sciences. I am convinced that they will be neglected simply because human beings are human beings, and parents, children and teachers are going to focus on what they are going to be examined on because that is what is getting them into secondary school; that is what is going to determine their preparedness.

Even though the report said that other subjects are going to form an integral part, they are saying that these are not as important as Mathematics and English. I beg to differ. As a matter of fact, what I would like to see is life skills taught and these children examined on life skills because children need life skills at any age, we need them all through the system, but since primary school education is the foundation, I think we should start teaching them life skills early. Teach them how to manage and discipline themselves, how to show gratitude, how to manage their fears and anxieties, how to protect themselves, how to build up their self-confidence so they are not going to fall victims to drugs and all the other anti-social behaviours. We need to teach them life skills which are equally important as Mathematics and English. They will be more prepared for secondary education if they are examined on Mathematics, English and life skills. If we are going the holistic way, let us put in life skills because this will include moral values, social values and emotional competencies.

To continue with what Sen. Prof. Ramchand was saying—you have to look at the society, you have to meet the needs of the individual when you are developing an educational policy, and you also have to look at the needs of the society because the effectiveness of any educational system can be judged by the attitudes and patterns of behaviour of the members of the society. I do not have to go into details about what is happening in our society. We can all see the increase in crime, road rage, hostility, aggressiveness, violence in the homes, violence in schools, grisly murders—all examples of negative emotions out of control. I repeat negative emotions out of control. These are all indications of a desperate need for education in understanding and managing emotions—for developing the emotional intelligence of our citizens.

**5.40 p.m.**

Our people do not know how to control their negative emotions. The emotional competency is nil. They are emotionally deficient and that begins in the schools. Here is an opportunity to teach them the emotional competencies—in the schools. That is the life-skills programme I am trying to make a plea for in our schools, because I think it is as important as Mathematics and English; it is important for the academic; it is as important for the non-academic, because the academic students who are graduates are just as vulnerable to drugs and any other anti-social behaviour as the non-academic. So life-skills should be compulsory in the schools. Children must learn to manage and express their emotions appropriately! There are many programmes on life-skills all over the world—I must tell you this—this is not anything new.

Canada has one called Emotional Smarts structured and time tabled in the school—very successful; England is using the Tact Life-Skills Programme and in the United States of America there are so many of them such as the Self Science Curriculum. And we talk about using Singapore as a model; they have a model educational system. They have introduced life-skills as compulsory in their education system. That is why they are so self-disciplined. You see there are multiple intelligences, not only intellectual intelligence, there is moral intelligence, emotional intelligence and social intelligence. We have to look at all of these intelligences. The emotional intelligence is just as important as the intellectual intelligence. That comes from the right brain, by the way. We must seek for balance and to develop the whole brain.

So, especially in our secondary school system we need to start teaching the children, in a structured way, how to manage their emotions; how to manage their

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. VALERE]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

anger; their frustrations; their fears; their anxieties; how to handle their positive emotions; how to show love; how to show gratitude; compassion; how to show empathy; we need to teach them how to nurture relationships and to maintain them, so that they become good team players. They must learn how to settle conflicts peacefully. In our society everybody feels that they have to score the goal; everybody feels that they have to be a Dwight Yorke. That is impossible. We need all the team players. That is one of the problems we have; we do not teach our children and our young people to be team players. Children who learn to be team players; who learn to develop all these emotional competencies, are better equipped to face the world.

Do you know research in this area has shown now that intellectual intelligence is responsible for only 20 per cent of your success, and that your emotional intelligence is what carries you through life. You do not wear your certificate on your chest as you are walking down the road. And we all need that emotional intelligence. We cannot trivialize that subject in the schools. Life skills must be taught in every school in Trinidad and Tobago. That is vitally important.

As a matter of fact, in all of these new secondary schools that we are putting out, if we start teaching life skills in these schools, then the students could graduate with a certificate in life skills. Do you know that would better help them to get a job than if they graduate only with a CXC certificate? Because it is telling the employer that this person is a good team player; and this person can manage himself or herself well—he or she is more balanced and more disciplined and he or she has the greater potential to be good employees. So we need to have the life skills in all the schools.

I am making a special case for life skills because I really feel very passionate about it. I am a psychologist and I see what is happening to children today. The young people are coming out from schools demoralized, depressed with no hope. They come out and create havoc in the society and then we want to punish them for a behaviour that we supported. All these anti-social behaviours are as a result of going to schools where their needs are not being met. They are being frustrated in the schools. They are not prepared to face society. So if we are going to give them total development; if we are really saying holistic development we have to go that way. We have to give equal value to life skills; we have to give equal value to the technical and vocational skills; we have to have an open system where they can choose whatever they want to do, to develop their own aptitudes and potential. We cannot continue this way ignoring half of our population or more than half of our population of young children.

I know that this is a very daunting task, and it is not only the curriculum that needs to be changed. If we are looking at the needs of the children, we have to look at the needs of the teachers too, because they are going to be providing this education and they would have to be retrained; they have to be professionalized; their dignity must be given back to them; they must be restored to a position where they feel a commitment to the service rather than feeling sidelined and being criminalized. We need to look after our teachers because they are responsible for developing the most important resource in this country—the human resource. So we have to look after our teachers.

We have to look at the methodology we are using to teach. We have to look at deshifting the junior secondary school system because the amount of psychological damage we are doing to those students in the junior secondary schools is very serious. I do not know how we could repair that. They are branded failures before they even go into these schools. And then they are subjected to a systematic destruction of their self-worth. We have to deshift that whole system. That is critically important.

So what I am saying here is that improving the education system involves more than just removing the 11 plus exam and providing secondary schools for all. I commend those actions as a sign of the beginning of a change process. It is a monumental task but I feel if we really do have a philosophy and we align all the actions to that philosophy of a holistic education, then we will turn out students from our schools—who are spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally sound individuals. This is the hope of our nation.

Mr. President, I thank you for this opportunity to make my contribution.

**Sen. Winston John:** Mr. President, when I listened to Sen. Valere it really adds a form of fuel to the fire that burns within me. It took me back to some years while I was in Scarborough Secondary School, there was a teacher whose name was Ms. Greene. She taught me some basic principles in life which I have never let go and that has lent me the opportunity to live for 18 years now, a married life, which is so blessed with bliss that when I walk on the road and I hold my wife's hand I still can feel that tingle there. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. President, there are many things that teach us in life, sometimes the sun teaches best, other times the moon is our best teacher. Today, in my mind, Sen. Valere has really stood out. I choose this opportunity to welcome Sen. Carlos John. *[Desk thumping]* It now makes us a formidable force within the walls of

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. W. JOHN]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

this honoured Chamber hence I may ask Sen. John Spence to turn his name around so as to lend greater strength. *[Laughter]*

**5.50 p.m.**

While I contemplated, Mr. President, the idea of preparing for this debate on Sen. Prof. Ramchand's motion, there are certain conflicts that manifested in my mind. I will hint at some of them. One is, the Senator in his contribution said that he did not want too much homework. He also mentioned that the country does not want too much homework. Then he turned and said, "Say what you like". Likewise, Sen. John Spence and Prof. Kenny have been challenging us on this side to get up and talk and to take away the so-called whip so that we will be able to speak freely.

If, however, I took those conflicts that manifested in my mind I would just say what education is, simply, what it is for and just state a two-word philosophy and sit, because the professor does not want too much homework, but I decided not to follow that line. Also, Mr. President, Sen. Shabazz has been harassing us from week to week saying things like, "Why do we not talk about Tobago?" and, "Why do we sit here saying nothing?"

I know this barrage of challenges that keeps coming over makes me feel that maybe the Senator wanted us to speak as an unorganized group, but I think we stood the test of time and you would have seen that today Sen. Jearlean John spoke, and Dr. Job, who incidentally is another Tobagonian, also spoke. So here I am, Mr. President, walking the thin line as suggested by Sen. John Spence, knowing that if I slip then my time will be much shorter than I expected. It means I have to run the risk. That risk is the possibility that I will be classed with a group of people who correct the Common Entrance Examination in Barbados, but I do not think that will come across for me.

Mr. President, I remember the various brothers and sisters in Trinidad and Tobago whom I meet on the streets. Every time I meet them they will say, "Sen. John, we want to hear you. You must talk about us, talk about poor people, talk about what is happening." I recognize what they want is someone with whom they could identify to speak on their behalf. I mean, many of the Senators here definitely speak for the people, but somewhere along the line, that link is not there. We seem to be having a missing link from time to time so that there is this amount of agitation, confrontation happening in society where the masses feel that the people in the Senate and in Parliament are not truly representing the masses, but themselves. I think that is a fallacy that we must all collectively work to get

rid of. Since I am new to the Senate, Mr. President, and since I might not be too *au courant* with all the Standing Orders and such, I hope that you will please bear with me if I may transgress from time to time.

Sen. Ramchand in his motion made some remarkable statements and I would like to quote some of these statements starting now. He said:

“Mr. President, the first thing I want to make clear is that I, for one, and am sure the country is appreciative of the fact that the Government is going to great effort and is spending a lot of money on education. The Government has said that it regards education as crucial to the development of our society and it has not only said so, it has allocated funds to develop education.

The plans for education, again, are commendably comprehensive. There is a wish to cover the entire spectrum from early childhood education through primary, through secondary and through tertiary. Having followed the main spine, the Government is aware of adult education, special education and they are taking care of the dropouts from the mainline in the system.”

Mr. President, the last line there that talked about the adults, the special education and taking care of the dropouts, this is one of the points that kept bothering me from time to time. You see, we all expect our children to be educated within a unit like a factory but this factory time-frame maybe lasts from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. or 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. and after that time the children are either on their own or home. That is a time that is quite critical and very important to the educational process.

At home, if there is no parent to guide the child or to help them with their homework, no male figurehead in the family, Mr. President, we have a problem there. Boys like to talk about their father, that role model, and we need to make sure that parenting is a part of the educational system, because if we do not produce proper, good, intelligent parents, with all the education that we think about putting into the children, it will not work. I must commend the Senator for the positive statement he has made. He is quite aware of the Government’s intention and, as he honestly said, the Government is putting their money where their mouth is.

I will quote another passage where the Senator said:

“Mr. President, education does not take place in a vacuum; it takes place in a society, and while the educational provision is being made, we have to look at what is going on in the society. Look at all the wonderful things that we are

doing about education. I am sure you have noticed that although we are doing all these wonderful things or we want to do these wonderful things in education; we see crime, violence, victimization of women, children and old people; disorder, disrespect. In many ways, even while we are spending millions and millions of dollars on education and training, our society seems to be in crisis.”

That is a statement of fact, Mr. President. It is reality. It shows that the Senator is quite abreast of the present situation in Trinidad and Tobago.

I will use a final quotation from his contribution, which goes like this:

“Education is about giving people the atmosphere and environment to do what they came in the world to do; to fulfil themselves; to be secure; to be happy; to be doing in the world. That is what education is for: to produce educated people who do the things that they came into the world to do. If education is not there to produce educated persons and if it is not producing educated persons, then something is wrong.”

My simple definition for education, Mr. President, is the acquiring of knowledge and skill to effect positive decision and action throughout our lifetime. Within that framework, there is also the training, the skills and that sort of thing. Knowledge is power. To have knowledge the people must be informed. There can be no democracy—I am going into political education forum—where leaders act in secrecy. The poorest man, even the illiterate man, must be informed about what the political leadership and politicians are doing for his or her welfare.

As has been said earlier, we all talk about education and we are talking about educating the children but no one from time to time seems to be dealing with the children from whatever stage we have, primary, secondary, tertiary, so as to let them be part of the planning stage where they could say what they want for themselves, because the children nowadays are not the children of yesteryear. The things that my little child will tell me now I wonder within my mind: I could never have told my father those things.

I never had that kind of freedom with my father that my children are having with me now. As a matter of fact, my children are sometimes my bosses. They tell me, “Daddy, make sure you come home tonight”, and I have to be there. I make sure that I give my children that sort of privilege that they would recognize that they are important and they are part of the decision-making, especially in the home. My home comes to me as a kingdom. I am the king, the wife is the queen,

the children are the princes and princesses and they must help to make some of the decisions in respect of what is going to happen to them and what is going to happen to us in a holistic way.

Education, Mr. President, is for responsible citizenship and it means that all leaders must empower people with information so that people would not be ignorant of any kind of investment that is done for the people, and that is done on their behalf. The best project for the people without their knowledge is not good for freedom. You cannot empower people by leaving them ignorant. That is the way to tyranny, not the way to liberty, and what we want for our people is liberty. We want freedom, we want respect and we want equality.

So, therefore, education is that vehicle through which freedom can be achieved; freedom from oppression, freedom from servitude; economic freedom, political freedom, religious freedom. Any kind of freedom one may talk about, education is the basis and the vehicle through which we go, therefore education is a right of every citizen. It is definitely a right of every citizen and whenever any government at all improves the total intellectual standard or educational standard of the population, that is nothing to boast about. That was their duty because governments and leadership in government must recognize from time to time that they are not the bosses *per se*, they are but the servants of the people. They have been put there, paid to do a particular job and they are accountable to the people.

So whatever achievement a government makes is not something to go boasting about, because with everything we do, the human race has evolved from time to time. What this one did in that time the others develop and therefore it is a collective situation. We are all collectively responsible for all the errors, all the wrongdoing, all the crimes and all the disenchantment that our people perceive, or people live through. It is our collective responsibility to solve all of those problems and to put in place policies, plans or whatever programmes to solve those sorts of things.

In Tobago, Mr. President, the total number of secondary school places available is inadequate. To achieve higher education Tobagonians must travel to Trinidad or travel overseas and this has led over the years to a suppression of the educational achievements within my little island, Tobago. It also led to a brain drain because most of the people with whom I went to school, once they are of a certain standard they must migrate. To get job opportunities, they have to migrate. To improve their education they have to migrate. Sen. Jearlean John did the same thing. She migrated to Trinidad, however, I am happy to hear that she has her

*Education (Philosophy and Purpose)*  
[SEN. W. JOHN]

*Tuesday, May 23, 2000*

roots back in Tobago. That sort of brain drain in Tobago, Mr. President, has led to a kind of suppression of my people to the extent that, as you may say, mediocracy seems to be the norm in Tobago whereby the diplomatic, logical, systematic approach to handling crises and problems is not there. From time to time I see that my people appear to be non-achievers in their own land because the system is so designed.

Mr. President, my belief is that education is holistic in nature. Every aspect of the human being must be dealt with and you cannot deal with education as though it is simply a project. Education must be a way of life.

**6.05 p.m.**

Mr. President, as I said, it moves from stage to stage and to educate ourselves is our collective responsibility. We can at no time leave that solely to the politician, otherwise we will always find ourselves subjected to the whims and fancies of politicians. I do not think that is what our country desires. We desire that education and our lifestyles must be developed so that Trinidad and Tobago could take its rightful place among the nations of the world. I think when you look at all the Third World countries, Trinidad and Tobago so far has been doing well compared to other countries such as our mother land Africa, India and so forth. Trinidad and Tobago has really come a long way and what we should do is to build on what has been set by our predecessors, our forefathers. They have worked hard for us and we should not let them down. We should continue in that vein.

Mr. President, so I can surely appreciate the burning desire of Sen. Prof. Ramchand, having listened to him, I know that his words will add fuel to the hopes that burn within our people out there. The society is really totally concerned with the efforts that have been made in respect of our educational system. As the Senator has rightly said, the society is slowly disintegrated with murders, rapes, robberies, corruption and so forth, and this is certainly not what we want and we are not educating our people for that.

When I walk through Port of Spain, I see so many of our youths on the streets. These are people who were not able to make the right decisions or right choices. I am certain that is because they were not educated in a holistic way. I have seen the example of what has been happening to others. In Tobago there is a place called: "Ants Nest" which is quickly becoming a boiling cauldron for AIDS and drugs such as cocaine. I hate to mention that here because in the minds of people and a lot of us here, Tobago is about a place of bliss and a natural heritage. I hope that we will be able to provide a place for them so that it will not shock us in the future.

Mr. President, the philosophy of education for me must be based on the empowerment of the masses. We have to use all that we have such as all the squares, like Woodford Square; all schools, departments, cooperatives, village councils, credit unions, and all our resources, human and otherwise, must play a part. Our leaders must show that they are responsible and that they are educated enough to sacrifice from time to time their foolish ego in order to benefit the people in totality.

I choose this moment to mention one guy with whom I had worked, brother Vernon Glean, during the days when I was greatly involved with the union. Vernon Glean was one of my mentors and the beauty about it is that regardless of how big he was, you could have sat at his feet and learnt from his experience. He made you feel as though you were with a father figure, and that is the kind of thing that we should have, where people would recognize one another for their worth, so that everybody would be able to make a contribution.

Mr. President, when we look at the past few months where we have lost so many of our prominent citizens, we must think whether we are able to replace all those role models who have passed on.

Mr. President, thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark):** Mr. President, before moving to adjourn the Senate, let me just remind my colleagues that on Thursday, May 25, 2000 we are going to be back. We are going to deal with Motions Nos. 1 and 2 on today's Order Paper. We will deal with Motion No. 2 first and Motion No. 1 after. We shall then proceed to Bills Nos. 1 and 2 and take them conjointly, continuing that debate. Then we will proceed to Bill No. 5, the Homes for Older Persons Bill. If there is time we will begin Bill No. 4, the Rent Restriction Act, Chap. 59:50.

I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Thursday, May 25, 2000 at 10.30am.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.13 p.m.*