

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, May 22, 2007***SENATE***Tuesday, May 22, 2007*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence from today's sitting to Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams, Sen. Danny Montano and Sen. Angela Cropper who are ill.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Professor George Maxwell Richards, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D.

“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.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MR. OVERAND PADMORE

WHEREAS Senator Joan Yuille-Williams is incapable of performing her duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

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, OVERAND PADMORE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of this said Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams.

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 22nd day of May, 2007.”

Senators' Appointment
[MADAM PRESIDENT]

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

“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.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MRS. JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN

WHEREAS Senator Danny Montano is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

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, JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of the said Sen. Danny Montano.

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 22nd day of May, 2007.”

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Senators Overand Padmore and Joan Hackshaw-Marslin took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
(Appointment of)**

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

“Senator the Hon. Dr. Linda Baboolal
President of the Senate
Office of the President of the Senate
Office of the Parliament

Joint Select Committee

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

The Red House
Abercromby Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Honourable Madam President,

Appointment of a Joint Select Committee

At a Sitting of the House of Representatives held on Monday May 21, 2007, the following Resolution was approved:

“BE IT RESOLVED that a Bill entitled, ‘An Act to prohibit certain kinds of discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different status, to establish an Equal Opportunity Commission and an Equal Opportunity Tribunal and for other related matters’, be referred to a Joint Select Committee for consideration and report and, provided that the Senate concurs, that the Committee comprise the following five (5) Members of the House with an equal number from the Senate:

- Mr. Colm Imbert, MP
- Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP
- Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis, MP
- Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP
- Ms. Gillian Lucky, MP

And that this Committee be empowered to consider the general merits of the Bill along with its details and report within one (1) month.”

I shall be grateful if the decision of the House of Representatives is brought to the attention of the Senate.

Yours respectfully,

/s/ B. Sinanan

Honourable Barendra Sinanan, MP

Speaker of the House ”

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I wish on behalf of the Government to give you three names:

Joint Select Committee
[SEN. THE HON. DR. L. SAITH]

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Sen. Christine Kangaloo

Sen. Christine Sahadeo, and

Sen. Arnold Piggott.

Madam President: Sen. Mark, do you have your names?

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I know the practice has always been the hon. Leader of Government Business will confer with the Leaders, and at the next sitting, the announcement is made. I do not know that the practice is that you just get up here and say who is who.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, I am quite prepared to wait, I thought there was an urgency about this and, therefore, I was seeking to avoid a wasted week, but I am quite prepared to wait for a week. I have given you our names, so there is no problem, we will wait for a week.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, in light of what the hon. Senator has said, if we need to do it today I have no problem, I would take the responsibility of being a Member of the Committee on behalf of the Opposition.

Madam President: Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie, can you give us a name?

Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie: Later in the sitting, Madam President.

Madam President: Later in the sitting? All right, we will return to this and I will announce the full five names later on in the sitting.

POLICE SERVICE (AMDT.) BILL

Bill to amend the Police Service Act, 2006 brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

PAPERS LAID

1. Quarry Policy White Paper for Trinidad and Tobago. [*The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith)*]
2. Value Added Tax (Amdt. To Schedule 2) (No. 2) Order, 2007. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill)*]
3. Toxic Chemicals Regulations, 2007. [*Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith*]

Statutory Instruments Committee

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. the Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, may I also advise that the Statutory Instruments Committee considered the Value Added Tax (Amdt. to Schedule 2) (No. 2) Order, 2007 and the Toxic Chemicals Regulations, 2007 and found that there was nothing to which the attention of the Senate should be specially drawn.

The Minutes of the committee were circulated to Members.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Madam President: Sen. Mark.

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, I do not know if this is a case of the Minister ducking and running, because as you know, these questions have been on the Order Paper for some time now.

I understand that Sen. Yuille-Williams is ill, and I do not want Sen. Joseph to answer any of my questions in the future. I will wait until Sen. Yuille-Williams is well, so we will delay questions 52, 53, 54, 69 and 70.

I refuse to listen to the hon. Minister.

Sen. Joseph: That is okay.

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

European Trade Mission (Details of Contingent)

- 52.** With respect to the cultural contingent which accompanied the Trade Mission to Europe during the period September 06 to 22, 2006, could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs provide the Senate with:
- (i) the names of the countries visited by the cultural contingent;
 - (ii) a detailed breakdown of the costs incurred;
 - (iii) the names of the artistes and organizations that comprised the contingent;
 - (iv) the amount of allowances/fees and other financial benefits received by each artiste and organization; and
 - (v) the criteria employed for engaging the services of these artistes and organizations?

**World Cup/Germany
(Details of Contingent)**

- 53.** A. Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs indicate to the Senate the total number of persons inclusive of public officials, cultural practitioners and technical staff that comprised the contingent which represented Trinidad and Tobago from June 07 to 22, 2006 during the World Cup in Germany?
- B. Could the Minister also provide the Senate with:
- (i) the names of the artistes and organizations that were selected; and
 - (ii) the criteria used in selecting the various artistes and organizations?

**German Contingent
(Details of)**

- 54.** With respect to the contingent that went to Germany during the period June 07 to 22, 2006, could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs inform the Senate of:
- (i) the names of the cities that the contingent visited;
 - (ii) the cost of accommodation and airfare for members of the contingent; and
 - (iii) the amount of fees, allowances and benefits that each member of the group received?

**NCC TV
(Breakdown of Operations)**

- 69.** Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown of the operations of the NCC TV in respect of the following areas:
- (i) the number of employees and the nature of their employment;
 - (ii) the value of government's capital injection into its operations from its inception to the present time; and
 - (iii) the profits and losses experienced by the NCC TV since its inception to the current time?

**Operations of NCC TV
(Discontinuance)**

- 70.** A. Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs inform the Senate whether there is any intention of the Government to discontinue the operations of NCC TV, to have it merged with the Caribbean New Media Group (CNMG) or whether the Government intends to continue to operate indefinitely into the future?
- B. Could the Minister provide to the Senate a comprehensive breakdown as to the current status of the CNMG in respect of the following areas viz:-
- (i) the date of its incorporation;
 - (ii) the names of the Chairman and the Board of Directors;
 - (iii) the number of employees and the nature of their employment;
 - (iv) the value of government's capital injection into the operations of the CNMG; and
 - (v) the profits and losses experienced by CNMG since its inception to the current period?

Questions, by leave, deferred.

**Current Construction Activity
(Nature and Extent of)**

- 65. Sen. Basharat Ali** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:
- Could the Minister provide the Senate with the following information:
- A. The nature and extent of the construction activity currently being undertaken at a location some 250 metres North of the Maraval Water Treatment Plant on the west bank of the Maraval River?
 - B. What approvals have been granted by:
 - (a) Town and Country Planning Division
 - (b) The Environmental Management Authority
 - (c) Diego Martin Regional Corporation
 - (d) The Water and Sewerage Authority
 - (e) The Drainage Division
 - (f) The Highways Division; and
 - C. The conditions attached to any such approvals?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Thank you, Madam President. The construction activity at a location some 250 metres north of the Maraval Water Treatment Plant on the west bank of the Maraval River is being undertaken under a notice of grant of permission to develop land subject to conditions issued by the Town and Country Planning Division in the name of Maureen Munro-Legge of 185 Morne Coco Road, Goodwood Park, Point Cumana (Application No. TIL:1263/2006) and a Certificate of Environmental Clearance No. CEC0767/2004 in the name of Mr. Richard Woodruffe of Arielle Gardens, Carenage.

The nature of the activity includes the cutting of the hillsides along the Maraval River west bank up to the 110-metre contour for the purpose of constructing roads, drains, sewerage disposal and buildings. A bridge has already been constructed over the Maraval River to link the development to the Saddle Road.

The extent of the construction activity is 5.5 hectares and extends from the West Bank of the Maraval River upwards to the 110 metre contour. Developmental activities have also extended and encroached on a road reserve referred to as the “Old Maraval High Road”.

With respect to part B:

- (a) The Town and Country Planning Division (TCPD) gave planning permission subject to conditions.
- (b) The Environmental Management Authority (EMA) issued a Certificate of Environmental Clearance subject to conditions.
- (c) The Diego Martin Regional Corporation did not issue any approvals.
- (d) The Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) gave Outline Approval subject to conditions.
- (e) The Drainage Division issued a no-objection to the construction of a bridge over the Maraval River subject to conditions but did not issue any approval for the development’s drainage system.
- (f) The Highways Division did not issue any approval.
- (g) The Designs Branch, Ministry of Works and Transport, did not issue any approval.

With respect to Part C, I will go through each one. The conditions attached to the Town and Country Planning Division approval are:

- (1) That the structural details of the buildings meet the requirements of the Ministry of Works and Transport.
- (2) That the relevant aspects of the building/site be approved by the Chief Fire Officer prior to the commencement of development.
- (3) That the consent of the local authority be obtained prior to the commencement of development.

With respect to the EMA approval, the conditions are as follows:

(i) General Conditions:

- (a) The project description, scope and anticipated impacts, such as the prevention, mitigation, compensation and monitoring measures presented in the application and any other additional information provided in writing form part of the conditions to which developer Richard Woodruffe shall adhere unless modified by a listed condition within this certificate.
- (b) The certificate shall only validate the scope of works identified for the activities as submitted in accordance with the application.

(ii) Mitigation measures:

- (a) The developer, Richard Woodruffe shall submit final plans of the sloping areas to be cut to facilitate development on this project site for approval by the Environmental Management Authority, at least one month prior to undertaking any such works and shall only cut and excavate those sloping areas as deemed absolutely necessary for the establishment of infrastructure for this development.
- (b) All excavated rock material removed as a result of infrastructural works may be reused for backfilling and landscaping. Such material that will not be reused shall be removed from the site and disposed of in an appropriate manner in accordance with the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. All aggregate to be used for road building and other infrastructural works shall be obtained from a source approved by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries.
- (c) In addition to the drainage and sediment control plans submitted in accordance with the application, developer, Richard Woodruffe shall ensure that detention pond systems are established and maintained to meet the following criteria:

- Energy dissipation and/or erosion control measures, such as gravel beds and vegetation strips, shall be implemented to reduce storm water velocities. These measures shall be properly maintained to ensure that the ability of water to flow out of the ponds at the desired rate is not compromised.
- The ponds and outlets shall be designed to allow a drawdown time of between 24 to 40 hours after the onset of a rainstorm which is defined as a rainfall event producing more than 0.8 inches of rain in 15 minutes.
- An emergency overflow shall be designed to collect the peak inflow, which would occur in a 50-year storm.
- Flows from ponds and drains shall flow into an approved municipal storm sewer system.
- Ponds are maintained during low flow conditions to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes.

Final plans showing the specifications of such a pond/ponds shall be submitted to the EMA prior to their establishment.

- (d) Clouds of dust shall be prevented from emanating from the site by the regular wetting of the project site. This shall be done as often as needed to prevent the impact of dust on ambient air quality and public health, particularly to neighbouring residences.
- (e) Sediment retention measures shall be utilized to minimize the amount of sediment migrating from the project site. These may include but are not to be limited to:
 - Sediment sieves, silt traps, settling ponds and geotextiles.
 - Berms placed at the boundaries of the development.
 - Washing of vehicle wheels shall be done prior to them exiting the site and driving onto public roadways.
 - Land clearing or excavation activities shall be executed on a phased basis to minimize the area of exposed soil at any given time. Tarpaulins or geotextiles shall be used to protect slopes from exposure to wind and raindrops.
 - Construction materials shall be stored within temporary bunds and away from storm drains to prevent the sedimentation of drains during heavy rainfall events.

- Aggregate piles shall be stabilized and covered during periods when they are not being used.
 - Vegetation shall only be removed where it is absolutely necessary to allow infrastructural works on site. There shall be no unnecessary felling of trees in the area.
 - Temporary drainage shall be designed to prevent runoff of silted material into surrounding areas and water bodies. Drainage designs shall be approved by the Drainage Division prior to the commencement of works.
- (f) Properly designed and engineered slope conservation measures shall be established along potentially unstable slopes to protect against slope failure.
- (g) All equipment and vehicles used during clearing and construction shall be inspected and maintained according to specifications.
- (h) Trucks and other vehicles to be used for the transport of materials shall be securely contained and covered to prevent spillage.
- (i) The bridge to be constructed in keeping with this project shall be established prior to any development works being undertaken at the residential site.
- (j) If it becomes absolutely necessary for large pieces of equipment such as tractors to drive across the Maraval riverbed in order to facilitate construction of the bridge, this activity should take place during a prolonged dry period. Temporary ramps shall be placed at the necessary point across the riverbed to facilitate the passage of such machinery and to reduce the disturbance of alluvial deposits within the riverbed.
- (k) The developer, Richard Woodruffe shall be responsible for all infrastructural repairs and maintenance to the bridge, private roads, drainage and detention systems within the development.
- (l) Absolutely no wastes or effluents including washings from premixed concrete trucks and other debris shall be dumped or disposed of into nearby watercourses and drains.
- (m) Solid waste generated during development and construction shall not be allowed to accumulate on the ground at any time. It shall be placed

directly into and stored in durable, covered containers of adequate capacity and managed so as not to have negative effects on public health.

- Paper, glass, scrap metal, plastic bottles and parts shall be sorted, properly stored and sent for recycling to a company with appropriate capabilities to the extent that such services are available in Trinidad and Tobago. Waste chemicals shall be disposed of as prescribed in their safety data sheets.
 - All hazardous solid waste including lead-acid batteries, construction waste, scrap wood, used oils and debris shall be collected and disposed of through remediation, recycling or proper disposal by a company with the ability to manage these types of waste.
 - Organic wastes, for example, food wastes and other miscellaneous waste shall be collected at least once weekly for disposal at a landfill site controlled by the relevant Regional Corporation or other contracted waste disposal firm.
- (n) No ozone depleting substances shall be used for this project for the purpose of air-conditioning and refrigeration, pest control and soil fumigation, fire extinction and in the forms of foams and aerosols including CFCs, HCFC, Methyl Bromide, trichloroethane and Carbon Tetrachloride. Approved alternatives shall be employed where necessary.
- (iii) Other terms and conditions:
- (a) All activities shall comply with the requirements of the Noise Pollution Control Rules, 2001.
 - (b) At least one month prior to commencement of activities, the developer shall consult with the Highways Division and police service about their intended activities and obtain guidance on appropriate traffic management measures.
 - (c) Two weeks prior to commencement of the construction of the bridge, the developer shall post advertisements in at least two daily newspapers informing the public of:
 - intended works to be done;

- dates and times of the work to be conducted;
 - the roads affected; and
 - alternate roadways if available.
- (d) For the duration of the bridge construction the developer shall post appropriate signage informing road users of the works that are being done.
- (e) Transport of equipment and materials to the project site shall not be undertaken during peak traffic periods.
- (f) A copy of all approvals required from other government entities such as WASA, Drainage Division, Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, Land and Surveys Division and Town and Country Planning Division shall be forwarded to the EMA within two weeks of the grant of such approvals prior to the commencement of activities.
- (g) The developer shall be held accountable for the maintenance and monitoring for the lifetime of the sewage system to ensure compliance with prescribed levels.
- (h) The outfall effluent point for such a system shall be monitored as follows:
- Grab samples shall be taken at the point of outfall once every six hours for the first day of discharge and analyzed.
 - After the first day of discharge, grab samples shall be taken at the same time once per month for the first six months of operation and analyzed.
 - After the first six months, samples shall be taken on the same day once per quarter and analyzed.
 - Samples shall be analyzed for faecal coliforms, pH, biological oxygen demand, total suspended solids, ammoniacal nitrogen and phosphorus to ensure compliance with the standard. Samples shall be taken and analyzed at any time upon the request of the EMA.

Oral Answers to Questions
[HON. C. IMBERT]

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

- Samples shall be taken in triplicate and the flow rate measurements shall be taken at the time the samples are taken for analysis. Samples shall be taken by qualified personnel and analyzed according to “Standard Methods for the analysis of Water and Wastewater”. Reports of all test results shall be submitted to the EMA as soon as they are received.
 - Where the results of the analyses indicate that acceptable levels have been exceeded, an immediate report shall be sent to the EMA and measures implemented to correct any non-compliance.
 - At no time during the life of its operation shall the sewage treatment plant be allowed to exist in a state of disrepair. It shall be maintained to achieve optimum performance throughout its lifetime.
- (i) The developer, Richard Woodruffe shall designate a contact officer who shall be responsible for communicating with the EMA in respect of this application.
- (ii) An inspector, duly appointed under the Environmental Management Act, 2000 shall be allowed to enter the premises at any reasonable time.

Sen. Seetahal S.C: Is that the end?

Hon. C. Imbert: No, no I have only just begun.

C. Conditions attached to the Drainage Division’s no-objection to the bridge construction are:

- (a) The bridge crossing must not restrict or constrict the natural waterway area.
- (b) The structural details of the bridge must be approved by the Bridges Branch of the Highways Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

2.00 p.m.

The conditions attached to the WASA approval are as follows:

- A 100 millimetre PVC metred connection be made of the existing 8 inch cast iron main that runs along the Saddle Road. Communal storage of 113 cubic metres, minimum capacity be provided.

- Each lot is required to have a three-quarter inch gated connection.
- The domestic waste water arising from this development must be disposed of via a conventional waste water collection treatment and disposal system.
- The point of effluent discharge must be beyond the intake of the Maraval waterways.
- The waste water treatment system must be capable of meeting the Trinidad and Tobago standard—TTS—417 1993 specifications for the liquid effluent from the Domestic Waste Water Treatment Plant into the environment and any other EMA regulations.
- Prior to installation of the water and waste water infrastructure, the developer must receive a final approval from the authority for the proposed works.
- The developer is required to submit detailed design drawings of the water reticulation system and design data, detailed design calculations, and drawings of the waste water disposal system.

Sen. Ali: In light of all these conditions, I would like to ask the Minister how many of these conditions are being met, seeing there is a large extent of construction buildings on the site already?

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam President, through you, let me just repeat. In due course, the Town and Country Planning Division gave permission subject to conditions. The EMA issued a CEC subject to conditions. The Diego Martin Corporation did not issue any approval. The Water and Sewerage Authority gave outlined approvals subject to conditions. The Drainage Division issued a no objection to the construction of the bridge subject to conditions but, did not issue approval for the development of the drainage system, and the Highways Divisions did not issue any approval nor did the Designs branch of the Ministry of Works and Transport issue any approval. Therefore, at first blush—you have to remember Senator, you have asked me about matters way outside of the portfolio of the Ministry of Works and Transport, and I am trying to accommodate you.

It would appear that the conditions set down in terms of approvals from the regional corporation and the Water and Sewerage Authority and the Designs branch of the Ministry of Works and Transport have not been met.

Sen. Ali: If that is so, what does the Government intend to do about this project which is ongoing, to a point where they are now painting?

Hon. C. Imbert: Again Senator, you are asking me for things that are way outside my portfolio but, I attempted to anticipate you. I had written to the Minister of Local Government seeking some information on what was happening in terms of the local government authority and I am advised that the Diego Martin Regional Corporation has served a show cause notice on the developer and I, in fact, have a copy. This show cause notice is dated April 17, 2007. In this show cause notice the developers are being asked to show cause why the buildings are now in the course of erection without the necessary approval and without the consent of the local authority and should not be removed or pulled down. So, the Diego Martin Regional Corporation has issued a show cause notice which is a legal requirement and it is now incumbent upon the developer to demonstrate to the Diego Martin Regional Corporation why the buildings under construction should not be pulled down.

The Ministry of Works and Transport has called in the developer and asked him to submit the necessary documentation in order to start the process of obtaining the necessary approvals because the developer had not even initiated the process, and we have given him one month to do so.

**Attorney General
(Role in Recent Matters)**

68. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Attorney General to provide to the Senate the following:

- (a) a comprehensive breakdown or account of his role in the Anti-Corruption Investigation Bureau; and
- (b) relevant information on his office's role in the recent court matters involving Mr. Basdeo Panday and the Chief Justice Satnarine Sharma?

The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie S.C.): Madam President, you would recall that on the last occasion, I indicated that I would endeavour to have this question ready this week, but I make a guarantee that it would be ready next week. It has not worked out so that the question is not yet ready, but it would be ready by next week.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, we will accept one week deferral. I would just like to draw your attention to the six questions that are outstanding for weeks. The Prime Minister is here, and I hope that the Prime Minister would exercise his authority to tell his Ministers to account to the Parliament and to make sure the questions that are asked and that have remained on the Order Paper for three months now, I would like him to exercise his authority in this regard.

Question, by leave, deferred.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, before the Prime Minister speaks, would we be debating this statement?

Madam President: No, there will be no debate on any statement.

Sen. Mark: Then, we are not prepared to listen.

Madam President: Senator, will you sit please. I want to remind you that “Statements by Ministers” is an item on the agenda, and I have granted permission to the Prime Minister to be here to give a statement. I also want to refer you to Standing Order 85.

[Opposition Senators walk out of Chamber]

**Section 137 of the Constitution
(Conduct of the Chief Justice)**

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning): Madam President, now that the House is clear, I would like to make a statement on behalf of the Government.

Madam President, on Tuesday, February 15, 2005 I reported through the other place, to the nation, that I had begun contemplation of the need to exercise the responsibility entrusted to me by section 137 of the Constitution.

It was a statement which I said then was made with a heavy heart. Although there are several responsibilities entrusted to the Office of the Prime Minister, it is not all of them that I take pleasure in exercising.

As the country is now aware, about one year ago, I received a second report pertaining to the conduct of the Hon. Chief Justice from another senior judicial officer, the Hon. Chief Magistrate and again in the context of the responsibilities entrusted to the Office of the Prime Minister by the Constitution, I sought to initiate proceedings to determine whether steps should be taken to investigate the conduct of the Hon. Chief Justice.

Madam President, I have never been one to neglect my duties or shirk my responsibilities, but I will admit that on both occasions I held meetings with the Hon. Chief Justice in the hope that I would be spared having to contemplate a matter that none of my predecessors has ever had to face, and for which there is no precedent either in Trinidad and Tobago or the Commonwealth.

Conduct of the Chief Justice
[HON. P. MANNING]

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

The matters surrounding the first report made against the Hon. Chief Justice are still before the High Court, and I do not intend to comment on them. In relation to the second matter, allegations were made by the Hon. Chief Magistrate to the effect that the Hon. Chief Justice had attempted to influence his decision in the summary trial of a matter involving the then Opposition Leader and Member for Couva North.

As you well know, the framers of the Constitution in their wisdom and their desire to insulate the Judiciary from the Executive ensured that the Prime Minister had no power to remove the Hon. Chief Justice or any judicial officer from office.

It is a position which I wholeheartedly endorse since I do not believe that any Prime Minister should be given the power to remove any Chief Justice from office.

May I repeat this statement for the benefit of all those who would say otherwise? I do not believe that any Prime Minister should be given the power to remove any Chief Justice from office.

What our Constitution does provide is that if sufficiently serious allegations are made against the holder of the office of Chief Justice for which there is prima facie, sufficient basis, in fact, the Prime Minister is the only person authorized to represent to the President the allegations so made be investigated.

That investigation is to be carried out in the first instance by a tribunal consisting of retired and sitting commonwealth judges and the final decision as to whether the Hon. Chief Justice ought to be removed from office is to be made by the judicial committee of the Privy Council.

Madam President, on March 26, 2007, I received from the Hon. Chief Justice his response to the allegations made against him. The main thrust of his submission to me was that the credibility and reliability of the Chief Magistrate had been destroyed by, among other things, his decision not to give evidence in the criminal proceedings brought against the Chief Justice. This was an issue which was naturally of concern to me and as I did in the past, I sought the advice of senior lawyers to guide me in the decision I had to make. This time I sought and received the advice of renowned constitutional lawyer, Dr. Lloyd Barnett, from Jamaica, and Mr. Mark Strachan Q.C. from the United Kingdom. They both advised that the threshold legal test had been satisfied—advice from both of them.

Madam President, having considered all of the material and submissions put before me, I decided to represent to His Excellency the President that the question of removing the Hon. Chief Justice from office ought to be investigated and I did

so by letter dated May 18, 2007. I also advised him that the tribunal charged with the responsibility of investigating the Chief Magistrate's allegations should comprise the right Hon. Lord Mustill, a former member of the Privy Council as Chairman, Sir Vincent. Floissac, the former Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal and Mr. Dennis Morrison, a current member of the Court of Appeal of Belize.

Madam President, I also wrote to the Hon. Chief Justice on May 21, 2007, seeking his views on whether I should advise His Excellency the President that he should be suspended from performing the functions of his office pending the investigation. I expect to receive the Chief Justice's response on this question by May 28, 2007.

Madam President, as I have ensured to do in the past, I wish to emphasize that the decision which I have made does not constitute a finding of guilt against the Chief Justice. That is a decision which is to be made by the tribunal and the Privy Council. In the meantime, I would urge all concerned to respect the process which has been initiated so that this unfortunate matter will be put to rest one way or the other, with fairness and with due dispatch.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE PART II
AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(Replacement of Member)**

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I beg to move the following Motion:

Be it resolved that this Senate appoint Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh to replace Mr. Harry Persad Mungalsingh on the Statutory Joint Select Committee on Government Ministries Part II, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises, falling under those Ministries and Mr. Ronald Phillip to replace Mr. Harry Persad Mungalsingh on the Public Accounts Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
(Appointment of)**

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Sen. Dr. Lenny Saith): Thank you, Madam President. I beg to move the following Motion:

Joint Select Committee
[SEN. THE HON. DR. L. SAITH]

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Be it resolved that the following five Senators be appointed to serve with the five Members appointed by the House of Representatives on the Joint Select Committee established to consider and report on a Bill entitled an Act to prohibit certain kinds of discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different status, to establish an equal opportunity commission and an equal opportunity tribunal and for other related matters:

Sen. Christine Kangaloo, Sen. Christine Sahadeo, Sen. Arnold Piggott, Sen. Wade Mark, and Sen. Prof Ramesh Deosoran.

Question put and agreed to.

**CRIME SITUATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
(GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING)**

[Fifth Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [January 30, 2007]:

Be it resolved that this Senate:

- (a) express its concern over Government's performance in handling crime,
- (b) call on the Government to explain to the Senate why the actions of the relevant agencies have so far consistently failed to produce the desired results; and
- (c) agree that the Government outline, with specific performance targets and mechanisms for accountability, what concrete measures it intends to take to deal effectively with the serious crime situation now facing the country so as to facilitate the pathway to national consensus and civic mobilization. [*Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran*]

Question again proposed.

Madam President: Those who have spoken so far are: Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran, mover of the Motion, Sen. Wade Mark, Sen. Overand Padmore, Sen. Dana Seetahal SC, Sen. Dr. Glenn Ramadar-Singh, Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie, Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid, Sen. Raziah Ahmed, Sen. Althea Rocke, Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph, Sen. Ronald Phillip, Sen. Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir and Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie SC.

The Minister of Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Ann Marie Manning): Madam President, it gives me great pleasure to join this debate on this said Motion. When this Government took office in the year 2002, violence and indiscipline in the school system had been an ongoing issue. As a matter of fact, a national consultation was held in 1988 and there were reviews that had taken place since then.

Madam President, the nature and the extent of the indiscipline in schools at that time had been defined as follows: Inattention and disruptive behaviour in class, thefts, fights in schools and among students of different schools, the use of various types of weapons, attack on students by students and non-students in and out of school, drug abuse, sexual misconduct, threats of attacks on teachers, verbal sexual harassment of female teachers, violent and physical attacks on teachers and attacks on self, for example, attempted suicides.

The incidence of violence and indiscipline were not limited to any one type of school or to any particular geographical area. It was noted at that time however, that the indiscipline that disrupted schools or reached the extreme of violence was evident only among a small minority of students and sometimes even in the most troubled schools.

The general impression was that the majority of the school population displayed positive behaviour. This report made certain recommendations which this Government met in various stages of implementation when it took office.

Madam President, may I remind you that this was in 1988. Some of these identified for immediate implementation were:

1. The mounting of weekly and regional parent education seminars and action to increase the principal's knowledge about regulations and law;
2. The formation of several interdisciplinary teams to monitor the schools, the prompt filling of vacancies of teachers and principals;
3. Addressing of the pastoral needs of students to reduce the risk of indiscipline, establishing student representative councils, and having well organized assemblies with student participation.

There were also more long term recommendations: The intensification of family life education programme, the ending of the shift system, the filling of all vacant posts of guidance counsellors, and after putting the support system in place, to institutionalize continuous assessment and evaluation of the education system at all levels and, of course, ongoing training for practising teachers.

These are just some of the many unfulfilled recommendations that were advocated by those on the other side, and when this Government took office few committees were formed and those formed did very little.

In 2002—2003 the Ministry of Education began to move expeditiously to pull together all the various activities in a coordinated project that we called 'Project Peace'.

The major goal of 'Project Peace' was to create a culture of peace in the school system, a culture of peace for the individual, a culture of peace in the family life of the students and in the communities at large. Immediately a coordinator was appointed and the project began to address redevelopment and implement various activities, various plans to reduce the violence and indiscipline in the school system.

The Ministry of Education also recognized that effective planning and implementation must be based on careful studies, not just on exaggerated newspaper items. The Ministry immediately commissioned Prof. Ramesh Deosaran, the goodly Senator on the Independent Benches, and his team of advisors to study and to analyze violence and indiscipline in the school system.

Madam President, this study lasted until the year 2005 and thanks to Sen. Prof. Deosaran and his team, the Ministry of Education now has a clear understanding of the nature of violence and indiscipline in our school system. Permit me to share some of the findings with this honourable Senate.

A sampling of 2,760 students from 20 schools turned up the following information. Almost 75 per cent of the students in the 20 schools sampled used obscene language or cursed with 30 per cent of them saying they did this more than 10 times for the term. The comparable figure for homes was 40 per cent, with 12 per cent of them saying that they did this more than 10 times for the same period.

Teachers in some of our schools are arguing that cursing now is no big thing and it should no longer be seen as a form of delinquency. Some teachers jokingly say that cursing has become a second language. Its use in the school system is so widespread. Many students explained however, that cursing occurs mainly during fighting incidents.

Secondly, spreading rumours and bad-talking other students, perhaps a mild form of delinquency, is also very widespread, 45 per cent of the students under study, with 5 per cent of them doing it more than 10 times for the term.

Skipping classes without good reason. Thirty per cent of the students in the study missed school or skipped classes and this amounted to 3,132 times for the term with 4 per cent being persistent delinquents, doing it more than 10 times for the term.

Then we had the damage of vandalizing school property. Twenty per cent of them wilfully damaged or vandalized school property during the term, the same period under study. This amounted to 2,139 times for the term and Madam President, the comparable figure for home, that is, damaging home furniture and so forth, was 38 per cent, 3,824 times. Five per cent did it more than 10 times at school; 6 per cent more than 10 times at home.

Sixteen per cent of the students under study were actively involved in gang misbehaviour in school. A total of 1,716 times for the term. Three per cent got involved in gang delinquency more than ten times for the term. And for home based gang delinquency, 12 per cent of the students were involved with over 3 per cent being involved more than 10 times. Ten per cent stole somebody else's property, a total of 782 times. When we compare the figures for the home, the comparable figure, 20 per cent, 1,664 times for the term.

Madam President, 55 per cent of those students did not do homework and got in trouble for it at school, a total of 5,455 times for the 37-day period under study. For home, it was 30 per cent and 2,857 times. The persistent ones were 7 per cent more than 10 times for the school and 4 per cent at home.

Seven per cent smoked cigarettes in school, a total of 882 times for the term, the comparable figure for home was 15 per cent, 1,935 times. The persistent delinquency, 3 per cent at the schools and 4 per cent at home did it more than 10 times.

2.30 p.m.

Almost 20 per cent said they drank alcohol in school, a total of 1,506 times. At home, that figure was 50 per cent, 7,290 times, a very big difference. We also have data for regular drinkers and regular smokers. For those drinking more than 10 times for the term, it was 2 per cent in school and 15 per cent at home, quite a big difference again. It seems that the drinking habit is brewed at home.

Over 3 per cent of the students surveyed said that they used illegal drugs in schools, for example, cocaine and marijuana, a total of 462 times for the term. At home, it was 6 per cent and 902 times and only 1 per cent used it at school more than 10 times for the term. At home, the comparable proportion was 2 per cent.

Twenty-two per cent of our students under study were in fights with other students in school and with no weapon. This amounted to 1,897 times. At home, it was 30 per cent, 3,913 times. At school, over 2 per cent did it more than 10 times. At home, over 7 per cent did it more than 10 times for the term.

Two conclusions can be drawn from these statistics, Madam President. The first is that many more students committed serious offences more often at home than at school. At home, for example, fighting with a weapon was about twice as much as in the school. This home-based delinquency includes stealing, vandalism, smoking, drug abuse and drinking alcohol.

For using illegal drugs, 3 per cent of the students did this at school while 6 per cent, twice as much, did it at home. Drinking alcohol also revealed a very big difference. Twenty per cent said that they drank alcohol at school, while 50 per cent of the 2,760 students said they drank alcohol at home, with 15 per cent of them saying that they did it more than 10 times for the term.

Smoking was twice as much at home compared to school—15 per cent at home versus 7 per cent at school. For vandalizing furniture et cetera, it was 20 per cent for the school furniture and 37 per cent at home; again, almost twice as many students at home.

While the study was in progress, Madam President, this Ministry of Education did not sit idly by, but began addressing the problems that had been identified in the earlier reports. The Ministry of Education immediately teamed up with the Ministry of National Security to address the issue. The committee formed a task force comprising members from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of National Security. Major initiatives flowed from this task force and they are as follows:

- (1) The development of a specific mentoring programme with the Youth Training Centre. I am sure you would have heard the results of this mentoring programme—very successful results.
- (2) The establishment of a police presence in 17 selected schools deemed as high-risk schools. I am pleased to announce that the police presence has been removed from these schools.
- (3) The procedures for reporting incidents to the police were put in place.
- (4) The introduction of School Safety Officers. All of our schools now have School Safety Officers.
- (5) The establishment of Student Councils.
- (6) The training of community leaders to implement parent education; and, finally,
- (7) The development of democratic citizenship curricula.

Madam President, the Ministry of Education, using the research, has continued to put in place a series of far-reaching and sustained initiatives to reduce the violence and the indiscipline in our school system. I wish to tell you

how we did it. We looked at the systems; we looked at programmes. Systems are long lasting and sustainable and they are designed to be preventive in nature and also to be responsive where necessary.

At the level of the school, we had established over 102 student councils in 102 secondary schools, out of a total of 135 schools. These student councils bring a level of democracy within the school system. We have placed 170 trained safety officers in 85 secondary schools. The principals are in high praise of this particular initiative. These officers have replaced the temporary police, as I said before.

We have built state-of-the-art security fences around our schools. I have not been informed of any violent element—especially the gangs that used to attack our schools before—entering our secondary schools once more. We have also begun lighting up our schools. We have established the Student Support Services Division in 59 secondary schools. Fifty-nine secondary schools now have Guidance Officers and, for the first time, we have introduced School Social Workers and these School Social Workers connect the schools to the homes. There are now 41 of them providing services at approximately 90 primary schools.

We have also introduced Guidance Officers at the primary level. We have 16 Guidance Officers functioning at the primary level. We have continued the process of hiring deans and heads of departments and it is hoped that by the academic year 2007/2008 all schools will have a fully functioning dean system to help us with our discipline problem.

We have joined forces with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development. We have recognized the importance of health as it contributes to discipline and have facilitated the Ministry of Health in putting together a hearing and vision screening programme to assist our children who are not capable of hearing or seeing very well.

By July 2006, a total of 30,117 first- and second-year students were screened for hearing difficulties. July 2006, 30,000 first- and second-year students were screened for hearing difficulties. The overall percentage of the target screened nationally for hearing was 83 per cent. We have started screening for vision in the counties of St. Patrick and St. George East.

As the reports and recommendations indicate, the delivery of the curriculum is a key component in the students' learning and the students' levels of indiscipline. We have changed the curriculum. We have in place traditional and non-traditional subjects, ensuring that some subjects are compulsory, such as physical education, technology education, and visual and performing arts.

We have recognized that when over 2,000 students per year end up with serious literacy problems, we have a serious problem in this place. This is exactly what happened when the former government decided to initiate universal secondary education without proper pre-planning. We have provided now, remedial teachers to work with these students and to upgrade their skills. We have put in place a unit called STAR, looking at the secondary students who are having problems with literacy skills. We have also put in place a programme called CETT in the primary school system to ensure that not many of our students enter secondary school unable to read or to write. We have begun training tutors to become remedial teachers to support these programmes.

We have established 85 school boards to assist the community. We have provided the National Parent-Teacher Association with a subvention to facilitate the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations in all of our schools. We need parents to work with us.

We have deshifted 15 out of 25 junior secondary schools and, in September 2007, we will deshift a further four.

Madam President, while we were strengthening the system, as just explained, we began putting short-term programmes in place. Our Peace Promotion Unit, that is what we called it, began spearheading and coordinating a number of programmes. We have introduced a Right Choices Programme, working in conjunction with several NGOs. For the academic year 2006/2007, over 121 workshops were conducted in 85 schools with 12,000 students benefiting. We have introduced the Peer Mediation and Counselling and Conflict Resolution for teachers and students. Over 75 workshops were conducted in 32 schools.

As the reports have suggested, alcohol and drug use is part of the problem. We have developed a drug abuse and no smoking policy for schools and have partnered with NGOs such as the Secondary Schools Drama Association and the Rebirth House to implement activities. Over 11,000 students have benefited both directly and indirectly from these activities in 2006/2007.

The Student Support Services Division implemented personal social guidance programmes focusing on self-development, personal and social responsibility and engaged just about 16,000 students in September and December 2006.

We have established two out-of-school suspension centres: one in the district of Victoria and the other in the St. George East education district. The suspended students in Port of Spain received individualized guidance and social work

services. Madam President, 180 teachers from nine secondary schools were trained in anger and stress management.

Madam President, we have only just begun. It is not my intention to boast about our achievements, but they have been many and the results are beginning to show. In a survey done with principals as to their understanding and their perception of the incidents of indiscipline in the school system in the years 2002 to 2005, we kept asking principals if the policies were working. The results indicated the following:

- In 2002, 10 per cent of the principals rated robbery and theft as very serious in their schools. By 2005, 50 per cent of the principals saw robbery and theft as being minor or not a problem in their schools;
- In 2002, just about 30 per cent of principals surveyed indicated that absenteeism and class cutting by our students were serious and by 2005, over 50 per cent rated this as a minor problem in their schools;
- In 2003, just about 60 per cent of the principals rated physical conflicts as being moderate and, by the year 2005, that figure had been reduced to about 40 per cent. In this area, we have a lot of work still to do;
- In 2002, just about 40 per cent of principals rated the possession of weapons as a serious to moderate problem and, in 2005, 50 per cent of them were saying that possession of weapons had become a minor problem;
- In 2002, 80 per cent of the principals considered the use of drugs to be a minor problem and, in 2005, just about 75 per cent indicated drugs to be a minor problem. This is another area that requires more work.

Madam President, the Ministry of Education is indeed very active in the reduction of violence and indiscipline in the school system. It is not, I am sure you would realize, a piecemeal approach, but a holistic one that involves curriculum, student support, peace promotion, other ministries, non-governmental organizations, the PTA and parents, who would walk off the streets to help us in our schools.

The school is just a small part of our society and the violence and the indiscipline is part and parcel of school life. The Ministry of Education is relentless in its efforts to reduce our violence to manageable levels and so I am appealing to parents and adults in our society to understand that we have programmes in place to reduce indiscipline. I ask them, when they are entering our schools, to enter so that they are not disruptive, as

we attempt to ensure that our schools are peaceful and calm. I appeal to them to heed our call for peace, safety and security for our children in our school environment. We can only achieve this with their support.

We recognize the need to engage the community. We recognize the need to engage the family in our efforts and, therefore, we have begun working with the Ministry of Social Development, especially their Family Life Programme. We have been working with the Ministry of Community Development as they strengthen their family policies. Therefore, I am appealing to parents to come on board; to understand the problems affecting their children and to hold hands with us at the Ministry of Education to achieve a more caring and a more peaceful society.

Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh: Madam President, I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the debate on this Motion by Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran, predominantly on the issue of crime.

Under this PNM Administration, up to December 2006, there have been over 1,500 murders committed in this country; approximately 92,000 serious crimes reported at an average of 42 per day; 11,060 kidnappings, at an average of four kidnappings per week. In 2005/2006, there was an average of more than one murder per day under this administration. Yet up to 2006, only two persons were convicted for these heinous crimes.

Madam President, this Government has spent more than \$15 billion on the Ministry of National Security in five years. What have they achieved? Only a state of crisis in crime. For every 1,000 murders that took place in this country, 999 times the killers get away. That is because for every 1,000 murders only one conviction is upheld after appeal.

Those were the findings of British criminologist and Oxford University Prof. John Hood. Hood's conclusion is the result of great research. What are some of the other findings of the criminologist? He said that the chance of a murderer getting caught is miniscule in Trinidad and Tobago. The likelihood of their being convicted is even smaller, and of those caught and convicted, 90 per cent will be released after appeal.

This country's murder rate is 30 per 100,000. Trinidad and Tobago's murder rate is higher than Haiti and Guyana combined—11.5 and 15.7 per 100,000 respectively. And Trinidad and Tobago's murder rate is 19 times higher than the rate of England and 1,600 per cent higher than the murder rate in Canada. Of the

1,500 murders to date under the PNM, the analysis suggests that only one person would be convicted and made to serve a sentence after appeal.

This is PNM governance for you, Madam President. This is PNM governance. This administration under Mr. Patrick Manning has blamed the United National Congress for blocking the Police Reform Bills and the Bail Bill. He said that was contributing to the escalation in crime. Since these Bills have been passed, what has happened to the crime situation? The crime situation continues unabated.

The UNC supported those Bills and they were passed in the House and every budget the Prime Minister has promised to deal with crime, yet it always went up. Four years ago, the PNM promised to put crime under control. After that, murders increased by 36 per cent to 229. After the 2005/2006 budget and promises of reduced crime, the number of murders jumped again, this time by a whopping 49 per cent to 387, in excess of one a day. Madam President, while this is happening, the Prime Minister, Mr. Patrick Manning, and the Minister of National Security, Mr. Martin Joseph, have been proving how breathtakingly incompetent they have been in tackling crime. They have been making simplistic statements saying that business people were partly to blame for the kidnappings taking place, failing to recognize that the real people at fault is the PNM Government.

They have been creating circumstances whereby criminals believe that committing criminal acts is worth the risk because they are not being caught. Every time a PNM administration comes into power, there is a huge escalation in crime because the criminals who are committing these crimes believe that they will never be caught.

Then the hon. Minister of National Security said that things would be all right in 2006 because the murder rate would not reach 400. Can the hon. Minister explain to the hundreds of families whose children have been murdered under his watch, while he believes this country is doing fine and more than one person was being murdered every day in 2005 and 2006?

You know that the PNM's record in crime is woeful—the country knows this.

Sen. Dumas: Could the Senator quote what he is reading from there?

Madam President: Both of you cannot stand. When he stands, you should sit.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: I quoted the Oxford criminologist, John Hood in the book that he wrote.

Sen. Dumas: You are constantly reading, so I was wondering if you would tell us who prepared what you are reading.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Why are you so interested? You are irrelevant. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President, the murder rate in Trinidad and Tobago is shocking. Do you accept that?

Madam President: Senator, speak to me!

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Pretty much everyone knows that someone else has lost a loved one. Every single day every citizen lives in fear. This country is traumatized with fear and apprehension. This society remains under siege under this administration and, as a people, we have been brought down to a decadent society on the precipitous verge of total lawlessness and anarchy.

They do not want to hear these things because it is the truth. [*Desk thumping*]. People undergo a long two-hour frustration to get home on evenings and when they reach they have to barricade themselves behind bars in their homes—you all understand that; you know that—they do not go out at nights and sit at home and worry that every time the phone rings it could be bad news that a family member would not be making it home.

Crime is having serious destruction and devastation on the psychological and emotional well-being of every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago. Governments around the world are advising their citizens not to travel to our beautiful twin island, particularly Tobago.

When we look at the expenditure on the Ministry of National Security versus the number of murders, you will see that the expenditure has been climbing every year and so has the murder rate. That is governance for you. What we find alarming is that after six years of governance, the PNM has decided to go to the population on crime consultations throughout Trinidad and Tobago. That is appalling. It took them six years to determine that they need to consult with the people of Trinidad and Tobago. What were they doing all the time?

On Monday, June 08, 2007, a barrage of anger was thrown at Deputy Commissioner of Police Glen Roach by the Lange Park Residents Association at a meeting in Lange Park, where over 200 residents said that the police have failed in their duty.

3.00 p.m.

The consensus among the residents in Lange Park was that they were being ignored by the PNM Government, having begged for more than two years to have more police patrols and another police post. The municipal police have been reduced to five; four of whom were untrained females. That is what this administration has been able to do for the people of Chaguanas. There are five municipal police with four untrained women. They have not been able to provide a police post. In fact, the PNM entourage that went to Lange Park, it seems as though, ran away. They left a senior cop to shoulder the residents' rage at the meeting; everyone told the PNM administration and the COP that they were complete failures.

On Saturday May 12, in the *Trinidad Guardian* it is reported that a mother cried out for justice two years after her son's murder. There is pain and suffering that this mother, Grace Ruiz, "continues to endure two years after her son", Colin Ian Ruiz, was murdered on Mothers' Day on May 08, 2005. "The pain and suffering" of this mother "echoed through the halls of Palms Club" in San Fernando.

Madam President: I am disappointed in you. You are reading Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Madam President, I am referring to the notes. She lamented—I am quoting from this newspaper—"the delay in the justice system during the PNM's Fifth National Consultation on Crime in San Fernando. She was pleading with the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Security and the top brass of the police service present, for speedier justice. She said, I quote:

"I want closure for my two granddaughters who keep asking me when daddy's murder is going to be solved?"

I went to court 25 times for a postponement because somebody was not ready'

When the enquiry got started it was the same thing. I went there for about 30 more times more.'"

She told the Prime Minister: "Tell, me, Sir do you know how this feels? I can tell you how it feels...I am hurting...As a mother", Mrs. Ruiz—there are many other mothers suffering the same way. There are hundreds of mothers whose children's blood were spilled on the streets and the earth of Trinidad and Tobago. She was begging for closure.

She was interrupted many times by lusty applause from the 1,000 persons who were there at Palms Club in the audience, because they all felt the same pain that she felt. The PNM, the hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of National Security seem to be oblivious to all this pain and suffering that people are encountering.

How could this administration and Members of this Government feel comfortable in their own minds, when international reports—*Reuters* reports go around the world—wrote that “Amidst prosperity, T&T struggles with crime.” This article was written on Thursday, February 22 in the *Business Today* of the *Trinidad Guardian*. That report speaks about “energy riches” having vaulted “Trinidad and Tobago up the economic rankings”. These “good times are being soured by a surge in murders and gun violence”. It stated that not far from towering cranes, rough parts of the capital Port of Spain are home to gangs with names like G-Unit and the Crock Gang that are thriving on an influx of South American cocaine and cheap guns. They speak about “a tripling of murders in five years and a rash of kidnappings”.

It is written in that report “there is a criminal insurgency in this country”. How would we, as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, feel comfortable when this is written by *Reuters*, which is circulated around the world, about the crime problem in Trinidad and Tobago? Who would want to come and join us here? It states:

“There were nearly 400 murders in each of the past two years.”

About the same number as in the United States, New Jersey, whose population is seven times ours.

They speak about newspaper headlines from one day showing why this country is becoming more like crime-prone neighbourhood Jamaica. They said that there is a perception that a death squad is operating in Trinidad and Tobago, with several police shootings and that there has never been an arrest of a major drug bust.

We would remember that there was supposed to have been an enquiry into the shootings of someone by the name of Galene Bonadie.

On February 26, 2005 in the *Trinidad Guardian*, there was a summary of 22 people who were killed by police bullets in 2004. Everyday that happened they outlined it. I would not go into reading that, because it is in the *Trinidad Guardian* of Sunday, February 26, 2005. There were 22 persons killed by police bullets in 2004. The dates and the names of the person were given. When were these inquests conducted and how long will it take for the families of the 22 persons to get redress, because they feel that their families have been gunned down by police bullets in 2004? We do not know what has happened in 2005 and 2006.

We ask the Ministry of National Security and the Director of Public Prosecutions to speed up and expedite the question of inquests into these killings. There were 22 persons killed by these so-called police bullets and the families are being left and nothing is being done for them. Some of them are poor and they cannot undertake any sort of legal fight in the courts for their family.

Trinidad and Tobago seems to be a fertile ground for criminals. Gang members are carrying out their deadly feuds within eyesight and ear shot of the police. Yesterday, a dental colleague of mine whose father is the former President of NATUC, Selwyn John, was shot in St. James by two men who walked into his office pretending to be patients. They were dressed in the clothes of young school children. His wife, who is a fellow dentist and his six-year old daughter were with him. When he heard the commotion outside he went out and these guys had semi-machine guns walking in Madras Street in St. James in the broad daylight at 12.30 p.m. Could you tell me that this Government really cares about citizens when murderers can walk the streets of St. James with guns in their pockets and nobody was able to detect that? Where are the police patrols? These people can go with impunity and gun down a young professional doctor. It could happen to any one of us here.

It could happen to me in my office in Brooms Street, St. Clair. I fear that everyday. All the professionals who work in their offices and even Ministers, I am sure, are afraid.

Ministers come here with bulletproof vests and they have security guards outside guarding them. When you touch a Minister and you hold him you are holding bulletproof vests. They are protected and they have security detail throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Wherever they go, their family is protected but the poor, innocent ones, who will protect us?

I walk the Savannah by myself and it does not matter if I am gunned down because I am fearless. I have lived my life already. I am fearless. You cannot do me anymore than you tried to put me in handcuffs. You can put me in handcuffs 10 times again and I will be fearless. Not this PNM administration. I fear no one across there. I fear only God.

Criminals have come to believe—under this PNM administration and previous PNM administrations, all through the time—that they can do what they want; they have a licence to kill people and nothing will happen to them.

There are many things that have gone wrong. There is police inadequacy, loopholes in the bail system, slowness of the court operations, a prison system

that is detrimental; not only breeding criminals, but facilitating criminal activity both inside and outside the prison walls.

There is an anger epidemic in Trinidad and Tobago. Everyone seems to be very angry on a daily basis. What makes our population angry? It is because of the fear and apprehension. They fear that they could be killed at any time and their family could be murdered. They are angry on the roads because of the delay in the traffic system. They take two and one-half to three hours to reach home. When they are so angry, it engenders frustration at the end of the day.

Imagine a Trinidad-born Los Angeles preacher speaks about an anger epidemic in Trinidad and Tobago. Brian Skinner had called on authorities in Trinidad and Tobago to launch a public health drive in communities affected by crime. He was speaking on Friday at a lecture and panel discussion organized by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. What is this administration doing about a reduction in the anger in Trinidad and Tobago? They are creating anger on a daily basis. They are creating anger by what this population is seeing as massive overexpenditure and massive overspending and waste. The poor people of Trinidad and Tobago cannot get a job. The young boys who are committing the crime cannot get gainful employment and they are reverting to crime. When they want to buy their sneakers they go and shoot somebody. They want to wear a nice pair of jeans so they go and shoot someone. You see this around Carnival time because they want to buy something for their girlfriends and they cannot afford it.

The PNM administration is spending billions of dollars on wasteful projects and the young ones are suffering. This is what engenders crime. This is the psychological and emotional impact it has upon the young ones, when they see so much waste and expenditure taking place. The country is so rich and they cannot get anything. They feel that everyone else is wealthy, they are poor and why do they have to suffer, so they gun you down because you have something. They do not know how hard and how long you have worked for it, but the poor, innocent young ones feel very hurt and angered.

The Prime Minister speaks about a mentoring system to tackle crime. The *Daily Express* of Monday, May 21, 2007 stated:

“Mentor system to tackle crime”

The Prime Minister was making a statement at his general council, fooling you all during his meeting at Balisier House.

“As a result of the crime consultation the political leader indicated that his government will undertake a programme of mentoring, which had been

suggested during these consultations as methodologies to save our young people, especially those at risk,”

The attachment of young people at risk is so important. This administration, you remember, in the election of 2002, and the Prime Minister moved around with members whom they called “community leaders”, who might have been considered to be mentors. These were criminals who were considered by this administration to be community leaders. The community leaders were mentoring these young ones. The Prime Minister spoke about mentoring. These so-called community leaders who were criminals, were mentoring the young ones. They were walking with the Prime Minister and his entourage and they were mentoring these young ones to get guns, use them and become a part of the gang culture that we have in Trinidad and Tobago.

This administration forced mothers to leave Trinidad and Tobago, to seek livelihood overseas to seek a decent living so that they can send money for their children back at home. They might have sent the money to the grandmothers who died and the mothers never came back, leaving thousands and thousands of children without mothers and grandmothers and without any self-esteem. The mothers never came back.

I know of someone who told me recently that his mother never called him for 20 years and when his mother called him recently, he was shocked. He had to fend for himself and he had to go into Ellerslie Park and Federation Park to wash cars in the morning to gain a livelihood for himself. I said: "I congratulate you. You are a decent man, but you must speak to your mother because now she must have realized her mistake.”

Could you imagine thousands and thousands of young children being left on their own? I see them everyday; young girls who become pregnant by 13 and have children already. By age 19 there are more than 1,000 mothers in Trinidad and Tobago on a yearly basis who would have had four children. What is happening to this country and its social programmes? The young ones are left alone. This administration is responsible for the blood of hundreds of these young ones, by forcing poverty on the families, despite the billions and billions of dollars which they have and are wasting everyday.

Mentoring is a business of the NGOs and private sector. How could Government undertake mentoring? The Prime Minister speaks and you wonder whether he thinks about what he is saying.

Sen. Mark: No boy, he does get things from the prophetess.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: I cannot understand.

Sen. Mark: “De obeah woman does guide him.”

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: We are now living in a horrific state where children are killing children.

There was an editorial in the *Guardian*. I lost the date. It read:

“Killing the gun trade

Children are killing children; the most degenerated state of civilization.”

The blood of innocent children is on the PNM's hands. Their legacy stands as the only government of this country which has stolen, not only the innocence of the children's minds, but an entire generation. This is the Government that wants to develop our country in the future. They are talking about Vision 2020. They know—they said that the best intelligence has told them—that there are 500 bad men in 66 gangs operating out of East Port of Spain, Morvant and Laventille. Most of these are young men who have to fend for themselves and who are left homeless.

Statistics revealed that seven out of 10 murders were done with the aid of a gun in Trinidad and Tobago. More than likely, these are illegal guns which were used in the commission of robberies or, more worrying, revenge killings of urban gang members. They are killing their own gang members.

Illegal guns are everywhere. I mentioned earlier on: how could these two men walk with sub-machine guns to kill a poor dental man who is earning his livelihood and his daughter was with him and the ease with which these murderers and bandits come into possession of these illegal guns.

You would remember a 16-year old boy tried to take a gun to school, Madam Minister of Education. Two teenaged boys died while playing with guns. The army and police guns go missing from time to time. There is a readily available supply of guns throughout Trinidad and Tobago. The police success rate in the flow of arms is abysmal. They have not been able to bring about any success in stemming the flow of illegal guns coming into this country.

The United States tried and convicted Lance Small of smuggling guns, but have you ever heard in Trinidad and Tobago of anyone being charged with such an offence? There must be networks organized for the purpose of smuggling guns. What has this Government and the Minister of National Security done about it? Have the authorities made any effort to combat this? While we know that legislation to ameliorate this scourge is necessary, it is not sufficient.

We have not heard anything about the Firearms Interdiction Unit, what successes they have achieved or the performance of their unit. We have not heard about what the coast guard and other national security units are doing in stemming illegal gun imports. They are woefully disastrous.

We need a concerted, international effort involving the coast guard, customs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trinidad and Tobago Diplomatic Missions to stem this illegal gun trade. You have to work and come together to prevent this scourge of guns coming in, on a daily basis. The safety of this nation continues to be at risk and we are at the mercy of your administration.

The Prime Minister, you will remember, spoke tough on crime at one time. He said: "If we have to lock down Tobago, Chaguanas and Cedros, we will lock them down. There shall be no rest for the wicked. The Government will be on your heels." What has happened? This is woefully short. It is only talk and lip service. He then moves when he cannot get the crime away. He said: "Dance the crime away." When someone is shot he calls it collateral damage. You remember in Movie Towne someone was shot by a stray bullet and he called it collateral damage.

Recently he said that streetlights are decreasing crime. People are afraid to go outside. It does not matter if streetlights are there or not. People are not outside. How could streetlights be preventing crime? Who is responsible for bringing down the streetlights valued at \$630 million? Who got the kickbacks from these streetlights?

The Prime Minister mentioned that kidnapping is a temporary phenomenon. Imagine, telling the families of the people who have been murdered that their loved one has been a temporary phenomenon.

He said watch television as a form of contraception. Police Commissioner, Trevor Paul, said that neither the police nor the Government was responsible for crime. This is what Commissioner Trevor Paul said: "Neither the Government nor the police was responsible for crime."

The Prime Minister goes on to say that CEPEP is preventing domestic abuse. We all know that CEPEP is fraught with so much difficulties and corruption.

This Government's responsibility is to ensure the security of every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, including us. Above everything else, besides outfitting the police with the resources that they need, the training and the equipment, they need to take the battle back to the criminals. These criminals have sophisticated operations, guns and tools. The Government's responsibility is to put programmes

and policies in place that will reduce the level of criminal activity. No plan has worked, it would seem. We are not interested in another plan by the Prime Minister. He said that in three weeks he will bring another plan following his six consultations throughout Trinidad and Tobago. No plans seem to have worked.

You would remember Operations Baghdad, Anaconda and so on. Nothing has worked. What we want is active, constructive work, so that we will rid the society of this criminal element that exists.

The time for procrastination is over. It is abundantly clear and obvious that the current regime, under the PNM is clueless. Crime plan upon crime plan, while Mastrofski who is supposed to be instrumental in producing all the crime plans for implementation, is getting \$85 million, but you are going around in Trinidad and Tobago to consult with the population, when you have consultants from so many universities throughout North America, spending \$85 million to give you crime plans, but you are going out and talking to the population for crime plans. What a waste of time and a waste of taxpayers' money. Whose did they take to go through with the six consultations throughout Trinidad and Tobago and all the advertisements? It is the taxpayers' money that have been spent for this. It is a national disgrace that the PNM administration, after six years, begins to feel that they now want to talk to the population on crime because it is an election year. They have Mastrofski to give them all the crime plans that they want. None of the crime plans has worked. They have all failed.

The Minister of National Security has a tremendous capability of political spin on giving the truth about crime statistics, especially the astronomical number of murders and kidnappings.

I found by coincidence a beautiful cartoon on Friday, May 18, 2007 in the *Trinidad Guardian*. It has the Government, which is the PNM, throwing a ball with crime statistics spinning and the poverty statistics behind the other arm spinning.

Madam President: You are supposed to be facing me.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Sure, I was showing the picture. I could not do the spin just like that. They are still saying that Gayle is the best spin bowler in the West Indies. That is what the cartoon is saying, but PNM is the best spin artist and con artist that the world has ever seen, in terms of what they say the GDP is. They have all sorts of statistical conmanship and the Minister of National Security comes and tries to fool the population. The population realizes that it is tomfoolery because they are trying to spin the crime statistics and the poverty statistics. What a shame and a national disgrace.

Do you know what Kevin James said in a letter of April 25, 2005 in the *Daily Express*? I wish that the Minister of National Security was here:

“Personally I think ‘he...’”

which is the Minister of National Security.

“is a total failure on the job and should be replaced.”

We are now reaping the fruits of all that nepotism and cronyism with no one being held accountable or responsible. Citizens are worried that the Prime Minister carries a seer woman with him where he goes.

Some of the Prime Minister's outlandish suggestions, such as playing classical music in prisons to reduce violence, and his ballroom dancing to young persons as a crime fighting technique might clarify the existence of that curious confidante of the Prime Minister; the prophetess or “propheterist” might have had an input into last year's budget, when the Prime Minister announced his plan to outlaw gambling. The superstitious mindset and cheap politics of this regime could well be a factor in this Government's ineffectuality in controlling crime. Superstitious beliefs often blind people to hard facts.

Indeed, two years ago, Minister Valley told a gathering of business people:

“When I look at what is happening, the type of crime and so on, I have to feel that there is some element of unnaturalness in what is happening.”

It seems that he knew that the Prime Minister has a prophetess or “propheterist”. He said:

“When I look at what is happening, the type of crime and so on, I have to feel that there is some element of unnaturalness in what is happening. I have to believe there is a spiritual side to what is happening.”

That is what this administration seems to be working on—a crystal ball, a seer woman, a prophetess, a “propheterist”, an obeah woman or an obeah man. That is what you get from people who want pure dictatorship and theocracy. This is what we have in Trinidad and Tobago.

This is a delusional government. Everywhere the reality is striking before them and they are living delusions. They are not seeing the reality. Our society has been reduced to where a Prime a Minister consults a seer woman to give a divine message to go ahead and pull the election date from his back pocket. Can such a leader and administration carry us to developed nation status and Vision 2020?

I now turn to the Government's social policies in the eradication and prevention of crime. What have they done? They have in fact propagated a dependency syndrome in most of the depressed areas of this country by engendering a cycle of poverty, which brings on a life of crime. In all the CEPEP programmes and URP programmes, they have gendered and propagated a dependency syndrome, where people have to be depending on this administration from year to year, without any training. Therefore, it creates and fosters a cycle of poverty. The blatant nepotism of these programmes has gone a long way in engendering this cycle.

It is a programme where friends and families of the PNM are made into millionaires with state funds, whereas the thousands of people they claim to employ are really the equivalent of working class slavery. There are no decent salaries, no decent benefits to the CEPEP workers, no medical insurance, no training given and manual labour for the rest of their lives. This is the modern equivalent of PNM's brand of neocolonial slavery, where friends and families of Government Ministers are made into veritable plantation owners—so many years we thought that was gone—while their supporters in the most depressed areas have been psychologically brainwashed into accepting the lowest status, in a system which enslaves them in a cycle of poverty.

Why have the social programmes of this administration not met with success in these depressed communities? Why must we still have 20 or 30 per cent poverty? The PNM is trying to put a spin and say that it is only 17 per cent. There should be no poverty in Trinidad and Tobago. What about social rehabilitation programmes for the members of criminal gangs, which have been unleashed in the society of Trinidad and Tobago?

Madam President, this administration has a propensity for using blatant rules to create political mischief and to lay the basis for continuing political victimization by this administration.

While we support the large numbers of honest and professional police officers who live up to the high ideals of the police service, we are extremely concerned of the growing trend of some senior First Division Police Officers who we now call “political police”, having a political agenda. These “political police”, you see them everyday in Trinidad and Tobago. We know who they are. In fact, some of them had been given advancement in their jobs after one of them have been found having \$300,000 of marked money from a kidnapping attempt. Yet, that person was sent away on scholarship. I understand that he came back and is heading an intelligence unit.

What has happened to the public enquiry into the death of Police Constable Ricardo Guerra, who was killed by another cop? Was Ricardo Guerra the one who squealed on a senior police officer in the First Division? How can we talk about preventing crime, when because a police officer makes a statement against a senior police officer, he is gunned down and then there is some attempt to cover it up? There are conflicting reports on the manner in which Guerra was killed. What about Inspector Bernadette James? This reminds us of what happened to Bernadette James, when she tried to make a statement years ago. These continue to haunt the police service.

Police Commissioner Trevor Paul appointed an independent police investigation to probe the killing of Kendal Hamilton at Fatima Extension in St. Barbs, shot dead by an officer of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Tuesday, August 09, 2005. All these are officers who had spoken negatively against their senior officers.

It brings me to the issue of white collar crime. What are the concrete policies to fight these white collar crimes that are committed in Trinidad and Tobago? Why has this Government ignored the IMF, the World Bank, the United Nations and Transparency International Reports?

Madam President: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the Senator has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Thank you, Madam President. I was asking why the Government has not heeded the International Monetary Fund's advice or the World Bank, United Nations or Transparency International in combating white collar crime. We have not seen any evidence from this administration. They are looking about themselves.

What about the overspending on so many Government projects? The sum of \$1.6 billion was spent in the UTT Centre in Wallerfield, when we have already seen that there has been an expenditure of \$600 million in the present UTT, without any transparency and accountability. Almost \$800 million was spent on the Brian Lara Stadium; approximately \$200 million on the Prime Minister's residence and the National Performing Arts Theatre and with \$400 million or \$500 million in each of these. The Waterfront Development Projects and all the

other Government projects have waste, mismanagement, expenditure and cost overruns. The Scarborough Hospital is also one. We can go on and on ad infinitum speaking of them. Trinidad and Tobago is angry because of the wasteful expenditures on these projects and the high-rise buildings. What would this do to the people of Trinidad and Tobago? How will the people of Trinidad and Tobago benefit from this?

Why has Andre Monteil not resigned as PNM treasurer? Why has Minister John Rahael not resigned as Minister? Why has Minister Keith Rowley not resigned and why have people who have major accusations levied against them not resigned; people who are still being investigated? The honourable thing is to resign. What about the state board CEO, Uthara Rao, who spent \$1.2 billion in levelling some land in Caroni, Mr. Andre Monteil with \$115 million purchase of shares in the Home Mortgage Bank and Calder Hart, who spent over \$15 billion without any transparency and accountability? This is a deliberate attempt by the PNM, engendering white collar crime. We find them guilty of white collar crime in Trinidad and Tobago. They do not want to do anything about it because they are locked up in their own mess. They know who are responsible amongst themselves.

We saw evidence of white collar crime recently in the credit card business. While speaking about white collar crime, I saw that I was named in something in today's newspaper, where someone mentioned that there was a prominent gynaecologist from the other side. I want to respond to that issue.

I refuse to breach any Hippocratic oath of patient/doctor confidentiality under any circumstance whatsoever. If it is that anyone else wishes to sink to the depths of gutter politics by attempting to tarnish my international, regional and national reputation as a professional gynaecologist, that is their prerogative. It has never been my modus operandi and I can assure the public that no amount of politicking on the other side will influence me to break my Hippocratic oath of patient/doctor confidentiality.

All I can say on this matter—you were there, you know the facts and the truth—is that in my 34 years practice as a professional—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Dumas: Madam President, there is a place in the Standing Orders for personal explanations.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: No, I am referring to white collar crime. In my 34 years practice as a professional in four continents of the world and in 16 hospitals, I have treated—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Abdul-Hamid: Circulate your CV “nah man”.

Madam President: What is your point of order?

Sen. Dumas: It is irrelevant. If there is a place for relevance, it is under “Personal Explanations”.

Madam President: Well, it is a personal explanation, but I think he is also responding to something that is very current. I will allow him a minute or two but you cannot go on reading a whole explanation, so do it quickly for me please.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Madam President, you were there, you know the facts. I am stating the facts. I have treated over 120,000 patients and treated them all from a wide spectrum of the society, to the best of my ability. My professional reputation speaks for itself. That is what I will continue to rely on, not only as a practicing doctor, but as a politician.

I want to come to the criminal justice system, which has collapsed and crumbled right around this PNM administration. The Director of Public Prosecutions has admitted that this system has collapsed.

We know that the independence of the Judiciary has been tampered with. The undermining of the Judiciary and the political persecution of the Chief Justice is where the criminal justice system breaks down. This is supposed to be the supreme body to prevent crime and to establish norms in society and societal behaviour, but when the criminal justice system—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Dumas: Madam President, I want to suggest that this is irrelevant and that it is inferring wrong motives on the Government and Members of the Government. I want to put that in the context—you are walking out when the conversation is being given and you are referring to something which we refuse to hear.

Madam President: Just be very careful about how you are going there with anything that might be under consideration or in the courts at the moment.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: I am guided by you. We know that under the criminal justice system that is folding around us in Trinidad and Tobago, the President had set up a tribunal to investigate the Chief Justice. The same speed with which he moved to appoint this tribunal, the people of this country, not us, are demanding of the Opposition that an independent tribunal be set up as well to investigate the conduct of the Prime Minister, the Attorney General and the Chief Magistrate, in their attempts to pervert the course of justice.

We as a responsible Opposition, seeking the interest of our people, demand that a Commission of Enquiry be enacted immediately by the President into the conduct of the Prime Minister, the Attorney General and the Chief Magistrate.

The people are also asking us: Why is it that they want and are demanding of the Opposition, as well that an independent enquiry be done into the sale of PAN 1010 to a reputed drug lord by the then Minister of Energy and Natural Resources in 1984. [Interruption]

Sen. Jeremie S.C.: Madam President, on a point of order. The matter involving the Chief Justice is before a tribunal of his peers and it is out of order for the Senator to speak about it.

Sen. Mark: You met with the Chief Magistrate, it was not out of order.

Madam President: It is something that he was referring to.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Madam President, I am not going there at all.

Madam President: I know that.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: The people of this country are asking the Opposition to ask for a tribunal to investigate into the conduct of the Prime Minister, the Attorney General and the Chief Magistrate. That is all we are saying.

They are asking us to investigate the secret, lucrative scholarships that were given by the German Government to two of the Prime Minister's sons.

Sen. Jeremie S.C.: Ma'am, on a point of order. He is imputing improper motives to a Member.

Madam President: You are skirting a very narrow line because you are talking about a Member of Parliament. Just be careful of what you are saying. Do you want to say something?

Sen. Dr. Saith: Yes, it goes beyond that. These matters have been raised before.

Madam President: Yes.

Sen. Dr. Saith: The Prime Minister has categorically said that his sons did not get any German scholarships. They were in power for a period of time. They did not call for any investigation. They did nothing. They are coming here when it is election season to scandalize people's name over and over.

Madam President: Yes, I must admit that I remember that there was a denial and if there was a denial, then you should not be bringing it up again.

Sen. Mark: We want an independent enquiry.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: The people are telling us that they are not satisfied with the response they have got and they are asking for an independent enquiry.

Sen. Mark: You should be in jail.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: They are asking about that. [*Continuous interruption and crosstalk*]

Madam President: If this disorder in the Senate continues, I am going to suspend right now.

Sen. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: I have made my point on this and we are asking for these commissions of enquiry and also that the President set up a tribunal to investigate whatever is necessary.

In closing, when a Prime Minister walks around with an obeah woman, they cannot see the reality before their eyes. They are myopic. They foster a crystal ball policy. A crystal ball policy seems to be swirling throughout Trinidad and Tobago in every Ministry, because they cannot implement anything because they have crystal ball policies throughout their governance process.

While they are trying to grapple with the obeah man's policies, the country suffers. This delusional Government is taking us down a pathway of no return. With every system collapsing, and the country full of tension, we as the alternative government, are saying we have had enough, the people have had enough of this type of prophetess and "propheteress", obeah people and crystal ball people and we are waiting anxiously for the prophetess to help Mr. Manning pull the paper from his back pocket and call the election when we will take their position.

Sen. Mary King: Thank you very much, Madam President. I do not know much about obeah, so "I eh going dey". I would like to congratulate— [*Interruption*]

Madam President: Can I have some silence, please? Continue Senator.

Sen. M. King: Thank you, Madam President. I would like to congratulate Sen. Prof. Deosaran for having this Motion before us. It has been on the Order Paper now for many years and I hope that very soon we can have it adopted and move forward, because it is a very important Motion to the country.

The hon. Minister, in his contribution on the same Motion, has told us that crime is a real issue in the country, if not the greatest concern that we have today. He listed four areas where the Government is focusing on, in the fight against crime.

The Minister has listed the justice system, governance, law administration and, of course, public safety. He has informed us that over the last seven years, we have spent over \$16 billion on national security and by the end of 2008, we will have spent \$80 million on the transformation of the police service. We have also heard that we are having police stations built by the Chinese, but I will come to that a little later.

The Minister has also given us some of the technical solutions. Indeed, from what we have been told, I think congratulations are in order to the Government and the Ministry and we do anticipate the implementation of instruments such as the performance, based on merit, system; something which we have talked about for many years in all our entities, Ministries and authorities and for some reason we cannot seem to get it going. I trust, if it works within the Ministry of National Security, we will roll it out to all the other ministries including the Ministry of Health, which is in absolute shambles.

The technical solutions are certainly very necessary conditions for improvements in our current system, but I think we need a lot more than that. I do not think we have given the focus to the other areas that we need to focus on. I am going to repeat some of them, which I had already talked about when we discussed this same Motion last year.

Many issues were raised and it looks again that—although suggestions are put forward and have been put forward by many people who have been discussing this crime Motion for the past three years—they seem not to be taken up. They seem to be totally ignored. I think we need to keep stressing them because we have to get them in place.

In my last contribution, we discussed the issues of addressing what causes crime, besides the containment of crime. I think we need to reiterate them.

I discussed, last year, the United Kingdom experience where the top brass in the Police Service of the United Kingdom were asking the same questions that we have been asking ourselves here: What do we have to do to fight crime and to help build stronger communities and stronger families?

On discussing the strengthening of families and communities, I stressed the fact that some of our children have become disconnected from the value of another's life besides even the value of their own life. They do not seem to be connected to values, or what it means.

I talked about the fact that the capacity to be affected by how others feel is developed very early in life in the very formative years, before the age of three.

We discussed the research of Dr. Elliot Barker who stated, I quote:

“This capacity to be affected by how others feel is developed most strongly when infants and toddlers are emphatically cared for by the same few people at all times; people who are willing and able to meet that child's emotional needs.”

Surely, one of the ways to do this is to raise the standard of emphatic parent care of our children under the age of three, therefore, increasing support services for disadvantaged parents who have young children and, therefore, improving the preparation even of potential parents.

Other studies show that fathers have an irreplaceable role to play in the concerned. We have many fathers, but few daddies at home; no male formative years of a child's life. You know where we are, as far as that is parents at home.

I am again calling for our disadvantaged mothers to be afforded social support, so that they can be at home with their infant children up to preschool age. We are planning to build preschools. We have, I think, built a couple this year, which is very commendable but we really need to look after these children before they get into preschool and have them nurtured by people who care for them, people who are close to them and people who can give them the confidence that they are being nurtured from the age of zero to three.

This would also ensure that they do not have to be put into abusive relationships. The Prime Minister's suggestion that CEPEP employment for these mothers takes care of this exposure to abusive relationships, I think was such a ridiculous and ludicrous suggestion, when we could be diverting those funds to having that mummy at home with her baby. When she is out on the CEPEP job, she is not looking after her infant child.

Another cause of crime that we discussed was when the value of a legal wage of a person is less than the proceeds from crime. In spite of the probability of being caught, and in spite of the utility of the punishment, that is measured in the cost to the person if he is caught. In other words, if it is perceived that the criminal activity will exceed its value than that of a legitimate wage, then they will commit the crime.

Therefore, it brings us to the discussion on—we have large numbers of our population with very low earnings and we have heard recently that 17 per cent of the population is earning or living on \$655 a day. That is a dreadful statistic in a country like Trinidad and Tobago.

We really have to look at the restructuring of the rest of our economy, because we know that the energy sector only employs 3 per cent of the population on those which are mainly high-paying jobs. Therefore, we have to get the onshore sector developed so that we will have a more equitable distribution of income and more sustainable jobs within the economy.

Another area we looked at in the same debate is the education system. If we look at the World Bank Report in 1995, it told us that in the 16 to 19 year-old cohort, only 28 per cent of the poorer students were still in school, compared with 67 per cent of the same age group in the higher income brackets. That is a very telling statistic if you are a national planner concerned with developing your social structure.

We know that we have a crisis of underachievement and it is disproportionately skewed towards the young Afro-Trinidadian. This group, it is obvious for all of us, is also disproportionately represented in our jails and, therefore, I have to ask the question: Are we doing enough for these families and the skewedness within our education system? I think we have to look again at these junior secondary/senior secondary five/seven-year schools and have more equity in entrance into the education system.

If that is not enough, we also have to consider that the narcotics trade has shifted to a path to the United States which now includes our West Indian islands.

We have local, very vulnerable young people, and very angry young people; willing recruits for their international and local criminal organizations, who not only supply the drugs, but supply the guns and other high-tech equipment and in some cases even higher-tech than the equipment that we have within our own police service and, therefore, our police are at a disadvantage.

4.00 p.m.

We know that drugs are having a huge effect on the level of crime in Trinidad and Tobago. If we are to follow the Colombia experience, and read what some of the researchers from that part of the world have had to say, I would quote from Felipe Osorio who writes:

“...the chief factor that has caused the change in the crime equilibrium is the boom of drug activity in the country. He bases his hypothesis on two ideas. First, that crime, as a variable, has two equilibria: one in which crime is low and the other in which crime is high. The latter equilibrium emerges in a situation in which the rule of law is highly eroded and the different types of crime live together reinforcing each other creating a high congestion in the judicial system.”

We can bring that right here.

“The second idea...places drug trafficking as the detonator that has changed the state of the world from a low crime equilibrium to a high one.”

The conclusions of Osorio's paper were as follows:

“1) Drug crimes are a critical determinant of all other crimes”.

In T&T we think that a large proportion of our homicides are gang related; translated this means drug related.

“2) Laws are ineffective in reducing homicide rates, though they are effective in reducing kidnappings, and, marginally, drug crimes.

3) The returns of illicit activities are a determinant of crimes for areas with high crime rates. Is this why crime has high positive feedback in certain parts of T&T?

4) Poverty determines homicides in areas with low crime rates: it determines kidnappings in all types of areas.”

Whether it is high income areas or low income areas, poverty determines kidnappings in all kinds of areas.

“5) The probability of capture is a stable and significant determinant of homicides and kidnapping. The higher the probability the less crimes there are. Hence our police have to increase their detection rate and the judiciary their lock-up rate, and, at a quicker pace...”

We are having exactly the same types of crimes, and the same incidences that have been experienced in Colombia. It concludes:

“6) The presence of the State is an important and significant determinant in reducing homicides in areas with low levels of crime but it is not significant for kidnappings or homicides in high crime areas...”

I think we could also relate very closely to that.

So, if we were to consider where we are at, I think our measures to fight the causes of crime and crime itself have to be three-pronged. We have to correct the social value functions of our people, and in particular, address the formation of the emphatic responsiveness of our children. We need to get into those communities and support those persons who need our support.

We have to seriously attempt to contain the impact of the drug trade on our own crime economy through improving communities currently under attack, and by improved policing and the judicial area.

Madam President, last month, the Attorney General told us here in this Senate on this Motion, that crime was on the decline, and that it was not as rampant as Sen. Prof. Deosaran's Motion maintained, and within a few days of that declaration we had daily murders, for days. I would like to suggest to the ministry and the Attorney General not to try to project a trend on a three months statistical period. This is certainly not a guide as to how we are going to look in the future. We need to have a longer period of analysis before we can actually predict increases or decreases, particularly when it comes to issues such as crime.

I said that we need to have a three-pronged approach, and the third point I would like to make is when one looks at the definition of crime, it is not just what we see in front of us every day, because we are afraid of that kind of crime. When you look at the definition of crime, the *Oxford Dictionary* tells us, crime is an act, a grave offence punishable by law; it is a shameful act; and it tells us that criminology is defined as the scientific study of crime.

Although we must focus on the social crimes such as murders, rapes, kidnappings and robberies, I would also like to suggest that we focus on white collar crime. What are our leaders in Government doing about white collar crime? What are we doing about corruption?

We are falling every year on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. We first appeared on that index in 2001, and for the past six years we have fallen dramatically from a score of 5.8 to a score of 3.2 last year. So, the perception of corruption continues to grow. The CPI results for this year will be out in two days' time. We look forward to us maybe going up a little on the scale and not falling further.

Madam President, if we want to look at white collar crime, I think we have to really examine what is happening in our society and, in some cases, things are just brushed aside, and really there are very serious matters. I would like to ask: Is it a crime when our local contractors are ignored at the expense of foreign contractors? For example, we are awarding several large contracts to China, and it is worth noting that the Bribe Payers Index which was released two days ago—that is when you look at the countries and companies that pay bribes rather than those accepting the bribes—we note that China and India are at the top of the bribe payers list for this year.

It states in the report that China and India are most willing to pay bribes abroad to do their business. Transparency International said a survey showed that efforts to introduce anti-corruption laws had yet to slow down the problem. The enforcement record on international anti-bribery laws makes for very short and very disheartening reading. That is from the Transparency International Survey Report.

So, we could be perceived to be doing very little about this kind of crime, for example, not bringing the Public Procurement Bill before the Parliament does nothing to increase our confidence in the procurement process. We are suddenly hearing of contracts being awarded, and we do not know what was the process for the building of the Prime Minister's residence; what was the process for the awarding of contracts at UTT; and many questions arise. So, there are concerns in our overall governance systems.

Is it not a crime when appointments are made without proper process in our state enterprises and our public authorities? Is it not a crime when people are fired without due process? Is it not a crime when new appointments are being made and, suddenly, people are fired with no process? This is happening within some of our institutions. When we have reports of sexual harassment in one of our very highly esteemed educational institutions and no investigation is done, is that not a crime to our society and a crime to mothers who send their young girls to this school? These crimes have got to be analyzed and reported upon properly and the persons who are committing these crimes should be brought to heel.

Another area which hurts very much is, how can we have managers year after year working in positions such as the management of the Water and Sewerage Authority and we still do not have a strategic plan? We suddenly hear that a foreign company has been employed to provide such a plan for water treatment at a cost of US \$6 million. That is a crime against the nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, and a crime that those persons have been allowed to be in those positions without production for so many years. How did we get the foreign company in place to do the water plan? There is no record of the process. Were any local firms invited to participate? If not, this is also a crime against our nationals.

How can we award \$1.8 billion for the building of UTT? This Parliament has no record of the establishment of UTT. This is a crime against the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Reports of activities on the establishment of state-owned enterprises must come before the Parliament, and we are funding UTT 100 per cent. It is not good enough, and it has to be

Government's Handling of Crime
[SEN. KING]

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

brought before the Parliament. Was the \$1.8 billion in the budget? Was it approved by this Parliament? Besides the fact, UTT has not been registered through this Parliament and there are no records laid as to how it is operating. Is that money in the budget or is this just another, “we will tell you all later”?

I would appreciate if the Government would bring to this Parliament besides the UTT regulations and registration information, and given all that is happening in our society today, that the Government bring before this House an amendment to the Commission of Enquiry Act, because we know that a Government cannot be forced to establish commissions of enquiry into itself and, therefore, the power has to be given to the President in order to give him the power to establish commissions of enquiry.

We also signed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption where we agreed to establish an anti-corruption agency, and we have not set that up as yet. This is not the first time that I have brought this point before the House, and we should really have it established.

Madam President, these are necessary conditions to bring about better governance in this country. I thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Brother Noble Khan: Madam President, thank you. I would like to share a few words on what is before us. Quite a bit has gone before, and what I would have liked to talk on had been covered by many of the previous speakers, but I would still like to share some thoughts.

I know that dealing with what is before us is touching at the core of our very existence; a nation's existence because it brings to bear the whole concept of law and order. Even from earliest time in man's history, law and order has always been of high priority. Some may even argue it is the reason for the accumulated knowledge that has come down to us over a period of time and, particularly, within sacred scriptures; law and order. The breaking or going against law and order has always occupied a very important part in any society's existence.

Very often, from early times, we would have seen that sacred scriptures have ensured that what is before us—that is humankind at the time—were governed by one, to a great extent, elements of spirituality in the belief of a God, and from that God comes revelation, and our great traditions still exist today with respect to that early initiation. I dare say, it still has a great influence in how nations continue to govern themselves, though the old days of theocracy or ruling by people who occupied sacred positions are long gone and past.

Obviously, the credence that because of the existence of these systems that persist will add to their validity, even today we have to think in terms of what might be relevant to our very existence. So, we have the future which is always important, even as a modern-day nation existing in what has been referred to as the mundane world; what we hope to achieve for tomorrow and what we hope to achieve in this worldly place.

As spiritual beings, we think in terms of a hereafter, and that hereafter takes us beyond the question of this mundane world. So, the position of law and order on both planes seem to occupy, or claim a great space in our very existence, particularly as every human being can claim to be one, spiritual and, secondly, to be material. I would just summarize that in a prayer of our great traditions where we appeal to the creator to give us good in this world and good in thereafter.

Very often, the shift in that balance leads to problems, but I would not go into that. Coming to the question of law and order and what is before us, it does touch on some very salient points, because within the structure of what our very distinguished colleague, Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran has said—he mentioned the question of the psychological, social and economic consequences—we know, particularly the social and psychological consequences cover quite a ground. So, though, to some extent there has been a strong concentration in the debates here today on what takes place on the mundane side—we could subsume that under “social”—there are other elements involved in what the learned professor has proffered to us.

Obviously, what is before us did not come by chance. It is because the nation has been more or less, under attack and under suppression. You could call all the negative words that you could think about, that one would not like to see a society in when we refer to the question of crime.

I would like to refer ourselves here to the question of the heart within us and the self within us. Very often, no matter what we may do—though this is a House of legislation that guides our nation—we cannot legislate for everything. This has been recognized from the earliest times. We have to bring into play the question of heart and the question of self. When I speak about “self” here, I am not speaking about the egotistical side of ourselves, but I am speaking in terms of that selfless part of ourselves.

When I speak about heart, I like to refer to the question of the very things that make us human beings, and that is within the question of our conscience. When I speak about these things—I have made mention of what has come to us over the

years and, obviously, we are speaking here about ethics, morality and spirituality. If we do not bring this into the mix in our make-up, obviously we would have problems. There would be problems and we would see the emergence of what we have in our society today, and which is responsible for this Motion on the table.

Very often, as I have said, we may write very beautiful laws, and I am sure we may have our questions about those beautiful laws, or even the competence of which those laws are brought before us. There are problems in them and yet the question of implementation of the laws and monitoring the laws still remains a big question.

What I have observed today is that quite a bit of the debates that have come through is because of that—not being able to properly write the laws, implement them and put them in our lives. The mechanisms that we have put in place are obviously not delivering. We are seeing the problem coming to bear again, even by the changes that have been proffered even within the systems that we have in governance; the State systems and, more so, the question of its operations.

What I would like to suggest in any form of a catalyst for change or transformation is that—it had been referred to here, but forgive me for just mentioning it in passing—from very early the ancient traditions say that even the preparation for existence for living even starts before the emergence or the creation of the new person into the world—the preparation of those who are to see about that. I am speaking about our parents and all parents, and there that preparation starts.

Secondly, even within the womb—I want to deviate a little to mention the question of the womb as being a place from which everything could definitely arise, and this is referred to very metaphorically. It starts there, and even there children come and babies come and they grow up and all of that. Each one of these stages, the question of the exchange or changing of that person, depends on the learning system that is in place.

We have heard and lauded the attempts by the Government and our Minister of Education to start this thing by going back as early as possible in the formal way; that is the early child care education system, and also as it moves into primary, secondary, tertiary and so forth, and even learning towards the end. As we know, the whole question here is a question—some of the traditions I have said are from the cradle to the grave, the learning experience and the living experience must be.

But, importantly, what is this learning experience? What is the next element which we can bring to bear? Obviously, we are in a highly materialistic world today; this post-modern era as it has been claimed, and we have even got into that too—the question of buildings, materialism and all of the things that I am sure have been touched here and we are not unaware of. What I strongly suspect is that

we have not matched the training or command over the discipline or the educational system of transferring those values that would definitely lead us in a way that would definitely see the obviation or the reduction or the elimination of what is before us that is crime. I have always stressed the great traditions and it has made its contribution and continues to make its contribution.

When this millennium first started, I think it was recognized at a higher level worldwide, to bring the question of spirituality into the area of governance. There was a conference held in the United Nations, and even some of the things that we are approaching here came into that mix. You cannot leave out the living, that we are here today of meeting our physical needs as well as matching what is required for us spiritually.

I know one of our great calypsonians has mentioned it before; there is no love without money; meaning the question of making a relationship, but there is also you cannot have love on a hungry belly. I think the message has gone across when I brought those two examples. They covered quite a bit of words. So, there is need to have a good living. We are entitled to that.

There is also the question of how do we develop that spiritual input. We have a great command over some of the resources of our land, the education system, and we are trying with that. What I would suggest and would like to see and strongly urge, is that for quite sometime the faith-based systems have advocated the question of values of education into the system which I think the Ministry of Education is making attempts at. I strongly suggest that there be a more robust approach to putting it into place. More resources should be put and also bring to bear more concentration on how we could get this going. Again, I am not speaking here about religion or theocracy, but I am speaking about bringing values that had been developed and distilled by the great traditions. Even if you do not have a tradition, you would find that those values have a place within, and you would find that those persons who do not have a tradition would find those values still having some credence. So, this is one of the areas that I think we can definitely address the question of crime, because we are talking about the changing of personality, which way we go and what direction we take.

Again, I would like to suggest that within the area of education that we take a particular second look at that spot where we have instructions, and "religious instructions". There might be need to revise that and bring it to bear.

Presently, there are some schools that receive religious instruction. Well, I will leave out the denominational schools where they are placed to deal with that

stronger, but within the Government school system, to bring people in so that they would give that sort of service, or to have that sort of ability developed by transferring self-knowledge. It may be necessary. Of course, I am not thinking in terms of you just taking up anybody who may claim to be a religious person and so forth. There must be some form of discipline in that, and if we could give some element of what I may refer to as a stipend. When we think in terms of that pool of persons who would be coming, they have to be there presentable, and they have to be prepared for that. There is need to put them in a frame so that they would come. I strongly suggest that we consider giving some stipend towards that end.

There is also the question to bring this into the systems within governance. I remember some years ago, the present Prime Minister mentioned or appointed a minister or someone high in the Cabinet, or within the systems of government which he referred to as ecclesiastical, or somebody within that area. I had spoken with the person, but even at that time, I did not get much as to which way it would have gone. Apparently, it was very young. The concept was very minute at the time.

I would like to suggest that consideration be given to bring this sort of recognition, maybe a desk within the office of the Prime Minister or so, or a committee—we have the National Aids Coordinating Committee (NACC)—or some element within the system to recognize the position that spirituality, morality and ethics could definitely be brought into the area of governance. There should also be a mechanism for transferring that stock of knowledge particularly to our young persons and other persons within the society. That should be recognized even within organizations of the State. These are some of the thoughts that I would like to share. As I mentioned before, I would not go into the area of things like crime and the regular manifestations and where we have gone wrong.

With respect to the economic system, it is said that we have plenty money now and poverty is still high. Apart from the figures that we may have, we may be poor in our pockets, but we may not be poor in our minds and concepts and so forth. I think this is the way, particularly if we could breed that sort of feeling among our people, I think we will be able to deal with what is before us. Possibly, this is what Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran said when he referred to the psychological—

Madam President: Senator, do you need to talk some more after tea?

Sen. Bro. N. Khan: I would say so.

Madam President: We would suspend for tea and return at 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

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

Sen. Bro. N. Khan: Mr. Vice-President, thank you for allowing me to share a few words as I continue. I was making the point earlier that the state of our nation is not a pleasant one and has caused this Motion to be before us. If you were to go outside you would see that there is much concern. My mind went back a few centuries—about 356 years BC—to an incident that took place in Athens where one of the most outstanding men of the time, Diogenes by name, to stress his point, went about the city in broad daylight with a lamp seeking an honest man. Now, he was known for his cynicism. One wonders if that might be relevant here today when we think in terms of the mere fact that we have this Motion before us, and the high priority it has attained by being on the agenda for so long.

As we know, the question of crime could be very diverse and covering a wide spectrum. Within recent times, we have been attracted by two major incidents of crime in our land: one is referred to as the kidnappings and the second one by the area of the shootings—the exchange between young people claiming to be in certain gangs, et cetera.

Violence in our land is not new and even gang violence. The reason for it may have changed over a period of time. One wonders if the emergence of this new society that is heralded in the world today, particularly with reference to the state of drugs, money laundering and some of these nefarious activities; how are we going to address them?

Recently, we have identified high systems of organizations within crime, because even kidnappings would take with it an element of sophistication. Obviously, it would take more than one person to be involved in that, and it would require some form of intelligence or criminal-mindedness to go about with the apparent success, and the proliferation that it has occupied within recent times and which seems to be insurmountable in addressing it.

On the other hand, there is the question of shootings among young persons. They are linked with certain types of activities, and one ought to address these areas. People may have their views and why they are in that way. One could say definitely that he is not in it for the money, but money is at the root or the backing of it, and there again you would have an element of sophistication. We ought to be able to have some form of permanent commission on crime comprising of persons who would be overseeing the whole concept of crime as it obtains in our country. I am speaking about outside the form of Government. Though it would form part of the governance, it would be outside of the direct control of the Government, so to speak. These are some areas that I think we could address.

The question of drugs might be linked to international connections. There is also the question of the Caribbean being part of the highway to which it goes to the consuming nations to the north and the producers from the south. Even intra you have it—production taking place of certain types of drugs in Trinidad and also in the Caribbean. I understand Trinidad forms part of the area where the supply ring comes from the smaller islands and it reaches here for consumption.

Even speaking normally with people when a big “bust” is made they would tell you nothing is going to happen; they would just bring in some from another area. When the police get on top of the local supply they would bring in from the outside. So, these things are very sophisticated. I take it that it may not be easy for the police to address all these questions. I have always held that Trinidad and Tobago is pretty small, and the question of monitoring the complete area is not beyond some way of addressing that question of what takes place in your country.

I remember very early in a debate here, I made mention that from where we are here now, within a matter of less than five minutes you could go to a place—everybody would see and pass—and get a rock and so forth. That is right on the Dry River banks. It is a pretty sight when it gets dark. You see the little lights and all the consumers are doing their thing.

With respect to the area of drugs, I am not only speaking about the hard drugs like cocaine, marijuana and ganja and so forth, but I am also talking about alcohol which has been recognized as a legal drug, so to speak. One of the ways of addressing this matter—I think it has been in this House for quite some time—is the breathalyser. What has happened to that? I think they have it in Jamaica, the United States of America and England and so forth. What is the situation with that in our country? I would really like to know. This might be a way of addressing something that is very prevalent. I do not know if today, but I am sure on Friday evening or Saturday evening, if you go down Frederick Street, not too far from here, you are going to see young persons, some of them below 18 years, drinking beer at the side of the road. I suspect that according to our laws, the partaking of alcohol is really not something that we should be doing in public.

I never travelled much, but I remember one of my very early visits to the United States of America, and that was around 2000. I went with one of my friends and he took me to a pan yard in Brooklyn. He told me that the year before the Puerto Ricans got on bad and they banned alcohol in the area where they would march on the road and also in the pan yards. When I went up in the pan yard it was in

the night, and the American police were walking up and down and you could not see a bottle of beer or any other type of alcohol. I do not know if they were afraid of the Yankee police and so forth or if that is the discipline of the land.

I am sure that on a day like Saturday or Friday or the day preceding a public holiday you would see people all over the place. Somebody was making the point not too long ago this has become part of our culture. So, we have allowed a part of a culture to overtake what we had—a previous culture which is established in our law—and we are seeing a deterioration taking place. These have spin-offs, and if you are unable to implement your law on something that is manifestly not good and is still accepted. I am just making these points not to be critical of anybody, but to show the framework we are operating in so that there could be a change in our approach and mindset to influence our younger persons coming up. It is not that this generation is bad. It is not my style to blame anyone, but there is need for some element for addressing this matter. I think that is one way we could definitely highlight some things which we could zero-in—form a programme and a plan to achieve some objectivity.

Mr. Vice-President, in summary, the whole question of crime deals with how we perceive ourselves; how we would allow that transformation to take place within ourselves. I am not attempting to say to leave people outside, and I am on the other side, because all of us are capable of mistakes, faults and forgiveness. There is the question of charity, the question of hope and the question of faith. These are great elements that have guided us in the path as to how we address ourselves. It is all well and good to feel a sense of perceived power. I always like to use this example—I used to be like your good self, very active in the sea—and three minutes under water could be long. If you only hold up that breath for less than a minute, many of us would not be able to survive that.

So, when we think in terms of power that we may have and decisions that we may have over people for whatever it is, we must consider our own self in the scheme of things—in dealing with crime and in so many other areas—and the way in which we can be humble and the way in which we can approach the matter in a giving way, to divert ourselves from an obvious path that we are going down which some would say could be a culture of death, and to raise it to one of heart and conscience so that our young people could look up to us and think in terms of pride; not of an arrogant pride, but look up to ourselves here as someone whom you would really like to be.

Thank you and may God bless us all. [*Desk thumping*]

Adjournment

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration and Information and Minister in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, May 29, 2007 at 1.30 p.m. at which time we would like to do the Motion that deals with the House of Representatives amendment to the National Library and Information System (Amdt.) Bill. It is a small amendment, but it is having an effect on the workers. I would really like to get that done, after which we would go to the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill and the Police Service (Amdt.) Bill. Both Bills have been completed in the other place, and we would like to take the two Bills as one in the debate.

Sen. Mark: Mr. Vice-President, before you adjourn—

Mr. Vice-President: I am not adjourning. Hon. Members, leave has been granted for a matter to be raised on the adjournment by Sen. Wade Mark.

Food Importation Programme

Sen. Wade Mark: Mr. Vice-President, the matter deals with the Government's decision to embark on a massive food importation programme, and the implications of this programme for the farmers, in particular, and food security in our country in general.

We were told sometime on May 02, 2007 in the *Trinidad Express* that the Minister of Legal Affairs, and not the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, had taken a decision on behalf of the Government to seriously consider the option of importing food items at lower prices from several countries including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, New Zealand and Uruguay.

Expressions of interest in supplying the local market with food items have already been received from Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. The plan is to get the National Flour Mills and the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) to have the responsibility of importing and distributing food items.

Now, given the extent, the depth and belief by the leadership of this Government in necromancy, mumbo-jumbo and nonsense, we on this side are not too sure whether it was spiritual inspiration on the part of the Minister of Legal Affairs, when she announced that the Government has taken this decision to embark upon a massive food importation programme. The purpose of this is obviously to address rising food prices in our country.

This policy decision is not merely short-sighted and absolutely senseless, but reckless and dangerous for our farmers and ultimately for our country's food security. Basic food prices are virtually out of the reach of ordinary persons in our country. Mr. Vice-President, we are aware that there is a gathering crisis in the global food supply today where world reserves have fallen to a level never seen in the last 30 years since the crisis of the 70s.

What is happening is that corn production is being diverted into bio-fuel or ethanol and, therefore, food supply to this region, which stands at US \$3 million per annum for the Caribbean—this is a dangerous situation that we are faced with. The President of the United States of America has made it very clear that he wants to reduce US gasoline consumption by 20 per cent over the next 10 years—

Mr. Vice-President: Where are you quoting from?

Sen. W. Mark: I am quoting from an article in *The Jamaica Observer* dated April 27, 2007 entitled “Ethanol drive will increase Caribbean food prices”. So, I am saying that in the United States of America, as we speak, 80 ethanol plants have already been established. They are going to invest some US \$40 billion into the ethanol industry. These developments have serious implications for our nation and, therefore, it is important for us to take agriculture very seriously.

We are not happy with the signal that this Government is sending to the country. Instead of using prime fertile agricultural lands for agricultural production, the Government is fast bulldozing these very lands in order to build ghettos for citizens, which they are going to call their homes, at exorbitant prices and to engage in house padding for voting purposes in the next few months.

Mr. Vice-President, we also have the situation with farmers being subjected to constant and continuous attacks by larcenists, bandits and persons who are engaged in praedial larceny and, therefore, the Government should be taking steps to ensure that prime agricultural lands remain in the hands of the farmers and the farmers are given the subsidies.

In the United States of America, corn alone “accounted for 10 per cent of the US \$305 billion farm industry”. The level of subsidy in that country and in the European Union is humongous, but we are not subsidizing our farmers. We are not encouraging our farmers to grow food. Today, food prices have escalated—if we use 2001 as the base year—to 219 per cent under this regime. Ordinary people cannot access food in the way that they would like. Mr. Vice-President, whether we talk about New Zealand or Australia where we import powdered milk, the prices are going to rise.

Recently, we saw where the price of large eggs has gone up by 20 per cent; milk has gone up by about 30 per cent. I was talking to a shopkeeper sometime ago. She was explaining to me that a small pack of Dairy Dairy Milk which used to cost \$11.95, under a UNC government, is now fetching about \$40 for ordinary persons. Whatever food we are talking about, whether it is dairy products like powdered milk, condensed milk, evaporated milk, eggs, butter, cheddar cheese or chicken products, sugar, cereals, split peas, kidney beans, ketchup, cocoa, soft drinks, grapefruit juice, orange juice, ripe bananas, Irish potatoes, dasheen—I am sorry, the dasheen Minister is not here today—and cassava, all these things are out of the reach of the ordinary person.

Mr. Vice-President, there are thousands of workers who are working for a minimum wage of \$9 an hour with these kinds of prices that are going up. Let me give you an example. When we were in office, you could have gotten 454 grammes of Irish potatoes at \$1.30.

Mr. Vice-President: Where are you quoting from?

Sen. W. Mark: I am looking at statistics that I have compiled. You do not have to get any quotation for them. I have gone to the grocery and I have compiled information on this matter. Do you know what the price is now? Under the UNC, you could have gotten that for \$1.30, and today that same thing is about \$2.75. Callaloo bush was \$2.00 under us and now it is \$5.00 under the PNM; a head of lettuce was \$3.00 and now it is \$5.50. I can go on and show you how ordinary persons are really having difficulty in accessing basic vegetables, fruits and basic foodstuff.

I am very concerned against this background that the Government is doing little. My hon. friend is about to leave office because he has already said that this is his last term. The hon. Jarrette Narine is not contesting the next election. I thought that the Minister would have left a legacy that we could all be proud of in terms of agriculture. Mr. Vice-President, the legacy is a very poor one. The masses of people are feeling the heat, because of the failure of the Government to properly address agricultural production in our country.

I have raised this matter on the Motion for the adjournment to elicit from the Government what are their plans for agricultural production. What kinds of incentives are we going to provide to our farmers? What kind of subsidies are we going to provide for our farmers? What guaranteed prices and markets are we going to establish to ensure that our farmers have a ready market to supply their products and their produce?

Mr. Vice-President, let us face the reality; food security is going to be very critical in the coming months and years, and unless we apply a revolution to the agricultural process in our nation, we are going to find our children and our countrymen and women having to pay exorbitant prices for basic necessities.

Close to 800 million new customers have come onto the world consumer market over the last five years, and the bulk of them are from China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. They are demanding the same products that you and I demand here. If we do not concomitantly increase our internal supplies and increase proper agricultural methods of production by giving our farmers the incentives and providing them with markets and guaranteed prices, we are going to find ourselves scrambling and eating each other out in this country.

My appeal this afternoon is to get from the hon. Minister some kind of perspective in terms of the Government's plans to rescue agriculture to bring about food security in our country in light of all that is taking place globally. There is a report which talks about the "hungry future". We are facing a hungry future in the world today because stocks are very low today worldwide.

I would like to sum up by calling on the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources to let the nation know what are the Government's plans to improve, increase, extend and expand food production. What are some of the statistics and data that he can supply to tell us over the next two years how much tomatoes we would get; how much cabbages we would get; how much garlic we would get; and how much live chicken we would get?

We need to know what kind of production we are going to have in order to safeguard our people, and to ensure that there is a ready, available and affordable supply of nutritionally rich products for them and their children to consume. I am not seeing it. I am calling on the hon. Minister to share with this Parliament and the national community, the plans of the Government to deal with agriculture; to deal with food security; to deal with the farmers of our nation to provide them with protection and enhancement; and to give them all the necessary subsidies and incentives to plant food, to grow food and to market their crops so that we can have cheaper goods and services and cheaper products when we visit the markets and the marketplace.

I thank you very much for allowing me to raise this issue. [*Desk thumping*]

5.30 p.m.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Hon. Jarrette Narine): Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President. The first thing that I would like to indicate to my colleague, Sen. Mark, is that we need to differentiate between imported foodstuff and foodstuff that we can grow here in Trinidad, because of our climatic conditions. You speak about Irish potatoes; yes, you love Irish potatoes so you have to buy it at that price, because we do not grow Irish potatoes here in Trinidad. I am sure that you knew that, but as usual trying to mislead the community in Trinidad and Tobago, he spoke about Irish potatoes, split peas and other products like wheat and all that we do not grow.

I am going to address the situation of agriculture in Trinidad, which your government left for six years and more in the wilderness, not even building a road; not building a bridge; not giving any incentive to farmers; nothing. But you come here today and feel that yes, we are a 24-hour country and everybody in Trinidad forgot that the UNC was a total failure in agriculture. [*Desk thumping*]

The question today is the decision of the Government to embark on a massive food importation programme and its implications for the food farmers of the country in particular, and food security in general. I would like to dispel the misinformation which is inherent in this question, that the Government has decided to embark on a massive importation programme.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has made no such decision—repeat—no such decision. We are prepared to embark on a programme of strategic importation of food items, not a massive importation of food. By this programme of strategic importation, Government intends to identify sources of cheaper wholesome foods and purchase our food requirements from those sources, rather than the more expensive traditional export countries. The savings that accrue from this programme will be passed on to the local consumers. Our strategic importation essentially involves those food items which we do not produce locally and those that are in short supply.

I also wish to give the assurance that there has not been any decrease in the production of local produce that is inconsistent with regular seasonal strengths. We all know the wet season and dry season in Trinidad is a different situation, and prices will fluctuate in agriculture. Indeed the Government continues to address the challenge of high food prices by fostering increased food production. The rationale for this approach is based on the principles of supply and demand, which predict that an increase in agricultural production will result in a reduction in food prices.

Therefore, the Ministry has sought to increase agricultural production by the following initiatives: one, increasing the acreage of land put to agricultural use, which the UNC did not do. The creation and refurbishment of agricultural access roads; between 2006 and 2007 this Government did 250 kilometres of roadways in Trinidad. This opened up 35,500 hectares and serviced 3000 farmers in Trinidad and partly in Tobago. That is only part of what I am going to tell you this afternoon.

Irrigation and Water Management: 60 kilometres of drainage for this fiscal year. Depot Road, which is in Longdenville, three pumps were placed to irrigate about 400 acres of lands. In Plum Mitan, three pumps were refurbished and three pumps were installed for irrigation purposes, and that is about 4,000 acres of land. We have done 248 farm ponds so that in the dry season the farmers can plant; they can plant all year round. Under the UNC it was six months planting. And I can tell you if you compare the prices at that time when they had to leave office, you would realize that the cost of living had risen; the cost of oil had risen; the cost of transport had risen and it is comparatively good for our farmers in Trinidad. They are receiving a good living, Mr. Vice-President.

One hundred and thirty-five sluice gates were built. You buy watermelon right now for \$2 a pound; you would not speak about that. But why watermelon is \$2 a pound? It is because we did 20 kilometres of drainage in the Kernaham area, near to Ortoire Village and we did 135 sluice gates throughout the country so that watermelon prices can be retained at a level that has never been seen before. [*Desk thumping*]

Agricultural Leases: When we came into office on this occasion your bhagi and pumpkin Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture was doing 20 leases per year. Our record shows that we now have a Commissioner of State Lands; we have additional staff placed by this Government—a PNM government—and we are doing over 400 leases per year at this point in time.

We have the divestment of Caroni (1975) Limited; 7,802 two-acre plots, 18,575 acres will be utilized of the best lands of Caroni; 17 areas that would be utilized for production of agriculture, and you come here today and say, “We grading good lands to build houses”. We are not house padding. When you were in Tunapuna two elections ago, you had 20 persons living in TTST office in Tunapuna. You had empty lots in Tunapuna that you registered people; you come here today to talk about voter padding. How ridiculous. How ridiculous. [*Crosstalk*]

Over 400 farmers have already started planting those lands. We already gave out Todds Road in 50-acre plots. The surveyors are on Tableland in La Gloria and very soon we are going to advertise to give out that area into 50-acre plots; and

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they talk about land distribution. [*Desk thumping*] No government in the history of Trinidad and Tobago has done so well with land distribution for the poor people of this country.

Increasing the number of persons involved in food production. What we have done is, our Extension Training Division in the Ministry has had between 2003 and 2007, 1,180 training sessions, and we have trained 15,575 persons. You asked what are we doing about the young people in agriculture. This is our track record for the last five years. We have trained over 15,000 persons on our monthly programme in the Ministry [*Desk thumping*] and I "ain't" talk about YAPA yet.

We are talking about the Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture now; 6,740 persons in Phase I; 335 in Phase II, and those are persons 17 to 25 years old. We have traced these students and found that 793 or 30 per cent return on family farms. We also have persons that have gone to ECIAF, UWI and UTT; 17 of our students have migrated out of the programme into the educational establishment of Trinidad and Tobago to further their education. [*Desk thumping*]

We have 364 persons now involved in agriculture business. It is not only planting that involves agriculture. You have harvesting, pruning and cutting of drains. The servicing of agriculture is more important to the young people of Trinidad. Transport and post harvesting; they have opted to go into that type of agriculture; do seedling production so that they can sell their plants on the way when people are getting home. They are able to sell their plants and provide plants for the national community.

We are talking about increasing support for persons engaged in food production, and you spoke about incentives programme. For new vehicles, 15 per cent of the purchase price, up to \$25,000; imported used and refurbished vehicles, 15 per cent, up to \$15,000. The land preparation; if you prepare lands in Trinidad and you till the soil, you get 25 per cent of the cost, up to \$200 per hectare. So that every hectare you provide, you will get up to \$200 and every year you are allowed to do additional lands.

The machinery and equipment: trailers, 50 per cent; machinery and equipment, 50 per cent of the purchase price up to \$25,000. The provision of seedling and germ plasm; the Agriculture Services Division produced, only last year alone, 35,839 plants, which were sold at the St. Augustine nurseries—citrus, mangoes, avocados, et cetera. When you were in the NAR government you would recall that you wanted to have agricultural entrepreneurs—

Sen. Mark: Who is that?

Hon. J. Narine: You—and when they diversified the La Pastora Station and said that they were not going to produce plants, that stopped the plant production in the Ministry. We have started that; we have recovered and 631,419 plants were done at the La Reunion Plant Propagation Station and that was for cocoa and breadfruit.

In the Chaguaramus area we did 10,215 kilogrammes of seeds at the Chaguaramus Development Centre. That was for pigeon peas, corn peas, hot peppers, bodi, pumpkin, sorrel, ochro and cucumbers. What is happening down there is that the—

Mr. Vice-President: You just have two minutes, Minister.

Hon. J. Narine:—importation of seeds into Trinidad is very costly, so that when the Government provides those seeds they are sold to the farmers at a very low cost. It is about 20 per cent of the cost that the farmers will pay for the import of seedlings. You have the Artificial Insemination Unit, 5,473 insemination in cattle; 52 in water buffalypso; 75 in sheep; goats were 325; pigs, 423. That is the Artificial Insemination Unit.

Mr. Vice-President, the flood relief assistance alone, we assisted 2,524 farmers at a cost of \$17.5 million. It is a pity that one can only ask questions and it takes a longer time to respond. But I am willing to meet with Sen. Mark anywhere, on his forum and indicate to him the track record of the People's National Movement in agriculture for these five years. [*Desk thumping*] We are not going to give up. When you speak about praedial larceny and crime, you have some persons in high public office, when they hear somebody with a piece of wood outside, they run in their room, lock up and hide. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark. Sen. Mark. Sen. Mark. We have another matter on the adjournment. Sen. Ramadhar-Singh.

Clean and Potable Drinking Water (Government's Failure to Supply)

Sen. Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President. I wish to address this critical Motion dealing with the Government's failure to provide honest tax paying citizens, in this oil and gas rich country, with a clean and potable supply of drinking water, after expending somewhere in the region of \$150 billion since assuming office.

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In hardwares in regional areas and rural communities there is a shortage of 2x4 wood, three inch nails and steel ball bearings, as people try to build box carts, so that they can tote water like the days of slavery and indentureship. Everyday the newspapers are littered with the elderly having to carry large pails of water for long distances. Some of these people are apparently weak, old and feeble; the people that we spoke of a few weeks ago in this honourable Senate about caring, loving and appreciating the elderly. I want to appeal to the Government to have pity and mercy on these suffering mothers and children, who are crying out to the Government for a glass of water.

You would remember that in the United National Congress tenure, 80 per cent of families in this country received pipe-borne water. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*] Had we been given another term the entire population—

Hon. Senator: “Where you take that from?” [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: I am quoting from the manifesto. [*Crosstalk*] [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Vice-President knocks gavel*]

Mr. Vice-President: Members, please!

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: Had we been given another term we would have fulfilled our mantra: “Water for All”. [*Desk thumping*] We were able to increase production to 100 million litres per day, which represented a 50 per cent increase. Under the PNM administration before, 8 per cent of the population or 85,000 persons only could have depended on a 24-hour supply, seven days a week.

It seems that during the tenure of the UNC, water tanks were picking up cobweb and dust in hardwares and now they are being sold like hot bread under the PNM administration. No supply of water, and people need to stow water like never before. Maybe it is because in the budget statement the Prime Minister gave only two paragraphs to water and issues of WASA, where he bemoaned the fact that to change all the lines would have cost some \$27 billion and spoke about a facility at Laventille.

I wish to point to an article from the *Trinidad Guardian*, May 15, “Waiting for Water”, which says:

“While the current administration has gone about committing huge resources to the construction of many high-rise, “prestige” buildings in...Port of Spain, it has not shown the same commitment to addressing the water distribution problem.

The proof of the Government's watery and lacklustre resolve is that the Government has committed...only US\$200 million...increase WASA's pipe-borne water supply..."

The Prime Minister himself on Tuesday, July 11 remarked "WASA is a \$27 billion headache, what we need is a special company to deal with that company". In the same breath he explained further that the smelter plant would provide much greenery and would be no risk to the environment.

Mr. Vice-President, there are two distribution networks for water. One is the pipeline network, where we have consumers who get water through the pipeline; and then where the last pipe is in a rural community, a circumference around that area where people are serviced by the regional corporations. So the regional corporations are involved in this and they are inadequately funded, while CEPEP has been allowed to misappropriate more than \$1.6 billion of taxpayers' money. I wish to quote from an article: "PNM keeps Rio Claro in poverty".

"Chairman of the Rio Claro/Mayaro Regional Corporation, Ramlochan Panchoo says that the community of Rio Claro is among the most neglected and underdeveloped in the country."

He said:

"We have the highest poverty level, 45 per cent. We have 40 per cent with pipe-borne water and let me tell you it is the most unreliable in the country."

He further remarked that what was really needed to develop a dilapidated constituency where they have as much as 106 critical wooden bridges was more in the region of \$60 million, and in this time of plenty, \$3.8 million is allocated to this corporation."

In the Vision 2020 document and also in the Draft White Paper, they boast about a policy of decentralization. In the Vision Draft Action Framework, they call for an expansion of Local Government bodies. Instead they set up a series of companies: Community Improvement Services Limited, Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited, the Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited and the National Commission for Self-Help to emasculate local government. So wire contracts that should have been done through the regional corporation, where we have the manpower and the capacity to do it are in companies where there are no regulations to Central Tenders Board, and so no transparency in the procurement process, which leaves the massive possibility of massive corruption and in an election year there will be no accountability to the people.

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In Chaguanas, a borough, the Mayor has remarked that \$50 million is required to develop that growing community; they were just given \$5 million. He needs a complement of 51 police officers, he has five. The PNM has systematically reduced that number from 14 to five over the last five years. This is a burning issue affecting and scorching the lives of our people. Each cell in our body consists of 70 to 95 per cent water. Water surrounds three-quarters of the earth. It flows around the entire land space of Trinidad and Tobago, and to quote Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "Water, water, everywhere and not a drop to drink."

WASA continues to advertise in the newspapers: "Save it, conservation, avoid crisis"

Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh: Do not flush the toilets.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: "Do not flush the toilets". Our poor people carry but—big spread, family, the importance of family; showing the importance of love. The family cannot grow in an environment where there is no water.

We already heard how the PNM has started a policy of depriving us of food and there is no plan for food security. We can live two or three weeks without food, but we will die in a couple of days without water. So I am exhorting the Government to think about those who are weak, poor, the underprivileged and the most vulnerable in the society.

In the health system, it is the same hot water that burnt one of our children and we do not have a Children Act passed in this Parliament as yet, but the activist has advised them; forget smelter, set up water treatment plants. They maligned the desalination plant in this Senate and the Prime Minister now says, more desalination plants coming to ease the water situation. He says to students that what we have decided to do is to return to the approach of desalination plants started by the UNC government. [*Desk thumping*]

While the poor people suffer, a picture in the newspaper is asking—

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark, let me hear the Member.

Sen. Mark: Sorry, sorry, Sir.

Sen. Dr. G. Ramadhar-Singh: While the poor people in Maturita, Biche, Charuma, Cedros and Toco are suffering for water, this photograph asks: "Fountain or pool?"

I do not think I can put it better than the Editorial of the *Newsday*; I thought that I wrote it myself. [*Laughter*] On Sunday, April 29:

“Indeed, with oil and gas flowing, the PNM administration is yet to say a word about installing a developed-nation water distribution system, even as it proceeds full speed ahead with multi-million-dollar building projects. Thus we have Third World image of people filling water containers from stand-pipes at the side of the road, even as unfinished multi-storey buildings rise above their dusty heads.”

Mr. Vice-President, I plead and implore you to ask the Government to let the UNC bring back water for all in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Laughter*] [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. Vice-President, I rise to respond to the Motion raised by Sen. Dr. Glenn Ramadhar-Singh and I wish to thank him most kindly for reminding me of the difference between what we do and what those who try to do what we do understand about what we do. [*Desk thumping*]

The Motion reads the failure of the Government—that is us—to take urgent measures inclusive of the provision of financial resources to cash strapped regional corporations and boroughs, in order to ensure that thousands of residents throughout Trinidad and Tobago are provided with an adequate supply of drinking water.

The Meteorological Services Division of the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment has gone on record as stating that this dry season is the worst experienced over the recent past. In fact, we experienced on May 07, the highest daily temperature in a very long time. As you know the hills are parched and we are very fortunate that the bush fires are not as prevalent and disastrous and, thank God, today we had some rain.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, to get on with his particular question. The Government has provided for fiscal 2007 the total sum of \$10,630,000 to the regional corporation in order to meet the cost of water trucking. Head 42: Ministry of Local Government — Funds provided for water trucking in 2007:

Chaguanas	-	\$100,000
Diego Martin	-	\$110,000
San Juan/Laventille	-	\$700,000
Tunapuna/Piarco	-	\$650,000
Sangre Grande	-	\$150,000

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Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo	-	\$1.4 million
Point Fortin	-	\$20,000
Mayaro/Rio Claro	-	\$2 million
Siparia	-	\$500,000
Penal/Debe	-	\$1 million
Princess Town	-	\$1 million, and;

Regional corporation services—something we have inside here, \$3 million.

Hon. Senator: Repeat.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: I will repeat in a little while because I have to come to a next point in a minute. So that the regional corporations are, therefore, to meet the cost of water trucking for their areas of control out of the allocations.

So, Mr. Vice-President, the first part of the Motion that talks about the failure for cash-strapped, clearly that is not so, but in spite of that, the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment, *[Interruption]* in recognition of the fact that we may have a situation that is not normal, convened a meeting in late February 2007 with the chairmen and CEOs of all the regional corporations and understanding the reality of the water situation requested them to submit invoices for water trucking up to the end of May 2007.

It is my information that regional corporations have not, as yet, and we hope that they would submit invoices for the ministry to provide the necessary funding for water trucking. This is in addition to what we have provided as the normal allocation.

But let me tell you, Mr. Vice-President, what we have found. The following information that is provided by the budget division will give you the amount provided for water trucking to each corporation, the amount spent and the unreleased balance of the provision for water trucking for each municipal corporation. It is as follows:

The provision for Chaguanas \$100,000; releases to date \$0; expenditure to April 30, 2007, \$0, so there is an unreleased balance available for this particular—*[Interruption]* Leave the Minister of Local Government alone—item, this is water trucking available to you, \$100,000.

In Diego Martin, provision \$110,000; releases to date \$85,000—

Sen. Mark: You see, smooth.

Hon. Senator: Requested. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:—expenditure to April 30, 2007 \$0; [*Interruption*] unreleased balances of provision \$25,000. San Juan/Laventille, provision \$700,000; releases to date \$700,000; expenditure, none as yet.

Sen. Mark: Discrimination. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dumas: Your men are not working, Mark.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Leave him “nah”. [*Crosstalk*] Tunapuna/Piarco, revised provisions \$650,000; releases to date \$650,000; expenditure to April 30, 2007 \$4,006; unreleased balance of provision. Sangre Grande \$150,000— [*Interruption*] Hold on a minute, releases to date is what you have asked for and what has been released. [*Interruption*]

Sangre Grande, provision \$150,000; releases to date \$80,000; expenditure to date \$0; unreleased provisions on balance \$70,000. Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, provision \$1.4 million revised provisions; releases to date \$900,000. Discrimination.

Sen. Mark: That is not discrimination. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Expenditure to April 30, 2007, \$0. [*Interruption*] They spent none. [*Interruption*] Expenditure to April 30, 2007, \$0.

Sen. Mark: Where is that?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: That is our records

Sen. Mark: We know! Which one?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo.

Sen. Mark: I am taking notes of these things because I am going to talk to this man, because I know we are being discriminated. No, discrimination! [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Point Fortin, provision \$20,000; releases to date—

Mr. Vice-President: Sen. Mark!

Sen. Mark: Sorry, Sir.

Mr. Vice-President: Just take your notes! [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:—\$10,000; unreleased balance of provision \$10,000. Mayaro/Rio Claro, provision \$2 million; releases to date \$1.5 million; expenditure to date \$816,322; [*Interruption*] unreleased balance of provision \$500,000. Siparia, provision \$500,000; releases to date \$450,000; expenditure to April 30, 2007, \$212,575; unreleased balance of provision \$50,000. Penal/Debe, provision \$1 million; releases to date \$894,700; expenditure to date \$679,355; unreleased balance of provision still \$105,300. Princes Town, provision \$1 million; releases to date \$580,000; expenditure to date \$514,828; unreleased balance of provision \$420,000. Regional corporation services available—and this is to deal with eventualities—provision, \$3 million releases; to date, none.

So that in a sense, Mr. Vice-President, this is what the situation is. Of the provisions of \$10,630,000; releases to date \$5,849,700; expenditure to date \$2,227,680; with an unreleased balance available under this Head of \$4,780,300. Now that, Mr. Vice-President, is under the heading 42—[*Crosstalk*]

[*Mr. Vice-President pounds gavel*]

Funds provided for water trucking. [*Interruption*] Now, in addition [*Interruption*] the sum of \$3 million is held by the Ministry of Local Government to meet additional water trucking cost of the municipal corporation if this is necessary.

In addition, WASA, funds from its own financial resources, water trucking where pipe borne water is not available for its customers. So, this Government has provided to the regional corporations through the Ministry of Local Government—

Sen. Dumas: You see, your chairman does go on the radio and tell you a set of lies. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:—and through WASA—

Sen. Dumas: That is the problem.

Sen. Mark: How much?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Forget how much just now, as it relates to this. Now, the supply of water provided to WASA by the desalination plant, is conditioned on the efficiency of the plant, when the plant is not functioning efficiently the quality of water is reduced considerably and as you are aware the desalination plant provides water to Point Lisas Industrial Estate and the balance, if available is provided to the general public to meet demand in the southern and other areas.

Mr. Vice-President, WASA is faced with a number of challenges in its performance:

- (1) A large percentage loss of water owing to leaks in the pipelines;
- (2) busted water mains not fixed expeditiously;
- (3) planned replacement of corroded pipelines.

And again, it is estimated that it will cost \$24 billion to replace all of the corroded pipelines. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Vice-President: Order!

Sen. Dumas: They do not want to hear the information man, they just want to talk.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Mr. Vice-President, the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment and WASA, over a three-year time frame have been explaining to the public the need for conservation of water and on the basis of the new reality, and it is my view that the population is paying heed to this advice. However, there are some areas where there is no water to conserve.

WASA continues and will continue in the construction of wells nationwide. Community groups must continue its support in the construction of wells under the Self-Help programme where WASA provided the technical advice and equipment while the residents of the affected community provide the labour.

The Government is providing funding for a restructured WASA and it is the Government's intention to achieve a very high percentage of the 24/7 water supply to all citizens of this country. We all have to work together to achieve this goal and we all have to collaborate to achieve success. Money, Mr. Vice-President, as we see is not for all, because even when the allocations are made it is not being accessed.

Mr. Vice-President, the Motion on the Adjournment is about lack of financial resources for cash-strapped regional corporations. The Government has demonstrated that it has put in place whatever is necessary to ensure that the plight of individuals who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of not to date having a water supply is adequately dealt with.

However, while we have the funds allocated we cannot do the responsibility of that which is for those who are involved in the management of these corporations and therefore we will implore them to use the facility in the interest of the people that we serve.

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Mr. Vice-President, with those few words, I thank you for the opportunity.
[*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Mark: My hon. colleague indicated before that we were going to deal with some Police Service Reform Bill and Regulations. I think that if I recall, and Sen. Dr. Saith could tell me if I am wrong on this. When was that Police Service (Amdt.) Bill tabled along with the Regulations? Was it this week or was it last week? [*Interruption*]

Sen. Dr. Saith: I merely indicated my preferences. You know, Mr. Vice-President, that when we sit next week I will make a formal request. They were both put at the same time in the other place, it is my understanding, taken concurrently, they were able to get through the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill and then the Police Service (Amdt.) Bill was done on Monday, but they were debated as one.

Sen. Jeremie: No, the Regulations was done on Monday.

Sen. Dr. Saith: The Regulations is something else, this has nothing to do with the Regulations, this is the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill and the Police Service (Amdt.) Bill, but the Regulations is a separate issue, they are not debated. I signal it so that when people get the two Bills they will be able to read it themselves and come to the conclusion whether they should be done as one. That is all I signalled.

Sen. Mark: Okay.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.12 p.m.