

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, April 19, 2005***SENATE***Tuesday, April 19, 2005*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I wish to advise that the President of the Senate, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal, is at present acting President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for His Excellency the President, Prof. George Maxwell Richards, who is out of the country.

During the absence of the President, the Vice-President will preside over the sitting and Ms. Rose Janneire will act temporarily.

Hon. Senators, I have also granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie and Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill from today's sitting and continuing.

**CONDOLENCES****(MR. ANTHONY CHARLES JACELON)**

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I wish to record the death of a former Senator, Charles Anthony Jacelon, who died on April 13, 2005 and was cremated on April 18, 2005.

The Acting Clerk of the Senate has been instructed to send a letter of condolence to the bereaved family as we in this Senate express our sympathy to the family of the deceased.

Senators wishing to pay tribute may do so now.

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Vice-President, I am thankful for the opportunity to make this statement on behalf of the Government Senators as we mourn the passing of the late Anthony Charles Jacelon, who served in this honourable Senate from 1981—1986.

Mr. Jacelon was then a member of the Cabinet, having served as Minister in the Ministry of Finance during his tenure as a Senator. In this capacity, he served the people of Trinidad and Tobago with skill and fortitude during a very difficult period of our country's history.

*Condolences (Mr. A. C. Jacelon)*  
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The nation's economy was then challenged by declining revenues due mainly to a precipitous drop in the price of oil. Mr. Jacelon was a leading member of a team that successfully steered the country to the start of a period of painful adjustment, the period that was to last for quite a number of years after he himself had demitted office.

In other words, he helped to lay the foundations for the strategies to deal with the new economic realities that we had to face as a nation in the modern world. These strategies bore good fruit as Trinidad and Tobago was eventually returned to economic growth and continued prosperity. The nation owes him a debt of gratitude for his invaluable work.

We, on this side, also knew him as a most valuable and trusted political colleague and friend. Anthony Jacelon was one of the longest serving treasurers in the People's National Movement, a post he held with undiminished commitment and responsibility. We will all miss him.

The people of Trinidad and Tobago have lost a committed son of the soil. In addition to his service in Government and politics, he also did his fair share of community work, mainly through his legal profession. He also gave sterling service to the business sector, serving for ten years on the board of directors of one of the country's leading financial institutions. He served the nation to the very end and until his passing, was the Chairman of British West Indian Airways at a particularly challenging time for the national airline. We know that his work will endure and the entire nation will always remember him very fondly.

On behalf of all Government Senators, I extend deepest condolences to his family and his friends. Thank you.

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, Mr. Charles Anthony Jacelon was born on June 01, 1939 and he passed away on April 13, 2005. Although on separate sides of the divide, in terms of the political system, I can attest to the fact that when the United National Congress came into office between 1995 and 1996, we met Mr. Anthony Jacelon in charge of BWIA. He was there between 1991, and when the PNM demitted office in 1995. We met him there in 1995 and he remained there until 1997. We did not remove him and he worked very, very hard during the tenure of the UNC as chairman of BWIA. In fact, he laid the foundations at BWIA for its recovery, and in 1999, BWIA for the first time in a long time, recorded a profit. So he played a role and, of course, he remained at BWIA during this period until his passing.

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Mr. Vice-President, Mr. Jacelon was also a former puisne judge in this country sometime between April and June of 1981, and as a member of Cabinet between 1981 and 1986, he was appointed a Senator in this Parliament. He was also a minister in the Ministry of Finance and Planning. He has had a very distinguished career. He was a part-time lecturer at the Extra Mural Department, University of the West Indies, between 1964 and 1965. He also served at the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute as a tutor between 1965 and 1968, and he also tutored at UWI between 1970 and 1972 and at the Sir Hugh Wooding Law School, 1975 and 1985.

Mr. Vice-President, when we look at the career of the former Senator, former Minister Anthony Jacelon, one could see he had a very colourful career and he made his contribution. As I said, he worked diligently, like all of us are working, for the development of our country and our nation.

On behalf of the United National Congress, we extend our profound condolences to his family on his passing. We know the funeral took place on April 18, 2005, but we would like to extend our belated condolences to his family and friends, and we hope that in the future, in the arms of the Almighty, he would find peace and he would find at least, lasting rest.

Thank you very much.

**Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie:** Mr. Vice-President, on behalf of the Members of the Independent Benches, I too, would like to join with those who spoke before, to offer our condolences to the family, relatives and friends of the late Anthony Jacelon.

I cannot boast of having had a political relationship with Mr. Jacelon, but I remember as an education extension officer in the early 1980s—I think it was in 1984—to do some public education in Tobago, there was the setting up of the Unit Trust branch and I sought assistance from Trinidad to have knowledgeable officers visit the different communities all over Tobago and do some public education to inform and advise Tobagonians about the Unit Trust and what it stood for and all the benefits and so forth. Luckily, two men of distinction were sent; Mr. Jerry Hospedales and Mr. Anthony Jacelon. I do not know whether Mr. Hospedales would remember that, but they went throughout the island. The first place we went was to Charlotteville.

They were so knowledgeable and they were very good teachers. They actually taught the people about the Unit Trust so well that a number of Tobagonians, after they left, actually went to the bank and took shares in the Unit Trust. I am happy

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to see that today, one of the most modern buildings we have in Tobago will be the Unit Trust building and to say this, it is all because of these two men who came to Tobago, who did not bathe in the sea, they came and went in the villages, sat in the ordinary school benches—people were actually saying but how could you bring these two important people—at that time, I did not know they were important, I just knew that they were public servants serving the people and that is what they were and that was how they behaved. They came and sat in the ordinary school benches in Charlotteville. I could still see them there, and at that time they could have fitted into the benches. I understand now Mr. Hospedales has put on some size, he would not fit in the Standard 5 benches anymore. And they educated the people. They listened to the simple questions, they answered their questions, they explained, they demonstrated and everything, and it is in that vein I would like to say that Mr. Jacelon left a mark in Tobago.

He left his footprints there; we are building on them now. When I go to the Unit Trust building, I see how cramped we are, and I know how very important and necessary it is to have a building as the one that is going up. And it is all because of the understanding of the people of Tobago, what the Unit Trust stands for, what it stood for, and what the benefits would be.

Finally, there was one man in Charlotteville who, long after, sought me out to say how every time his correspondence from the Unit Trust came to the village post office—that time there was a village post office—he would walk around the village with Unit Trust on it that everybody could see, to show off that he was a member of the Unit Trust, that he had shares there, and that brought a certain amount of importance to him.

So to those of you who knew him politically, let me say, on behalf of Tobago, how much we feel very, very sad that someone in the vein of Mr. Jacelon has passed on. But let us rejoice in the fact that what he had to do, he did it very well indeed, and we are grateful for the footprints he has left on the sands of time in Tobago. To his family I say again, on behalf of all of us, our condolences to them and may his soul rest in peace.

**Mr. Vice-President:** I myself would like to extend sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of the Jacelons.

Everything I have heard about the late Sen. Jacelon, has been something very good. As a matter of fact, reading, listening to people talk about the late Sen. Jacelon, one would realize that he has left his mark in education, in politics,

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business and law. And what is very significant about the life he lived is the fact that he never sought to grab the headlines. He was a humble person and, I think, that is a lesson that we can all learn from his life.

As I said, I extend very sincere condolences on behalf of this entire Senate.

*The Senate stood.*

#### SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from Her Excellency Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal, Acting President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency DR. LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL,  
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Linda Baboolal  
Acting President.

TO: MRS. JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN

WHEREAS the President of the Senate has temporarily vacated her Office of Senator to act as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago:

AND WHEREAS the Vice-President of the Senate is acting as President of the Senate:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, 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, JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN, to be temporarily a member of the Senate with immediate effect and continuing during the period that Senator Dr. Linda Savitri Baboolal has temporarily vacated her Office as 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 18th day of April,  
2005.”

*Senators' Appointment*  
[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT]

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“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

TO: MS. ROSE JANNEIRE

WHEREAS Senator Conrad Enill is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, 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, ROSE JANNEIRE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect from 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Conrad Enill.

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 15th day of April,  
2005.”

/s/ G. Richards  
President

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency DR. LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

“TO: MS. BONNIE-LOU DE SILVA

WHEREAS Senator John Jeremie is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LINDA SAVITRI BABOOLAL, Acting 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

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Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, BONNIE-LOU DE SILVA, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of the said Senator John Jeremie.

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 19th day of April,  
2005."

/s/ Linda Baboolal  
Acting President

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Senators Joan Hackshaw-Marslin, Rose Janneire and Bonnie-Lou De Silva took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Annual report of the Venture Capital Incentive Programme for the financial year ended September 30, 2001. [*The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith)*]
2. Annual report of the Venture Capital Incentive Programme for the financial year ended September 30, 2002. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]
3. Annual report of the Venture Capital Incentive Programme for the financial year ended September 30, 2003. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]
4. Annual audited financial statements of Taurus Services Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2004. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]
5. Annual Administrative Report of the Betting Levy Board for the period July 01, 2003 to June 30, 2004. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]
6. Consolidated financial statements of the Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the year ended September 30, 2004. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]
7. Report on the administration of the Ministry of Housing and its agencies for the years 2002—2004. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]

*Papers Laid*

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8. Administrative report of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation for the period January 2002 to September 2003. [*The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas)*]
9. Administrative report of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation for the period October 2003 to September 2004. [*Sen. The Hon. R. Dumas*]
10. A Green Paper—Draft Quarry Policy for Trinidad and Tobago for the year 2005. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]
11. Annual report of the Environmental Management Authority for the years 2001 and 2002. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Vice-President, the hon. Minister is out of the country, and has asked that questions Nos. 55 and 58 be deferred for one week; when he returns.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Wade Mark:*

#### **Government Employed Advertising Agencies (Details of)**

55.
  - A. Could the hon. Minister of Finance provide this Senate with the names of the various advertising agencies employed by the various government ministries, state enterprises, statutory authorities and other government agencies and departments over the period May 01, 2002 to December 31, 2004?
  - B. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a breakdown of the expenditure per agency in respect of the various government ministries, state enterprises, statutory boards and other government agencies and departments over the same period?
  - C. Could the hon. Minister further state the amount of moneys utilized in both the print and electronic media in a detailed way over the same period, as well as, the various events hosted, promoted and advertised?

**Expenses Incurred by G Tech  
on behalf of the National Lotteries Control Board  
(Details of)**

58. A. Could the hon. Minister of Finance provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the various costs/donations incurred or made by G Tech on behalf of the National Lotteries Control Board for the period January 01, 2002 to January 25, 2005?
- B. Could the Minister further provide the Senate with the names and addresses of all beneficiaries from this arrangement with G Tech and the National Lotteries Control Board?

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, as indicated last week, the hon. Minister asked at that time for two weeks. He has advised me that the answer will be provided at the next sitting of the Senate.

*The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Wade Mark.*

***MV Sonia*  
(Details of Contract and Payments of Acquisition)**

60. A. Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the terms and conditions of the contract entered into between the owners of the *MV Sonia* and the brokers International Shipping Partners?
- B. Could the Minister further provide the Senate with all the details concerning the actual payments made to date towards the actual acquisition of the *MV Sonia*?

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Memorandum of Understanding  
(Details of)**

63. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information:
- A. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the terms and conditions of the memorandum of understanding entered into between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the National Carnival Commission with respect to broadcasting arrangements?

- B. Could the Minister inform the Senate of the date on which this memorandum of understanding was entered into?
- C. Could the Minister provide the Senate with copies of the signed memorandum of understanding?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Vice-President, in respect of A, copies of the memorandum of understanding between the National Broadcasting Network Limited and the National Carnival Commission to which the question refers, are being made available to the Senate at this time.

Hon. Senators will find therein the detailed breakdown asked for in part A of the question.

This memorandum of understanding was entered into on January 15, 2005.

Signed copies of the MOU are now available to the Senate.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is customary for documents to be signed without dates being appended. I refer him to the memorandum of understanding, and that it is signed and not dated. I would like to know if that is a new practice that has developed with the PNM Government to have memorandum of understandings prepared, executed, but no dates appended to this particular document?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, the memorandum was executed by lawyers for both sides, and I have to accept that is a proper document.

**Sen. Mark:** I have to speak to the Law Association about that. Could the hon. Minister indicate what is the relationship between this particular agency called the National Carnival Commission and the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs in the execution of this particular memorandum or, is there any relationship between the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs and the National Carnival Commission in the execution and implementation of this memorandum of agreement? I have not had chance to go through all the details. I have just received it, so maybe the Minister can help me.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, the National Carnival Commission is under the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs which is the line Ministry responsible for its operation.

*Vide end of sitting for written part of the answer.*

**2.00 p.m.**

**Sen. Mark:** Could the hon. Minister indicate the period of this memorandum of understanding? How long will it last? Could he also indicate whether the National Broadcasting Network (NBN) properties, as indicated at paragraph (e), have undergone any renovation to date and when he expects them to take place?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, I really regret not having laid this document five minutes ago. It is all here. This memorandum is for three months from January 15. I am not aware that any renovation was done to the property at Maraval Road.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, I have very quickly perused this document and I cannot find the consideration for it. Will the hon. Minister please state whether there is any consideration for this memorandum?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** I know there has been no money exchanged.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Consideration is not money.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** I am told by the lawyers on this side that it is not a contract; it is a memorandum of understanding. I leave that for you lawyers to deal with.

**Sen. Mark:** Will the hon. Minister indicate whether he is aware that the three-month period has now expired and, in those circumstances, what has happened to the undertaking of this particular agreement between the National Carnival Commission and the National Broadcasting Network? Why have the properties at 11A Maraval Road and 2A Alcazar Street not been renovated, even though the memorandum of understanding has now expired?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, it has been agreed to extend the memorandum for a further six months. In fact, arrangements have been made for the Channel 4 operations to move to Morvant to release that building for the new company to begin its work.

**Sen. Mark:** Are we to expect, as a result, a new memorandum of understanding or would this memorandum of agreement be re-signed? Is the hon. Minister aware that this so-called NCC TV has been illegally broadcasting from the Cumberland Hill signals, which belong to the NBN Group, in order to get to persons in Charlotteville and other parts of rural Tobago, who have been complaining that they have been denied access to television programming? If he is aware, what steps has he taken to address this question?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** As far as I am aware, this is an agreement between NBN and the NCC. I imagine that, in carrying out the agreement, they are sticking within the law. As to whether a new MOU is required or whether this one would be extended, I am saying that the decision has been taken to extend the MOU for six months and I presume the lawyers will ensure that it is done properly.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, question 64.

**Sen. Mark:** We will talk to the Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs, who is the gatekeeper for Abu Bakr. Question 64 to the hon.—

**Sen. D. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, that statement is clearly out of order and must be withdrawn.

**Sen. Mark:** But that is a fact. All right!

**Sen. D. Montano:** It must be withdrawn.

**Sen. Mark:** You are denying it—that she is his gatekeeper?

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, I have always asked that we do not make those sweeping statements. Could you withdraw that statement, please?

**Sen. Mark:** It is in the public record.

**Sen. D. Montano:** It must be withdrawn.

**Sen. Mark:** It is in the public record.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, I have requested that you withdraw the statement.

**Sen. Mark:** Withdraw what statement?

**Mr. Vice-President:** Gatekeeper of Abu Bakr.

**Sen. Mark:** But, Mr. Vice-President, that is in the newspapers. Do you want me to bring the newspapers for you?

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, that is—

**Sen. Mark:** All right, if I bring the papers—

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark—

**Sen. Mark:** All right! I will read it later.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, the statement is out of order!

**Sen. Mark:** You know I would not want to fight with you at this time because you are acting. So with due respect, I would take a bow on that.

**Sen. D. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, he must withdraw the statement.

**Sen. Mark:** Temporarily.

**Sen. D. Montano:** It must be withdrawn.

**Sen. Mark:** And I will read the record when I get an opportunity to speak publicly. You want to deny the truth, eh?

**Sen. D. Montano:** You must withdraw it on this occasion.

**Sen. Mark:** Anyway boy, it is a matter of time for you now.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Please continue with your question!

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, let me address you. He knows it is the truth, eh.

**Sen. D. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, he is repeating it.

**Sen. Mark:** I have withdrawn the statement. It is a fact.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, could you please just continue with your question and leave the statement withdrawn.

**Sen. Mark:** I will leave it for when I am debating, Sir.

**British Broadcasting Corporation  
(Copies of Report)**

**64. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information:

- A. Could the Minister provide the Senate with copies of the report prepared by the consultancy team of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on the National Broadcasting Network (NBN)?
- B. Could the Minister further provide the Senate with:
  - (i) a detailed list of the personnel and their portfolios who comprised the British Broadcasting Corporation Consultancy Team; and
  - (ii) a breakdown of the total costs incurred for the services rendered in respect of the preparation of the report?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Vice-President, I am always happy to respond to questions from Sen. Mark who, I believe, hosted Abu Bakr to [*Inaudible*] a carnival show. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Mark:** You see, Mr. Vice-President, he continues the crosstalk. That is why I will say that she is the gatekeeper of Abu Bakr again.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, in response to A, as has been demonstrated with the closure of NBN Limited and the establishment of the Caribbean New Media Group, the Government is committed to openness and transparency in the conduct of public affairs. We have kept the nation informed every step of the way. However, it is a well-known and established practice in all democracies that certain constraints placed on the availability and accessibility of sensitive information are necessary for the protection of either national or individual good. One such constraint stems from the principle of confidentiality in the conduct of business negotiations. The agreement with BBC technology is based on confidential information being held in the “strictest confidence”—to use the words of the non-disclosure clause of the agreement. Violation of this agreement could lead to severe repercussions for Trinidad and Tobago, including loss of reputation in the international business community and the obvious negative consequences that could ensue.

Additionally, Mr. Vice-President, you must remember that the CNMG will be entering as a new entity in a most competitive market. The report contains, inter alia, the business strategies to be employed by the new company, which, if revealed, could severely affect the prospects of the company before it even gets off the ground. We have a responsibility to protect the state-owned company and the public good. It would, therefore, be irresponsible to accede to the request made in part A of the question.

With respect to part B, based on legal advice, we are satisfied that the information required by part B of the question could be provided without violating the agreement. Therefore, I wish to inform the Senate that the persons who comprised the consulting team were:

Steve France

Principal, Quality Control, Head of the consulting practice;

Chris Lawrence

Assignment Manager, Management Consultant, qualified in Strategic Analysis and Advice; Organization and Process Designs; Business Planning and Project Management;

Andy Blustin

Strategy Consultant, qualified in Business Strategy; Business Modelling; Competitor Market Analysis; New media and Start-up Experience;

Ollivier Jorda

Media Strategy Consultant, qualified in Business Strategy; Strategic Market Analysis; Advertising and Media Planning;

Chrichton Limbert

Broadcast Professional, skilled in Editorial and Production Techniques; Establishment of New Output Strands, Workflows, Production Systems and Brands and technology change in production;

Michael Readman

Consultant, qualified in Risk Analysis and Management; Financial and Project Analysis, Digital Television Strategy and Implementation and Broadcast Technology;

Peter Weitzel

Senior Engineering Strategist and Broadcasting Technical Expert.

With respect to part B(ii), furthermore, as requested, the breakdown of total costs incurred is as follows:

Phase I	Economic and Physical Analysis	US \$116,735.00
Phase II	Strategy Development and Programme of Action	127,347.00
Phase III	Project Report	21,224.00
	Expenses	24,609.00
	Total	289,915.00 or TT \$1,826.027.80

I thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. Mark:** Could the hon. Minister indicate why a Government-owned institution such as the BBC, which, as you are aware, fully disclosed all the circumstances surrounding the suicidal death of Dr. Kelly to the British people, should refuse to make available to this Parliament, copies of a report which deals with the future of NBN? What is the real basis or reasons for the failure of the BBC technology team to provide this Republic, after we have paid them so much money, a copy of a report?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** I will try to précis my answer, but I covered all of that. This is a commercial contract between a consulting firm and the Government. In it, there are elements of non-disclosure. I have also indicated that it contains the business plan of the new company, which we do not believe should be made public.

Sen. Mark, it is not the BBC refusing. The Government, as recipient of this report, is honouring its obligation in its commercial contract and the business sense that it has in respect of making available at this time, a business plan for a company that is going into a competitive market.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Assuming but not accepting that the hon. Minister is correct in that there are elements there that ought not, for commercial reasons, to be disclosed, could the hon. Minister say whether there are any elements in this transaction that could be disclosed? We got absolutely nothing. Would the hon. Minister further not agree that very often these non-disclosure clauses are limited to very narrow issues and there are general things that can be disclosed? Could the hon. Minister tell us what could be disclosed and tell us what they are?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Assuming but not accepting the hon. Senator's question, I indicated the information we did provide—they want to know the people who worked on it; they want to know cost—but the business plan is part of the report.

**Sen. Mark:** Would the Minister, in a Government that is committed to transparency, openness and accountability, not agree that it is contradictory that we should be trying to get a copy of the BBC report on the future of NBN—not the business plan—and take steps to ensure that at the next sitting of the Senate he makes available a copy of the report?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, the answer is no. I have indicated that the business plan is a significant part of the report. Some of the things come out of the report like the creation of a new company. I really believe that the best interest of the new company would not be served by making the report available.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, so much for open—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President—

**Mr. Vice-President:** I am willing to entertain the one question. We are just over question time.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Could the hon. Minister state whether the report is critical of any person, firm or corporation and, in particular, the National Lotteries Control Board?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** The answer, again, is no.

*The following question stood on the Order Paper:*

**Mr. Michael Quamina  
(Details of services rendered)**

- 67.** A. Could the hon. Attorney General provide the Senate with a list of all the cases involving state enterprises, statutory authorities and any other state institution/agency in which Mr. Michael Quamina, attorney at law has been retained as counsel?
- B. Could the Attorney General also indicate the amount of moneys paid to him for services rendered to the State during the period June 01, 2004 to January 31, 2005? [*Sen. W. Mark*]

*Question time having expired, question 67 was not dealt with.*

**CARONI (1975) LIMITED AND ORANGE GROVE NATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED  
(DIVESTMENT AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT) (NO. 2) BILL**

[THIRD DAY]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question* [April 05, 2005]

That the Bill be now read a second time.

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, those people who already spoke on the Bill, on Tuesday, April 05, 2005 were: Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo, the presenter of the Bill, Sen. Wade Mark, Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand. Sen. The Hon. Satish Ramroop, Sen. Sadiq Baksh, Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie; on Tuesday, April 12, 2005, Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan, Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran, Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano, Sen. Roy Augustus, Sen. Mary King, Sen. Basharat Ali and Sen. Brother Noble S. A. Khan, who was in the process of making his contribution. He has a remainder of 11 minutes in the first instance and he may have an extension of 15 minutes.

**Sen. Bro. N. S. A. Khan.** Mr. Vice-President, thank you for allowing me these few moments again. I will quickly recap some of the points I had raised when the Senate adjourned the last time. I had raised the question of trust—a trust that was sacred. We were dealing with a resource of land and I had linked the question of that land with culture and the people who had worked the land. As you know, culture has a close nexus with cultivation and the soil.

The fact that we have brought this before this Senate and the vastness of the resources is one that stresses the importance of what is before us, it raises the question of nature; of what God Almighty has given to us and we are making law on. Let us remember that even before we were men—and we ourselves made ourselves citizens—the great nature had made us men. This is an important factor, when we consider, too, that nature itself cannot be ordered about except by obeying her.

To nature's great command, I must say that all human laws and even what we are about are frail and weak and some would say that half or if not more than half our miseries and weaknesses are derived from how we relate to the soil; how we have broken from the soil; where we have allowed the roots that bind us to the earth to rot; where we have become detached from the earth; where we have abandoned her.

These are some of the thoughts that came to my mind when I considered what is before us in the frame of the law. I had raised the question of the use of these vast resources which are addressed in the Bill, and the question in this mundane world of the concept of efficiency and effectiveness of best practice and best use, which ought to emerge when we consider what is before us. This obviously would lead us to questions of governance and how we go about it and, further, to justice, of being fair and square; of thinking of the future and the responsibility that we have to future generations. We know the land, some may say is eternal, and in some traditions this is recognized when we say: From the earth have we come and to the earth we will return.

I am of the view that what we have before us is a good step, given what has taken place before and one may wonder what else we could do. In the pursuit of any form of acceleration of development, if we do not have a proper evaluation of what is before us, this, obviously, could lead to a snowballing of more distress; not only economically, for which we seem to have a penchant, when we think in terms of the essays we have done.

As far as land development is concerned, my mind has just flashed on Wallerfield, which we see has moved from agricultural products into some other area and also the social effect it would have. There is the question of whether there would be more gears jammed; the predisposition to increase and move deeper for longer periods into booby traps and acquire more triggers. I think it is too sensitive an area with what is before us. The question of deepening the processes, possibly at a later stage, for changes in what is before us, would definitely arise.

I would like to see these changes and some have been proffered by past speakers and we look forward to some amendments at the stage when this could possibly be done.

I would like to see the question—and I have received a letter and I support it from one of the organizations outside which might be better equipped to know the quality of land and what have you that brought into the framework of the law the question of the 10 per cent for use being brought into the Bill; being elaborated and also the 90 per cent. I think that the document, which was circulated to us, had touched that 90 per cent for agriculture. I think that within the framework of just agriculture, it might be too expansive a word and one would think in terms of parks, conservation, leisure use and the need for some form of classification of the land, which is before us.

These I would like to see. So if when it comes to that time, at the committee stage when these would be addressed, I think that there would be consideration for me to change my position. As it is now, I am unable to accept what is before us.

Again, let me thank you and the President, who was here before you and whom I burdened with my contribution. So, we move forward in this most seminal document as far as our nation is concerned. This is the only time that such a vast acreage is before us. We are making our decision-making processes and putting them before us. I would hate to think, and I do not support just leaving it within this land structure form that is before us; this company that is before us, there will be some form of change when the time comes to bring into the legislation where we will have mechanisms whereby when it changes from these percentages, if that is accepted, could come back to this Senate for consideration.

My own view is that it is sufficiently important in order to keep a veneer of the people's involvement in this land structure before the minds of the people represented in this Senate.

Thank you, again, Mr. Vice-President. May God bless us all!

**Sen. Robin Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, I had not intended to speak on this Bill. I thought that the first two speakers, Sen. Wade Mark and Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan had, more or less, articulated all the points very clearly and had made the issues quite clear. Further, I had been heartened by the call from the Independent Bench for a select committee to look at this Bill. I had rather hoped that the debate would have been halted; that the select committee would have been appointed and we could have then had a really good debate, after the select committee had come back and dealt with all the issues raised by the Independents, who had spoken before me, and also by the Opposition.

I thought that better use of parliamentary time would be going to the select committee. It is clear that when you take all the politics out of this, this affects not just the farmers, some of whom we have here this afternoon, but every single citizen, his children and grandchildren.

I have a flier from the Federation of Independent Trade Unions and NGOs, called FITUN. FITUN says that food prices are too high and they point out that the population's food and nutrition levels are essentially measures of how developed a country is. They talk about the price of basics—vegetables, ground provisions, bread, chicken, fish—all increasing tremendously.

**2.30 p.m.**

They are offering some solutions. They say the farmers need price support. We need to increase school feeding and provide protection from unfair competition. They said that the farmers need price support like the US and European farmers. They are talking about price gouging and how the Government must move to stop unscrupulous business people. The most important thing—and I agree with what they say here—is the need for political will to place agriculture, food and nutrition at the top of the nation's development agenda. We must move away from the “we have oil and gas” syndrome. We will not always be able to buy the food we need with petro-dollars. We cannot eat oil. When that runs out, what next? We need to reduce our dependency on imported food. This is the point. This is why we on this side, at the end of the day, recognize that we are opposed to what has taken place.

We recognize that it is a fait accompli. It has been done. The next step, having done this, is to decide exactly what we are going to do with it. This Bill, as my colleagues on the Independent Benches have indicated, does not protect our heritage. It does not protect our lands. We can have a rampant Estate Management Business Company running roughshod through the lands, destroying the heritage of the nation. I will say more on that later.

I think the thing is so obvious. In law we say *res ipsa loquitur*, the thing speaks for itself. It is so obvious that regardless of one's political colouration, for want of a better word, regardless of the colour of your politics, the fact of the matter is, I think that all right-thinking persons on both sides of the House and all sides of the political spectrum, would have to agree that we must ensure that no matter what happens, these lands are properly protected. With the greatest of respect, this Bill does not do so.

By the way, and before I get into other things, I would like to point out that this Bill in its present form needs a two-thirds majority to be passed. Clause 6 of the Bill states that from the appointed date, this Act should be deemed to be a good root of title to real estate undertakings. This means that in any future dealings, assuming that the Bill is passed; all a conveyancer has to do is go back to all transactions that were made after this Bill. Guess what? There is an awful lot of people who own the oil and mineral rights to lands in Caroni (1975) Limited. This effectively wipes them out. It does not take into consideration their ownership, and it effectively wipes them out, because I can turn around tomorrow morning and do a conveyance of lands, buy some lands from Caroni (1975) Limited, assuming that the Bill is passed. It does not matter that company A or individual B owns the oil and mineral rights. He is wiped out. You cannot do that. If we pass this Bill without a two-thirds majority, that person will be able to go to court and set aside the Bill.

I am sorry. I am trying hard not to be political this afternoon. At the very least, Mr. Vice-President, could you ask the Government that the next time they are drafting a Bill they ask some conveyancers to look at it? This is simple.

Sen. Prof. Deosaran asked the very legitimate question that I thought had been answered many times. I admit that it had not been answered in the Senate, but we said many times on this side—I am using my words because I am never good at quoting exactly. I am good at getting the thought across. He said, in essence: “What would the UNC have done if they had remained?” The answer, in one or two words, is a lot less.

Let me tell you what our plans were. We were planning to set up what you might call a conglomerate, such as Neal and Massy or Ansa McAl. We would have had divestment from Caroni (1975) Limited into the various companies. I am answering Sen. Prof. Deosaran directly, again, because he spoke after Sen. Mark. Each company would have had a particular area of expertise, for example, sugar, rum, citrus and other things. It would not have been large and unwieldy.

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Each company would have been a profit centre of its own. We recognize that one or two companies might have ended up being unprofitable. We would have taken the profitable portions to support the unprofitable ones, but we would have made sure that at least we knew where money was being made and where would have needed propping.

Caroni (1975) Limited was doing all kinds of things that are supposed to be done by the Ministry of Local Government. It has not been done since Caroni (1975) Limited was closed down. Caroni (1975) Limited was maintaining roads, cemeteries and playing fields. Part of the expenditure that they incurred every year ought to have been for local government. It is no wonder that there has been massive flooding. The flooding problem has increased since Caroni (1975) Limited was closed down. I will bet you dollars to donuts, that flooding this year will be worse than ever, because nothing is being done.

We were planning that, effectively, we would go into a partnership with the cane farmers. Caroni (1975) Limited would produce X per cent of the cane and the farmers would produce Y per cent. Basically, the plan had not been firmed up, but we were looking at something in the region of 60 per cent cane farmers, 40 per cent Caroni (1975) Limited and we were going to step up the question of quality control. We wanted to introduce a different variety of cane, to increase the sucrose content, because right now the cost of sugar production was too high. We wanted to increase the sucrose content and the sugar quality. We wanted to improve the mechanization and the cost effectiveness. I would like to pause for a moment about the mechanization and cost effectiveness.

Here I have a copy of an advertisement of an auctioneer selling off Caroni (1975) Limited. This auction sale is dated Sunday, April 17, 2005. It states that upon the instructions of Caroni (1975) Limited, there will be offered for sale over 500 motor vehicles and mobile field equipment, which includes a mobile unit, jeeps, cars, tractors, forklifts et cetera. Basically, it is a garage sale to take place on Thursday, April 21, 2005. All of this is being auctioned off, but we have reports that an awful lot of the good equipment has gone missing. While there is equipment being sold at this auction sale, we have reports that a lot of equipment, the best equipment, has gone missing. I will pause for one moment to allow Sen. Sahadeo to confirm or deny this and I will continue.

**Sen. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, when I conclude this debate, I will respond accordingly.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Why am I so surprised? In other words, we "ain't" getting an answer. We will not get an answer to that; openness and transparency. Why did I bother? Morality and integrity tells you she should answer. Morality and integrity tells you that you should not be bringing this Bill in the first place. Morality and integrity tells you that you should not have put 9,000 people on the headline. That is morality and integrity.

While we are talking about morality and integrity, let me tell you something. When Sen. Mark spoke he spoke about—remember I told you I would come back to a rampant estate management company. You will also remember that Sen. Mark spoke and was challenged about sexual victimization of girls by this—I want to read a couple of letters into the record. I made some copies for you. I will not call the names of the girls, for reasons that I hope are obvious. You will follow me.

“April 14, 2003.

Dear Hon. Minister.

Re: Sexual Harassment and Victimization at the EMBCD.

My name is X and I was employed at the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited (EMBCD) as an office assistant for the past two and one-half months.”

I am not going to give the date but the date is here because I do not want anything going back to the girl.

“I decided to quit my job at EMBCD, the reason being that I was being sexually molested, harassed and victimized on a daily basis by the CEO and Chairman, Mr. Uthara Rao. On numerous occasions Mr. Rao would touch my breasts, buttocks and kiss me on my cheeks. Mr. Rao enquired about my waist size, bra size and said he would purchase tablets for me to firm up my breasts.”

**Sen. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, on the last occasion, we indicated that this matter is before the Industrial Court and therefore it is deemed to be sub judice at this time.

**Sen. R. Montano:** This particular girl's matter is not before the court.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Is this matter you are talking about before the court?

**Hon. Senators:** No.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, that is another one.

**Sen. Sahadeo:** I am not going to raise—

**Sen. D. Montano:** On a point of order. This is not the subject of this debate. Furthermore, it is completely out of order and out of the practice of this Chamber to try a citizen in his absence. It is completely wrong and totally improper.

**Sen. R. Montano:** I am talking about a young girl who is the same age as my eldest daughter. This thing offends. This was raised in the Parliament on the second to last occasion, in this debate. We were asked to produce evidence of it. I am producing the disgusting evidence. This matter is not before the Industrial Court. We are the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago. We are allowed free speech.

**Sen. Yuille-Williams:** Clearly, we cannot sit and let that continue. It is irrelevant. We are dealing with the Vesting Bill at this time. I think it is unfair and that is irrelevant material to the Vesting Bill.

**Sen. D. Montano:** If I may shed a little light on it. What is being read is not any evidence in the normal course of things. One does not know where it came from. One does not know if it was fabricated. Therefore, there are common rules in this Chamber that you cannot do that. You cannot come with something that you purport is evidence that has no fact. It cannot be proved or disproved. It is improper in its extreme. There are other places to vent that. This is not the place. It is an abuse of the parliamentary privilege, to hide behind the cloak of the Senate, to say things what you cannot say in public. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, please.

**Sen. Mark:** If you want us to call names we will do it.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark! Do you wish to make a point, Sen. Montano? Go ahead.

**Sen. R. Montano:** This Bill, if it passes, will vest in the Estate Management Business and Development Company all Caroni (1975) Limited lands. The Executive Chairman of the Estate Management Business and Development Company is Mr. Rao. We have to be very, very careful when we are putting the tremendous power that he will have into the hands of a person I cannot trust. I am looking at these letters. These letters are serious in the extreme. It is interesting that Sen. Mark raised the issue before. I publicly withdraw any parliamentary privilege that I might have on this particular issue. If Mr. Rao wishes to sue me for defamation I will not take the point. Let him come, but I will remind him of what happened to Oscar Wilde. *[Interruption]* I will go outside, no problem at all. Let him come.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Senators, could we please desist from the amount of banter. Sen. R. Montano, I agree, if one looks at the content of the letters, one would find them containing immoral intentions, whatever you might call it. I am looking at these letters very curiously and I am seeing one letter coming from an address. The other letters are all addressed to the same person coming from, apparently, nowhere. They do not have an address; they just have a signature at the bottom. The last three came from apparently the same person. Sen. R. Montano, I do not think we could admit this as evidence in anything because, basically, anybody could have signed these letters. They do not come from an address. There is a name. They might be authentic.

**Hon. Senators:** They are!

**Mr. Vice-President:** We have absolutely no way of determining that. Sen. R. Montano, I am absolutely certain that you could make your points without getting into detail where these are concerned. Could you please do that?

**Sen. R. Montano:** With a heavy heart, I will abide by your ruling. If I were to produce something like this and they were false I would be misleading the Senate and I would effectively have to resign my seat, because misleading the Senate is an extremely grave thing to do. In a thousand years, I will never mislead the Senate. Every single name you see here was at one time or another employed in the Estate Management Business Development Company and every single name was sexually molested and harassed by this chap, Rao. I will make my point and abide by your ruling.

One of the things I will point out to you is that some of these letters were in fact copied to Sen. Sahadeo. She cannot tell me that she is not aware of them. On the basis—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Sahadeo:** On a point of order. As I indicated at the last sitting, the matter is before the Industrial Court and, therefore, I cannot discuss the issue at hand. I think the Senator is fully aware of this, but he persists. He can continue contributing; as you guided him.

**Sen. R. Montano:** The matter that is before the Industrial Court does not involve these girls. That is my point. There is a sexual harassment suit in the Industrial Court right now, but it does not involve these. To come here and say that the matter is before the Industrial Court is in fact, in my language, cute. It is tantamount to misleading the Senate. There is morality and integrity in this

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country and it is totally immoral and totally lacking in integrity to try and protect this nonsense. No UNC government would ever tolerate this. If they did, and I was in it, you better believe there would be all hell to pay! I beg your pardon about the “hell”, let me withdraw that comment. This is the word and nothing else, Sir.

Mr. Vice-President, are you aware that the same chap, Rao, has told the farmers that he has promised the Prime Minister that he will bring \$10 billion over the next 10 years into Caroni (1975) Limited? That is \$1 billion per year. It could only mean one thing; that you are taking these lands and turning them for commercial and industrial use. That is the Government’s plan, commercial and industrial use. You cannot do that. The Government is squeezing out the poor farmers.

The farmers who are here this afternoon have told me that they are being charged \$1,800 per acre by Rao. They cannot afford it. Rao is talking about bringing in \$10 billion in the next 10 years. Money is the god. Individuals can go jump in the lake, and it does not matter what we do with our heritage. It does not matter when; 10 years, 20 years or 30 years from now, the oil and gas run out, what the heck. In 30 years from now those of us who survive will be really old. But it is our children and grandchildren who will have to pay the price.

I am sorry. I hope and I pray to God that the information I have is correct, that is to say that this Bill is going to a select committee. I agree with what the Independent Senators said: what the Government has done to Caroni (1975) Limited is a fait accompli. While we must close the book on what has been done, we must not forget that we can turn around and say to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, okay this went wrong here, this was messed up, we did not agree, but now let us look at the soup we have and let us see how we can make it edible. This is not making it edible. This is going to further destroy the people, some of whom we have sitting here this afternoon. This is going to further impoverish the people, some of whom are sitting here this afternoon.

There was a Vice-President of the United States, Hubert Humphrey, who said, and I am going to paraphrase him, if we are to judge our society by how we protect the weakest among us, then Trinidad and Tobago is in trouble. How do we protect these poor people, the farmers? That is only one example. Do we protect them with an Act of Parliament that effectively turns over the Caroni (1975) Limited lands to Rao, who is a sexual predator and pervert?

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, I, like Sen. R. Montano, have two daughters and I will not tolerate or agree to that kind of behaviour. This Bill is not about Rao. There is no relevance of what Mr. Rao may or may not do or may or may not say. This is a question of transferring the assets of a company. Mr. Rao may be the chairman today and tomorrow it may be Mr. Montano. That is not the issue. I think we are stretching it a little. If one has difficulty with the concept of a company owning the land, fine. That is a concept and a principle. It cannot be that we have a difficulty because there is a gentleman called Mr. Rao. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark! We are not outside on a picket line, please.

**Sen. Mark:** Not yet! I am going just now. Let them continue; it is protest and demonstration.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Mark, I am certain you know which direction this is going.

**Sen. Mark:** I bow to your ruling, even though I am seated.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Are you giving way to Sen. Prof. Ramchand?

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Let me finish the point. I am trying to—*[Interruption]* I am not defending anybody. You can do that and you can say that. *[Interruption]* Mr. Vice-President, I am seeking your protection. I am appealing to my fellow Senators to try and lift the debate. This debate is not about a man; it is about principles and policies. If you object to the policy, yes, make your point. The man is incidental because whether he stays or goes is not the issue before us. That is another issue. That is a political issue. I will not defend anybody whom I feel should not be defended, but there is a time and place for that. I would like us to get back to the Bill. I would like us to get back to the principles that are being enunciated in the Bill, that is the transfer of lands from a private company to another company, and what are the safeguards that we want to put in that Bill.

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** Mr. Vice-President, I agree with what Sen. Dr. Saith is saying, but there is a peculiarity in this case. The Senate is being asked, through the Bill, to accept a certain business company and its functions. The business company comes with a set of directors. If the directors are suspect, then our willingness to say yes we accept the board, will be affected by that. It is not totally irrelevant to ask the question about the qualifications of the people who are directors. It is not irrelevant.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I know you will get injury time. I think that it is interesting that we take it. I agree with you. One can say if you are giving it to this company, we want to ensure that the kinds of people you put to run this company are people in whom we have confidence. You could say that without where we seem to be going.

**Mr. Vice-President:** I have listened to the last couple of contributions and I agree that the people involved in the company are in fact to be looked at. I cannot agree with what Sen. R. Montano is saying to be transferred to Mr. Rao. I would like you to confine your discussions to what is really in the Bill, from one company to the next.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Okay, but the reality of the situation is Mr. Rao is in charge of the Estate Management Business Development Company. When you split the legal hairs and you say that it is being transferred to the Estate Management Business Development Company, it suggests or pretends that Mr. Rao will either have nothing do with this, or can be controlled. The reality of the situation is Mr. Rao has everything to do with this. Mr. Rao is not being controlled. The situation here is absolutely terrible. I want to use the word "disgusting" but I am not sure if that is a parliamentary term. It is absolutely terrible. Speaking for myself, my colleagues and my party, I would like to think of every right-thinking person in the society; everybody who hears this, will want to know why this situation has not been properly investigated, why it has not been dealt with, what exactly is this peculiar situation, why is this man being defended in this way, and why are we afraid to deal with this head-on. Why? These charges are really serious. *[Interruption]*

Wade, let us stay away from that. Let us just try and lift us up as high as we possibly can, but ask again, why? What is going on? It is not just from these girls that I have heard this story. I have heard these stories from other people as well. I have spoken to a couple of directors who said that I should not quote them. I have spoken to a few directors who said: "Yes, this man is a law unto himself." One hears all kinds of horror stories coming out.

I have a report that Mr. Rao told the rice farmers that Sen. Sahadeo said they could not get several thousand acres of land, because she wanted it for her husband. When she confronted him he denied it, even though the board members—*[Interruption]* I am telling you what has been said.

**Sen. Sahadeo:** Do I have to stand all the time?

**Sen. R. Montano:** I did not say that the report on Sen. Sahadeo was true. What I said was true was that this is what he was telling people about the Minister. When the Minister confronted him in front of the board, he denied it and the board turned around and said: "Wooh! What happened? We heard you tell us this."

**Sen. D. Montano:** On a point of order. It is exactly this type of "mauvais langue" that we need to defend. I want to correct the Senator; nobody on this side has made any attempt to defend Mr. Rao. What we are defending are the proper procedures in this Chamber, and the proper decorum, nothing more, nothing less. That must be defended.

**Sen. R. Montano:** As you have noticed, I never attacked my little brother in this Chamber, or outside, and I do not intend to do so now. I have always said that whatever my little brother says I abide by. I am done with that. I do not agree with him, but I never had and I am not going to have an argument with my brother at any time, on any issue and certainly not over an "expletive deleted" like Rao.

We are the Senate of the proud little Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. We have before us a Bill which has the potential to destroy our birthright, or alternatively it could make it so good it will not be funny, but it will not make it good in its present form. There are too many problems. Sen. Prof. Deosaran, Sen. Prof. Ramchand, Sen. Dr. McKenzie, Sen. Bro. Noble Khan, Sen. Ali, Sen. King and all the Independent Senators have spoken unusually with one voice. I say "unusually", not in any derogatory sense.

Outside of Parliament, we have had a letter, which was circulated, amongst others, to the Senators, I think it was last week, in which it was argued. *[Interruption]* It does not matter. To my belief, all Senators received a copy of it. It would have been nice to refer to it. Former Sen. Prof. John Spence argued that the Bill, in its present form, was not acceptable.

The Bill needs looking at. Let me say from the heart, I agree that we need a Bill. The Government mashed up Caroni (1975) Limited, totally, immorally and everything else. The thing is destroyed. Now it is up to us, Senators, to rebuild. Much as we hate what has happened and much as we disagree with what has happened, it is necessary that we now move on. We do not forget, but we move on. I have been passed the article written by Prof. Spence, of Thursday, March 31, which indicates that we should save the Caroni lands. I join with everything he says in the article. It is up to us now Senators. We must rebuild. The country must be rebuilt.

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A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. We disagree, fundamentally, with what has been done to Caroni (1975) Limited, but it has been done and no amount of crime can restore what has been done, so we need to rebuild. Please, hon. Senators, if you love this country, let this Bill go to a select committee. Let the select committee sit and call for public discussion and debate. Let the stakeholders come into the select committee and give evidence before the select committee. Give the ideas. Let the thing be built properly, without seeming to rush. It is the right thing to do. It is the honourable thing to do. It is the moral thing to do and it is the thing of integrity to do. Let us remember the cane farmers. Let us remember that at the end of the day, those people who are most directly affected by it, the 9,000 of them, are multiplied by five dependents. That is 45,000 people. Let us call them in and hear about their ideas. Let us do the thing properly, but in a thousand years, let us not give this to a company where a man is in effective control of it, who, apparently, appears to be totally and completely out of control.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. Dana Seetahal:** Mr. Vice-President, the purpose of the Bill, by now everyone would know, is to vest real estate holdings of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove in the State and, secondly, to provide for management thereof.

The concern expressed by previous speakers and in particular Sen. R. Montano, about the person who currently heads that management company, to my mind, is a valid concern. Under clause 10 of this Act, it is proposed to give the manager the power to “manage, rent, assign, exchange, lease, evict from or otherwise deal with the real estate undertakings” of the company which would be all the lands vested in the company, then we must, as legislators and people who are giving power to that person, whoever that person will be—it will be Rao today and another person tomorrow—we must be concerned about the breadth of the power and we must be concerned eventually as to the process of selection of that person.

We do not know how this last person was selected. I do not know personally, and I have attempted to find out how he was appointed and I have failed to do so. Nevertheless, if it is that there are concerns as to the improper utilization of power in a personal kind of situation by the current holder, then one can imagine the powers that he would have over 76,000 acres of land. One might want to say that is an exaggeration. With the management power to do all these things, a person who is likely to abuse power in whatever way could abuse this power.

Under subsection (5) of that same section, there is provision that the President may, by Order, prescribe the real estate undertakings in respect of which the manager may exercise the power. This is subject only to negative resolution of Parliament. It could be as things happen, probably all the real estate undertakings could go to the management of whomsoever that manager is. That manager, if he is given to a wanton abuse of power, can abuse the power in whatever way for anything. Sexual favours might be just one way. That is probably something that we have to confront; many, many women on a daily basis. I am talking about corruption and the like.

One has to be concerned not just with whoever is the current holder of that, but with the powers under this section. I have a problem with that. We have seen, and reference has been made by other speakers, letters from various stakeholders, I will call them. Some of them are here today, in particular, respected Prof. Spence, whose concern expressed is as to safeguarding the use of agricultural lands for future generations, specifying the failure to specify the need or specifying a proper agricultural policy. He is saying that there is a need for that. Also, the Association of Professional Agricultural Scientists of Trinidad and Tobago (APASTT) and the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, to name a few, as well as many citizens who have written letters to the editor in the various newspapers and called in to talk about their concerns.

This is an emotive issue. It is not only a question of culture and history; it is a question that we are dealing with 76,000 acres of land. It has been said, I think it is the Minister but she can correct me if I am wrong, that it comprises 25 per cent of the arable land in Trinidad and Tobago. That is what I have, but I may be wrong. Even when I work it out mathematically, if 640 acres make one square mile, then literally 76,000 acres would be between 6 per cent and 7 per cent of all the lands in Trinidad and Tobago. When you take into account rain forests and swamps, it would seem to me that it is likely that we are dealing with one-quarter of all the arable lands in the country. That is why this is so important. We have no problem with vesting in the State, which represents the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but it is how this thing will be managed, who is going to manage it eventually, and what use you are making of this land.

I do not propose to go at length into the details, because I understand that there may be a select committee, which we have asked for on this side. Clearly, I would agree with that. I need to point out that my personal concerns stem from my history, as well as my personal experience in the Orange Grove Estate, and what I have read about the Woodford Lodge Estate, which comprises a significant part of Caroni holdings.

My parents' parents worked in the Orange Grove Estate. Our family home is on the periphery of that estate in Tacarigua. I have looked at a book *Great Estates of Trinidad* by Anthony de Verteuil. I am sure many of us would know about it. There is a whole record of the history of the Orange Grove Estate. If I may, with leave, read what the people have mentioned at length. Not much recognition has been given to Orange Grove Estate. Between the period 1950—2000 the recent period, it is said:

“In this year of grace, 2000 looking north from the levelled lands of the estate, the steeply rising mountains, three miles off in the distance clothed in luxuriant forest of a multitude of varied greens, through the larger loftier trees that have long since disappeared.

The mountains run in serrated style across the horizon, so that no single peak attracts undivided attention. Their slopes streaked in board lights and shades by the shadows of the fleecy clouds above which moved slowly across the deep blue sky. They provide a wonderful backdrop to a magnificent estate just as they have done for the past two centuries.”

Orange Grove Estate existed centuries ago. According to this text, again:

“Sugar Cane prosperity for Orange Grove Estate.”

At page 164 of this book we learn with regret that the Orange Grove Estate is no longer. The glory of the estate has disappeared. It continues:

“One hundred and eighty years later it is still there—with its size and its beauty somewhat reduced...”

The northern portion of the estate has, in fact, been turned into a housing settlement, 'Trincity'. The houses are built with good taste, as one would expect of anything to do with Orange Grove. They extend almost to the old northern boundary of the estate, the Spanish Royal Road, now reduced in status by the pedestrian name of the Eastern Main Road. The estate has been cruelly chopped in two by the Churchill Roosevelt Highway, a utilitarian and ugly route; and fumes from the many vehicles defile the purity of the estate air.”

Economic necessity has brought an intruder into the cane fields. The estate owned at present, by the Government, has given a long term lease to many of its acres of land to the manufacturers of Pernod.

What I have read, to my mind, represents the concern of many people as to what is to become with agricultural lands that we have historical ties to. We know that history cannot stand still, but when we are talking about industrial use on the one hand, housing on the other hand and the destruction of what was before; of the cruel chopping up of the estates and the reduction in production, then we have to be concerned as to the powers given to anyone to deal with 25 per cent of our arable lands. That is my concern, as someone who has close connections with Orange Grove. I feel personally affected by whatever is to become of it.

In terms of Woodford Lodge Estate, which is a significant part of Caroni (1975) Limited lands, according to this text, I will like to point out that it is because of Woodford Lodge Estate, according to history, that Chaguanas was able to develop.

"...Woodford Lodge was among the first estates to employ East Indian Indentured labourers..."

It was the premier estate in Chaguanas. Page 331 states:

"The Indians from Woodford Lodge considered that it was the premier estate in the area and always claimed the right for their Tajahs to lead the procession into Chaguanas."

This is in 1865. We are talking about Chaguanas, developing along with Woodford Lodge.

In 1914, Woodford Lodge Estate produced 2,483 tonnes of sugar and 17,000 tonnes of estate canes were ground; 1,451 tonnes of sugar was made from it. It goes on to talk about how much sugar we had in 1914. That whole thing expanded.

"In 1920 the old run-down estate of Woodford Lodge almost in its death throes obtained a new and energetic proprietor in the person of E.A. Robinson."

He was a lawyer from Arima. Lawyers get involved in agriculture too.

"He injected new capital into the old estate and installed new machinery in the factory. The Woodford Lodge estate he had bought included Perseverance estate north and other lands, a total of 1,300 acres. The new factory was designed to manufacture sugar at a rate compatible with a plantation of 5,000 acres...By 1953 there were 1,200 cane farmers associated with Woodford Lodge Estate, 850 East Indians and 350 West Indians."

That was the expansion of Woodford Lodge. The problem is what eventually became of Woodford Lodge.

"In 1956 with the deterioration of the sugar market, Caroni acquired Garden Estates Ltd. and a little later, Woodford Lodge. Indeed, by 1962, Caroni owned over 73,000 acres and produced 90% of Trinidad's sugar. Only Forres Park and Orange Grove remained separate.

And so, Woodford Lodge today forms a part (though not an inconsequential one) of Caroni Estates Limited. It has disappeared or been swallowed up in the mega-maw of the agricultural and political monster that is Caroni Limited. The factory at Woodford Lodge is now derelict, the machinery is rusting away in the old factory yard. The Great House has been transformed into a dilapidated club-house. No longer do the cane carts rumble past its wide verandah. Woodford Lodge has been virtually reduced to a mere place on the map, a shadow of its former self!"

Why I have read extensively from this, Mr. Vice-President, and Senators, is that my fear and I am sure that of many Senators is what became of Woodford Lodge, the premier estate in Chaguanas, to which the borough of Chaguanas owes, in no small measure, its development and existence, according to this book. We fear that this is what is going to happen to all of the estates that comprise Caroni at present. That is a real fear, given the derelict nature, according to the text, of Woodford Lodge, which became a part of Caroni and what we envisage—all of those pools and amenities which we have in those estates, that are going to go to the Government or whoever are going to be separate and apart. We fear that without proper management, and proper organization of the land use, everything that my colleagues here have urged will fall down. That is the bottom line and that is why we feel that without certain assurances, and without certain qualifications on the power of the manager, as contained in clause 10, of an agricultural policy, probably something more specific, in terms of ensuring the preservation of Caroni (1975) Limited lands for agricultural use. As it stands right now, we would not support the Bill, unless it goes to a select committee and we have assurances. My colleague is saying amendments, but whatever emanates from that is left to be seen.

Mr. Vice-President, I propose to end here. I really do feel that before one within makes any decision about the 25 per cent of our arable lands that consisted of great estates in our country, we need to consider the history and culture of the estates themselves and the people who inhabited those estates.

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President.

**3.30 p.m.**

**The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams):** Mr. Vice-President, thank you very much. I rise to make just a short intervention, particularly, after hearing Sen. Seetahal speak, and to let her know that we on this side listen. That is a comfort that you have. So, this afternoon, we are supposed to be discussing a vesting Bill. Mr. Vice-President, so far, the debates have not really been focusing on this. There was a lot of emotion and a lot of passion being generated, sometimes hate, and the true focus of the Bill may have been lost. We really know that this is important.

Sen. Montano was just telling us that this seems like a *fait accompli*, and let us get on with it. I am sure that we all have a contribution at this time to make, to ensure that this restructuring process is done in such a way to the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I am quite sure that even though we did not contribute to this Bill, we would want to have that opportunity. That is the reason the debate is continuing this afternoon, and we did not stop it, as some people would have liked us to do. Sen. Robin Montano suggested that we stop the debate and send the Bill to a select committee. We felt that we needed to give all the Senators a chance to make their comments, so that even if the Bill went to a select committee, we would have benefited from the comments. Therefore, I want to give the Senate the assurance that this Bill would go to a select committee. [*Desk thumping*]

I would hope that even now, or even after, before we get there, persons would really focus on what is being said here, because it took time to draft this Bill. This concerns the lives of people; this concerns 77,000 acres of land that people were talking about; this concerns buildings and other assets, and, therefore, I do feel that you need to take that opportunity now to concentrate on what is in this Bill. We have been very passionate, but we have to know sometimes when to step to the other side.

Unfortunately, this afternoon was not one of the happier moments for the Senate. The debate has gone to a depth to which we would not have liked it to have gone. I want to tell you that people are very passionate, and I am also passionate as well. I am a member of the sub-committee on Caroni (1975) Limited, and I would tell you how I got there.

When we had to restructure Caroni (1975) Limited—let me tell you, it took a brave and strong government to take a decision like that. [*Desk thumping*] As Sen. Prof. Deosaran would say: You very well knew something had to be done. You either just did not know what to do or you were afraid to do it because, to you, it would have been a political decision, and you would have said that they were affecting your base and, therefore, you pulled back on doing what you thought was necessary to do, but we had to do it.

**Sen. Mark:** Try and justify that. That is politics.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** We had to do it, but we know that the way that we were going to do it, we were not going to lose. You were afraid that you were going to lose your base. We are going to be sure that at the end of it, we will increase the size of our base.

**Sen. Mark:** We are going to beat you in 2007.

**Sen. The Hon. J Yuille-Williams:** Last week, someone on the Independent Bench—Sen. Mark, is either you could take it or you cannot take it.

**Sen. R. Montano:** I thought you were going to talk about the Bill.

**Sen. The Hon. J Yuille-Williams:** Last week, someone on the Independent Bench asked how come they were talking about all these people and all these things and when you look around the gallery, where are the people? There was nobody there. So, do you know what they did? I saw Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan today, when I was coming in, talking to a group outside.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** I bring them. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** A handful of persons were outside there. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Joseph:** Ten people you pulled in the Parliament; poor people.

**Sen. The Hon. J Yuille-Williams:** I waved to them, and she was there trying to ensure that she gets her picture to be on tomorrow's newspapers. She was talking to the people, and that indicated to me that not even those persons were worried about what was happening, and I would tell you why. They could not even find the people to come, because the same people that they are worried about are very happy today at what has happened to them. [*Desk thumping*] I could have counted the number of persons who were outside there on my hands. They smiled with me. Tomorrow morning, you are going to be on the newspapers, when you spoke to the protestors. Those people are happy.

**Sen. R. Montano:** They are happy, so they were protesting, right?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** They were not protesting; they asked for a land use plan. You did not even know what you wanted them to do. You told them about the land use plan which all the Independent Senators talked about. They were not protesting, but they were asking about things that would take the process forward, like where is the plan and all of that.

**Sen. R. Montano:** That is a lie.

**Sen. Joseph:** What is going on in this place?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** I just want to tell you that you better think first about what you are doing.

**Sen. R. Montano:** You should think!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** I am one of those persons who was on the committee. I am interested in those persons, as all of us here are interested. I want to tell you how far the interest has generated. There were 9,000 persons separated, and we were asked the hard questions. I want to tell everybody that we multiplied that figure by the number of members in a family. Did that strike you? Therefore, anybody who sits across there—anybody at all—would be interested in what would happen to those persons. I have been following what has been happening, and if you were not following—do you know what struck me?

**Sen. Mark:** Ten thousand killed.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** When I sat on that side of the Parliament—Sen. D. Montano was there and also Sen. King was there at the time—we contributed in a positive way to every Bill that came here. Yes, we showed the flaws, but we also gave ideas and suggestions so that we could improve it.

**Sen. R. Montano:** And we do not do that?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** What some of you think—we are not going to tell you how to govern, it is your business how to govern—showed up a lot. I remember when we were doing the Food and Drug Bill, when the contribution was finished—go back to the *Hansard*—the then Minister of Health, Dr. Rafeeq, an excellent gentleman, said—

**Sen. R. Montano:** I thought you got up to talk about the Bill.

**Sen. The Hon. J Yuille-Williams:** You should have been on this side. You did not talk on the Bill either.

**Sen. Mark:** You are irrelevant.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Please, Senators.

**Sen. Mark:** We want you to rule on irrelevance.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** She is responding to you.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Please, Sen. Mark—

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Are you frightened?

**Sen. D. Montano:** This is disgraceful.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. Yuille-Williams, please confine your contribution to the Bill. Sen. R. Montano—

**Sen. R. Montano:** I did not say anything.

**Mr. Vice-President:** I know you did not say anything. I did not suggest that. I am saying to you, to please, watch your demeanour in the Senate, okay.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Okay, but what? I do not understand. I turned like this—

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. R. Montano, one could easily mistake what happens to you hand.

**Sen. R. Montano:** By putting my hand on my forehead?

**Mr. Vice-President:** Senator, please—

**Sen. R. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, let me just say this—

**Hon. Senator:** The Vice-President is on his feet.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. R. Montano, okay, let me be specific. If you move you hand like this—*[Mr. Vice-President raises his hand]*—I may not see all of your fingers. Please, be careful. *[Laughter]* That is what I am saying.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Let me apologize, because I did not intend—I pulled up my hand and put it on my head.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Please, continue.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Mr. Vice-President, actually, what I was trying to show is that when we first came with the restructuring plan, there was noise all around. The unions were there and everybody else was there. At that

point in time, all I could hear coming from the other side—even outside of this Parliament—were negative things. Not once, when we were formulating anything, we heard anything positive of our plan. I was trying to show the difference on how we approach things. Therefore, the opportunities that were given at that time for you to make your contribution, to ensure that separation was something that would benefit all of us, you kept hold of it; you kept it there.

**Sen. R. Montano:** I thought you were going to talk about the Bill.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** I want to tell you that all of this came up in the Parliament.

**Sen. R. Montano:** If you want to criticize us and talk about the Bill, I do not mind. If you want to criticize us, go ahead, but do not start off by saying: “I came to talk about the Bill”, because you are not talking about the Bill. I crave your protection, Sir.

**Sen. Mark:** Talk about the Bill “nah”. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** You do not want to hear it.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. R. Montano, what is happening here is that we are really allowing this to get low. We are taking this down too far. There are attempts being made by the Minister to respond to statements that were made, and I would like you to permit her to continue, please.

**Sen. R. Montano:** I have no problem with that. She said that she was going to talk about the Bill, but she is not doing that. What she is doing is responding. I have no problem with that but, at least, that is what she is doing. If she is responding to the Bill, and talking on the Bill, that is fine. If you want to criticize us that is fine too, but do not say in a lord or lady or big high manner: “I am going to talk about the Bill”, and then proceed to do something else.

**Sen. Joseph:** So, what should she talk about?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Mr. Vice-President, I know why people are so worried. At the beginning, I also said where this Bill was going, and where the focus was going, and that there is an opportunity for it to go to the select committee where we can talk. All that I am talking about is relevant to the debate that has happened so far and, therefore, I only wanted a few minutes to put things into perspective. [*Desk thumping*] I just said it. I am saying that we brought something to the Parliament and the way the Opposition works, the opportunities that people had even before this Bill was drafted to contribute to the drafting—I

am part of the legislative group—was never used. All I heard around the table were high criticisms coming from the Opposition, and all those other groups. I am saying to you this afternoon that you must always take the time, as we did when we were in opposition, to contribute. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** Were you invited? I was not invited. I know of no invitation to take part.

**Sen. D. Montano:** Is this a debate or an argument?

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, this is supposed to be a debate. People on that side have made statements. They have accused this Government of being heartless, killing people and all the rest of it. The Minister is entitled to respond to what was being said. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, secondly, I think this is reaching a stage where Members on this side are finding it difficult to make contributions, because of the constant—not occasional, but there is room for occasional crosstalk—

**Sen. Mark:** Talk to Danny.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** —barrage that is coming from Sen. Mark and Sen. R. Montano.

**Sen. Mark:** I agree with you; talk to Danny Montano.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** I think, Sir, we cannot really have a good debate in this House if this kind of behaviour continues. I am appealing to my—[*Interruption*] You see, you are doing it again. I am appealing to Members to allow Senators to make their contributions. I mean, the interruptions no longer have any wit in them; it is just interruption. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, could I just say that I know of no invitation from the Government, and I know of no invitation to my party or any Members of the Opposition, to take part in any restructuring of Caroni (1975) Limited. So, when the Minister stands and says: “You all had an opportunity to take part”, we received no such invitation. I know of none.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** I think people like to put things in their own way and in their own context. They put it according to what they have been saying. I just said that when people heard things were happening—the entire population could make suggestions in various ways. Let us say that everybody could make suggestions—the unions could also make suggestions—if you are really interested in what is happening with the people, but if your focus is on trying to damage the Government then you would not use it.

**Sen. R. Montano:** That is not true, because we did it and the union did it. That is not true!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Let us move on.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Sen. R. Montano, please allow the Minister to continue.

**Sen. The Hon. J Yuille-Williams:** Mr. Vice-President, thank you again. I expect you to go on all the time, because people do not like to hear the truth.

**Sen. R. Montano:** No! What? [*Laughter*]

**Sen. D. Montano:** This is ridiculous.

**Sen. The Hon. J Yuille-Williams:** Mr. Vice-President, let us take the people who were separated. There were 9,000 persons who were separated. The hon. Minister did tell us that. I heard it coming from you that it seems as if we were heartless. I went to those meetings to ensure that I knew exactly what was happening. I was satisfied, and they were also satisfied that they have been treated well. In fact, nowhere else have I heard a separation as good as the one that has happened in Caroni (1975) Limited. None!

**Sen. Mark:** What is the average take home pay of those workers?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** They have been separated and they have opportunities. The Bill told us about the housing opportunities that they were going to get. Let me tell you that I met some of the persons there. There were housing opportunities; they were getting a house if they did not own one. I remember, last Thursday, a guy came to me and said that he was from Caroni. I said: Did you get your house? He said: "No, but do you know what I had to do? I have just given over my share to ensure that I am clear to apply for one." I asked the Minister if that person would be qualified for a house. They will be getting a house; they will be getting land which they did not have. Think about it! They got an enhanced VSEP; and they had opportunities for training. I am telling you that they have taken that opportunity.

Mr. Vice-President, a number of them are at the University of the West Indies continuation school. I know because I have a nephew there doing business management. I could tell you that, because he is there. I have seen some of them coming and they have done several courses. They have taken the opportunity. The Minister and other persons went out there to ensure that people knew about these things. One of the things I said was: how would these people know of all these things, because their own people would not tell them that these things were being

offered to them, because they rather just keep it there, so that the statistics would show that people did not go to the programmes, because that is what would make them strong. Therefore, I know the Minister and other persons went walking with public address system to let the people know what was happening and what was being offered to them.

Our Ministry went down there because there were a number of women who were dislodged, and we had special programmes for them. We were only able to hold these programmes on evenings because during the day they were at work. If you go down there and do any kind of survey, you would see that the courses that were being given were being done on evenings, because the people are now gainfully employed; some of them had other employment. You just go down there and you would see them. Some of these persons have been working before and they were alternating things.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, I do not know if my hon. friend would like to give way on a point of clarification?

**Sen. D. Montano:** Do not give way. If it is not a point of order, do not give way.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, is she prepared to give way?

**Hon. Senators:** She is not giving way.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** I am tired of hearing you. I think I will continue. I only wanted 10 minutes. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Mark:** High circus! You are in a circus. That is what you are on—guns and circuses!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Sen. Seepersad-Bachan is going to come and say the same things that I am saying, so that is all right.

**Sen. Mark:** That is a waste of time; “ol’ talk”. Hypocrites!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** She is not going to talk on the Bill anyway. I am saying that is what happened. They were gainfully employed; a lot of them. We know the hours that they worked during the day. They were very industrious people, so they were doing other things. They have moved on. You must take a survey of what has happened to those persons there. I was interested, and I am still interested, and that is why I was there. I attended one of the graduations. I go there. If you think that I am living on the outside of the people, I am not.

So, I am saying that, yes, we had to do this turnaround, but we did it with a human face.

**Sen. Mark:** An ugly face!

**Sen. D. Montano:** Like yours? [*Laughter*] They are liberated and emancipated. Freedom!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Do you think that they are not happy? Look at them there. Talk to any one of them and you would see that they are happy.

I was concerned, as you were, because there were certain buildings that were there and those buildings were divided up. I have received some at the Ministry, and I have also been able to get buildings at the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs for the people of the area.

**Sen. Mark:** Are you sure? “Da is with Bakr.”

**Hon. Senator:** They are looking for you.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** In that area, some of the lands were allocated for community centres. The Ministry of Sport got the sporting areas, so that these facilities were not just thrown out, but they were put into such a place so that the community could benefit from it. So, we are talking about this kind of thing; this is community work.

**Sen. D. Montano:** “All yuh gone through.”

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** That is why I am so close to this process. I was looking for the opportunity to do it, so that we could see what has happened to it. None of it will go astray. The last two buildings that we have there—I think it was Angel Harps and I cannot remember the other—but two NGOs wanted it; one for drug rehabilitation and the other for something else, but I have to go and see. We have to verify whether these things are genuine and whether they would continue. What I am saying is that this was meticulously done; this was not wholesale. We did not give away the houses, as people want to make it happen here. We could account for every one. I want to thank the divestment secretariat for the work that they have done to make this thing happen. It is the best that I have ever seen. [*Desk thumping*] It is the best. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Mark:** I agree with you.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Let me tell you something. I am going to be sure that some other place—it may not even be in Trinidad—would look at how this was done. We could walk through Caroni very proudly now, because

*Caroni and Orange Grove National (No. 2) Bill*  
[SEN. THE HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

*Tuesday, April 19, 2005*

people are satisfied, and the process is not yet finished. We still have work to do, and we will continue to do the work. You would not like the work that we are doing, but we would continue to do the work. If there is anything that you see that needs to be done, you still have the opportunity to come in and do it. [*Crosstalk*] There was one gentleman who told me that he has taken six programmes, because he is going into agriculture. I was happy to hear that. He called all the things that he had done in agriculture, so that he would be able to work on his land.

I am concerned, just as you are concerned, with what happens with the rest of the land—the 77,000 acres. We are concerned. Do not think that we are just sitting here and we are not concerned with what happens to the 77,000 acres. Do you think that we just want to have it? Do you think that we just want to go and build houses on the 77,000 acres? As Sen. Dr. McKenzie said, you cannot take it back after it has gone. We are interested in it and, therefore, I am also interested in what happens to the 77,000 acres. I belong to Trinidad and Tobago, and that is our basket and some of the best lands are there. We are going to be careful as to what happens to it.

I have heard my former colleague, Sen. Prof. Spence, talked about the use of the land. Yes, we are going to discuss it. What is your responsibility at this time is not to turn an eye and only criticize, but you are to ensure that the best use is made of the land. That is not what you are doing.

**Sen. D. Montano:** They do not want you there at all.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** You wish we could fail; you wish we could build houses all over the land so that you could tell the people that we used the land for houses, or we used the land to give it away to friends and foe. You are not interested in making the best use of that land. I am telling you that. That is not your business. Your business is to do something that you feel that we would fail. I want to tell you all that this is not just an experiment. We took time to work this out, and you could see the documentation. Every week, when we attended those meetings, hard questions were being asked, very painstakingly, by the committee. I am sorry, but I should have brought it. It was done painstakingly. If you see the documentation, it is the best documentation that I have ever seen.

**Sen. Mark:** Is that confidential?

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon Senators, we cannot on one hand ask for discipline and on the other hand ignore it. Could we please allow the Senator to make her contribution without the interruptions?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Mr. Vice-President, I will not be long, again, thank you. I just want to conclude by telling them and also Senators on the Independent Benches who had concerns, that we would ensure that the best use would be made of those lands. The land is still there and we welcome all the suggestions from all who wish to suggest, and without your suggestion we would succeed.

I want to also tell you that even within the areas for housing—I spoke to the same company that you talked about today, because my business with all the housing estates is to ensure that there are recreational areas and areas for schools. This is not just going to be a jungle; that is not happening. As we distribute the land, we have to look at amenities for community living and community development. Have no fear. You do not always get it because sometimes I have to drive it in. Even now, in some of the housing estates that are being built, we are out there ensuring that we have those spaces out there. It is very difficult when there is a shortage—the persons who do the work tend to fill it up to get the numbers, but my job is to ensure that it is not just the numbers, but the facilities are there, because we know what has happened before, and we do not want to repeat some of those same mistakes where we did not have enough space for a school, a community centre or recreational grounds. All of that is being taken into consideration in whatever we do with the land that is there.

Mr. Vice-President, of course, we have to be fed. For those of you who do not know—Sen. King, you were there with me at the University of the West Indies when I did agricultural management. I went and did that course, because it was an extra course and I had a concern and an interest in it. I still have that concern and I still have that interest and I would use that to help in whatever documentation or programmes that we are doing.

I really wanted to say this afternoon that we would have wished, even at this stage, for a lot more focus on this Bill which we did not have. I also want to tell you that I am the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs.

**Sen. Mark:** We know that.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Some people forget that. I take my job seriously. When I talk about cultural heritage, and people talk about it, even when I go to these meetings, I know what I am talking about—what comes to my mind and what we need to protect. It is there, because culture is a way of life. We did not want to destroy it. I heard Sen. Seetahal read something today and I almost

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felt a little chill, as she read it, because as history is being passed on, we may have lost that, as the case may be. I bring my portfolio of the community to bear on what is happening in Caroni. People asked me why I am on that committee, but I have to be there. I have to represent those concerns. That is why my Ministry went down there to see about the women who needed the extra programmes.

**Sen. Mark:** Politics!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** This afternoon, in spite of the abuse, and I have also heard other things said, but I would not close my eyes to it. I need not repeat them, but that is my work and that is what I am here for. I would not close my eyes to some of the things that have been said, but I would look at them, if that is the case. I feel that we have to be careful about what we do to people's characters before they are really tried, but it would not escape us. I am not saying this afternoon—

**Sen. Mark:** You “lick up” Basdeo Panday and you are talking about character! You “lick up” Carlos John and you are talking about character!

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** As a good communicator, the next stage—after hearing and listening—is that response and that reaction, and I want to assure you that is going to happen.

**Sen. D. Montano:** What is wrong with you?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Mr. Vice-President, I am looking forward to the discussion of the Vesting Bill in the committee stage. [*Crosstalk*] I want to give this Senate the assurance that this Government is just as passionate about the people. We are emotional, as you are, with respect to what happens to these people; and we are concerned, as you are, as to what would happen to the people there; and that is why you are seeing several things being done. We know what is there; we know there is a lot of land and how close land is to the people and, therefore, even with the land, we are going to ensure that the best use is being made of it. A number of persons feared that we were going to take the land over and out of agriculture, and after a few years we would regret it. We are very concerned and conscious about that. I want to give you the assurance that would not happen.

At this time, as I said before, we are a government that is strong; a government that puts politics aside—we were not thinking of politics—because we knew what was best for the people, and we took the decision to do it; we took the decision to communicate with them, and all that I can ask of you is to

empathize with us. I know that you will also want to do the best for the people and you must stop destroying the people all the time and letting the people see the negative side, if there are any at all, but keep them focused and let them reap the benefits of what I consider to be one of the best restructuring that has ever happened here or anywhere else.

**Sen. Mark:** “Oh goooo.”

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** I have never seen any separation package as good as this one. I want to commend it to all of you.

Mr. Vice-President, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President, thank you very much. I am pleased this afternoon to contribute to this Bill. You know, Mr. Vice-President, today is really a sad day. After having listened to the Senator’s contribution, I could not be more saddened. Mr. Vice-President, do you know why? I do not know these farmers. I met them here this afternoon, for the first time, across the street. Yes, I know of Wendy Lee Yuen. I have seen her articles, and I knew her from before. I knew of her when she was on campus doing agriculture, and through her articles, and I know of her passion for agriculture, Mr. Vice-President. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, let me tell you something. It is not easy for people in this country to say that they are going to fight for agriculture. It is very easy for everybody to run off and go into the commercial sector, because life is easy there, and we should take our hats off to these people who want to stand up for food security in this country. [*Desk thumping*] This is what I cannot understand with that side. I could never understand that!

Mr. Vice-President, instead of the Minister—I went across there, because I saw them holding up their placards, and they have been asking and begging—you have seen their letters; you have seen Wendy Lee Yuen’s letters to this Senate and in the newspapers, and you have heard of Prof. Spence. Do you know what the Minister did? She came when I was there—I had just arrived, and I was hoping that she would cross the road and come across and show some support to the farmers of this country, but she stood there and watched them because I was there. Mr. Vice-President, that is the problem we have in this country.

One of the farmers said to me—and if you read their placards—across there that he sat on Vision 2020 Committee and Mr. Arthur Lok Jack said that we have enough money from oil and gas to buy food, what is the issue? That is the

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thinking of this Government. You know, we have enough oil and gas money, what do we need agriculture for? This is why today we could be arguing about Rao and the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited (EMBD), because everybody there just feels that they could take up Caroni (1975) Limited lands and do what they want with it, and then the Minister talks about the best restructuring plan!

Mr. Vice-President, how in heaven's name could they tell the farmers when they went to beg for Orange Grove land—Mr. Rao told them \$1,800 an acre—They know so much, but you tell me if that could be economically feasible for any farmer in this country. What are you telling those farmers? You are telling them to get off the land; we do not want your agriculture! That is what this Government is doing. That is the signal that they are sending. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Mark:** Wicked!

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Then Mr. Rao told them that he has made a promise to the Prime Minister that he would get \$10 billion over the next 10 years; one billion a year. What rent is he charging? Is he charging that per square foot or is he charging that per acre? What rent is he charging? It is true that Caroni (1975) Limited lands are very valuable when we talk about commercial value, but if you take a piece of land and zone it for agriculture, what market value are you getting for it? When it is valued at commercial value it goes up by 10 times the amount. I know the policy is 2 per cent of the market value that you pay in rental, et cetera. Mr. Vice-President, if you value it at commercial value, agriculture would never be economically viable on those lands. This is what this Government does not understand.

Mr. Vice-President, you see, because of the Government's economics—the PNM economics—that is why the country is in the situation that it is in today. We have a widening deficit right now for the non-energy sector. What are they doing about it? Nothing! They continue to overheat the economy. They shut down Caroni (1975) Limited, why? Because of the \$500 million lost every year, but they put that same \$500 million back into the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP). Look at what you have done! You have shut down an entire economy where there was economic activity, and you did not see the value of that. We were generating foreign exchange. It is not just 9,000 workers but it is 9,000 workers plus their family members and the ancillary economic activity that goes on there, and they are telling me about the best restructuring plan! [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, for the past couple of weeks, when we read the newspapers, we saw headlines: “grabbing of lands”, “Bon Air farmers cry”; “Between a rock and a hard place”; “Curepe farmers vow to fight for land”; and I did not bring the next one. The other one had to do with Ramgoolie Trace. Sen. Wade Mark referred to it. They are fighting now over agricultural land. This is what we want. We want to see farmers fight amongst themselves to get land to produce food for this nation. This is what they are encouraging across there, and they are not ashamed of themselves, and they are talking a pack of nonsense! [Desk thumping] They should be ashamed! [Desk thumping] [Laughter] I have never heard so much of garbage before in my entire life.

I was trying to call the Minister to come across the road to show that she empathizes with those farmers and to show that she cares. I was trying to signal to her to come, but she stood so far away and just looked. I saw the look on her face, and I wonder what she was angry about.

**Sen. Mark:** Contempt for farmers!

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Contempt for farmers; that is what it is, because it has been demonstrated this afternoon. Mr. Vice-President, let me tell you something. I looked at this plan, *Post Caroni (1975) Limited: A Comprehensive and Integrated Development Plan*. I do not know what the Minister wants us to talk about. She said that we are not talking about the Bill. What is this Bill? This Bill must be informed by something. What is the policy-decision of the Government that informs this Bill? We have to get to the heart of it.

Let us look at the document: *Post Caroni (1975) Limited: A Comprehensive and Integrated Development Plan*. I opened it and I tried to read it. Yes, there are some figures there, but I could not figure out what was the plan. I decided to go to the library. So, I went to the library downstairs and I pulled out some other plans. Of course, there have been many studies done on Caroni (1975) Limited, and some of them may not be relevant today because times have changed and this is the year 2005. I pulled out Caroni (1975) Limited Directional Plan. This was chaired by Mr. Vishnu Ramlogan, Dr. Frank Gumbs, Prof. John Spence, Dr. P.I. Gomes, Dr. Dyanand Rajkumar, Mr. Steve Johnson and Mr. L. Rajaram. This was done sometime in 1987. It was a plan for the period 1987 to 1992.

I then pulled out the tripartite, which was done in July 1992, probably following from this plan. Let me just call out the members. This was headed by then chairman, Dr. Kusha Haraksingh and it was presented to the Government. The then minister, Dr. Keith Rowley, who was the Minister of Agriculture, Land

and Marine Resources, quoted from this plan several times in this House. I saw it in the *Hansard*. I started with this plan to see what the thinking was. Do you know what is so different between this plan and what they have here? You know, they are saying that this is a plan, but these are just some statements. When you look in this document, for example, you could see what is the diversification process; what is the plan for diversification; how you will set up all the various industries; and what is the timing like.

We all agree that Caroni (1975) Limited needed restructuring, but in restructuring Caroni (1975) Limited and restructuring the sugar industry, you would recognize that there are workers who have to be retained and they must move across into new industries, so you come up with a plan and say, well, these are the little industries here and there—we want to have some agro processing; we want to do legumes; and we want to do this or that.

Then you would pull the skills out and say, okay, we can train these persons and this is our skills-gap analysis. Sen. Sadiq Baksh referred to that matter. Did they do a skills-gap analysis? No! Did they pull the skills out and train them and absorb them? Is there something in here called an absorption plan to move the workers from one point to the other point? Those persons who are old and would be retiring should be given VSEP, because they would not be re-trainable and re-deployable at this point in time.

Mr. Vice-President, if you go to the financial planning, there is a financial plan here that tells you, okay, if we want to go into beef, dairy or sheep what the capital requirements are. They gave you the capital expenditure for 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992, and what would be the recurrent expenditure to support these small industries. For example, the beef project, you would see \$278 million and it keeps going up, and it escalates until it starts coming back down; then it goes to the projected revenues for those four years. I am saying that there are about six or seven projects identified here: beef, dairy, sheep, tilapia, bagasse, rice, passion fruit, exotic bananas, citrus grapefruit, citrus orange, coffee, et cetera. This was a financial plan. If you look in this document—everybody tells you that they have a plan; this is a great plan; and a comprehensive plan. I would hate to find out what is a brief plan from the PNM. It may be non-existent. That is why Sen. Sadiq Baksh always talks about turning words into deeds.

Mr. Vice-President, nowhere in here tells me how they are going to support the restructuring exercise, and how much money they are going to spend? Do you know why? They have no plan for diversification in the first place, and that is

why we cannot see any financial figures here. [*Desk thumping*] This is why they could call this plan a comprehensive plan. That is why! They tell me that this is a plan. The plan should tell us what is your transitional period; what your transformation plan is; what is your financial plan; and what is your training and development plan.

Mr. Vice-President, even if the PNM was so interested in throwing out all the other plans that were available, what informs this plan? Did they do a comprehensive and economic analysis? How did they do this study? This is not about Caroni (1975) Limited. Caroni (1975) Limited with its 9,000 workers was an economy by itself. Did they recognize that such a study is a complex study and not just a matter of seeing a \$500 million loss every year? This is about looking at all the economic activity, and performing an analysis on all those ancillary activities. They did not do that. If they had done that they would have been able to tell us more in this plan.

Where is your agricultural policy? What is your plan for agriculture in this country? If there was a plan for agriculture, could you tell me how this fits into your plans for agriculture? Could you tell me how this plan fits into how you are going to achieve food security for this nation? No. Do you know why? Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams answered one thing that I was bothered about. All I kept hearing her talk about is who have a base—I did not realize that this Bill had a base. Do you know that this Bill has a base? The Bill now has a base. She just gave us credence to all that has been said in the past. I want the Senator to understand that.

When we were talking about the shut down of Caroni (1975) Limited, we asked whether the motive was to destroy the base of the UNC, and they kept saying no, but do you know what? She said it today. It is on *Hansard*; it is down on the record. She said your base would be destroyed and our base will expand. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Vice-President, that is what she said.

Sen. Prof. Deosaran, I was going to answer you today, but I hope now that you have heard for yourself that it is about base. This has nothing to do with agriculture; this has nothing to do with diversification; and this has nothing to do with the development of Trinidad and Tobago. I hope you understand. [*Desk thumping*] We could talk how much we want—

[*Sen. Yuille-Williams on her feet*]

Just before the Senator gets up, let me just say something. You will get your time. I always allow people to slip in whatever clarification they would need, but just now when we were asking you to give way, you did not want to give way.

Your colleagues always tell us that if we do not give way, then we are saying that it is not true, but I will give way, go ahead. [*Laughter*]

**4.15 p.m.**

**Sen. Yuille-Williams:** Let us put it into context, I said that you were afraid to make the decision to do it because you were afraid. That is what I said. I said in the context we had to make a decision about Caroni (1975) Limited—that is what I said—and I said you were afraid to do it. You did not wish to make a decision which had to be made. We were a strong Government, we made the decision.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** You made the decision. You made the decision Senator and your Government, because you said your base will expand. Let me tell you something; let me tell you why we did not make a decision. You see the analysis you all performed about saying that it is \$500 million loss every year, so this is why we should shut down Caroni (1975) Limited, but you take the same \$500 million and you put it back into CEPEP, which is what is overheating this economy every year and that is what is causing inflation.

Let me just put on the record because I was a little surprised as every time we keep hearing about what decision we did not make. A study was done on Caroni (1975) Limited, and on the same basis after reviewing plans like this—the directional plan and the Tripartite Committee plan—it was recognized that a similar plan had to be developed for Caroni (1975) Limited, in the context of the global environment and in the context of the dynamics that were taking place at the point in time. This is the 21st Century.

As a result of that—and Mr. Yetming made it very clear in the other place. When he came into office the Divestment Secretariat, Mr. Hospedales told him, “I have a plan ready for you.” You know what the plan was? To shut down Caroni (1975) Limited. Mr. Yetming said specifically, no way are we going to shut down Caroni (1975) Limited, because that will do nothing for us in terms of economic development, and as a result of that he sent the Divestment Secretariat back to the drawing board, with specific guidelines on how to sustain employment and allow for the transformation of this industry.

Mr. Vice-President, my colleague referred extensively to the sugar industry in Belize. These two plans are representative of what we call a structural adjustment programme. Any transformation programme must take five and six years. You do not shut down the industry and then look for a plan after, but this is what this Government did. They shut it down and then said “let meh come up with a plan, let meh look for a plan”. They did not think about that before, so you know what,

they shut it down. When we were in office, when the Divestment Secretariat was redirected—and I want to challenge the Minister here this afternoon.

Sen. Christine Sahadeo, I am challenging you this afternoon to go and pull out the plan. If this goes to a select committee, I want to tell all these Independent Senators, whoever may be sitting on this committee, you go and you ask for that report from the Divestment Secretariat and you would see that there was no intention of shutting down Caroni (1975) Limited, let me tell you that. The last report that was produced in 2001 clearly stated how there would be an adjustment programme for five years, along the same lines of this sort of report, where you identify how you were going to develop the other industries; how you were going to come up with the transformation plan; how you were going to do your skills-gap analysis and identify the skills required for the various industries; and how you were going to develop those skills and then re-deploy them.

During that time you did not have to shut down Caroni (1975) Limited and put people on the breadline. They could have still been employed, getting a salary; you train them and then you move them over. That is a structural adjustment programme. You make an investment on that basis. So when Sen. Satish Ramroop got up and talked stupidity—[*Interruption*] nonsense. Okay, I would withdraw the stupidity, but talking nonsense about how much these poor people wanted to be out of where they were, elevating them and evolving them out of agriculture—What happen, we have to be ashamed of agriculture in this country?

Let me ask you something, Sen. Ramroop, is it that you had to force them out, so you had to shut them down? Through you, Mr. Vice-President, did they have to shut down Caroni (1975) Limited and put them on the breadline: where they have no house and where they will not be able to eat? Let me tell you all something, Sen. Ramroop, when they shut down Caroni (1975) Limited there were people who were still Caroni workers, who were surviving, still making their bake and butter, roti and butter and sending their children to school. When you shut down Caroni (1975) Limited and you took away the livelihood of these people; these very same people cannot send their children to school. I want all of you to understand, by just a slight twist of fate, I could have been one of those mothers facing that problem today, and this is why I feel for this!

Do not come and tell me when you take a nice picture—they spoke about cameras and the graduation ceremony. Mr. Vice-President, there was a big centre spread where they spent Government's money to show how they gave out those awards. What happen, do you think the people would not have come to get their

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certificates? They will take anything! But did it mean that you had to put them on the breadline to give them that? This is ridiculous! I could never understand the thinking of this Government! Explain to me how you all could justify that! [*Desk thumping*] You could never justify that position!

Why no other country did that? How come Belize did not have to shut down an entire industry and they could have come up with a plan? Belize came up with a plan for diversification, but they did not shut down the industry. They did not do that! We could quote several other countries. But it does not matter and you see this nonsense about \$500 million they lost every year—

I just saw a Petrotrin consolidated which showed nice, healthy figures but I want to ask the Senator if she ever asked them to break this up into the business unit—break it up into the refinery and tell me if the refinery is a profitable centre. The refinery is not a profitable centre. You talked about us being 2.7 times more, as the lowest producer—we produced at 2.7 times the cost of the lowest producer. Find out what is the cost of refining oil in this country compared to the Asian countries. We will never be operating! On that basis you should shut down the refinery, because we are the highest cost producer right now, but you would not do that!

What do you do? You pump Government's money—you are putting in capital—into the refinery to bring down the cost to ensure that they can become more cost efficient. Why you did not say I will take a certain amount of capital—because all the billions of dollars you are spending on the refinery—and put it into Caroni (1975) Limited with a proper transformation plan? Would it not have had the same effect? No, no! You answered the question, it is because of the base, that is the problem there, Mr. Vice-President. As my colleague said, the longest rope has an end. [*Desk thumping*] All of you Senators who continue to sit there and continue with this nonsense, let me tell you something, I am calling on you to have a conscience.

**Sen. Mark:** They do not have that.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Have a heart in this situation for the sake of the country. I am speaking here now for the country, because we all have children and I would like to think that my children could stay in this country, they could survive and that there would be food security; that we would continue to strive for that. Senator, let me tell you something, if you really had a plan when you had a plan, all of these plans have a map and the map tells you how they were going to develop all the areas of Caroni (1975) Limited, where you were placing what. If

you wanted to go into agro-processing, for example, if it were citrus, how you were locating it. So you know what, it was done in the context of a national agricultural plan. But they did not do that, I am not saying that I am now asking for this.

I want to remind this Senate—two years ago, about a couple of months after we came into Opposition, before Sen. Sahadeo came to this Senate—I moved a matter on the Motion for the Adjournment of the Senate, and that is on land utilization and distribution in the context of the decision taken on Caroni (1975) Limited, and I drew to the attention of this Senate a report that was done in 1992 by the very same PNM Government on land utilization and distribution and I highlighted the importance of not breaking up lands of Caroni (1975) Limited, because of the reduced economic viability of this fragmentation and segmentation. That wherever agricultural lands continue to be fragmented, it would not be economically viable and that was done since then, in 2003.

I am going to bring it back to the attention of this Senate. You continue to fragment, segment, and talking about giving out two-acre plots of land. How do you expect this thing to be economically viable? I want to ask, is it that the PNM is actually hatching a plan to ensure the failure of agriculture in this country? [*Desk thumping*] Nothing, nothing. In the energy sector we hear about so many incentives for the development of the energy sector, so many tax incentives. What has happened to agriculture? Where are the incentives? I do not ever see any legislation coming here to give us incentives. Where are the incentives for agro-processing, if we want to stimulate that sector? What about training? You talked about farming, I am not saying farming has to be cutting cane every day, there are so many new techniques, the industry has modernized. What have you done to ensure that we can adopt some of those technologies here, some of those techniques? How are we training people? Did you give incentives to the private sector to say, come let us do this and we will give you the incentives to do it?

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** They do not know what they are talking about—

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Then they are telling me they have a comprehensive plan. This is what is in the name of a comprehensive plan. It never ceases to amaze me with the PNM Government.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** You ask whether there is a land use plan. There is a land use plan. If you want to see pictures and maps, there are pages and pages of maps of land use. There is a land use plan and I am sure that when it goes to the Select Committee, this report would also be made available to the Select Committee. There is a plan, and if you judge a plan by pictures, there are plenty pictures in it. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** I am not judging it by pictures. Mr. Vice-President, just let me answer him, please. That is the land use plan he may be talking about and that may be an updated version of the 1992 plan. I am talking about Caroni (1975) Limited, all these plans have—yes they may be talking about general land use. What they have done here is detailed the Caroni lands and showed you how it will be de-utilized and how it will be deployed to achieve the objectives of diversification.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, I thank her again. This is not a general land use plan, this is a plan dated April 30, 2004, Caroni (1975) Limited Inter-Agency Land Use Planning Team Report on Caroni lands. So these are allocations of Caroni lands, not a general land use plan.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I would like the Senator to go on but we are right at tea time. We are going to take the break now for tea and I will allow you to continue right afterwards. I would like you to make a note of where you are please. The Senate will now be suspended until 5.00 p.m.

**4.30 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President, how much time do I have remaining?

**Mr. Vice-President:** You have 15 minutes, and possible extension.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President, I wanted to answer the Senator before we went on the tea break, because he produced a document which outlined the Inter-Agency Committee which they had set up to come up with this plan. There is the Planning and Development of Land Act, 1998—it is my understanding in looking at this inter-agency plan, in fact what they have done is not legal, because you cannot bind the decisions or recommendations of the inter-agency because there is a National Physical Development Plan and that is due now, Sen. Dr. Kernahan raised the issue. If I look at page 9 of this particular report, in section 38:

“Government is of the view that the *National Physical Development Plan* which was expected to be revised by the TCPD by **2006**, should inform specific land use designations and should allow Government to manage and guide the future development of Caroni’s lands. In this connection, Government is of the view that the implementation of that Plan as it pertains to former Caroni’s lands would be undertaken by the relevant Ministries in consultation with the EMBD.

This notwithstanding, Government has agreed that pending the completion of the revised *National Physical Development Plan* by **2006**, the land suitability exercise conducted by the Inter-Agency Land Use Planning Team would serve as a guideline for identifying specific land use designations on Caroni's lands."

Mr. Vice-President, what this is saying to us is that they did not use and the National Physical Development Plan will not guide the utilization of Caroni (1975) Limited lands. You are going to base the use of the Caroni (1975) Limited lands on the findings of the Inter-Agency Land Use Planning Team, which is not the same thing, and this is what I do not understand. That is due before this Parliament. Sen. Dr. Kernahan went into detail about that and it is clear, the last one was in 1982. I just wanted to say because I am looking on here, and I am just quoting, part of the plan is to prepare the comprehensive physical development plan to coordinate the land development approval process. To look at the codes and standards, because this is why we are getting into the situation that we are getting into right now, where we are taking lands that are already zoned for agricultural use and we are zoning it for commercial use and we know that. Because right here on the East-West Corridor, for example, Aranguez, we had a situation where if the same lands continue to be used for agriculture, the market value is substantially lower than if they were zoned for commercial value. We have to be very careful about this.

This Government really does not care about any National Physical Development Plan. This is why they could take good arable land and put housing on it. This is why they would take good Class III lands and put commercial activity on it; put an industry on it; put concrete jungle on it. That is done, Mr. Vice-President, because we are not interested in how we utilize land in this country. That is why we do not want the National Physical Development Plan Committee, which was set up to do so, to inform these sorts of decisions. That is why you do not want them involved.

Let me just tell you what that national planning and development is supposed to do. That committee would have had to look at Caroni (1975) Limited lands; they would have had to obtain all the background information; they would have had to ask who did you speak to. Where are all the supporting documents that suggest how we are going to use these lands? What are the recommendations for the land use? How are these recommendations taken on board? You must provide a full justification for the utilization of these lands, which the National Physical Development Plan Committee, empowered to do so, would have been

able to pursue and would have been able to determine what are arable lands and therefore should it be zoned for commercial activity. This is why—as I pointed out earlier—we have a situation where farmers are fighting over land. You hear farmers talking about—I think it is Bon Air Gardens—Government grabbing the lands to put housing on and it was good land which they were using for agricultural purposes. This is why you could go down to Chatham and you hear they have destroyed good agricultural lands because they want to put aluminium smelter. This is why right now for the last two years in this country, this is all we have continued to hear about.

The Government has no intention of listening to any planning body as to how we utilize land. Instead, all they are interested in is how we take land and use it for housing projects, so that they could put up their crime factories in this country, put up a housing project here, put up a housing project there. You know, Mr. Vice-President, my colleague, Sen. Baksh would bear me out on this; do you know when they used to talk about John Humphrey and everybody used to say, oh, he taking so long and no housing project and Sen. Baksh did not do anything in housing, but it was because of this same situation.

You just do not go to Circular Road in San Fernando and say I am putting up a housing scheme. I just do not go to Caroni and say, okay, in Felicity I would take good arable land and put up a housing settlement. Because you want to be able to develop rural areas as well, and if you are putting in housing, you want it to be done on a community basis. For example, you have the police station, the medical facilities, a school, et cetera. Not everybody flocking to this housing unit, which all you are doing is developing another Nelson Street, and what happens on Nelson Street and those areas. It is a crime factory, nothing else. Every day we have to hear about the lock down on Nelson Street by the army and the police. But this is the kind of planning that goes by the Government. What do we expect when we hear the Minister, Joan Yuille-Williams saying, "Well you know, in order to develop and expand our base", so we understand very well why—*[Interruption]* But you said that.

Let me just go back to the point I was making before we started this discussion and that was about the whole issue of the diversification, the process itself. In the case of Belize, if you look at the Belize restructuring—and this is one example, my colleagues at the back were saying there are several countries which you can go to and look at how their diversification process took place. But in the case of Belize, they came up with their strategic plan and they said all right, this is how we are going to diversify. They have been able to come up and say okay, this

is the suitability of land, these are the industries that we need, and more so, you know they said okay, for example, we want to stay in sugar. We will stay in sugar, we would do everything. Sen. Montano talked about utilizing more of the varieties of cane that would allow for better sucrose content, et cetera, so that we improve on efficiency, and so on. They said not only that, we see that there is still a strategic need to stay in sugar.

I am not saying this is the need for Trinidad and Tobago, it may not be. But you know what we would do, we are going to go further down stream, we are going to deepen the sugar industry. We are not going to just take cane, process it into sugar and export it. For example, like how we have rum, they would want to go into other areas, whether it was ethanol, et cetera. They said we would deepen this section and yes we would diversify other areas, but it was on a strategic basis that they decided that they would continue in sugar.

Now, I am not saying that Trinidad and Tobago must stay in sugar. What I want to know is, did we perform the analysis to determine whether or not we should stay in sugar in the 21st century? Is the answer yes or no? Were there options for us to further deepen the sector? All I want to know is if these studies were done, and from what is evident before us, these studies are absent. They are non-existent, we are not hearing any findings. We talk a lot about agricultural activity, but do you know why most of those countries adopted a particular approach to the diversification and development when they were moving away from sugar? I am sure all of these countries recognize the need to restructure, to make it more cost efficient and to get a strategic end for the sugar industry. But you know why, Mr. Vice-President? Everyone knows that with the sugar industry you had complementary activities taking place, you had some farming going on.

During the periods when there was no harvesting of cane, those very same farmers would plant and prepare some plots of land and the produce from it, they would sell. That was part of the contribution to the agricultural sector in this country. Do you know what we have done when we shut down Caroni (1975) Limited? We take away everything; we let all the citrus dry up; we let all those fields go to waste. According to Sen. Baksh, we allowed a lot of the husbandry and so on to disappear, we do not know where it has gone, nobody knows; he suggested some ways, the rumour on the ground. When we shut down an industry like this, the way this Government has done it, what they have done is they have actually taken away all those ancillary activities, all those complementary activities that went with farming, that went with agriculture. You know what will happen? They will become non-existent in this country and that is what the fear

is. Because what the other countries have done, they continued it and while it was ongoing they took a simultaneous approach, they brought in their other new ideas. The diversification process took place simultaneously while the industry was still running. That was to be able to ensure that the resources that you developed in agriculture did not disappear.

The point I am making here is, when you see Senator—she ridiculed the farmers who were present and basically showed contempt for them. I want her to understand there were several young farmers whom we should be encouraging in this nation to continue in farming, but we did not do that. When I raised the issue about Mr. Rao and his \$1,800 that he is asking these farmers for their acre of land—are you aware that on that same Orange Grove Estate, we have a French company—what is the name of the company?

**Hon. Senators:** Pernod Ricard.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Yes, that same French company. You know what they are charging them? They have hundreds of acres and they are charging them \$200 an acre, but our farmers they want to charge them \$1,800, you hear, and that is the nonsense that goes on in this country.

**Sen. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-president, just to correct the records, I would like this honourable Senate to know that all lands that are leased are leased on the terms and conditions that are outlined by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. So that is inaccurate, all agricultural leases are on those terms and conditions, so that data is inaccurate.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Well Senator, I think you better check your facts.

**Sen. Sahadeo:** I checked on it.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Check your facts. Well, what is the price they are charging then?

**Sen. Sahadeo:** It is on the normal rates that the Ministry—

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Which is?

**Sen. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, the rates depend on the location of the land and all the factors that would determine what would be the rental leases. But I want to assure you that it is nowhere close to the \$1,800. The last time I saw it, it was like \$350, et cetera. They have a formula based on the location of the acreage and those lands are leased accordingly.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President, the Senator may be right, but she is not listening to the point I am making. These farmers went to Mr. Rao and what they were told, for them to continue they have to pay \$1,800 a year. That is what she needs to check into. You need to check into that, \$1,800 an acre. Find out if this is what they have been told. What you need to do, Senator, is call the farmers in and consult with them, you must get the other side of the story. You cannot listen to Mr. Rao all the time.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**5.15 p.m.**

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Thank you, Mr. Vice-President. The point I am trying to make as an example, a case in point, in the Belize situation there was a complete rethink of the industry, and that rethink is what informed the directional plan and that is what we are appealing for here this evening.

Mr. Vice-President, we talked about diversification, but I want to make a point about diversification. This country and this Government talks extensively about diversification, but all we ever hear about is diversification within the energy sector. For example, go and build Cannon Ball, the platform at the LABIDCO site. Do not mind that you are hearing the Chairman of bpTT, Robert Riley, who is saying that with inflation cost taking place, there is no way that they could continue to produce platforms like these in this country. We would lose our competitive edge, because right now we have a competitive edge, because for those platforms that come off the Gulf of Mexico, there is a transportation cost. So we are able to get that competitive edge. What we are doing now, when we continue to overheat the economy, the diversification process becomes more and more difficult. Now what happens, if you are hearing that complaint about diversification within the energy sector, where it is the plans of this Government—the hon. Patrick Manning is saying, “I am going to sell platforms to Venezuela, Colombia and Latin America,” and right there they are complaining about inflation, what do you expect for agriculture?

Mr. Vice-President, right now they are not doing enough. This Government is not doing enough to take the proceeds—when they talk about true diversification of the economy; taking the proceeds from the energy sector and using it to develop other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture. [*Desk thumping*] That should be number one and they are not doing that. Every year they come in this House. They say it at budget time, they talk about what they are doing to diversify agriculture, and they do nothing.

Mr. Vice-President, let me just respond to Sen. Danny Montano, because he talked about governance—what is governance—but when he was asked the question: “What are the alternatives? When you train all of these people where do they get jobs?” I want to tell this Government something, all those Senators who jumped up on that side and talked about all those people being employed, I want to know where these people are being employed. Because every day you hear complaints on the radio stations, when you go down there, you hear complaints. If there was a condition that for them to get their two-acre plot, that they must come to these training exercises, do you expect them not to come! You expect that if they are going to graduate and get a certificate, for them not to come! Nobody is saying no to them. Nobody is saying no, they should not be trained, but what else do you expect? But you feel by seeing a happy smiling face that all is well, when you could have used a better approach.

So when Sen. Dr. Kernahan asked, what are the alternatives? What are these people being trained for? If you read this document, Mr. Vice-President, this comprehensive plan, we see people being trained, but it is as if they pulled courses out of a hat. Computer this, that and the other, it is not aimed at having plans for alternative industries on the Caroni (1975) Limited lands and we are training people to fit into those industries, Mr. Vice-President. That is not what they are doing. I have not seen anything.

You know what was Sen. Danny Montano's response? “We cannot tell where they are going to employ them. We do not know what the alternatives are. That is for private enterprise.” You really do not know where the private enterprise is going to fit into this? You have no idea; you have no clue as to where the private enterprise is going to fit into this? You do not recognize that if you want private enterprise to seriously take on agriculture in this country, you have to provide that enabling environment; you have to facilitate them; you have to give them incentives; you have to develop the environment such that you, as Government, will be able to facilitate. But no, he talks about governance.

It is okay for the State to say they are going to set up state company to build schools. It is okay for the State to say that they are going to set up company for Tobago. Tell me, so the private sector could not do that?

**Sen. Mark:** What is the role of the THA?

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** The private sector has no role? I think, Mr. Vice-President, the private sector in this country has gotten a failing grade of "F", if they are not able to build schools in this country and the Government must move in and set up state enterprises, duplicate costs, create a whole organization again, rent buildings and saying it is to build schools.

They do not recognize the kind of cost they are putting into the system. They are heating up the economy, that is all they are doing. They are becoming an employer of the State, Every time they open a new state enterprise—and it is clear, all the economists have told them that all the inefficiency takes place within the state enterprises. It must be that they just want to be able to employ their PNM hacks. That is all you want to do, to put Mr. Monteil back to build schools. That is all they are doing, Mr. Vice-President.

**Hon. Senator:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President. Let me make this point, because I want to respond to Sen. the Hon. Danny Montano.

**Hon. Senator:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** I have just ten minutes again, Senator.

**Sen. Mark:** No, no, no, do not take on Lenny.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Let me tell you something. Sen. the Hon. Danny Montano was allowed in this House earlier this year under a different Bill and he was totally irrelevant when he talked about TTIT.

Let me talk about TTIT, because everybody talked about TTIT. Why we put TTIT in Central Trinidad? How we could end up with TTIT in central? It was a curse, it was a crime—well now it is UTT but—it was a crime. The UNC committed the biggest crime by putting TTIT—

**Hon. Senator:** Yes.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Yes! You hear that. The UNC committed the biggest crime by putting TTIT in Caroni. We should not put TTIT in Caroni and then they talk about Caroni workers. Then Sen. the hon. Satish Ramroop talked

about the training of people. So what is it then? Why is it you object to TTIT being in Caroni? Let me set the record, let me tell you something—[*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senators:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** Do not take them on.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President, let me clear the record and let me clear the air on this TTIT. When the National Energy Skills Centre was set up—when the UNC came into government—it was because it was recognized that the energy sector companies were bringing in a lot of skills and they were applying for a lot of work permits. The former Minister of Energy and Energy Industries stated, “I will give you one year for these work permits, but you must put something in place to ensure that our people are trained to take up these positions.” The National Energy Skills Centre (NESC) was born out of that and out of the LNG Train 1 negotiations, that was the first set of funding that went to the NESC, Mr. Vice-President. As a result of that the NESC comprised a board and that board of directors—

**Hon. Senator:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** —I am telling you, because I know that is what went on—[*Crosstalk*] Those are facts. The people who sat on that board from as early as 1996/1997 were members of the various multinational companies, that put money into the NESC. Sometime in 1998 it was still recognized that what was being done by the NESC, was that they were training at a very low level and that there was still a gap between the very low level and the university graduates. An area called technologists—operators who could operate a distributive control system—and the idea of the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology was born. It was equivalent to any of the Institutes of Technology in India and that is what it was there to parallel, because we thought of it being able to develop the intellectual capital of the country.

Mr. Vice-President, do you know how TTIT ended up in Central Trinidad? What they should have checked to see, is that it was right next door to Point Lisas. When they recognized, the various multinational companies which were putting money into it, they started including a lot of the Point Lisas Industrial companies. As a result of that, they were saying, the kind of facilities they would have to put in we cannot afford it—for example, if we want them to train on an operating and distributing control system, we cannot go and put a distributive control system in TTIT—let them be next door to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, so that these students can get their practical experience at Point Lisas Industrial Estate, Mr. Vice-President. And that was the basis.

Let me tell you something that was recommended by the technocrats in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. Go back and check the facts. [*Desk thumping*] When he did it he was out of order, he was irrelevant. Mr. Vice-President, let me tell you and I make no apologies today because TTIT is located in Central Trinidad. Central Trinidad and Caroni are part of Trinidad and Tobago, man. Not the way this Government carries on—shut them down and put them on the breadline—and then tell me that is a human approach, a humane approach. My goodness!

**Hon. Senator:** A human face.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** A human face. Mr. Vice-President, tell me what is this about? We are talking about diversification—

**Sen. Mark:** That is Rao face.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** —and we talking about—but let me just read very quickly some of the plans that came out and I am challenging the Senator to go and get that plan that was produced in August, 2001. I just want to quote parts of it in summary because I do not have time—just five minutes. In summary, the Report of the Project Management Team (PMT) submitted undercover hereof proposes that:

- “1. the PMT be authorized to incorporate the strategic business units relating to sugar cane cultivation, sugar processing, sugar refining, dairy production and beef production;
2. the PMT make appropriate arrangements:”

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** What Report is that?

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** That was the Report that was produced in August, 2001 by the Divestment Secretariat.

**Hon. Senator:** Yetming Report.

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Yes, call it “Yetming Report”.

“the PMT to make appropriate arrangements:

- (a) to secure private sector investors for the purchase of forty nine per cent (49.0%) of the equity of one (1) or more of the three (3) subsidiaries involved in sugar cane cultivation, sugar processing, and sugar refining;

- (b) to secure private sector investors for the acquisition of forty nine per cent (49.0%) of the two (2) subsidiaries involved in dairy production and beef production;
- (c) to lease lands currently occupied in rice production to investors to produce agricultural crops including rice and short-term crops;
- (d) to secure a lease operator for the citrus assets; and
- (e) for Caroni/PMT to engage E&Y, the Auditors of Caroni, to provide divestment advisory services;

the Ministry of Finance in consultation with Caroni incorporate CEDCO as a wholly owned state enterprise with a mandate to stimulate and facilitate new business activity...”

Let me just tell you, CEDCO is the name of that company and it was mandated that CEDCO stimulate the economic activity required for the diversification process. Mr. Vice-President, I just want to quote some other parts of it:

“Government put in place the mechanisms for ensuring that the financial requirements for the six (6) year restructuring plan for Caroni be met with \$594 million being required in FY 2002.”

So, we are talking here about a six-year restructuring plan for Caroni (1975) Limited. Let me make this very clear—

**Hon. Senators:** No!

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** —what was in place was a six-year restructuring plan for Caroni (1975) Limited. [*Desk thumping*].

“Government take the appropriate steps in the event that private sector investors are not found for the joint venture companies involved in sugar cane cultivation, sugar processing and sugar refining to allow Caroni to continue in sugar cane cultivation with farmers’ cane becoming the principal source of feedstock for the sugar processing operation by 2006 and to this end provide the annual subventions to Caroni on an ongoing basis with \$218 million required in 2002.”

**Sen. Mark:** They stole the elections—you!

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President,

“The PMT recognizes that CEDCO’s operations would begin the process of creating job opportunities in the area identified by CEDCO for the different estates. The PMT also recognizes that the job creation programme will parallel the continuation of sugar operation.”

I want to make that clear.

“Accordingly, in order to ensure that the employees of Caroni are absorbed in the new jobs being created, CEDCO must take steps to put in place arrangements for an orderly movement of employees from sugar operations to the new activities which become available to the estate.”

That is a human face, that is a humane face. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, let me tell you. This is part of a letter to Mr. Assam:

“You may wish to consider the adoption of the approach recommended by the PMT and, subject to your agreement, the Team can be mandated to provide the technical framework for the job-creation exercise of CEDCO.”

**Sen. Dumas:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Mr. Vice-President, the company will stimulate the economic activity. Not to manage land and go and barter for lands, make deals with people and tell them it is \$1,800 for an acre of land. This is the point that this Government—they are losing all the way. I do not know if they have gotten the point. They have not gotten the point, but I wanted to make that point for the record and for those who are sitting and listening. There is a plan, Mr. Vice-President. There was a plan; a workable plan; an implementable plan and one that did not involve shutting down Caroni Limited, putting workers on the breadline and still giving them all that they would need.

**Hon. Senator:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Yes. Getting them out of agriculture and upgrading their skills. That was the plan, Mr. Vice-President. And I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Mark:** Yeah man, oh God, pressure man.

**Sen. Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir:** Thank you, Mr. Vice-President, for allowing me to make a contribution to this debate on the Vesting Bill before us.

Mr. Vice-President, two years after the premature and inhumane closure of the sugar, rice, citrus and dairy operations of the former Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove Estate the Government is now seeking parliamentary approval to regularize the ownership, control and management of these assets. But while this is no easy task, it appears as though Government is at sea in dealing with and meaningfully transforming these assets into the common heritage of our people.

There is no clear policy framework on agriculture within which the lands now made available from sugar production can be managed and used in a manner that can contribute to the attainment of food security and sustainable development. Even if there was a policy, what guarantee do the citizens have that there will be adherence to this policy? One wonders how committed we are to agriculture and food security. There is nothing in this Bill that safeguards the use of agricultural lands for future generations. I view this as a major flaw in this Bill.

**Hon. Senator:** Good point.

**Sen. P. Anmolsingh-Mahabir:** That is why I feel impelled to ask: What consultations have been undertaken with the numerous stakeholders, the agricultural experts and the communities of the sugar belt, before embarking upon and finalizing the post Caroni Development Plan? What is the role of the workers' union in the utilization of these assets of the people? The people are the owners of this landed patrimony and they have an inalienable right to determine how these lands are to be used in the national interest.

Mr. Vice-President, the lands of the former Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited are of great strategic importance in the quest for achieving food and energy security. We must not allow the current non-renewable and wasting oil and gas bonanza to lull us into a false sense of long-term security. We must consider the current escalating prices of locally grown food as an indicator of the gloom and doom if we vandalize and misuse the valuable assets of these lands for the sake of political expediency.

**Hon. Senator:** Good point.

**Sen. P. Anmolsingh-Mahabir:** Food is a basic necessity and if we do not safeguard these lands now and preserve their capacity to produce food, we will be condemning our future generations to food insecurity and insufficiency.

Sen. Seetahal made reference to a letter from APASTT and I would like to quote from that letter. This letter was sent from the Association of Professional Agricultural Scientists of Trinidad and Tobago dated April 08, 2005 and signed by Mr. Lawrence Wilson. In this letter it states:

"After discussion, two major implications of the Bill leading to two concerns in the area of land use emerged as follows:

1. There were no provisions in the Bill to restrict the use of the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited

for the development of business thereon, particularly in the areas of industrial light and heavy manufacturing, housing and commerce, to 10% of the total land area of the companies, as proposed and recorded in the proceedings of the Senate in Hansard.

2. There were also no provisions in the Bill to guarantee that the remaining 90% of the total land area of the Caroni and Orange Grove companies lands will be used for agricultural development under the management or the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) (see paras 10 and 14 of the Bill)”

Mr. Vice-President, I share the views of this association and I will make some amendments at the appropriate time and place later on.

Almost 80,000 acres of land are being vested in the State with two state companies, the Sugar Manufacturing Company and the Estate Management Company presiding over the management of these valuable assets. Concerns have been raised and expressed with regard to the Estate Management Company which is headed by someone who may not understand the psycho-cultural and historical status of the lands in question and this person is given considerable powers under clause 10 of this Bill.

May I ask the Minister, what has the Estate Management Company been doing since 2002 to this present day? We would like to know. May I also ask, Mr. Vice-President, what rural interest groups were represented on the Board of the Estate Management Company to ensure—

**Hon. Senator:** Good point.

**Sen. P. Anmolsingh-Mahabir:** —that the aspirations of these communities are catered for? These citizens, their parents and grandparents lived all their lives in the sugar belt, doing work that no one else wanted to do. They endured hardships and dangers to their health, from decades of aerial spraying of toxic chemicals; the burning canes disrupted their lives; they endured mosquito infestation and widespread flooding. It is inconceivable that in any developed country such a radical change in land use as evidenced by the post Caroni plan could be embarked upon without the active inputs of the communities that stand to be affected by the new land use proposal.

Mr. Vice-President, the post Caroni plan speaks of the rice project being assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources for administration and management. Has this Ministry allocated parts of the project to

farmers? What criteria were used to bypass former rice projects workers? Why were the former workers and managers of the rice projects bypassed in the allocation of rice growing plots?

After two years, the former Caroni workers are now hearing the welcome news that they will be shortly receiving the lands that were conditional to their acceptance of the Caroni VSEP package. I must commend the hon. Minister Christine Sahadeo, [*Desk thumping*] for speeding up this process, but the Minister must not stop there. The hon. Minister needs to go a step further to relieve the distress of hundreds of former Caroni (1975) Limited workers who are having extreme difficulty in accessing their NIS benefits.

Mr. Vice-President, I am sure it will bring tears to the eyes of the hon. Minister if she were aware of the real horrors that thousands of these ex-Caroni workers have to endure to access their NIS benefits, keeping in mind that these workers are now without an income. Through you, Mr. Vice-President, I want to inform the hon. Minister that there are over 500 invalidity benefit claims and another 500 for sickness benefits, pending from ex-Caroni (1975) Limited workers with NIB, awaiting the medical advisor's approval. May I ask the Minister what steps are being taken to expedite the process and payment of these claims to the workers—remember these workers are without an income at this point in time? Two years ago I brought to the attention of this honourable House the inadequacy of the NIB having only one medical advisor since its inception in 1972. In spite of assurances, the situation remains the same, although the workload has increased.

Mr. Vice-President, if you would allow me, I had also pointed out the poor state of record keeping at the National Insurance. Is the hon. Minister aware that contribution statements issued by NIB to ex-Caroni (1975) Limited workers are incorrect, and that the vast majority of these workers have not received any statement at all? Through you, Mr. Vice-President, I would like to implore the hon. Minister to give this honourable House an assurance that these contribution statements will be issued as a matter of urgency, so that the workers can have them corrected, if there are any discrepancies before it becomes too late and before Caroni (1975) Limited becomes obsolete and the records are destroyed.

I believe the hon. Minister Joan Yuille-Williams stated that if we see there is anything to be done, to bring it to her attention. I thank the hon. Minister for her kind offer and I certainly would be approaching her with some of these difficulties, because thousands of former Caroni (1975) Limited workers will be counting on her to keep her word.

In conclusion, Mr. Vice-President, it is quite clear to me that this Bill before us needs to be amended to provide the necessary checks and balances to ensure food security for future generations. I refer particularly to clause 10, because this clause conceals more than it reveals, and has far reaching consequences. I therefore join my colleagues in calling for this Bill to be sent to a Select Committee and that this Committee should report back to the Parliament, within the time frame of not more than one month.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Angela Cropper:** Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President. The Bill that is before us is clearly of great national interest and significance and I guess, being citizens of this country, we all can readily appreciate why that is so. Certainly it is of interest and significance to the generations of families and workers, who have nurtured these resources over time, contributing to satisfy the national demand and need for food as well as for employment, foreign exchange earnings and development of the country as a whole. But it is also of interest and significance because of the very complex package of economic, social, cultural and political factors that are combined in any policy decision or in any action that relates to Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited. These factors have already been very well and sufficiently articulated by Senators Prof. Deosaran, King, Prof. Ramcharan and others.

Seeing that the hour is late and I am coming in as the 11<sup>th</sup> person on this team, as it were, I do not think that I need to go over many of those points that have already been made; but I do wish to take them as the context within which I will make the comments that I am about to do.

Sugar production may no longer be a strategic economic activity globally speaking nor in the context of this economy, but what we do with these lands can be strategic for the future of this country. Strategic in terms of our need for food security now and for the future; strategic in terms of the need to diversify the economy, especially the rural sector; strategic in terms of the nature and the variety of employment opportunities that exist; strategic in terms of the quality of livelihoods that people in the rural part of the country can depend upon and can achieve; and specially strategic in terms of the social stability of the country and of ethnic harmony amongst us all.

Caroni (1975) Limited lands comprise in a composite way, the largest block of existing agricultural lands remaining, and so they present a great opportunity in any measure to divest them and to cater for their development—agricultural or

business development. It presents a considerable opportunity for transformation of the kind that we need to make to assure the future stability of the economy and the society, and certainly from the point of view of planning it presents a considerable opportunity for using contemporary approaches to landscape planning, to eco-system management and to sustainability of natural resources.

**5.45 p.m.**

Given that, Mr. Vice-President, we need to see these considerations in the context of the document that was laid in the Senate in January 2005 and upon which this Bill is predicated, the Comprehensive and Integrated Development Plan. Hereafter I will refer to this as “the plan”. I note that the initial focus of this Bill and of Government's policy with regard to divestment of Caroni and Orange Grove lands was aimed at satisfying the commitments of Government to former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited, but notwithstanding that, the Government was also mindful of the need to develop, on a sustainable basis, the lands of Caroni for the benefit of the national community.

Let me say at the outset, that I support, with absolutely no reservation, the central policy purpose inherent in this Bill; that is to say, the vesting of the real estate holdings of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove Limited in the State, as provided for by clause 4(1). I think that this vesting facilitates the Government in discharging the social justice aspects that are the historical legacy of the Caroni enterprise and our sugarcane economy and enterprise, as a whole. I would also have thought that the very vesting of these lands in the State implied that they were also important because we are dealing here with the patrimony of the nation; therefore, we need to be very clear about how the national public interest is going to be served by the Bill before us.

The plan indicates, I think in some detail, how the commitments that the Government has made to the Caroni workers are going to be satisfied. But in my view, the big picture, how we are developing the lands on a sustainable basis, for the benefit of the national community now, and for the generations to come, is not evident. I think a whole lot more is required in the plan before us, if we are to have a very good and confident basis upon which we might contemplate voting this Bill into legislation.

I would like, therefore, to comment on both aspects and purposes of the Bill before us as outlined in the plan. Since the hour is late and much has already been said and, perhaps, all the runs have been scored, I would make my comments under the following five headings.

The first has to do with the economic viability of the arrangements disclosed within the plan. I would like to take as my point of departure, the statement made by Sen. D. Montano when he was making a response in last week's sitting, in which he said that the Bill was "to enable Caroni workers to climb out of economic servitude". My very simple question is: How? It seems to me that a lot more is required to enable those workers and those communities to climb out of economic servitude, than access to two acres of land upon which they may engage, as it is expected, in some part-time agricultural activity. We are talking here about sugar workers who are now expected to become farmers, as a way of not only contributing to the laudable objective that was stated, but also contributing to their own ability to improve their lives and livelihoods and to provide for themselves and their families.

The plan does not, really, make clear to us how two acres are going to be viable and for what purposes and commodities and with what form of organization. Is there going to be something magical by which every activity that is engaged in would require two acres to make a viable enterprise? The plan does not make clear how we are going to cater for the water needs of a large area such as this that may go under agriculture nor what are the infrastructural requirements and plans to avoid the flooding that we see so regularly. The plan does not make clear how we might, actually, avoid the flooding of the market with vegetables and the price impacts and consequences for profitability that might lead to, for the very workers who are now being given access to these resources in order to become more viable as families and communities.

The plan does not make clear what niche commodities for export marketing or for agro-processing are contemplated. It does not disclose and describe what the linkages are among the enterprises contemplated to be set up there. It does not discuss the range of supports required: the infrastructure for irrigation and flood control; the extension services that will be required to support the activities that they will undertake; the technical and technological supports for modern day competitive agriculture. It does not make any commitments about investment in product development, markets and marketing, nor does it say anything about funds being available for capitalization for these enterprises.

We have heard a lot about the training being undertaken. I think there is much foresight in recognizing that capacity-building for this new line of activity will be required, but as it has already been suggested, we need to see how this capacity-building and these training activities fit into the overall scheme and into the design of the range of economic enterprises that are expected to be undertaken. So

I think we have a lot more to do to describe how these units and how these two-acre parcels of land are going to be made viable, if we feel this is the way we want to enable Caroni workers to climb out of economic servitude.

My second point relates to the national patrimony. As I have said before, this requires some balance between the individuals' and the national interests to be struck. So in addition to making the leases available, we need to be sure that there are provisions and restrictions to make these holdings environmentally sustainable. For example, we need to make sure that there is an increased efficiency in the use of the land and increased productivity per unit of land, but we also need to make sure that we prevent the nutrient loading; that we support modern day crop management practices; that we make available training for precision farming techniques; that we teach people how to control fertilizer application and so on, if these holdings and agricultural lands are to remain sustainable in the distant future.

We need to make sure also that there are conditions in the leases to guarantee that food production takes place and to make sure there are enough safeguards so that the lands designated for agricultural use are not alienated and that they remain for the assigned purpose; especially as it is said in the plan that 68.73 per cent of the lands are classified as class III and IV, that is to say, they are good agricultural lands, but they require moderate to intensive conservation and management practices. If we are concerned about the sustainability of the natural resource endowment and especially the land resources of the country, we need to make sure that the appropriate conservation and management practices are stipulated and employed.

My third point is about the human settlement aspects of the scheme. I think we have a great opportunity in planning for such a large parcel of land, all at one time, in a very conscious way, to design our human settlements so that the best possibilities for community development and community viability emerge. We also need to make sure in the design that the agricultural holdings and the human habitation areas are related in some way. Sure, we know that no houses are to be constructed on the agricultural plots, but then we need to consider the trade-off to that. We need to plan for the inevitable praedial larceny that will take place—we are Trinidadians after all—if the owner is not in close proximity to protect his resources. Therefore, we need to make sure that the agricultural and housing areas are designed in some relationship one to the other, and not be necessarily determined by where the lands that are good for housing exist, so you put housing there, and where

the lands that are good for agriculture exist, you put agriculture there. A good human settlement plan would also anticipate the management difficulties and requirements of the people who occupy the land and who cultivate it.

Sen. Yuille-Williams assured us earlier that the planning for human settlement in this divestment package is going to require attention to the need for community services. We take her word for that and it remains to be seen what are the community services being planned and how they are going to be done. The human settlement aspects and dimension of this whole scheme give us a very good opportunity to make a departure from the way in which we have approached human settlements in the past and from the way we have designed and constructed them. It also gives us an opportunity to design housing in a way that allows for improvement and expansion as families grow and earn more income and are able to better themselves. What is required here is a development plan for the whole area, as has been done in the past for Orange Grove by the University of the West Indies. We need to have a physical development plan of the same nature for this whole area so we can see how this human settlement aspect of it is going to be undertaken.

I have to also note, in passing, that the allocations are based on the existing method of land classification used in the country; a very archaic method that has long been discredited by the academics of the University of the West Indies and who have, themselves, revised that and devised new formulas. Why can we not use this opportunity to adopt and apply those new formulas that they have devised, in order to use our own indigenous formulations to replace the United States' classification scheme that has been in use in the country for so long? I notice also in the plan that details for Orange Grove are not reflected. We are pre-occupied with Caroni and although Orange Grove is being divested through this Bill, the plan itself is silent on what are the arrangements for it. I think we need to correct that omission.

My fourth point is on the governance aspects inherent in this Bill. I could not understand why a Bill that is seeking to vest the resources in the State for the use of the nation, as a whole, would exclude other Acts that are on our books, especially the State Lands Act, as provided for in clause 14. Why could we not issue the leases for the two acres with some controls, along the lines that we have been discussing, but allow the rest of the land to come under the aegis of the State Lands Act with all the protection that already allows and which we have grown used to and have come to rely upon? [*Desk thumping*] Of course, it is quite bureaucratic at times and it may be slow, but that cannot be overcome by a mere

negation of that Act. We have to make sure that the standards that the State Lands Act seek to impose, are also applied in the course of settling these lands.

I note also, in terms of the governance arrangements in this Bill, that the manager (the EMBD) is not required to prepare a plan for approval; especially as clause 10(2) confers very wide powers on the manager. This is exacerbated, it seems to me, by an arrangement in which the Chief Executive Officer is also the Executive Chairman of the EMBD. Given the significance of the issue we are dealing with and the sensitivities associated with it, at the very least, a proper governance arrangement would require these two functions to be separated. Much better oversight will be required for what is done with these lands and how the manager carries out these powers and functions that the Bill confers upon it. I do not think the Bill provides for such oversight.

My final point relates to the approach to planning. The plan, as I read it and for the reasons I have given, is quite inadequate to guarantee the development of the lands on a sustainable basis or to treat them in keeping with their significance as the patrimony of the nation. This is reflected in some of the provisions of the Bill. Better balance is required between the two goals. There are trade-offs between these two goals; trade offs between catering for the individual benefit of workers and families and catering also for the requirements to sustain these lands into the future, because they belong to the nation as well.

The policy framework in the plan is not clear or compelling. The Bill should be predicated on the updated national physical development plan, which has already been discussed earlier by Sen. Seepersad-Bachan, and also on an agricultural policy for Trinidad and Tobago. Without these contextual policies, it is very difficult to see how what is contemplated here would, actually, be able to achieve the goals that are being set up.

Several Senators have already noted that we have numerous previous studies done on Caroni and Orange Grove, but we do not see them reflected in the plan. One would have thought that the drafters of this plan would look at those studies and extract all the significant and, still relevant, aspects of them and we would see a discussion of what the previous recommendations were in relation to what we are proposing now and why. We do not, really, have a sense also of how what is planned here can be looked at in the context of all that is being contemplated for Vision 2020, in terms of the plans for agriculture, rural development, food security, the environment, the protection of jobs or for contributions to

employment. Where is the analysis of poverty reduction? By what means are we going to reduce the poverty for these workers and for these communities who are caught within the ambit of this Bill? To what extent can we expect that the activities in which they will engage and which this Bill implies would allow them to escape from the poverty associated all along with the rural sugar cane industry?

In Sen. Sahadeo's statement in the Senate on January 18, 2005, she said that the Bill represented a critical component of the Government's strategy for the effective management of lands vacated by Caroni (1975) Limited, in keeping with the principles of sustainable development for the benefit of current and future generations. Well, I need to ask: What are the other components of this strategy? They are not evident from what has been said in the plan. Perhaps, there are other components that will make this Bill far more understandable and acceptable than it stands now.

The plan, the post-Caroni (1975) Limited document, is very limited. It addresses some of the social justice aspects of the concerns of the Government and of the promises that have been made, but it is quite inadequate on the aspects of economic viability and environmentally sustainable aspects of sustainable development. It seems to me that these two aspects are left to the Estate Management and Business Development Company; that is to say, the manager. But given clause 12(1), in which the disclosure of the plan and the decisions and actions that have been taken by the manager will be known only after the fact, it seems to me that this is totally inadequate, as there is no requirement for the manager to table a plan for examination and, probably, approval by the Parliament, given the significance of the issues we are talking about.

Mr. Vice-President, for these reasons, I would very much support the proposal for a joint select committee to examine the Bill, in the context of all the points that have been made in this debate.

Thank you.

**The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo):** Mr. Vice-President, I thank the hon. Members of this Senate for their passionate responses to this Bill. I think that this Bill is dear to all our hearts; therefore, I know a lot of effort and energy went into responding to this Bill. I am very pleased, by and large, by the many contributions, because it says that the Members of this Senate certainly have this country at heart and want to ensure that we proceed along a line to benefit all the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

My colleagues on this side, both Sen. D. Montano and Sen. Yuille-Williams, have already responded to some of the concerns raised during the debate. I will attempt to discuss and bring to light some of the other areas which have been brought up during this debate.

I had indicated that all the tracer studies implemented were not quite complete, but so far we have summarized and have, actually, been able to detail, that just about 750 of these employees have been placed on a sound footing; in other words, they have been employed. I have circulated this document. I know when I presented it Sen. Seepersad-Bachan also raised the question about what truth and validity there was to the fact that some of these former employees who were trained have been placed. I would have liked to quote that we have evidence of all being placed, but this is what we have at hand. However, with my interaction with them on a regular basis, it appears that many of these former employees have, in fact, gotten jobs and moved on. As a matter of fact, I spoke to 20 crane operators who have just completed their training last Thursday and they were all happy to report that they were all placed in lucrative jobs. In other words, they are, actually, performing the task of crane operator from the training they recently acquired.

One of the biggest issues raised here concerned the adequacy, and some may say inadequacy, of the two-acre agricultural plots that have been committed to all former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited. Am I justifying it? First of all, I have said this in public and I will say it here again. In the first instance, the argument put forward: Should we have entertained the request by each of these 7,105 former employees who applied for agricultural land where each one made a request, be it five, 10, 20 or two acres? How could we have proceeded with that? That would have taken an alarming amount of time and the whole allocation process would have been very difficult.

The approach we took was that the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited have, in fact, been farming. I refer to a Land Policy Management and Utilization for Caroni (1975) Limited, which was prepared by Lloyd B. Rankin since 1991, which said that out of the 11,861 acres of land, most of the 5,500 private cane farmers have an average sized holding of 2.16 acres. As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources land use administration has indicated that the two-acre parcel, by and large, is quite adequate for small-scale farming or the cultivation of mixed vegetables. Many of the training courses that were offered and many of the selections from the Caroni

workers suggest that the two acres would be very adequate and would have some level of sustainability. Therefore, we are quite pleased with the fact that we are moving fastidiously regarding the two-acre plots.

I took the opportunity to meet with the learned Prof. Spence and we had quite an interesting discussion. I also put to him and he concurred that the two-acre agricultural sized plots would be quite adequate. I might add, as was said before, any former workers or any national of Trinidad and Tobago desirous of undertaking agricultural activity can apply to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources for additional land. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, I want to get some clarification from the hon. Minister. Having regard to the various contributions made and the commitment given by your good self and the Government to have this matter referred to a select committee, I respectfully suggest that we not pre-empt the work of the committee. If part of the policy of the Government, at the moment, which is contained in the report we have before us, is to allocate a two-acre block to workers and a 10- or 12-year lease, I suggest, with the leave of the Minister and the Leader of Government Business, that this matter could be better addressed at the level of the committee. I do not want us to engage in an activity where, while we are discussing matters at the committee level, the Government is going ahead with a policy that, as far as we are concerned, needs to be re-thought and re-looked at.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Mr. Vice-President, we took the decision to have a select committee and we could have said that at the start of the session. We felt, as did everyone, that since a lot of Senators would not be on the select committee, everybody should have an opportunity to put their views. I think it is quite in order, on this Government's side, to indicate some of the thinking that went behind what they would be discussing. In those circumstances we should let the Minister make her contribution. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, we recognized that certain crops would not be viable on a two-acre plot. In that regard, Government agreed to allocate 4,000 acres of Caroni land deemed suitable to rice production to two rice farmer groups, which are the Caribbean Rice Association and the River Farms Limited. As a matter of fact, these 4,000 acres have been allocated and it is estimated that this will bring in 1.8 million kilograms of rice at the end of this month. For the second crop, it is estimated that this will contribute to the domestic

market another 2.5 million kilograms of rice. So we fully understand that depending on the nature of the agricultural activity, certainly, we would have to look at larger acreages. Likewise, we considered that the citrus cultivation would not economically be conducted on a two-acre plot. In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources will be leasing out 50-acre parcels on a commercial basis to the national community. Again, I assure this honourable Senate that some effort has gone into this Bill. I did not always get the feedback that Senators here recognize how much energy and effort went into this.

Mr. Vice-President, on the issue of pensions, I think much inaccuracy has been touted in this Parliament. Firstly, there has been a real potpourri in terms of the various arrangements under Caroni (1975) Limited. This is all being finalized to ensure that pensions are put on an actuarially sound basis. Let me clarify this, however. I think it was Sen. Mark who raised a concern about the quantum of pensions being received by former Caroni workers. There are those who left after 1992 upon the attainment of their retirement age and, as such, were entitled to payments in accordance with the rules of the old scheme; in other words, they got a minimum of \$650. That scheme would have been terminated and there was a new scheme. Those who went on to this new scheme would also have gotten some payments under it. So when arbitrary numbers and figures are called, it may be that quantum was regarded, if you had only made two or whatever the number of contributions were. As you would appreciate, in a pension scheme, depending on the return, the quantum of your payment would be in that, accordingly.

Mr. Vice-President, we had those who left prior to 1992 and those who left even before we had the restructuring of Caroni (1975) Limited. It meant that those former retirees would have been in receipt of a pension up to a maximum of \$150. Let me reassure this honourable Senate, that the Government is rationalizing the pensions of all the workers to ensure that they are put on a basis which is acceptable and that we address all the concerns. At this point in time, it is underfunded by approximately \$350 million. The Government has made the commitment—and we will honour it—to ensure that these pensions are put on an actuarially sound basis. [*Desk thumping*]

Lastly, let me mention that what may have brought up some concerns would have been those who left Caroni (1975) Limited prior to the attainment of the retirement age; in other words, “deferred pensioners”. If we can understand how pensions work: if you only worked for a short period of time, when your retirement comes up and you are a deferred pensioner, the quantum can be very arbitrary, in that, you cannot be guaranteed a minimum pension. When these

items are raised in this honourable Senate and dollar figures are called, we should, really, make sure that we have all the facts. I just thought I should lend some credence and information there. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Prof. Ramchand raised many issues. I think this matter has been raised by many other Senators and they were very correct: What was the reason for the words in clause 10: “Notwithstanding the State Lands Act”. I think almost every Senator who spoke would have mentioned it. We have also enunciated and detailed the rationale for it, which was because of the high level of bureaucracy once land is transferred under the State Lands Act. We recognized that it would have delayed the process substantially. Some people have asked why can we not just fix it and we keep saying that we have to have public service reform to deal with the issues, but, at the present time, the bureaucracy is very high.

In addition to that, we have a situation where we have the State Lands (Regularisation of Tenure) Act and this also has a very strict regime for granting right of ownership to squatters. We have a very large number of former employees who also fall into this category. Again, if we were to go the route of letting the State Lands Act apply, I am afraid it will always deter. We have heard the comments put forward and I know we have said that, certainly, in a select committee we would have some more time to discuss this. Much has been said about the fact that we do not have a land use policy. [*Interruption*]

#### PROCEDURAL MOTION

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that this Senate continue to sit until we complete this Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### CARONI (1975) LIMITED AND ORANGE GROVE NATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED (DIVESTMENT AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT) (NO.2) BILL

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, when we laid this document it may not have been as detailed as some of our colleagues would have liked it to be. The question is: How much do you put in a plan? We also have a report from the Inter-Agency Land Use Planning Team, which is also quite comprehensive. I refer you to page 9, paragraphs 38 and 39. We said very clearly:

“Government is of the view that the National Physical Development Plan which was expected to be revised by the Town and Country Planning Division by 2006 should inform specific land use designations and should allow Government to manage and guide the future development of Caroni Lands. In

this connection, Government is of the view that the implementation of that plan, as it pertains to former Caroni Lands, would be undertaken by the relevant ministries in consultation with the EMBD. This notwithstanding, Government has agreed that pending the completion of the Revised National Physical Development Plan the land suitability exercise conducted by the Inter-Agency Land Use Planning team would serve as a guideline for identifying specific land use designations on Caroni Lands.”

I know too that there has been some critique in terms of this. As you can appreciate, Mr. Vice-President, efforts were made to determine what should be used for built development and, at this time, we were really talking, to a large extent, about those land acreages being assigned for residential plots for former Caroni workers and, by extension, most would be agricultural land.

We did not indicate that we had a National Land Use Policy, but we said very clearly in this document that this is in the process of being finalized and, therefore, I am sure that the input made in this honourable Senate will be taken into consideration in the finalization of the National Physical Development Plan. Sen. Prof. Ramchand had made reference to the Planning and Development of Land Bill, but I think he really meant this policy, if I may say so, because that Bill dealt with some of the issues of Town and Country Planning. From my dialogue and discussion, the land use policy comes under the umbrella of the National Physical Development Plan. I know the Planning and Development of Land Bill is still also under intensive review. I understand that there are many shortcomings and the Bill is being looked at, at this time, but the land use policy is, really, outlined in this National Physical Development Plan. The Planning and Development of Land Bill deals with some of the issues by Town and Country Planning. Again, I know our colleagues would like to see this Bill addressed; I understand that it is being addressed at this time. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** Just on a matter of clarification, Mr. Vice-President. I am fanatical about the Planning and Development of Land Bill, not necessarily in the form in which it was presented the last time. We want to make that a bigger thing to deal with the whole country and it could be taken in conjunction with a land use bill.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Thank you. Just to let this honourable Senate know that the Bill cannot be implemented in the absence of the type of institutional capacity building that the local authorities need if they are to make planning decisions; so in dialogue with the Ministry of Planning and Development, they have some concerns and, at this time, they are re-looking at that Bill.

There has been much concern in terms of who comprises the Inter-Agency Land Use Planning team. Just to reassure this honourable Senate, we had members from Town and Country Planning; we had a steering committee also supporting this; the Environmental Management Authority; T&TEC; the Water and Sewerage Authority; the Ministry of Planning and Development; the Director, Social and Economic Transformation, Ministry of Finance; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. This Inter-Agency Land Use team had representation from all the relevant authorities to ensure that the initial plan that we put together took cognizance of the concerns of the various ministries. [Interruption]

**Sen. Mark:** Just on a point of clarification. Mr. Vice-President, could the hon. Minister indicate to us the legal status of this task force she mentioned. In other words, they have come up with a land use plan, how is that going to be effected? Which agency is that going to come through? The task force came from different agencies; that has not been approved by the Parliament.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I am referring to the Inter-Agency Land Use Planning team which was the input data used for preparing the development plan and moving forward.

**Sen. Mark:** How will it have legal effect?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Remember that everything we do here has to be approved at the Ministry of Planning and Development, under whose portfolio is Town and Country Planning, which must give approval to all these projects.

**Sen. Mark:** That will come out of the Town and Country Planning document?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** That is correct; that is the reason we had the EMA and Town and Country Planning. I assure Senators that we had adequate input from these authorities to ensure that we proceeded along a path that was acceptable.

**Sen. Mark:** But Parliament would have to approve that!

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Certainly, all arrangements have and are being approved by the Town and Country Planning Division and the EMA, where necessary.

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** I asked in my contribution who this team was. I wonder if the Minister could tell us who they were, what were their qualifications and were there any agriculturists?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** We had Mr. Jerry Hospedales, Chairman of the Divestment Secretariat; he was supported by Ms. Alisha Abraham, also from the Divestment Secretariat; acting Chief Executive Officer of EMBD, Mr. Chris Jagroop; the corporate secretary of Caroni, Mr. Clarence Ramberath; Executive Chairman of EMBD, Mr. Rao; Director of Land Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, Ms. Jacqui Farrell; Senior Soil Scientist, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, Mr. Persad; Mr. Robert Robinson, Director of Economic Research and Planning, Ministry of Housing; Ms. Deborah Cheeseman, Land Coordinator, National Housing Authority; Ms. Margaret Parillon, Acting Director, Social and Economic Transformation, Ministry of Finance and Dr. Debra Thomas, Assistant Coordinator, Town and Country Planning Division, Ministry of Planning and Development.

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** I did hear that there was only one agricultural scientist involved.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** We had two. We also had a steering committee which comprised the Environmental Management Authority, Dr. Dave Macintosh and Ms. Robin Cross; Ministry of Works and Transport, Mr. Richard Sahadath; from T&TEC, Denis Singh, at that time, the General Manager, and Mr. Indarjit Singh; from the Water and Sewerage Authority, Mr. Errol Grimes and Mr. Godfrey Ventour. What they did was to provide the various supports to ensure that as we move forward we had accurate data and certain regulations and regulatory authorities in place. *[Interruption]*

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** I would like the Minister to clarify this issue for me. Under the Town and Country Planning Act, the Minister responsible for Town and Country Planning is mandated by law to bring to Parliament an update of the National Physical Development Plan every five years. It is within this legal framework that any plans for land use and land development can take place in Trinidad and Tobago. Although this inter-agency task force has established all these great plans, it seems to me that unless it goes through the National Physical Development Plan brought to Parliament, it is illegal. It is outside the legal framework. All these plans have to be brought by the Minister to this Senate, as an update of the National Physical Development Plan, to have any legal standing.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, as you would appreciate, we just cannot wait on standby and nothing gets done until we bring this plan to Parliament. In the meantime, the Town and Country Planning Division, on a continuous basis, has to be reviewing applications and monitoring them, ensuring

that they comply with the various regulations. It is in this light that the present proposals have been submitted to Town and Country Planning for approval. The broad acreages under Caroni (1975) Limited will be included under the National Physical Development Plan. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Mark:** National Security, the *Newsday* said that you are hollow and weak.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Much concern was raised regarding the disposal of Caroni (1975) Limited assets, particularly, the rolling stock. As I said in the Lower House, Caroni (1975) Limited has accounted for all of its 866 items of rolling stock except one. We have here an audited statement by Ernst & Young which has, in fact, all the items recorded as been accounted for, except one that went missing since February 25, 2004. I could not understand what the concern was. Caroni (1975) Limited undertook to allow, in many instances, the farmers access to some of this equipment during the crop season to assist in the harvesting. We have all seen the newspaper advertisements which clearly outlined the dates and times of these various auctions. It is very transparent, in terms of the auctions which have been scheduled. As I indicated, if Senators want it, there is proper audited data by Ernst & Young regarding this equipment.

I would also like to deal with the issue raised by Sen. Baksh. I, actually congratulated him for what I would call almost an entertaining contribution. [*Crosstalk*] It is serious business, but he did it so eloquently and so well. During his delivery he made many statements which had me extraordinarily concerned. He was very correct in stating that there were quite a few fires in the La Gloria Estate. Let me say, categorically, that there were, actually, teams of security people assigned to ensure that, if fires occurred, they were kept under control. I know the hon. Senator would not want his integrity to be questioned. I urge him, in future, to check the source of his information, because what was brought to this Parliament was grossly inaccurate. Let me, therefore, correct this honourable Senate. We had absolutely no loss of animals in those fires, so there was no issue of having barbecued beef at all, as was suggested by the Senator. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Baksh:** Mr. Vice-President, the barbecue did not take place in the fire; it took place long before. It was not at the fire at all; the fires did take place, but the barbecue took place long before. When they closed down Caroni (1975) Limited, they barbecued the animals deliberately, not by accident.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** You know, Mr. Vice-President, somehow the close association when he contributed—sometimes I do not understand things very clearly; I do not feign to be very bright; therefore, I need to listen carefully.

**Sen. Mark:** You are young in politics; you are a youth.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** If I were to check the *Hansard*, it suggested that. We went so far as to have a count of the cattle heads. I am told here that, in fact, prior to the VSEP, they had 980. My staff actually went and did a reconciliation. I wonder if I should waste the time of this honourable Senate to go through this; I will. We had 980 heads; births of 192; some ailments; deaths of 105; [*Crosstalk*] transfers to the sugar cane feed centre for slaughter and sale, 484; sale of injured animals, two. We actually had a decrease after we took all the activities and, therefore, the count was reduced from 980 to 715. As a matter of fact, these animals are kept at Mora Valley and not at La Gloria, so even if there were fires, certainly, they were not at risk. Let me also assure this honourable Senate, that whereas we prefer not to have forest fires, because we all know about their impact, they, really, occurred on some of the non-productive land.

Thank you Senator for bringing it to my attention. I am on 24-hour call. As you know, I came from a previous environment where I was called on a 24-hour basis if necessary and, therefore, I kept up-to-date on any irregular activities that occurred. [*Crosstalk*] Certainly, that was not brought to my attention.

**Sen. Mark:** Neal and Massy.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** “Doh geh mix up at all.” Sorry, Mr. Vice-President. He wants to distract me, but I will address you.

One of the concerns raised was the value of the certificates which we have offered to the former employees. I would not like to sound emotional about the training, but I want to pay special tribute to the management of Caroni (1975) Limited and the various agencies which undertook the training activities for the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited. A lot of questions have been raised regarding the relevance of the training activities, what efforts were made to take into consideration their needs to ensure that training was done on the basis that, at the end of the day, these people would find employment.

In the first instance, the Employers’ Consultative Association (ECA) was used as the body to coordinate the training activities for the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited. I have attended all seven graduations. I say so proudly, because a lot of energy went into the training programmes. A lot of time was taken to ensure that they were of a certain caliber and quality so that their certification, at the end of the day, could be used in the marketplace. As a matter

of fact, only this week there was an article in the *Daily Express*, and there are lots I could read from. The article is from Monday, following last Thursday's graduation. It reads:

“‘New hope’ for ex-Caroni workers

But the former employees saw a ray of hope when the government offered training programmes to help them get back on their feet.”

The valedictorian was Ms. Alimoon Rojan.

“...who graduated after completing three courses last week, recalled that when the training was first offered, the former workers were hesitant...

Rojan who completed courses in health and safety, agriculture and food preservation, added that the time spent at the programmes proved to be useful as well as enjoyable, enabling them to develop both communications skills and team-work.”

**Sen. Mark:** Is that an ad?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I know those sitting on the other side would think that it is an advertisement, but these were the words spoken from the lips of one of the former employees who got training and was the valedictorian. She was very graciously representing the group of graduates who was saying, “Thank you; we enjoyed it; we have been trained and we are moving on.” [*Desk thumping*] I did not report it; this is the *Express* newspaper of Monday, April 18, 2005.

**Sen. Mark:** Guns and circuses! [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senator:** You execute them and then give them training!

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** If only those on the other side were magnanimous enough to get up and say, “We congratulate you on your training programme.”

**Sen. Mark:** We want to remove you! Congratulate you for what?

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Nine thousand people on the breadline and you want us to congratulate you? [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I am new here and I still expect the best from my colleagues.

Let me right now state categorically that in the other place we have several Members on the other side who are elected. At least, I can forgive some of the

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Senators on the other side here, they are not elected, but not one elected Member referred an employee to me or asked for any assistance. I am sorry if I sound emotional: we walked days and nights. We had long hours. We met with the employees. We did not ask for “no” vote, because there was no need. We modified programmes to ensure that the former employees were able to work and still take advantage of these programmes. A lot of these programmes were modified to allow those people who were working to still get the training. [Crosstalk] I thank Caroni (1975) Limited and the Divestment Secretariat for supporting me. I am a very hard task master. When we insisted on proper training, I got the full support of the management there and, therefore, I am very proud to say that, on the training end, we will continue to provide training for the former employees. [Desk thumping] [Crosstalk]

Let me clear a lot of the inaccuracies said in this Senate. When we did the first programme in air-conditioning—and, again, it only came about because we walked the street; we walked the talk—when we understood that they needed a second programme in order for their certificates to be accepted in the workplace, guess what we did? We put on additional programmes. We listened to the people and we delivered. [Desk thumping]

Let me itemize some of the certification that has been given. Sen. Seepersad-Bachan was very correct when she talked very glowingly about the National Energy Skills Centre (NESC). Technical training has been approved by recognized bodies such as the NESC and the Metal Industries Company. In the case of courses offered by NESC, certificates are endorsed by the National Training Agency. Air-conditioning courses have been provided by the Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Association (ARIA), which is the recognized body. Training in crane operation and technology—and as I said a while ago, 20 members graduated last Thursday—was offered by the Trinidad and Tobago Crane Training and Inspection Company and this training is widely recognized in the industry. Moreover, the agriculture courses have been conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and this guarantee that they receive training on the latest available farming techniques.

**6.45 p.m.**

Mr. Vice-President, I can go on and on, but I know we have very limited time. I think Sen. Augustus was very concerned regarding the counselling programme, and in particular, the daily-paid workers. In my initial contribution, I outlined the difficulties we had because of the problem regarding the injunction filed, in the first instance, by the unions representing the daily-paid employees.

Mr. Vice-President, you will be pleased to note that there have been three centres where employees were granted time off in order to access counselling. We have professional counsellors; Garth Thomas, Cecil Sylvester and Petrotrin's EAP Services Limited. Caroni also established a hotline at its human resources department for employees to call in. We also had counsellors from Caroni (1975) Limited's HEAL, that is the house rehabilitation programme.

After the Industrial Court's action was lifted, we tried to work accordingly with some of the alliances we had with the Diabetes Association, Alcoholics Anonymous, the HEAL house and the South Cancer Society.

As a matter of fact, in addition to that, as I indicated, we had several walkabouts and, irrespective of what has been said about them, I want to say again that they allowed us to come in contact with the people and former employees, and they also allowed us to have a one-on-one discussion and open dialogue.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Vice-President, on these training programmes we took people from NEDCO and eTeck who made presentations to them, letting them know the type of industrial activity that would be conducted and, therefore, the types of jobs that would become available—

**Sen. Mark:** You are campaigning.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** If you say so. You see when you have talent you have to spread it around. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Vice-President, as I indicated, by and large, the counselling that was offered through these programmes has assisted as we continue to offer support to the Caroni (1975) Limited's workers. In all of this we tried to be as transparent and accountable as possible. And I had quite an interesting dialogue with Prof. Spence which lasted for almost two hours.

One of the observations which Sen. Prof. Deosaran commended us highly about was in terms of vesting the land in the State, and several other Senators indicated the preferred position where the land was vested in a state enterprise, and now the whole vesting of the land in the State and the benefits thereto, and we all know them.

Do you know what is amazing? We never heard a howl and a cry all the time the land was vested in Caroni (1975) Limited, and here it is this Government is making every effort to do things the correct way and be transparent and here it is—As you know, we could have made the statement in this Bill that we vest it in the State and it be managed by an entity, but we did more than that, we put it and detailed how it would be managed.

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I understand that my colleagues would have concerns, but we should not let an individual affect the way we must go, we must always be driven by policy and if we are to deal with people, we deal with them but we must be driven by policy and, therefore, this Bill is one that is driven by policy. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Mark:** Sexual harassment. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, Sen. R. Montano indicated, and I think I have addressed his concern because he asked me if we could have accounted for all the items, and I have just indicated that all 866 pieces except one is accounted for. So we do not really have the situation of missing equipment.

Regarding the agricultural land which has been leased out, again, the comment was made that it is just over \$1,800 an acre. I want you to know, Mr. Vice-President, that in the beginning there was dialogue with the Estate Management Business Development Company (EMBD), it was brought to my attention, and there was a correction to it during the very early stages. It appears that there may have been some misunderstandings about these leases. The EMBD was directed to fall in line with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources in terms of their policy on lease payments on those lands.

**Sen. Mark:** [*Interruption*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I beg your pardon?

**Sen. Mark:** [*Inaudible*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I have only a few minutes—

**Sen. Mark:** You have made a very important contribution; I am listening to you very carefully, but I just want to know whether the matter involving the Orange Grove farmers has been settled from the \$1,800 to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources' \$10.00 per year.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, I did not say \$10.00 a year. I indicated that the lands are leased according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources' policy guidelines. These are the guidelines that have been adopted by EMBD.

You know, I was trying not to refer to this article, it is on the desk and I say let me not resort to using some of these things but when I see several articles which were sent to me as to what was the UNC's Caroni (1975) Limited challenge, and Sen. R. Montano talked about the UNC's plans and how they were going about them—All these “what ifs” and “what ifs”, I refer to the January 27, 2005 opinion. It says:

“UNC’s Caroni Challenge”

It goes on to say:

“...this government got its chance to deal with the Caroni problem in the way it saw fit only because his UNC failed to do anything about the crisis in sugar...”

Mr. Vice-President, it goes on— [*Crosstalk*] [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Vice-President:** Please, hon. Senators, we do not have to resort to this.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, I continue with the report which says:

“...one wonders whether their concern has to do as much with the plight of the affected sugar workers as it has to do with their attempt to win back the...”

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, on a point of order, and in accordance with practice when you are reading—[*Interruption*] It is a point of order, Sir, she has to take her seat on a point of order.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Oh really!

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. Vice-President, in accordance with practice, when you are reading, you must quote the name of the newspaper and the page. The Minister has not done that.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I have.

**Sen. Mark:** Could you repeat that?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Let me graciously read it.

**Sen. Mark:** I want to know the agent of the PNM who wrote that.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, it is on page 10 of the *Daily Express*, Thursday, January 27, 2005. It is in the “Our Opinion” section. I quote:

“...one wonders whether their concern has to do as much with the plight of the affected sugar workers as it has to do with their attempt to win back the disaffected among their constituents, many of whom have lost faith in what, to all intents and purposes, was a ‘sugar-based’ party but which, when it came down to the crunch, had not a clue about what could be done to ‘save sugar’”.

Mr. Vice-President, I have another article but I will not be bad, I will save them. It says: “The UNC failed on Caroni and agriculture”.

**Sen. Mark:** Who wrote that?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I wrote that myself. That was before my time, Mr. Vice-President, but let me proceed with some of the issues that were raised.

I was really impressed when Sen. Dana Seetahal began and she reminded me quite a bit about Sen. Prof. Ramchand, such fine reading, Sen. Seetahal. We heard your sentiments and concerns and it was quite interesting at that time in the afternoon when things were a bit low. I assure you of your concerns regarding Orange Grove. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Vice-President, many concerns and issues were raised regarding the agricultural land use policy. I think I have gone through and indicated very clearly that in addition to what has been said in our development plan, this national physical development plan which details the land use planning should be delivered shortly and presented here.

**Sen. Mark:** In accordance with the law, that is illegal.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Mr. Vice-President, I want to also refer this honourable Senate—and I think it was Sen. Seepersad-Bachan who asked—to the type of training given, the qualifications, and so on. I refer this honourable Senate to Appendix 12 which details very clearly with all the courses that were offered, and clearly outlines the courses. We also detailed in Appendices 10 and 11 all the institutions which were used to provide training. So I was optimistic that this document would have probably been used much more in detail.

Sen. Anmolsingh-Mahabir also had many questions which dealt with the NIS. Senator, certainly I am not aware of these issues as you know. They have not been drawn to my attention, but certainly they would be looked at, the National Insurance Board (NIB) can afford it and, once an employee has made his/her contribution, he/she would be entitled. If they can be brought to our attention, I want to assure you that I myself would assist in ensuring that it is rectified.

Again, many concerns were raised that there has been no guarantee in this Bill that 90 per cent of the land will be allocated to agriculture. On page 13 of the land development plan we outlined the acreages we have allocated so far. We detailed all the various acreages used for pasture, citrus, wine making, rice, aquaculture, and private cane farming. At this time we have indicated that 68,599 acres or 89.5 per cent would remain available for agricultural purposes.

Mr. Vice-President, I also want to make a fundamental point here. I agree that we must ensure that the adequate acreage must be maintained for agriculture, but of more concern is to ensure that these are put to productive use because too often in the past— [*Crosstalk*] lands have been allocated—

Mr. Vice-President, may I be allowed to continue?

**Sen. Mark:** “She going too long.”

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** I am going too long? [*Laughter*] Mr. Vice-President, seeing that we have kept such long hours in preparing all this, let us all celebrate tonight; let us talk for as long as we have time, and let us enjoy and we can work together. I am sure Sen. Mark would probably understand this Bill a bit more, and I am sure when we go to the select committee stage, he will be able to understand it much better.

Mr. Vice-President, let me also go through some of the items which were raised by Sen. Cropper.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Thank you. Again, many of the items raised by Sen. Cropper went into very much detail in terms of some of the guidelines we would have from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and, therefore, the development plan did not go into all of these details.

We went into some of the issues, and I think one of the concerns raised was the various settlement programmes and how can we have a more holistic development of these housing settlements. I want to assure the hon. Senator that much effort went into this and it is planned that as we develop these new areas, these settlements, that a more holistic view is taken. In other words, we will not just be building houses, but we would have all other infrastructure in place like playgrounds, et cetera, and an adequate ratio of amenities to ensure that we have better living conditions to inculcate healthy lifestyles.

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As a matter of fact, hon. Senator, you may wish to know even in the industrial parks which we are now developing, a lot of emphasis has been put on greenery and lifestyle to ensure that there is an adequate balance and we do not just continue along that road, but make sure that all our developments take into consideration a much more healthy approach.

There are many more items that I am sure we can go into but because of the time I will summarize. You would have heard that we have made commitments to the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited. We have committed in the first instance to make agricultural land available by July 2005, which is a mere three months away. Similarly, we have agreed to assign the residential plots to the former employees by July of this year.

Mr. Vice-President, the delivery of these commitments on a timely basis can only be effected by the timely passage of this Bill. We on this side had indicated before and have agreed to a special select committee to resolve some of the concerns which have been identified.

We too, have a small amendment or two to offer, and we would place them when we get to the select committee. Again, I respect the fact that every effort be made to be transparent. We did not only vest the land in the State, but we detailed the management company as I said earlier. With those few words, I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill referred to a special select committee of the Senate appointed by the President as follows: Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams (Chairperson), Sen. The Hon. J. Jeremie, Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo, Sen. The Hon. D. Montano, Sen. The Hon. C. Kangaloo, Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand, Sen. D. Seetahal, Sen. Dr. J. Jones-Kernahan, Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, April 26 at 1.30 p.m., and unless the Opposition disagrees, that day will be Private Members' Day.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 7.10 p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**

*Pursuant to his reply to question No. 63 earlier in the proceedings, the Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith) caused to be circulated to Members of the Senate the following statistics:*

**Memorandum of Understanding  
(Details of)**

**64. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information:

- A. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the terms and conditions of the memorandum of understanding entered into between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the National Carnival Commission with respect to broadcasting arrangements?
- B. Could the Minister inform the Senate of the date on which this memorandum of understanding was entered into?
- C. Could the Minister provide the Senate with copies of the signed memorandum of understanding?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):**

**THIS MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING** is made this 1st day of February in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Five between **NATIONAL BROADCASTING NETWORK LIMITED**, incorporated as a company under the Companies Act Chap. 81:01 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago with its registered office at No. 11A Maraval Road, Port of Spain (hereinafter called "NBN") of the First Part, **NATIONAL CARNIVAL COMMISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**, a body corporate by virtue of the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago Act, 1991 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago of the Queens Park Savannah, Port-of-Spain of the Other Part.

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. NBN shall cease broadcasting at midnight on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2005.
- B. NBN owns certain Television production facilities and transmission capabilities located at 11A Maraval Road.
- C. NBN controls other production facilities and transmission capabilities operated in the name of the. Information Channel (Channels 4 & 16).
- D. National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago is desirous of acquiring access to all such Television production facilities and transmission capabilities and related assets belonging to NBN and such production facilities and operated in the name of The Information Channel for a period of up to three months commencing January 15<sup>th</sup> 2005.
- E. NBN's properties at 11A Maraval Road and 2A Alcazar Street are to be renovated during the period of the Memorandum of Understanding.

**NOW BY THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING THE PARTIES AGREE as follows:**

- 1. That NBN hereby undertakes to grant to the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago:
  - (a) access to NBN's premises situate at No.11A Maraval Road together with all pertinent Television production, editing and transmission and broadcast facilities including but not limited to it's Studio, Outside Broadcast Vehicle, cameras, transmitter sites and all other associated equipment and machinery for the purpose of effecting both live and delayed transmission;
  - (b) access to the Information Channel's premises situated at Morvant together with all pertinent production, editing and transmission and broadcast facilities including but not limited to its Studio, cameras, transmitter sites and all other associated equipment and machinery for the purpose of effecting both live and delayed transmission;
  - (c) access to NBN and The Information Channel's respective libraries for the purpose of accessing culturally relevant material. Such license and access shall be subject to the direct supervision and control of NBN acting through its duly authorized representative.

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2. The National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago warrants and undertakes that it would indemnify and hold harmless NBN and The Information Channel against any and all loss, injury and damage both direct and consequential that may arise by or in connection with their premises, equipment, production facilities, and machinery (including vehicles) and that it will keep insured the said premises, equipment, production facilities, and machinery.
3. The National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago shall comply with all directions, instructions and requests issued to it by NBN in respect of the proper use, management and development and access to all of the premises, equipment, Television production facilities and machinery.
4. The National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago undertakes and warrants that it shall not use or exercise any of its rights or privileges under this agreement in respect of NBN's premises, equipment, Television production facilities and machinery so as to delay, disrupt or other wise interfere with the planned renovation of NBN's properties at 11A Maraval Road and 2A Alcazar Street.
5. The National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago shall have access to all Television production facilities and related assets belonging to NBN and production facilities and transmission capabilities operated in the name of The Information Channel commencing from January 15<sup>th</sup> 2005 for a period of up to three (3) months.
6. The effective date of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2005.
7. Any differences in the interpretation or implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be settled amicably by the parties through negotiation. In the event of the failure of the parties to reach a settlement the dispute shall be referred to arbitration under the Arbitration Act, Chap. 5 :01.

Signed on behalf of National            )  
 Broadcasting Network Limited        )  
 in the presence of:                        )

Signed on behalf of The National        )  
 Carnival Commission of Trinidad        )  
 and Tobago in the presence of:        )