

Leave of Absence

Thursday, December 13, 1990

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 1990

The House met at 10.05 a.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Port of Spain East has been granted leave of absence from today's sitting.

**OMBUDSMAN
(RETIREMENT)**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication dated November 6, 1990 from Justice Evan Rees, Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago in which he states:

"... with effect from December 31, 1990, I shall be retiring as Ombudsman of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and thereafter proceeding on vacation leave until April 3, 1992.

My years spent as the first national Ombudsman since 1977 have been most rewarding. Despite many setbacks and difficulties, I am confident that the institution will grow from strength to strength in the service of our citizens. May I take this opportunity to thank you for all the kind courtesies extended to me during my term of office and wish you continued health and success in the years ahead."

Hon. Members, as you are aware, this is the one institution that is attached to Parliament and I thought it would be proper for us to record the retirement of Justice Evan Rees, being the first Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Minister of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism (Dr. The Hon. Bhoendradatt Tewarie): Mr. Speaker, let me on behalf of this side of this honourable House record the Government's gratitude for the service given to Trinidad and Tobago by Justice Evan Rees, in his capacity as Ombudsman. Part 2, section 91(1) of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago provides that there shall be an Ombudsman for Trinidad and Tobago who shall be an officer of Parliament.

Ombudsman (Retirement)
[HON. B. TEWARIE]

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On December 6, 1977, Mr. Justice Evan Rees became the first Ombudsman for Trinidad and Tobago. We wish him well on his retirement due at the end of this year after serving in this capacity for 13 years, following on a very distinguished career on the Bench as a high court judge. In accordance with constitutional provisions the Ombudsman has caused to be laid before Parliament, annual reports with the 12th Annual Report being laid at the first sitting of this House held on Monday, November 5, 1990.

As you know Mr. Speaker, under this administration the reports of the Ombudsman were debated for the first time in the history of this country and that is principally because we had indicated to the country in our manifesto, that we considered this institution and this office a vital and significant one and we made a commitment there, to strengthen that institution during our term of office. Not only did we debate the reports of the Ombudsman in 1987, 1988 and 1989, but under your guidance, Mr. Speaker, we were able to establish a parliamentary committee under the chairmanship of the President of the Senate, with a view to strengthening the office of the Ombudsman, of course, in keeping with the manifesto commitment and pledge.

During his term of office, the Ombudsman has ensured that all complainants of administrative injustices in this society received a reasonable opportunity to be heard and to seek redress and on so many occasions his intervention has been critical in determining, in fact, that justice was done, where justice needed to be done where administrative errors had occurred. This particular Ombudsman, Justice Evan Rees, went further than simply seeking justice for ordinary citizens. He decentralized his activities when he instituted regular visits to Tobago to facilitate persons residing there.

Mr. Speaker, he also made it a regular habit to visit communities, one might say, in the remote districts of Trinidad, to ensure not only that justice was done, but to give people a sense that someone, somewhere, was taking an interest in the problems of little people who felt that they had been sidelined.

The Ombudsman, as well, has represented Trinidad and Tobago at international conferences for Ombudsmen in other parts of the world and, therefore, has kept the flag of Trinidad and Tobago flying as a place of democracy, where justice is an important part of the living existence of citizens and where institutions that administer justice are regarded as important institutions in our society. For all of these things we thank him and we pay tribute to him today.

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He was the first Ombudsman and whatever we may do from 1991 on will be done and will be built on the strength which he has given to the institution and because of his own service to that institution. The life of this particular Ombudsman, our first in Trinidad and Tobago, Justice Evan Rees, has been one of service and commitment to the country. A man retiring at this time and at his age, would have known a lot of our history. Because of his particular bent and profession, he would have seen the whole constitutional process evolved in Trinidad and Tobago. He would also have seen changes appearing before his very eyes. He would have been through the entire colonial system, through independence, through republicanism and he would have seen changes and the evolution of our society, moving from strength to strength during the time that he would have lived here as a boy, based on his experiences abroad and his knowledge of the system.

In closing therefore, we on this side of the House pay special tribute to Justice Evan Rees for his commitment and his service and for his contribution to the institutions of state in his capacity as a servant of the people in the office of the Ombudsman. We wish him well in his retirement, good health, long life and we wish always that he knows that as a person of such experience and calibre, the Government always has a willing ear to any contribution he may wish to make. Thank you.

10.15 a.m.

Mr. Patrick Manning (*San Fernando East*): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to add my voice on behalf of those of us on this side.

I have had the pleasure of being associated with Mr. Justice Rees while he was still a member of the Bench. Following a very distinguished career, he agreed to accept the appointment of the first Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago. He did so at a time when the institutions of the country were still evolving and the institution of Ombudsman was something that had just been put in place and which required—in the context of institution building, somebody of a high calibre and above all, of high moral standard and of great integrity. He fitted the bill exceedingly well.

As a Minister of Government, I have found myself in the past, on the wrong side of the Ombudsman and I am in a position to say that even when the task is an unpleasant one, he was able to discharge his functions with dignity and with the

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decorum that was expected of the holder of an office as lofty as that one was, and undoubtedly is.

Whatever is made of the office of Ombudsman today, has been shaped by Mr. Justice Rees and so he comes to retirement after a distinguished record in that office, as indeed in the Judiciary. I have no doubt that in due course this country is going to record its appreciation for the contribution he has made, both in that office and in others in his very long association with the public service and with democracy.

I wish him well and God's speed.

Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*): Mr. Speaker, we too, on this side of the House, extend to Mr. Rees, the Ombudsman, our congratulations for the honourable service he has rendered unto this country. We hope that his retirement will be very fruitful and, in fact, well deserved.

I would like to say that the institution, which is a new institution introduced into our political and parliamentary system, was an attempt to deal with one aspect of the alienation which we have faced in this country. That is, the interaction with the relationship the average citizen has with the democracy and the administration. It was a novel introduction—a new thing in this parliamentary system and I cannot help but recount the difficulties and problems which the Ombudsman faced in carrying out his tasks and dealing with the bureaucracy and administration. His own frustration has been recorded from time to time and I must say that we on this side have been very sympathetic to his experience.

Despite these difficulties, the Ombudsman has carried out his duties with commitment and with dignity and for that we wish to thank him. We do trust that the example which he has set will be followed by those who come after. I myself have written on the subject of the Ombudsman in an academic way and the Ombudsman informed me that he has that as required reading for his staff at the Ombudsman's office. The problem I was trying to highlight there was the difficulties that such an institution had in coming to grips with our political culture. I was despairing that, in fact, given the restrictions which have been placed on that office, the restraints and constraints of his jurisdiction, the office would not be as effective as we in this House and the country would like it to be.

Therefore, I think it is important that we in this Parliament look at this institution again and look at the record of the first Ombudsman and his pioneering work and attempt to build on that.

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I merely again thank the Ombudsman for his public service to this Parliament, and will wish him well in his retirement and hope that we have his experience at our seeking, whenever we may wish to do so.

Mr. Speaker: I thank hon. Members most sincerely for their kind remarks and I unhesitatingly endorse the remarks made and join in wishing Justice Evan Rees the very best in his retirement although he does not appear to be a retiring person.

I have had the pleasure of knowing him both while he served on the Bench and while he carried the office as Ombudsman and I can say that his retirement can be regarded as the departure of a father figure from public life. I am sure that we are going to miss him because of the pioneering work that he has done and the foundation that he has laid.

Today, Trinidad and Tobago can boast of having had an Ombudsman for 13 years and, he would have been the longest serving Ombudsman in the world—which to my mind is not a mean achievement. While the appointment of Ombudsman is a presidential appointment, Justice Evans Rees has had the distinction of serving under three separate Prime Ministers and since he is responsible to the Parliament, it goes to show the calibre and integrity of the person of Justice Evan Rees.

I join with hon. Members in wishing him all the best in his retirement and also Mrs. Rees and his family. I thank you again for the kind words that you have expressed and put on record here today.

PAPER LAID

1. Caribbean Industrial Research Institute—Annual Report 1989 [*The Minister of Planning and Mobilization (Hon. Winston Dookeran)*]

**APPROPRIATION BILL
(BUDGET)**

[THIRD DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [December 7, 1990.]

That the bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed.

10.25 a.m.

Mr. Patrick Manning (*San Fernando West*): Mr. Speaker, the 1991 budget has been presented to this Parliament against the background of a by-election to be held on Monday, December 17, in Diego Martin Central and against the background of a general election that is due in 1991 within 12 months or so. Therefore I make no apologies for stating that I consider this budget to be an election budget.

This Government which was elected on December 15, 1986 with a mandate to roll back the recession and to get the economy moving once more, a Government which boasts of tremendous talent, is now being seen to be completely devoid of any management skills and where it has been unable to properly manage the economy it has now resorted to improperly managing the figures.

The hon. Minister of Finance in the budget presentation made very heavy weather of what he termed an economic turnaround and cited a number of figures to suggest that. I have been looking at the *Review of the Economy 1990* and this is what emerges. I refer to Appendix 2, Gross Domestic Product of Trinidad and Tobago at Market Prices, (Constant 1985 prices,) Growth Rates 1985—1990

Year	Per Cent	
1985—86	-1.7	Negative Growth
1986—87	-0.5	"
1987—88	-3.4	"
1988—89	-0.2	"
1989—90	0.7	Positive Growth

It is important that we understand from the outset that the figures for 1989—1990 are projected figures based on some position that has been used as a base and projected to the end of the year—the year not yet having been completed and, therefore, it reflects the Government's view and assumptions that were made at the time this projection was made which was not in December 1990. I rather suspect it was done in October 1990 when the world experienced a certain international situation in respect of oil and oil prices when I am sure an optimistic oil price was used as the basis for some of these projections.

Permit me to direct your attention to the *Review of the Economy 1989* and this is what Appendix 16, Gross Domestic Product of Trinidad and Tobago at Market Prices (Constant 1985 prices) Growth Rates 1985—1989. Gross Domestic Product 1985—1986, whereas the 1990 document gives a figure of minus 1.7 per cent, the 1989 document gave you a figure of minus 1.6 per cent. Whereas the 1990 document gives for 1986—87 a figure of minus 5 per cent the 1989 document for 1986—87 gives a figure of minus 6.7 per cent, 1.7 per cent different. Whereas the 1987—88 figure in the *Review of the Economy 1990* is minus 3.4 per cent, the 1987—88 figure in the *Review of the Economy 1989* is minus 4.3 per cent and whereas the 1988—89 figure in the *Review of the Economy 1990* is minus 0.2 per cent, in the *Review of the Economy 1989* that very same figure is minus 3.7 per cent.

Therefore, one asks the question, what has gone wrong? These were the figures that were presented to Parliament last year in a document that was laid before this House and, therefore, forms a part of the Parliament's records. These were the figures. We come this year in a similar table to find figures that are very different. More than that, the same figures that were changed in the 1990 document now projects for the year 1990 an economic turnaround and positive growth of the order of 0.7 per cent in 1990.

When you go a little further into it oil as opposed to non-oil 1988/1989—this is the *Review of the Economy 1990*, Petroleum minus 0.6 per cent and non-oil minus 0.2 per cent. The 1989 figures show oil 0.9 per cent positive growth in 1989 and non-oil minus 6.0 per cent. So minus 6.0 per cent negative growth in the non-oil sector in 1989 is now translated one year later in the same year to minus 0.2 per cent, close to a break-even position in 1990.

What has gone wrong here? One can understand if an adjustment has to be made for the previous year. In other words if the 1988—89 figure varied slightly in 1990 from the figure that was presented to Parliament in 1989, then I would have understood that. I would have said that the figure was adjusted based on what eventually emerged at the end of the year, the 1988—89 figure being a projection to year end, 1989. Not only has the 1988—89 figure been adjusted but so has been the 1987—88 figure, so has the 1986—87 figure and also the 1985—86 figure. How could we in 1990 seek to be making adjustments to statistics for the year 1985 and absolutely no explanation has been given by either the hon. Minister of Finance in his presentation last week, or by any Member on the other side of the House?

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When you look at the raw figures what do you see? Not the percentages. The basic raw data. What do you see? The 1990 and 1989 raw figures. Listen very carefully. Appendix 15 of the *Review of the Economy 1989* and Appendix 1 of the *Review of the Economy 1990*; Gross Domestic Product figures for 1985, \$17,800.7 million; in 1989 \$17,813.5 million. In other words, this year they depressed the 1985 figure by approximately \$13 million; 1986 in 1990 figures \$17,500.1 million; in the 1989 document \$17,527.5 million. They depressed the 1986 figure by approximately \$27 million: 1987 in the 1990 document \$16,627.1 million; 1989 document for 1987 \$16,348.2 million. In other words they increased the 1987 figure by just under \$300 million. What was the difference between 1985, 1986 and 1987? The difference was a general election and a change of government. In other words what is being presented here in 1990 as opposed to 1989 is an attempt to show 1985 and 1986 in a worse light than it was and an attempt to show 1987 in a better light. In fact it continued in 1987, 1988 and 1989. In 1988, 1990 figures \$16057.4 million; 1988 in 1989 figures \$15,645.1 million. In other words about \$400 million more in 1990. When you get to 1989, \$16,030.4 million in the GDP in the 1990 document. In the 1989 document it was \$15,060.4 million, an increase in 1990 of over \$1 billion.

To what conclusion am I expected to come? It has to be a sleight of hand. More than that, since these figures emanate from the Central Statistical Office and since I have the greatest confidence in the public servants in that department—I have been associated with them for a considerable number of years—I can only see this as political interference in an office that ought to be an independent department.

In 1974 I was parliamentary secretary to the Speaker and the question first arose as to the status of the Central Statistical Office and what status that office should have in the public sector. I am now satisfied in my own mind on the basis of the budget that was presented by the hon. Minister of Finance this year that the Central Statistical Office ought to be an independent office in the public sector with a status similar to that of Auditor General. That is not the end of it. It is worse. In fact the PNM is now considering that proposal with a view to adopting it as PNM policy which any future PNM government will carry out. This is a gerrymandering of the figures. It is improper management of the figures in circumstances where they could not properly manage the economy of Trinidad and Tobago and it would have been bad enough if it were restricted just to this.

Before I go on to the other one, the Minister of Finance used projections. I have a document in my possession called "Review of Economical and Financial Developments—Third Quarter 1990", to deal with this question of economic turnaround. It is a Central Bank document and if it is available to me, I imagine it ought to be available to the hon. Minister of Finance. Page 1 of that document states:

"Provisional estimates of movements in real gross domestic product indicate that the decline in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago decelerated further in the period January-September 1990. Real GDP declined by 0.9 per cent relative to the level of output in the corresponding period of 1989."

So that the figures that are available for the first nine months of 1990, Central Bank figures, have identified that the economy declined by 0.9 per cent in the first nine months of 1990. How in God's name did the hon. Minister of Finance translate a 0.9 per cent economic decline for the first nine months of 1990 to using his gerrymandered figures, a 0.7 per cent positive growth by December 31, 1990? What would have intervened? It has to be oil. But let us go on.

Page 2 of the Central Bank document talks about the third quarter:

"A 2.9 per cent contraction in output of the non-oil economy offset the effect of growth of 1.6 per cent in the Petroleum sector (including Petrochemicals) to cause an overall decline of 1.7 per cent in real value added during the quarter."

Mr. Speaker, a decline of 1.7 per cent in the third quarter. How did that translate from a 0.9 per cent decline for the first three quarters of the year and a 1.7 per cent decline for the third quarter of the year? How did the hon. Minister of Finance translate that to a 0.7 per cent growth by the end of 1990 and it is a projection?

I turn to page 5 of the Central Bank document. I take it that the Central Bank figures are accepted by all. They are known to be—

"The improvement in the Petroleum sector in the third quarter of 1990 was largely attributable to recovery in the petrochemicals sub-sector, which experienced growth of 39.2 per cent following a decline of 25.5 per cent in the previous quarter. Output in the second quarter had been affected by routine maintenance on the urea plant and the de-bottlenecking of the methanol plant. However, a decline of 1.2 per cent in other petroleum products stemming from a decline of 10 per cent in refining, and more marginal declines in exploration and production (0.8 per cent), services contractors (-4.6 per cent) and

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petroleum distribution (-1.0 per cent), to offset the improvements in the petrochemicals sub-sector."

The Central Bank tells you exactly what was responsible for the figures. Mr. Speaker, how, in the light of these trends which appear so clear to me, as I am sure they appear to you, could the Minister of Finance tell this Parliament that he expects positive growth in the economy over the entire year by December, 1991? The figures have been gerrymandered. What is worse, in gerrymandering the GDP figures, they have gerrymandered in such a way—where the break took place as soon as the Government changed in 1986—that 1985 and 1986 figures look worse than they were presented last year and 1987, 1988 and 1989 figures look better than they were presented in the *Review of the Economy*, a document laid by the Minister of Finance before this honourable House in the budget for 1989. That is not the only sleight of hand.

He boasted in presenting the budget to the Parliament of a fall in the level of unemployment—20.1 per cent was the figure. Mr. Speaker, I have with me a document which reads "Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Office of the Prime Minister, Central Statistical Office." You would notice to whose office it is attached. CSO is attached to the Office of the Prime Minister and charged with gerrymandering figures. "Labour force Bulletin for the first quarter, 1990 (January-March)" First quarter 1990, unemployment rate 20.1 per cent, the figure quoted by the Minister of Finance. I am asking the question: Were figures available for the second and third quarters, and if so what were those figures? I do not know and I am sure that such figures could be available to the Minister of Finance if he wanted them to be. Why did he not come to the Parliament with the most up-to-date figures? But, it does not matter.

Third quarter 1989, unemployment rate, 22.4 per cent and, therefore, on that basis the Minister of Finance is saying that the unemployment rate in the country has fallen. He left you to draw the conclusion that the Government's policies have had the effect of stimulating economic activity in the context of the positive growth that they project by the end of the year. Improperly so, and to come to the conclusion that jobs were being created and, therefore, the quality of life in the country has been made more bearable and things were on the rise.

Mr. Speaker, total labour force. Third quarter 1989—477,400 persons. First quarter 1990—469,000. The Leader of the Opposition adverted to it. So that between the third quarter of 1989, and the first quarter of 1990, there was a

reduction in the total labour force, a net reduction of 8,400 person. The documents state that it is a net reduction. Total number of persons unemployed, third quarter 1989—107,400; the first quarter of 1990—94,500, a reduction in the total number of persons unemployed.

Listen to what the Central Statistical Office has had to say about this. I quote from page 2 of the document:

"It is significant to note that the decline in unemployment has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in employment but, however, by an increase in the number of persons recorded as 'not in the labour force'."

Mr. Speaker, Do you know what they did? Persons involved in YTEPP were considered as students or in some categories not counted in the labour force and, therefore, by reducing—a sleight of hand—the size of the labour force with the number of persons employed remaining constant, it manifests itself in a smaller number in terms of the unemployment rate.

The reality of the situation is that not one more job has been created during the period under review. The hon. Minister of Finance tried to give this country the impression, through this honourable House, that the unemployment rate in the country has fallen, implying as undoubtedly he did, that more jobs were being created and that more people were being employed.

Mr. Speaker, that is two in two. They like to talk about the PNM, and who can manage and who cannot manage, and they like to make all kinds of comparisons, some of them sometimes very odious but if they want to compare let us compare. Using their own gerrymandered figures from the *Review of the Economy 1990*, Appendix 1—Gross Domestic Product: Petroleum 1986 contribution to GDP—\$4,712 million; 1990—\$4,430.8 million, down. Non-oil, \$13,500 million, 1986; 1990—\$12,175 million, down. Manufacturing—1986—\$1,382.6 million; 1990—\$1,285.2 million, down. Textiles, Garments and Footwear—\$85 million—1986; \$62.3 million—1990, down. Chemicals and non-metallic minerals—\$231.3 million, 1986; \$205.2 million in 1990.

On every occasion that I have called so far, in every sector of the economy the performance of the PNM in 1986 when oil prices collapsed to \$9.00 a barrel and adverse circumstances indeed hit Trinidad and Tobago, we have been able to demonstrate by their own gerrymandered figures that the PNM performed far better than the new managers which the population elected to manage the affairs of this country in 1986.

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Miscellaneous manufacture, 1986—\$41 million; 1990—\$36.5 million, down. Construction and quarrying—because it was the hon. Member for St. Augustine who raised this question yesterday of construction and in quoting from the manifesto of the NAR which was the basis on which the population voted them in that year, cited the construction sector as one area for stimulation of economic activity. This is 1986 construction and quarrying—contribution to GDP, \$1,532.8 million; 1990, \$1,177.6 million. It is down again. Less activity in construction in 1990 than the PNM had in 1986 and they like to talk about superior management.

That is how they put themselves over to the population. The hon. Prime Minister even described his Cabinet as an embarrassment of riches. He can now, I am sure, properly say that they are now an embarrassment minus the riches. *[Interruption]* It is clear that the riches may have departed even though the riches may not necessarily have come over to this side of the House. Government 1986—\$2,65.3 million; in 1990 it us up for Government, \$2,974.9. Mr. Speaker, that is the story—economic mismanagement. Unable to do what they said they would do. Unable, as they continue to manage properly the affairs of the country, they have now resorted to improperly managing the figures and the information that is made available to the national community.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of the International Monetary Fund is another sleight of hand. The Minister of Finance comes to this House—I think I better quote him from page 52 of the Budget Speech:

“The current Stand-By Arrangement with the International Monetary Fund comes to an end on March 31, 1991. Under this arrangement, Trinidad and Tobago is still eligible to make two more drawdowns in respect of the third and fourth quarters. However, having regard to our level of gross international reserves at the end of October, and the high cost of borrowing from the Fund relative to short term deposit rates prevailing in the United States, I do not propose at this time to exercise the option to make these drawdowns, unless there is a significant change in circumstances before March 31, 1991.”

Even while he was talking, Saddam Hussein had been releasing hostages in Iraq and the price of oil had been coming down. Therefore, I am sure he spoke tongue-in-cheek when he spoke about an economic turnaround by the end of the year in the light of that development.

"Mr. Speaker, on the basis of medium term balance of payments projections, there appear to be no external financing gaps, and therefore no

need for short-term balance of payments support from the IMF. Consequently, we will not be entering into a third Stand-by Arrangement with the IMF.”

This document was laid in Parliament. It is a Ministry of Finance document "Trinidad and Tobago's Government relationship with the International Monetary Fund and the Paris Club dated May, 1990. I draw your attention to the final page in this document. It is a press release from the IMF dated April 23, 1990 and it states:

"The International Monetary Fund has approved the use of financial resources up to special drawing rights of \$127.5 million which is equal to US \$166 million by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Of this total, \$85 million special drawing rights, equal to US \$111 million will be available over the next 11 months under a stand-by arrangement to support the Government's economic and financial programme for 1990. An additional special drawing rights of \$42.5 million which is equal to US \$55 million would be available under the Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility to meet additional financing needs in the event that adverse external developments affect the economy over the period of the stand-by arrangement."

What they are telling us here is that they have approved an arrangement whereby Trinidad and Tobago has access to US \$111 million under the stand-by arrangement 11-month period which is normally drawn in four equal tranches and so on, but that if adverse circumstances affect our economy during the period of the stand-by then Trinidad and Tobago is eligible to access an additional US \$55 million from the compensatory and contingency financing facility. Indeed, that point of view is reflected in Annex 1 to the stand-by arrangement, the Letter of Intent, and it reads as follows at subclause (2):

"The maximum amount of external contingency financing that may be permitted in case of unfavourable external contingent deviation shall be equivalent to special drawing rights \$42.5 million which is US \$55 million. If unfavourable circumstances hit the economy you have access to US \$55 million."

But at subclause (5), listen to what this document says:

"The maximum amount of adjustment in case of favourable external contingent deviations shall be equivalent to special drawing rights \$42.5 million, US \$55 million. If adverse circumstances hit you you have access to US \$55 million. If favourable conditions are experienced in your economy then

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you have to deduct from the \$111 million, a quantity of money equal to US \$55 million."

Do you get the point? If favourable conditions are experienced in your economy then you would have to deduct from the \$111 million, a quantity of money equal to US \$55 million. Do you get the point? What happened during the period of the standby? Saddam Hussein moved into Kuwait on August 2, and oil prices skyrocketed for Brent North sea crude, \$40 per barrel. It crossed \$40 per barrel.

11.00 a.m.

With that, Trinidad and Tobago became the recipient of revenues at an enhanced rate. Indeed, in the budget for 1990, the amount of money that was anticipated over and above what was budgeted at the beginning of the year as a consequence of oil price increases, is \$346 million. That is more than US \$55 million. In other words, because we have had an enhanced revenue position in 1990, as a result of favourable external development, resulting in \$346 million more in that year, subclause (5) of the annex to this agreement has been triggered, whereby Trinidad and Tobago does not have access to the full US \$111 million, but instead has access to a quantity of money, that is \$111 million minus \$55. In other words, it is roughly half.

Since these tranches are in equal portions and it is four draw downs for period of the standby, Trinidad and Tobago today does not now have access to the standby facility and draw downs on that standby. What the Minister of Finance did, was to give you the impression that his Government has taken the decision, not to go to the IMF and to draw down any further, because things are looking good. The reality is, they do not have access to it and it constitutes a third major sleight of hand in the budget for 1990. Prudent gerrymandering of the figures and the information.

Mr. Speaker, this thing is outrageous. We, in Trinidad and Tobago, will now understand. I am sure the national community will now understand when the PNM says that we are all suffering at the hands of an untrustworthy Government. You cannot trust them, not even when they talk in Parliament, Mr. Speaker—a sacred place, as you know. The mace means a lot to you Mr. Speaker. It is what it symbolizes. It is the institution of Parliament. That is the point. We are pledged to uphold lofty principles and ideals in here. You cannot come and do this, not a Minister of Finance. It is being done for no other reason, than there is a by-election on December 17, 1990 and there is a general election due in 1991. Come hell or

high water, they are determined to demonstrate that they have managed well—nothing could be further from the truth—and they are going to put that to the national community: we said we will do so and so and look this is what we have done. That is what they are trying to say. They did not do it so they will manipulate the figures to show that.

Mr. Speaker, this thing is really, really outrageous, and he is boasting. He is boasting that they are not going back into a third standby, but of course, he is couching it in very careful terms because he recognizes that there is the possibility already beginning to show that lower oil prices could be the result, especially in the light of what is happening outside; lower prices could result and they may very well have to go back to the International Monetary Fund for a standby. He made a lot of heavy weather about implementing the common external tariff. Mr. Speaker, you would believe it was done out of prudence and out of their own free will.

Loan agreement; structural adjustment loan with the World Bank. They have handed us over to the international institutions in terms and conditions which are not in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Structural adjustment loan, Conditionalities, page 18, schedule 4. I am reading from page 20:

"(a) to achieve a level of import surcharge equivalent to the rate of CET through a gradual elimination of all other charges on imports and of all exemptions from the CET except as such exemption may be agreed to with the Bank based on the results of such study;"

The implementation of the common external tariff is not as a result of anything they did or they want to do. It is mandated by the World Bank. They have handed us over to the international agencies. They are making heavy weather of the fact that they are not going back for a third standby. They had no right to go to the IMF in the first place for standby because—I am going to put it on the record for yet another time—on December 31, 1986, the balance of payments position of this country stood at TT \$1,184.5 million, a quantity which was equal to 3.4 months of imports at the rate at which imports were being brought into the country at that time. If prudent steps had been taken to protect the foreign exchange reserves which were left for them in adequate quantity, we would not have found ourselves at the doorstep of the International Monetary Fund for a standby facility and the conditionalities associated with that. I understand it is eight of them. One of them is the removal of the negative list associated with the first standby.

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They work in step with the World Bank which says that when you move the negative list then there is going to be a flood of imports into your country. There is going to be a net outflow of foreign exchange and, therefore, to finance that we are going to make available to you \$40 million and we are going to use our best efforts to secure an additional US \$40 million from the Japanese Import/Export Bank—US \$80 million. For US \$80 million, merely to finance this item, the removal of the negative list in the standby arrangements, they have ended up with this document.

I go back to Schedule 4 which tells you what the implications of all this has been:

"(1) That the Borrower has made progress, satisfactory to the Bank, in implementing the SOE Divestment and Rationalization Program..."

They put that as a condition on the World Bank loan—\$40 million plus a possible \$40 million merely to finance the removal of the negative list and the consequent influx that you are going to get from the imports and the outflow from foreign exchange. So you have as a result of that, for US \$80 million, not a package really, you have to divest the state owned enterprises, complete liquidation of National Hospital Management Committee, SNC, which is the School Nutrition Company, and the National Secondary Roads Company, and so on.

11.10 a.m.

"(2) That the borrower has adopted a plan of action for the Water and Sewerage Authority."

and included in that plan of action at—

"(c) Improve operational efficiency measured by targets including *inter alia* number of customers per employee, share of salaries in operating expenditure."

The implication being quite clear that we are being called upon by the World Bank to retrench at the Water and Sewerage Authority—that is the implication of this.

At (3) T&TEC, another condition for \$40 million plus \$40 million: Why? To finance removal of the negative list, thus subscribing to a concept of free trade that exists nowhere else in the world but these bright new managers of Trinidad and Tobago sit with an international agency and agree to this dubious concept of free

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trade and saddle the people of Trinidad and Tobago with the conditions that are associated with accessing US \$80 million. T&TEC, same thing—

"Improved operational efficiency measured by targets including *inter alia*, number of customers per employee share of salaries in operating expenditure."

It goes on Mr. Speaker—no actually it says—

"(a) Improved financial self-sufficiency."

both for T&TEC and the Water and Sewerage Authority.

Do you know what that means? Increased rates. That is what it means. Indeed they are now before the Public Utilities Commission for a 29 per cent increase in T&TEC rates. Why? Because the World Bank says so. Consequent on their pursuing the concept of free trade—completely free trade, removal of the negative list which exists nowhere else in the world but which the new prudent cerebral systems management of the NAR is seeking to foist on the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

"(4) That the borrower has adopted measures, including best efforts to obtain tariff adjustments."

It is now explicit—

"in order to achieve a break even position for T&TEC in 1990, and has achieved for T&TEC a ratio of customers per employee of not less than 99."

It is a World Bank condition. The principle, higher up in the document, they spell it out at clause (5)—

"That the Borrower and its agencies have liquidated their arrears to WASA and T&TEC."

They forced them to pay, at least somebody can get them to pay money that is owed to somebody else, domestically. World Bank serves no other good purpose but to get them to pay their outstanding liabilities to WASA and T&TEC. It is a pity that we could not get the World Bank to get them to pay the outstanding liabilities to the public service and sugar workers.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. T. Sudama*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Manning: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. There are 16 conditions attached to accessing the World Bank \$40 million and, therefore, when that Minister tells you that they have come out of the IMF or they intend to come out of the IMF, and he spoke prematurely, do not for one minute get the impression that the days of wine and roses are here. They are not and do not for one minute get the impression Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, that the tight conditions that have been associated with access to IMF funding are no longer with us. Indeed, they are here and perhaps in worse measures with the World Bank, the sister financial institution to the International Monetary Fund.

There is one at (14) here that refers specifically to petroleum that I did not want to get in at this stage but perhaps I ought to do so. Let me read it:

"(14) That the Borrower has made progress, satisfactory to the Bank, in reviewing relevant petroleum legislation and regulations affecting the concessionary and other systems of contracts, royalty payments, and petroleum taxation to assess the Borrowers competitiveness for encouraging increased private sector investment in the petroleum industry and making proposals for improvement, where necessary."

You understand, why now they are unwilling and indeed perhaps unable—I do not know which—to adjust the supplemental petroleum tax regime to ensure that windfall profits do not accrue to the companies but to the country whose national patrimony it is that is being exploited. The World Bank says so. So the Minister does not get up and tell you that. What the Minister says is that to adjust the tax regime at this time will serve to undermine investor confidence. Do you understand it? Pretty language, that is what they are good at. He then comes back and says in the budget—

"that as had been promised sometime before, we will in 1991 begin the review of the petroleum tax structure that had been promised."

Do you think there is going to be a review, designed to ensure that windfall profits do not go to the oil companies? It is not that. It is a review designed to make Trinidad and Tobago more competitive, according to what the World Bank has put down here. In other words, it is likely to be give and no take. A sum of \$346 million is what they project for the end of the year.

What the document also says is that Trintoc has paid to the Government in 1990 a figure equal to about \$362 million. Back taxes, they could not pay it in 1987, 1988, and 1989 but they pay it in 1990. Why Mr. Speaker, because windfall

profits have accrued to the company as a consequence of oil price increases? If Trintoc could pay that out of windfall profits, imagine what is the position of the oil companies including those that may not be wholly domestically owned. Do you understand the point I am making? People are getting away with murder and they are sitting and pussyfooting and they turn around now and tell public servants that of the \$789 million in COLA that is owed, you will be paid \$30 million in 1991.

You dig your hand deep into people's pockets without their knowledge and/or consent and afterwards you come in the budget for 1991 and say on the eve of a by-election and a general election that you are going to pay \$30 million in 1991. What does it mean to the public servants? The honourable Minister himself indicated that it means \$300—you dangle \$30 million, but it means \$300 before the application of your tax liability. Therefore if you are in the 35 per cent bracket, it means that \$300 will have to be reduced by \$105, which means that you will be getting the total figure in partial satisfaction of the Government's liability to you in respect of cost of living allowances of \$195. I hear they are hustling to pay it before December pay.

This is a by-election budget you know Mr. Speaker—BUY, if you feel you can purchase the franchise of the population in this way then by all means proceed. You are going to find out as others have found out before you that this population is not as gullible as you may believe.

Public servants, my heart goes out for them, I have spent 20 years of my working life in the public service. Whereas they came in 1987 and they wanted to malign every public servant in this country, my position has always been on the basis of my association with the public service that some of our finest sons and daughters are to be found in the public sector. There is no question about that.

They talk about debt and the honourable Minister spoke very glibly about debt service ratio being lower than expected and so on. Do you know why that is so? That is so because they have shifted the bulk of the debt from now to 1992. He made the point before. It is not now, it is 1992 and a couple weeks ago they increased the ability of the Government to incur debt by a figure of \$2 billion dollars. Amendment to the Development Loans Act right here in this Parliament. In this budget the borrowings on the domestic market amount to \$775 million—I will come to that in a minute. Look at it, this is the external debt service figures that the Minister of Finance gave in answer to a question in this very Parliament.

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In fact, in 1990, debt service is US \$341 million; in 1991 it is US \$315 million but in 1992 it goes to US \$512 million. It is a significant increase in your debt service liability. In 1993 it goes to US \$672 million. The next Government of Trinidad and Tobago is going to find itself in a very difficult position in terms of the allocation of revenues of the country to debt service. It is not going to be an easy position. So when he is boasting it is not because of any prudent management, it is not because of any management of the economy in a way to bring a credit to the people of Trinidad and Tobago—in terms of debt service, he has merely shifted the debt to a later period and, therefore, shifted the bunching of the debt service charges of 1990, the year to which reference had been made, to 1992 and the years ahead. Skilfully doing it. After the next general elections, I say it again, it is very clear, they know why, because when those elections are called, with the greatest deference to the Chair, Mr. Speaker, they will not be back in Government and they know it. They are talking about Diego Martin Central. We do not have long again to wait.

11.20 a.m.

What should they have done? In my address to the 30th Annual Convention of the PNM, I outlined a short-term strategic plan. That is what they should have done, Mr. Speaker.

"The major elements of such a programme envisage:-

- (i) the adjustment of the tax structure to reduce the high incidence of personal income taxation so as to stimulate individual savings and investment."

It goes on:

"The imperatives for economic growth demand a reinstatement of the incentives for saving, a reasonable limited deduction for home repair maintenance, and a return to a form of personal deduction system rather than peripheral tax credits.

- (ii) We supported the protection from corporation tax burden on small firms, particularly those engaged directly in productive activities in the agro-processing sector as well as cottage manufacturing and service industries in order to encourage these firms to finance expansion."

And as they expand, they create the jobs that are required in the economy and they stimulate economic activity.

“(iii) We supported the introduction of a system of indirect taxation such as VAT but at a lower rate than 15 per cent with appropriate exclusions for basic foodstuffs, medication and school books so as to cushion the burden on the unemployed and low-income taxpayer.”

A caring Government, Mr. Speaker. Economic Recovery Plan:

“(iv) We called for a reduction in the general rate of corporation tax in the non-oil sector to allow these firms to finance their growth through retained earnings and to position them for competition in external markets by appropriate accounting and reporting safeguards to eliminate abuse.”

A PNM alternative—what to do. All you have to do is to pick it up, read it and see what you could take out of it. They did it elsewhere but they did not do it here.

“(v) We supported and called for the immediate implementation of productivity incentive schemes in state enterprises to foster greater efficiency and profitability. While we applaud any attempt to increase the efficiency of state companies we regret and cannot agree with the insinuation that the state sector companies are an encroachment in the private sector preserves.

(vi) We advocated the active development of co-operative farming and agricultural schemes utilizing state lands and lands held by companies such as Caroni (1975) Ltd., Trintoc, Trintopec and Non Pareil Estates Ltd. for the expansion of food crop farming, livestock, fruits and horticulture for both domestic as well as foreign consumption;

(vii) Our proposals also include providing funding support to the University of the West Indies and Caribbean Research Institute (CARIRI) for specific research and development in selected areas which have the potential for economic impact;

(viii) Credit unions and Co-operatives: The PNM will resolutely defend this vital sector of our economy and put adequate financial and material resources of the state at their disposal, not only to allow them to survive but to recover and to flourish.”

Dr. Tewarie: May I ask the hon. Member since he has given way, what is this pool of funds from which they are going to take all of this money to provide to all of these sectors?

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Minister was a little patient or had he listened to me a little earlier on, he would have found his answer. Adjust the

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petroleum tax structure at this stage to ensure that windfall profits accrue, not to the companies but to the country.

Dr. Tewarie: If the hon. Member would give way. I thought he might have said that. Would the hon. Member answer honestly if he feels—

Mr. Speaker: Order please.

Dr. Tewarie: I meant to impute no motives.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for San Fernando East has been extremely polite and he is engaging in an effort to establish a point. Let us proceed and forget how the answer would come.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, he has just disqualified himself by putting it in the way he has done.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think he meant what he said.

Mr. Manning: I understand that you are apologizing for him.

Mr. Speaker: I am not apologizing for anyone. If you wish and you feel it is sufficiently offensive, I would ask the hon. Member to withdraw that statement.

Dr. Tewarie: Mr. Speaker, I was imputing no motives.

Mr. Speaker: Please proceed.

Mr. Manning: When we look at this 1991 Budget, what do we see? We see a gerrymandered economic recovery; we see a country that has had negative growth for the first nine months of 1990 and being projected to positive growth at the end of the year. We see an attempt to put the Government of the PNM of 1985/1986 in a far worse position than they put that Government in last year's budget with a corresponding attempt to give the impression that this Government's performance has been better than it should have been—political interference.

We see a position where, notwithstanding the impression that they have tried to give, that the number of employed persons has not increased, notwithstanding the Minister's glee in announcing what he determined to be a reduced level of unemployment; we see an untrustworthy Government talking about the International Monetary Fund and the fact that it is not going to access tranche 3 and tranche 4 of the second standby facility, instead of saying that favourable economic external circumstances which led to an increase in oil revenue have now precluded the Government from accessing any further disbursements from the

standby tranche 3 and tranche 4, because it triggered a clause in the agreement. We see, all in all, a Government that has put forward a budget dangling what it believes to be carrots before what it hopes to be an unsuspecting population, and you see a country which is heading down the slippery slope to ruin at the hands of a Government that came in on the premise that it could provide the proper economic management that this country requires.

I am afraid that we on this side cannot support the proposals of the hon. Minister of Finance.

11.29 a.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

1.40 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before we resume, just as a matter of information, before we took the break for lunch you may have observed there was some movement between the Clerk's table and the Chair. What actually happened was that one of the police officers on duty, in an attempt to clear breach of his weapon, accidentally fired it off. This happened somewhere in the area of the rotunda on the upper floor. No one was injured but a number of staff members, both of the Parliament and the Registrar General's Department, because of their previous experience, panicked. Two of our staff members, one a messenger and one of the Hansard reporters were advised that they should go home and they did leave for home. About five members of staff of the Registrar General's Department were also advised to go home because of their nervous state. One, I understand, was taken to the hospital for treatment for shock. I hope that this clarifies everything. It was an accidental discharge of a firearm.

The Minister of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism (Dr. The Hon. Bhoendradatt Tewarie): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my contribution on this Appropriation Bill which sets out the terms of the 1991 budget by congratulating the hon. Minister of Finance for a presentation which was remarkable, both for its record of the achievements of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago over the last four years and, at the same time, for pointing the direction in which this country must proceed, if we are to have enhanced growth and expansion and create a society which can sustain jobs and income for our citizens in this country.

I want to continue however, by reading from the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago *Economic Survey 1989*, page 3 under the sub-heading "Gross Domestic Product":

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“There were signs that the decline in the economic activity which began in 1983 slowed appreciably in 1989. Real GDP contracted by 2.4 per cent compared with minor 6.2 and 4.7 per cent in 1987 and 1988.”

The point I want to make is that in this document it is recorded that real GDP contracted by 2.4 per cent for 1989. When the Minister of Finance, at the end of 1989, presented the budget for 1990, which is this year, in his presentation on page 3 said that the preliminary data suggested that real GDP in 1989 may have declined by 3.7 per cent. This is a different figure from the 2.4 per cent mentioned by the Central Bank in its report and the other figures which the Minister of Finance recorded in his presentation in 1989 are also figures which are different. For instance 4.3 per cent in 1988, 6.7 per cent in 1987 and he added an accumulative decline of over 40 per cent between 1983 and 1986.

Mr. Speaker, as in this particular budget presentation for the 1991 budget, the Minister of Finance says on page 32.

"Mr. Speaker, as I had projected earlier this year, the continuous decline in economic activity observed since 1983 has finally come to an end. Real GDP in 1990 is being projected by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) to increase by 0.7 per cent. You will recall that the decline in real GDP had been decelerating in recent years..."

The point I am trying to make is that although the Minister of Finance had the option of quoting the lower figure in his 1990 budget presentation at the end of 1989 from the Central Bank statistics, he used the statistics provided by the Central Statistical Office, which officially are the figures which the Government must rely on. He continued in consistent fashion to use those figures in this year's budget and I think that what we witnessed this morning, it is not the first time. When we had the debate to increase borrowing in this House about three or four weeks ago by the central government in Trinidad and Tobago, the hon. Member for San Fernando East made a vicious intervention when he spoke about freezing all the figures for 1986 and proceeding to compare the figures which accrued for debt after 1986, comparing those against his frozen figures for 1986 all the way through in the years up to 1990 and forward, in order to make a point that the debt ratio was increasing, contrary to the position taken by the Minister of Finance. In this particular intervention, again he is seeking to discredit the Minister of Finance. More than that, it seems to me that he is making a very brutal attack on the people

in the Central Statistical Office who put together these figures as professionals and on whom the Minister of Finance has to rely for his statistics and documentation.

In my view, the charge of manipulation of these professional people in the Central Statistical Office cannot be tolerated. Even if you were to take the point of view, as he did, that the figures have been reviewed, the only point to be made is that the Minister of Finance consistently used in his presentation of the budget on several occasions here in this House, the statistics of the Central Statistical Office over and against the statistics of the Central Bank, although in many respects, those were lower figures in 1989. So that consistency is what we want to establish in the use of the same figures for all the documents.

Secondly, I feel it is unreasonable to claim that these professional officers in the public service and the Central Statistical Office can be manipulated by any politician or government official. I want to make that point at the outset to indicate that the contribution of the Member for San Fernando East, should on no account be taken seriously by Members of this House nor by the public at large.

Mr. Speaker, one would think that after all we had gone through over the last four years as a country, when the Minister of Finance came to this House and presented a budget which restored the 10 per cent which had been cut from the salaries of public servants, and which, made a token contribution to the debt owed on COLA and other related matters of \$30 million, and in the case of Caroni workers, \$10 million, indicating of course, an acknowledgement of the debt and a commitment to meeting those obligations at some time when it is possible. In addition to that, coming to the House and indicating that if things went as he hopes, on the basis of projections which he, his officers and the Government have made that we will not go back to the IMF in March, 1991.

1.50 p.m.

In addition to that, he indicated very clearly, even though in small sums, a commitment to social sector in this country that had been under pressure because of the economic decline and the measures that we have had to take simply to bring the country in line, so to speak. One would have thought that the least that the Members on the opposite side could do, notwithstanding any criticisms that they might make, is to congratulate the Government on what it had achieved, and its intentions which were clearly signalled in the budget; that and whatever criticism they had to make it was clear that the Government had achieved what it had set out to do and had in fact brought the country from decline to growth. Somehow,

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the politics of Trinidad and Tobago does not allow, it would seem, for this kind of attitude that is required for Governments of independent countries.

Really, our dilemma as a country in 1991, in the context of what we have been able to achieve: an expanding economy, growth, will in fact be, how to contain public expectations in the context of pent up consumer demands over the last four years. That is really something that is going to be a very serious issue to manage in this country. That in large measure is going to be able to determine how successful we will be in continuing the process that we have embarked upon in 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990; that in large measure will determine the success of the economy in moving, as we have said on so many occasions, towards a serious twenty-first century world class economy, notwithstanding our size and limited population in Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to say that it is not enough to say, as so many have said, that this is a good budget; that the Government has really achieved something in 1990 and that the prospects are good for 1991 and thereafter. Once you concede that this is a reasonable budget, that there have been real achievements and the prospects for growth and expansion are real, then you have to also concede that the criticisms of the 1987, 1988 and 1989 budgets which preceded this one, the 1991 budget in 1990, had to be nothing short of alarmist and unreasonable. That in short measure illustrates in many ways, the stand of the people on the Opposition benches, with regard to Government's performance.

The criticisms this morning were on the poor quality of management. Imagine, a Government which has moved this country from recession to growth; and from decline to expansion, is being charged with mismanagement of the economy. It is unreasonable in the extreme, Mr. Speaker, to make those kinds of charges, let alone attempt to get away with it.

When we have had so far, three presentations by Members of the Opposition, we find that they have not been any criticisms of substance about the budget. Most of the criticisms have been of a political nature, either geared at the Diego Martin Central elections, at defending some kind of policy which existed before 1986 or to show that the Government is uncaring and is not committed to the people of the country, and somehow what we have done must not be seen as achievement but some kind of fluke that happened in spite of Government's governance of this country in 1987—1990.

Clearly, the performance and achievement is a reflection of a Government that is very, very professional in its approach. I want to emphasize that the Government may, in fact, be young and governing for the first time in its history, except for the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Security, but the Government is a government that consists of Members that are committed to this country with heart and soul and are prepared to work their lives out, if necessary, to ensure that this country is one to be proud of and that people are part of what there is to be proud of in Trinidad and Tobago.

We have been achieving these things and have been moving the economy forward against a background internationally, where there has been a slowing down of output at the global level. Of concern to us, as a people in an economy such as Trinidad and Tobago has, in the context of what we are trying to do with respect to our external thrust, is the rate of growth in the industrial countries which is estimated to have fallen to just over two per cent in 1990.

With the exception of Japan and the United States, the resulting unemployment has reached levels unprecedented in the recent past. The growth of world trade is also on the decline. This is symptomatic of the slowing down of global output which I just mentioned. External account imbalances among the industrial countries continue to exert a destabilizing effect on the international economy when looked at globally. These recessionary conditions in the industrial countries' markets have witnessed a rise in protectionism and the decline in the purchasing power abroad. There has also been weakening of investment flows from the developed to the developing world and that affects Trinidad and Tobago in a fundamental way. The Uruguay round of trade to which the hon. Member for Couva North and the Leader of the Opposition referred is not expected to bring any rescue in some of the more subtle and contentious issues of trade policy including the injudicious application of such non-tariff practices as anti-dumping and countervailing measures and export restraint agreements, all of which have already affected Trinidad and Tobago. For instance, in the case of steel exports and also recently in the case of urea exports.

This is the environment and the background against which Trinidad and Tobago has had to cope with its own decline. With the decline in the price in petroleum, until very recently and to try, out of all of these things: the international background and the situation at home, to bring about a vibrant and meaningful economic forward movement in this country. Despite all of these things, we have brought the country to an increase in real GDP in 1990 projected at 0.7 per cent

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and that after recording negative growth levels of 5.2, 3.4 and 0.2 per cent for the years 1987, 1988 and 1989.

2.00 p.m.

The Minister of Finance mentioned in his presentation that we have now reached the point, in terms of foreign reserves, where we can boast—if that is not too strong a word in the context of what has happened in the past—of about 4.4 months, I think he said, of import cover, a trade surplus was recorded to September 1990 which exceeds that for the same period, 1989 which was \$1,289 million for the period to September 1989 and just over \$21 million for the same period in 1990. These things have happened because of careful management and a clear focus on the policy measures that we have put in place on growth, development and expansion.

The Member for San Fernando East talked about areas in which we have had decline. The point is that you cannot expect all sectors of the economy to expand at once. Clearly, everything is not equal in this growth process and what the Member for San Fernando East did was to refer selectively to things which would make his own case, rather than look at the whole national picture and really come to terms with the advance that we have made as an economy and as a country.

One of the areas which was mentioned by both the Members for Couva North and San Fernando East was the criticism, first of all, of the concept of free trade and secondly, the caution on the part of the Leader of the Opposition as to how we were going to proceed with the dismantling of the negative list and so on. That was adequately responded to by the Member for Chaguanas, the Minister of Planning. In fact, this morning the Member for San Fernando East mentioned that we had to be cautious about how we proceeded on this matter and that we were somewhat naive about this business of free trade. I think it is important for the country to understand what we are doing and the context in which we are doing it and I want to address that particular issue.

The world as we know, is a fast changing world and it is changing in a fashion in which the driving force behind global politics is really global economics. The whole situation is different today. It is economics that is driving the world; political change and political strategies of individual countries as they address the global market place. The point is, in this kind of situation what you have with the opening up of the world and the need to inter-connect in terms of the global economy that is taking place, is not only the opening up but a need to trade and the need for the

flow of trade between one country and another; between one region and another and that is something which everybody is looking at. Together with that you have the rise of these major trading blocs that have emerged. I do not want to go into that. We are all familiar with what they are.

2.05 p.m.

We in the Caribbean have always had our own problems as small nation states, at the same time we have always had both the political tendency and the economic aspiration of having a kind of Caricom region of co-operation: politically, economically and culturally because of the commonality of history, sociology and so on. Economics, as I said, is driving everything and that is forcing everybody to respond and to conform in some way. We within Caricom at the level of the heads of government and at the level of the foreign ministers and trade ministers, have a situation in which all Caricom countries have made a commitment to the common external tariff in relation to Third World countries by July, 1994. This is going on at a time when you have GATT negotiations, the whole opening up of trade in the world, the opening up of economies and the rise of these blocs and so on. We have set that kind of target. At the same time, Trinidad and Tobago was involved with the multilateral institutions both the IMF and the World Bank, in trying to put its own house in order.

I do not deny that these multilateral institutions have a sort of ideological orientation. I think it would be foolish to deny that. It is clear that they are spawned out of a certain culture; they have a certain view of economics, and what they try to do when they get involved with countries is to negotiate with them in such a way as to get them in a certain orientation. A lot depends on the extent to which people in those particular countries in which they are negotiating understand something about the economics and politics of the world, including the politics of multilateral institutions. More than that, the extent to which they have the supportive base in terms of the public service rate and so on, to engage in negotiations with them. More than that, the extent to which, on the basis of self-confidence in themselves, they are able to deal with these people as leaders of an independent country on equal terms, in the process of negotiations. I have no doubt that is exactly what has been done with the multilateral institutions by this Government from the Prime Minister—the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Planning and Mobilization, all of them—involved in any level of negotiations with them, certainly, in the minimal way in which I have been involved, having been invited by the Minister of Planning and Mobilization to some of the discussions

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when they come here. I have certainly stated my own position very clearly. There could be no miss on this matter of trade.

I remembered that the last time they were here I said that in addition to simply talking about open trade and getting things out of the negative list, we want to know what are their proposals for lobbying for the interests of countries such as ours, against measures taken in larger countries to close out our export capability in these countries. I think the position of this Government is very clear as to what is the state of the economy, what we need to do and what is the nature of the global order. We are involved as people leading an independent and free country in negotiations with multilateral institutions because we were put in that position by an administration which did not know what it was doing, and sent us to this point beyond 1986.

Mr. Speaker, the decision at the level of Caricom concurrently with the discussions at the level of the multilateral institutions are interrelated. At the level of Caricom there is general agreement that by July, 1994, all Caricom countries shall have one external tariff rate per category of product involving other third countries. There is also a commitment that we shall have Caricom free trade by July, 1991. That is to say, all existing barriers to trade among Caricom countries would be removed. There will be no negative list applying to any Caricom country. You will have nothing on the negative list in relation to other Caricom countries. Effectively, what you will have is no tariff barriers. Barriers and negative list would be removed and you would have open and free trade at the level of Caricom. Then in 1994, you will have a set rate for all countries outside of the Caricom region—products coming to the various Caricom countries including Trinidad and Tobago.

January 1, 1991, we are going to make a tentative, far-reaching step in that the only difference between January 1, 1991 and July, 1991 is that allowances have been made for some products in which particular countries have particular problems—what they described as derogations. That is why sometimes you have little tussles here and there among some Caricom countries. The most recent situation we had was a case of tiles involving Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. But those things would be ironed out. It is a matter of months, or weeks in some cases. Those things would be worked out and basically what we are doing is moving Caricom together economically and creating a situation in which, not only are we open to each other, but we have a common position in relation to the rest of the world, so to speak. All of this is happening, as I said, not only as the world and trade are opening up, but within the hemisphere itself.

What is happening here? Brazil alone removed about 2,000 items from its negative list within recent times and it is happening in every other Latin American country. What other countries are doing, we have got to respond. If we want to sell something to Brazil, we would expect that the Brazilians would want to sell something to Trinidad and Tobago.

Are we going to say that it cannot come? It is not going to be possible. This is where the hemisphere is going. What you need to do is to have other things which will effect certain amounts of restraints and, therefore, protection for your own economy, and products and so on. Tariffs is one of them and that has been agreed upon at certain ranges, both in terms of the region and in terms of our arrangements with the multilateral institutions at certain levels. The tariffs are very high. They offer tremendous protection for local industry.

In one particular case of textiles it is up to 120 per cent. In most of the others it is close to 100 per cent. We are talking about an efficiency level that is required for industry in Trinidad and Tobago. The world is not a place of regions anymore; it is not a place of national boundaries anymore. Production systems are wherever is the best place to be located. People want an entry into the global market place. If you are a country in the world you have to make room and space to do that. We have to do it and the faster we do it, the better. That is not to say that we are going to be naive and simply open everything so that every industry in this country is crushed. That is not the intention. Why do you think the Minister of Finance has offered a special incentive to the manufacturing sector in the budget?

Why do you think we place such an emphasis on the manufacturing sector? That is a sector which, after being a relatively—and I use this word advisedly—“lazy” sector, today it is a very productive and vibrant sector because they have responded to measures put in place by the Government, and there has been a lot of interaction between the various ministries including the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism, the Ministry of Planning and Mobilization, and the Ministry of Finance.

In the conduct of my work as Minister of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism, the collaboration that has been taking place with the Minister of Food Production, the Minister of Planning and Mobilization, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Energy, I really consider that in itself, not in terms of an achievement, the way we have been able to work together, but an experience that I will remember for all of my life, because there has been such harmony in dealing with some of these

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issues and the collaboration has been really critical in developing a governmental approach on many of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to all of those things, we are committed to the monitoring of imports and the establishment of an export quality certification programme. First of all, what we want to move with the help of the Bureau of Standards is a situation in which we can stamp a product, made in Trinidad and Tobago or quality assured by such and such an institution in Trinidad and Tobago, and everybody knows when they see that product with that stamp that you are dealing with a first-class product from a first-class country. We are seeking to do that for export competitiveness. You cannot have a first class country with a third class government and I speak as a Member of a first class government which is why I can make this kind of statement. This also explains why we were never first class before.

2.15 p.m.

There have been certain suggestions made by the manufacturing sector on the question of imports. First of all, that any product coming into Trinidad and Tobago should be properly labelled in the English language. That, of course, is to ensure that the product which comes here can be clearly identified: you know where it is coming from, what it contains and so on, for the protection of the consumer. Secondly, that the agent or the distributor in Trinidad and Tobago can clearly identify his company and from where he is distributing. Why are these things necessary? To prevent dumping in the country and to protect the consumer in Trinidad and Tobago because we need to protect the consumer even from products manufactured locally.

Of course, the question of customs and what has to be done there in terms of illegal importation and anti-dumping is important. We have anti-dumping legislation in Trinidad and Tobago and experts came here from various institutions such as the United Nations and held seminars and had interaction with people in the public service, both in the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Industry and they have made recommendations and have given us certain guidelines. One of the things we need to do is to amend the legislation by updating and tightening it in keeping with the way that the world is evolving and the way we ourselves as an economy are evolving in relation to those things, and that is going to happen.

The Member for Couva North raised the question of monitoring and so on. Obviously, some kind of unit is going to have to be put in place. That in fact has been recommended. It is not an easy operation to put in place because it is costly.

It involves training, you need people with skills and they must have the freedom and the authority to go about their work. These things are very important. They are in train, we have thought about them. Pretty soon some of these issues are to be brought before the Cabinet. Eventually, legislation would be brought to this Parliament hopefully, sooner rather than later.

A lot of the criticism of this Government has been on the public sector programme, that there are no commitments or programmes that are and I quote, "job creation programmes". I do not believe that is true. That is a poor assessment of what is contained in the documents that the Government has presented to this Parliament. It is important to understand the philosophy of this Government and what we are attempting to do; a philosophy that is not an abstract philosophy but guided by the changes that are taking place in the world and changes that must take place in the Trinidad and Tobago's economy. Clearly, we have been proceeding in such a fashion as to increase the capacity of the private sector to invest and to become involved in the economy.

The private sector for us is not big business or multinational corporations or any particular type of business. The private sector to us, is private citizens engaged in business and entrepreneurial activities that add value in the economy and more than that, which contribute to growth, expansion and the creation of wealth in Trinidad and Tobago. That is why we have been creating a regime and a climate that will allow these activities to go on. More than that, creating the space below, understanding how the economy has evolved from colonial times when the private sector consisted of a small elite, to the period of independence when the state was the dominant sector in the national economy; to the present time when our people have come through the process of education, they have had the exposure. We are better off now in terms of our ability to deal with the question of direct entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, the commitment has been to broaden the base of people actively involved in the community so that you have a large entrepreneurial class in Trinidad and Tobago.

In 1990, a total of \$2.6 billion was committed for investment in the manufacturing and energy sectors. Those are two critical sectors in this economy. The scale is different because when you speak of energy you are talking about a lot of money; when you are talking about manufacturing, you are talking about small bits here and there which add up in that particular sector. What is important is that we are talking, in 1990, of a direct employment or job creation of approximately

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2,700 jobs. It is not true to say, using the statistics as the Member for San Fernando East did, that jobs have not been created in Trinidad and Tobago.

What are these investments besides the energy sector—I do not want to deal with that, as I have no doubt, the Minister of Energy will deal with these matters in the Senate. Where have these investments been taking place? In certain sectors: concrete products have been one of them, pharmaceuticals, sanitary ware, motor vehicle components, upholstery, garments, chemicals and processed foods. Investment commitments in the manufacturing sector alone amounted to just under \$100 million, creating approximately 1,200 new jobs in 1990. This follows an investment performance by that particular sector of \$150 million in 1989, which created approximately 1,500 direct jobs.

Investment has been taking place in Trinidad and Tobago. Expansion and upgrading of existing plants have been taking place. New investments have been taking place and jobs have been created and are being created. In addition, approximately 1,500 persons will be employed in the energy sector through additional investments of \$1,298.35 billion for the year. Actual investment undertaken in the manufacturing sector was about \$65 million in the first half of 1990 and about \$30 million in the second half of this year. Of course, we do not have complete figures for the second half as yet. Out of that, there is going to be a carry over into the month of January/February of approximately \$19.4 million.

For the energy sector actual investment expenditure undertaken in 1990, was \$710.05 million with another \$1.01 billion to be carried over into 1990. The investment commitments in the energy sector over the period 1990 to 1991, are being channelled respectively into exploration—19 per cent; production—19 per cent; oil processing—31 per cent. It is estimated that of the \$1.2 billion committed to investment in 1990, approximately 70 per cent of that would be in the form of foreign capital.

2.25 p.m.

I want to tell Members of this House something about the manufacturing sector and what has been happening to it. The current value of plant and equipment in the manufacturing sector of Trinidad and Tobago is estimated at about \$2.5 billion. Employment in this sector is approximately 35,000 persons. This represents about 14 per cent of the labour force. The contribution to gross domestic product in 1989 was approximately 9 per cent. Where is the investment in this area? Where are the places in which the manufacturing sector is expanding

and investing? I mentioned some of them before: garments, chemicals, pharmaceuticals.

The Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association this year made a tentative commitment to investment in the year 1990 of approximately \$300 million. That has not happened and I have no doubt that some of that investment, which was projected for the year is going to carry over into 1991. In addition, there are new projects in this particular sector which, as the Minister of Finance pointed out, is one of four key sectors in this economy. I have no doubt that growth and expansion is likely to be the bright future of that particular sector which we need sorely if we have to diversify and expand the economic base of this country.

The Member for Couva North talked about investment and the various companies. I cannot mention all of the companies which are both local and foreign and I would not mention any in the petroleum sector. Most of us know them because they are mentioned in the press almost every day. I want to give you an idea of some of the figures involved in investment by individual companies.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. W. Dookeran*]

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. Tewarie We were talking about investment, some of them relatively small, like \$852,000, but investment, nonetheless. In some cases \$8.6 million, in another case \$1.73 million, in another \$3 million, in another \$52,000, in another case \$3.298 million, in another case \$6 million, in another case \$1.57 million, in another case \$18 million, in another case \$18,000, in another case \$792,000, in another case \$1.8 million. All of these companies are investing in this country—small companies which are either expanding or getting involved in new investments.

I have quite a long list of companies which were supposed to invest in 1990 and did not, but which will be operative in 1991. I do not think that there should be any worry at all, either about the Government's commitment to investment, the climate it has created or the actual response to the climate which we have created in Trinidad and Tobago. That is at the level of local investment.

At the level of foreign investment—I am sorry I do not have the figures, I thought I did—that is to say, outside of the petroleum and energy sectors, these

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are smaller investments as well, a couple million here, a couple million there, many of them in joint ventures with local people. As I said—I mentioned the global figure for the energy sector—I am not going to identify the individual companies because they are well known. But we have here investments by companies such as Ready Mix, Colour Clad, Leisure Time, Premiums International, Gordon Grant, Interchange Engineering, Monogram Products, JP Coats and so on. These are foreign companies which have made investments in Trinidad and Tobago, either on their own or in joint ventures with local partners in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, in the free zone, I think the one valid criticism which can be made about this Government, is that things which were supposed to happen did not happen fast enough. I think that is a valid criticism because as Minister, I become quite frustrated sometimes at the length of time it takes something to happen. But one also has to understand the realities. If people are making investment, they are not going to bring their money and put it in a country just like that, they would want to make sure that everything is fine and all the little things are tight and well set so that when they go into their investment, certain things are in place.

The free zone has been one area in which investments could have taken place faster than they have. Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, there are 14 companies which are now in various stages of negotiation to establish the free zone of Trinidad and Tobago. Three of them have made commitments and have started construction. Some of them have made commitments but have not started construction and some of them are continuing the process of negotiation.

One has to take into account again, what is happening in the rest of the world. One of the things which has emerged, for instance, is that many of the companies which established the free zone in Brazil—Manos I think it is called—are unhappy with the way things are evolving there. Many of them wish to relocate. Many discussions are now taking place with some of those companies *[Interruption]*

You know you cannot plan your world forever. The free zone, in a way, is external to the economy in some ways and what we want to do is to generate development here. We are simply creating jobs here. That is the objective. We always said that and we always knew that. We know we are not going to get any long term investment there and things which are going to be too critical to the national economy, but what you are going to do is to have business activity, a focus on this country as an investment centre. More than that, we are going to

create jobs which are badly needed. If we are lucky and it is managed properly the free zone investments can link back to the national economy and that is how we would get something out of it. We have always been very, very clear about that.

Mr. Speaker, although things have not happened as fast as they should have, I believe that we are on to a good thing there. What is happening more and more, is that people are willing to come to Trinidad and Tobago to put down plants, but they do not want to go to Point Lisas because of the particular product. They want to establish plants outside of there, near to the main centres of population and to some of the readily available skills. They want those things designated as free zones and that is being looked at now by the Free Zone Company, to see how this can be managed.

I want to say as well that after the events of July 27, I wrote a personal letter as Minister responsible for Industry to most, if not all, of the the major industries in Trinidad and Tobago. Some of them, as you know, are large industries and some of them are small industries. I also wrote to every single foreign investor that I met at any point in time or had contact with and I have a big file of letters from those prospective foreign investors and also from the local people involved in the economy in Trinidad and Tobago. I did not bring the whole file but I did bring one or two letters and I want to read one or two lines.

"With confidence in this economy and this Government, we have decided to invest over \$750,000 in 1991."

I would not call the company's name but it is a small company. There is another one which is a commitment of \$2.5 million "which will be used in this factory to more than double our output" of such and such a product and so on—again in 1991. There are a number of letters like this which indicate very clearly. I do not need to look at the statistics to know what is happening in Trinidad and Tobago. I can sense from what is happening in the banking sector, the amount of mortgages being accessed, what is happening in the stock market and from the feel of people when they come to talk to me about investments, I can tell about what is happening generally, the climate, by the disposition of people, that the economy is advancing at a rapid pace. The adjusted figures which you yourself quoted and for which you hammered the public servants in the Central Statistical Office, indicate very clearly that there was an accelerated reduction of the decline in the economy between 1988 and 1989, faster than we had hoped in the figures before.

Mr. Manning Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct an impression which the hon. Minister is seeking to give. I was quite careful this morning to absolve the public servants of all blame and put it squarely on the doorstep of the political directorate.

Dr. Tewarie: Mr. Speaker, from his presentation and his interjection just now, he is capable of doing a better turnaround than the economy itself.

The tourism sector, again, I will not deal with that fully because I am sure that the Minister with direct responsibility for this will go at some length in the Senate. But I want to say something about the tourism sector because it is important to clear that up. The tourism industry which we are trying to build in Trinidad and Tobago is not based on cruise ships. That is a fallacy. The point is that Trinidad and Tobago together have only approximately 3,000 rooms—it is a little less than that.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if people understand that but the facilities which we have are very limited and if you have a good season in Tobago, you are sold out completely. If you have two or three conventions running on one another in Trinidad and Tobago, you are going to have problems for rooms, as we do every carnival. So that what we are seeking to do is trying to increase our capacity in the tourism sector as an industry. Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago is a very important thing and we are very well poised to make that into a serious industry. The reason is very simple. We have been late in starting. We are starting from ground and we are seeing now the mistakes of every other Caribbean country. We are seeing this as a great industry internationally and what is possible if we are sensitive to what people are looking for in tourism.

In my discussions with hotel developers in various countries, it is significant to note that when, for instance, you talk about Tobago, they want to be very, very clear that the Government's position on Tobago is to make sure that we are protective of the fragile ecology; that we would not over-develop the island and that we will allow that to be, with increased capacity, the magnificent and unique island that it is. That is the first thing

2.35 p.m.

In Trinidad clearly, we are selling a different product and what we are trying to do is build convention business in Trinidad. Over the next few months, we have three large conventions which are coming up, of various kinds—one is by SEGRAMS—I do not remember exactly, about 150 people; another one involves an

educational thing, I think about 500 people—between now and March. All of this for Trinidad.

Tobago for the winter season is sold out. The marketing has been top class and in spite of July 27, it is completely sold out. *[Interruption]* What do you mean by “I am not responsible”?

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to deal with these people. Really, I think you will know that what we have been able to do in the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism in the tourism sector, the Minister with direct jurisdiction for this has gone out of his way to pull the hotels together, and work on a marketing plan with them individually as well as with the Tourism Development Authority. It is a joint kind of collaborative approach as indeed we have done with the manufacturing sector. It is Government, people and industry working together for a common cause, which is the development of Trinidad and Tobago. The success is not simply the Government's success; it is the contribution of all of these people trying to achieve a common goal, which is what development is all about.

We have succeeded in doing that, as I said, for Tobago; in Trinidad we are going to build that kind of business. The significance of the cruise ship industry is that while we are trying to build an industry in Trinidad and Tobago, increase our capacity for rooms and so on, we are having ships come to the country. Every ship that comes, advertises Trinidad and Tobago as a destination. What we are really doing is building a clientele. The tourists come here and spend a few dollars and so on, no big thing, the money circulates and gets into the economy but the main thing is that you have established in the minds of large numbers of people and airlines, the destination that is Trinidad and Tobago. In any case our objective is to go for a different kind of market.

We are going for the convention business, as I mentioned, in terms of culture and the diversity of Trinidad and the up-scale market in Tobago with all of that natural setting has to provide, which people love so much. There is a misunderstanding of the tourism industry, the tourism strategy and more than that, there is a lack of knowledge of the success of this sector. Between 1985 and 1989, 16,000 to 321,000 people actually occupied rooms in the tourism sector in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a small number for a small plant. You cannot put people in rooms you do not have or have not built. There are investments that are likely to accrue in this particular sector as well. I do not like to announce things before they actually happen. I think we will wait for the discussions to take place; for people,

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in fact, to put their money where their mouth is and for contribution to start on many of these particular projects.

On the business of developing Chagaramas and Las Cuevas on the north coast it is not true to say that tourism is only being developed in Trinidad and Tobago. We have to understand that tourism has to be the mainstay of the local economy in Tobago. More than that, what we are seeking to do there, as indeed I mentioned to the Chamber of Commerce in Tobago when I went there recently, is to try and link that particular industry to the other things that go on in the island, especially agricultural production and the production of food for that sector. In Trinidad we are going to actively develop these sectors as well but as the Minister of Works indicated, it is not possible to do everything. One has to do things in a certain way. You have to determine priorities and do the best you can in the time that is available to you.

We have done so, Mr. Speaker and I feel there is no reason to apologize for anything except to say that many of the things that we hoped would happen at a faster rate took more time than we expected or anticipated. It is the only thing I for which we need to apologize for.

The performance of the state enterprise companies over the last 12 months, I think one must view the actual achievements against the policy objectives that this Government has set for that particular sector. What are those policy objectives? Improved profitability and operation at the highest level of efficiency, reduction in financial support from Government, a systematic programme of divestment involving workers and the local private sector, greater accountability, worker participation in the management of companies, rationalization and reorganization of the state enterprises.

In terms of profitability, in 1986 state enterprise companies recorded an aggregate loss of \$1,100 million compared with a loss in 1989 of \$531.6 million. This represents an improvement—although it needs much more improvement of \$565.1 million and we do not have the 1990 figures as yet.

2.45 p.m.

Financial reduction in government's financial support in state enterprise companies amounted to:

Year	\$M
1986	683.1

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1987	516.09
1988	479.16
1989	322.19
1990	265.05

The transfers for 1991 are estimated to be reduced even further. I have a breakdown of most, if not all, of the state enterprise companies here and that information can be available for anyone who wishes to have it. I do not have the time to deal with that. In terms of the overall thrust and objective of this Government, we have had the IDC prepare a number of packages on the various sectors for which we want investments. We have about 15 documents. We have one on Trinidad and Tobago, land of opportunity. We have done documents on the port of Trinidad and Tobago, the free zone, the tourism sector in Trinidad including the regime of legislation governing the industry on taxes and so on.

We have identified about 20 specific projects for which we have a foreign partner and we are trying to build local participation in it because that is also a problem for some of the projects. We have local people who are interested but we need a foreign partner who will guarantee us technology and markets. In addition to that—I do not want to announce or indicate things before they happen—we have established a Far East investment programme for Trinidad and Tobago and I know that some work is going on in that area and I have no doubt that before long we are going to see the fruit of those initial labours. For your information, I only went once, contrary to the report in one of the newspapers.

When we look at the contributions of the three Members: the representative for St. Augustine, the Member for Couva North and the Member for San Fernando East, we see that one of the charges emanating from all three is that this budget is without ideas. I cannot understand how serious men in a serious forum like a Parliament can say that against the evidence that is available. Clearly, what we have witnessed here in the budget presentation—and we got so quickly off the debate yesterday—is an ideological excursion on one hand and a discussion about the vendors on the other. We strayed far away from the budget and its objectives, our strategy for development in this country, what we have been able to achieve and what we are seeking to do.

Trinidad and Tobago as an economy has come such a long way under the leadership and guidance of the hon. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago,

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successive budgets by the Minister of Finance and Member for Point Fortin. The country has gotten to this point precisely because of guidance, our sticking to the orientation of the manifesto and pursuing a programme in keeping with the objectives of the macro-economic plans that we have established for this country. In saying that, it is important to note that the manifesto is not a document for five years. I think that is a terrible blunder the Member for St. Augustine keeps making.

From the time we parted company, they have been holding up the manifesto and going from page to page saying that you have not done this and you have not done that. It cannot be done. Clearly the manifesto is a statement of where the party in Government wants to take the country over a period of time and we always anticipated a minimum of 10 years and I have no doubt we are going to get it. The ideological orientation of that manifesto is very clear.

Yesterday, the hon. Members for Couva North and St. Augustine and today the Member for San Fernando East spoke about people who are involving them in the economic systems. They mentioned credit unions and co-operatives. They are creating a disaster area. They are lucky we have put things in place to revive that movement. In the programme, we have put in place expansion for the economy and involvement in business, the lowering of mortgages for first-time home owners, personal income taxes, corporation taxes for investment, the distribution of land, and bringing people into the financial system by providing them with land to enter into arrangement with the bank. All of these things are done precisely to bring people into the financial system in order to ensure that independence is transferred from the concept of a flag to the ownership of assets by people in their country. That is what the Ministry of Finance proposes, to give people a stake in the profitable state enterprise. The proposal is all about bringing people into the ownership of land, house, shares; of allowing them to participate in the national economy. It is a total misunderstanding perhaps or a refusal to understand. I just mentioned that we created 2,700 jobs this year.

2.55 p.m.

The proposals have either been misunderstood or there has been some concerted attempt not to understand and, therefore, to castigate the Government for all manner of things. But I will say that you do not bring an economy from ruin to positive economic growth in four years unless your policies are correct, unless you manage the economy and the finances properly, unless you care about the country and the people who live in it. Our record can speak for itself. The

criticisms of the Opposition have been hollow, vapid and they have been without any substance of fact. They have simply, in many ways, been rantings and ravings about things in general as has been the norm in this Parliament on many issues.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition made a better presentation than I expected, in the sense that he addressed some of the issues. But in doing so, the issues that he addressed were second place to the politics he was playing and that is always the problem. It is unfortunate that we have a culture of politics in this country that will not allow the acknowledgement of genuine achievements of the Government and the country, while at the same time presenting views of what might be possible for the country. You live politics and you will die politics. Politics will bury you.

All I want to say in closing is that talk is cheap and you cannot build a country on politics. On this side we may not have professional politicians, but we have had, in the last four years, a professional Government. That professional Government, working with the state sector, the public service, the private sector, community organizations and with the people, has brought this country to economic recovery. This same Government, working in the same way, and even harder, with increased resources, will help to take this country into the twenty-first century. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh (*Naparima*): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could find the conviction to congratulate the Government on its many rantings about development. I wish I could face the community and find on the faces of people everywhere in this country some measure of satisfaction, joy and hope. I wish that we had a country with the ethos for staying together as a unity and pulling in the same direction. But, all these hopes have not been realized, and today one could simply see in the budget a reflection of more despair to come.

Mr. Speaker, if that is expansion in the economy, for whom is it? If there is growth in the economy, who is sharing in the wealth of that growth? Certainly, not the vast majority of our people because everyday you read in the newspapers where it is the banks and some of the other large companies that are making the millions in profits. Therefore, one must be very careful not to equate growth with welfare in a society because if we cannot show that welfare is important, then we could talk as much GDP as we want; we could talk as much balance of payments surplus as we want; we could talk about the reduction of inflation, it still amounts

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to the most fundamental lack of satisfaction, that is, satisfying the needs of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the argument even about Caricom and that of a common external tariff for Trinidad and the rest of the Caricom countries, in a short while. We have been in this economic integration for some time and we have postulated that we have reached the position where we were a common market and obviously a common market would have long passed the situation in which a common external tariff ought to have been implemented.

To talk about a common external tariff is going back to the step of where you were a customs union. In that scenario, you should have been able, a long time ago, to put together a common external tariff and a common protective policy for the region, especially for the industries within the region. That is no big thing. What obviously it is pointing to in the world scenario, is the question: when will we be brave enough to come together in the Caribbean, not as separate entities, but as entities that would be willing to give some measure of national concessions one to another.

We must not forget the experience of the Federation because the Federation was an attempt to put together a political process and supposedly, that process failed. But in terms of our own development, the time might be here again to re-open that entire issue of a political federation, because if you do not have the co-ordination of economic, financial and monetary policies in the Caribbean, then at their whims and fancies, politicians are going to divide the community. Someday we will get up to find that someone wants to break the unity of Trinidad and Tobago.

3.05 p.m.

I want to indicate that the world trend of union from customs union to common market, to economic community as we are witnessing in Europe, the political union would more and more drive us to the position of being an integrated community where there is going to be free movement of labour and capital. We also ought to understand that the United States and Canada have entered into a free trade arrangement and in that free trade arrangement certain dislocations are taking place particularly in those communities in Canada. Maybe they are not so strong *viz-a-viz* the multinational corporations, but at the same time, there is an influx of cheap labour from Mexico into Canada and the United States and you are witnessing what is called social dislocation. How are we to cope with that

challenge? We can only hope that with the challenge of being a nation on the move and being progressive, we can mobilize our nation's resources, especially our human resource where it can be productive and less competitive within the national framework so as to be efficient for production in competition with the outer community. So, the saying that Japan has brought tremors to the United States and elsewhere, the United States is now responding to what is happening in Europe and the terms of trade would become increasingly less favourable for us in all our productive efforts in the years to come, until we can find a Caribbean and national spirit that could weld our nations together.

It is not enough to come here and merely talk in the national scenario about economic policies and what we have been doing and what is going on unless there is some measure of justice and equity for all our people. In the budget presented by the hon. Minister of Finance, he has stated that the objectives of the budget is firstly, to promote the welfare of the people and secondly, to put the economy back on a path of sustained growth; to diversify and make it internationally competitive. If we are to succeed in the second then we are likely to succeed in the first. He states:

"Unless the economy is put on a path of sustained growth, we will not create the environment for the creation of more jobs and the alleviation of poverty."

Is the honourable Minister now acknowledging the seriousness of the problem that has haunted and continues to haunt his Government? Is his conscience now being stirred for the first time? Has he and his Government given a place within their hearts to the voice against oppression of and violence to many people in the country? Permit me, Mr. Speaker, to quote from Pope John Paul in his message on the occasion of his visit to the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, Chile, on April 3, 1987:

"The challenge of poverty is so great that in order to overcome it the fullest advantage must be taken of the dynamism and creativity of private enterprise, its potential for effective action, its capacity for the effective allocation of resources and the fullness of its renovative energy. The public authorities for their part, cannot abdicate their responsibility for the supreme direction of the economic process, their capacity to mobilize the forces of the nation, to correct certain shortcomings which are characteristic of developing economies, and in short, their ultimate responsibility for the well being of the society as a whole."

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The Pope has obviously given theological significance to political and economic matters for he recognizes the sovereignty of God is overwhelming and all encompassing in the lives of men and women everywhere in the globe.

The hon. Minister has indicated that negative growth has ceased and that we are now returning to growth to the extent of 0.7 per cent. It is my view that the hon. Minister has advanced spurious arguments to relax our vigilance and to *mamaguy* the people once more. Everyone in the country knows the extent of unemployment, under employment, poverty, abuse and the number of people who are trying to get out of this country. I want to go back to the NAR manifesto in 1986 which says on the very first page:

“On the economic front, the situation steadily grows worse. Strikes, lockouts, collapse of financial houses, receiverships etc., have wreaked havoc with the lives of honest, hard-working citizens. Joblessness has become the order of the day. The Government cannot pay wages to its workers nor can it meet its financial commitments to the local government bodies and businessmen of the country. The working family, the very bedrock of our nation, struggles to stay together.

Yet, notwithstanding the woes which the people have to endure in the throes of this economic crisis, the government keeps demolishing the huts of the poor and the stalls of vendors in the most ruthless and arrogant fashion. Vagrancy abounds. Senior citizens in the care of the state are sent up in flames through criminal negligence at a hospital. People are treated as things, as though they are bloodless, without feelings, without desires, without minds. Such is the cold, calculated arrogance of the party in power.

As we approach the General Elections, the critical issues of the day are very clear!”

3.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, may I simply state how extremely relevant is the foregoing extract for today. If our concern is about people, then let us look at what is happening today in our country. A presentation at a seminar, Social Action for Justice and Peace at Fatima College, Port of Spain on January 27 sponsored by the Archdiocesan Commission, the audience was reminded that 25 per cent of the people of Trinidad and Tobago was living under the poverty line, according to a survey done by Dr. Ralph Henry of the Central Statistical Office at that time. The seminar concluded that the numbers might have been increased to about 40 per

cent today and a view was carried in the *Express* of Saturday, February 3, 1990 on page 9.

Mr. Speaker, in a more recent publication, the same Dr. Ralph Henry, who is now a UWI economist, found that 22 per cent of the population lived in poverty. He calculated the cheapest sources of food, clothing, rent and utilities and allowed for the absolute minimum and other incidentals for a family of four. Dr. Henry estimated that a single person needed \$288.47 per month to live. A family of three, \$822.76 and a family of five, \$1303.00. People earning less than this were considered to be living under the poverty line and figures arrived at show 200,000 such persons in this country. This was the finding just before the events of July 27, 1990.

According to the CSO bulletin, volume 1 (1) March 1990, 56.8 per cent of households in 1988 had four persons or more living in them; 21.5 per cent of the households earned less than \$500 monthly; 13.8 per cent earned between \$500 to \$999 and 16.2 per cent earned \$1,014.99. Was the hon. Minister, Gloria Henry, not prophetic when in June, 1990 she called for radical moves to help the poor? She said that the political pressures pushed administration towards high profile economic projects which do not always show adequate concern for people.

I have noticed the hon. Minister, Gloria Henry, in championing the cause of women, for the women more than anyone else, pay the price of adjustment. Much has also been said about the abuse of women and children. What is the Government's response? In the development programme \$560,700 is targeted and listed for social infrastructure. Would someone explain what is the social infrastructure? The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has been allocated a budget of \$297.2 million, 4.554 per cent of the budget which is considered to be at variance of \$2,314,895 from the original estimates of 1990. Development funds amount to only 0.2 per cent of the allocation. No Government can be serious about people when this sort of consideration is given to keeping soul, mind and body of a people together.

The *Trinidad Guardian* of Thursday 6, 1990, on page 3, postulated that over the next nine years the Government would have to provide 180,000 jobs. That is the amount needed now to take care of the unemployed and the under-employed. What about the 20,000 young people leaving school each year? What about the refugees who would have to return home to nothing since the Government

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pressured the Canadian Government into sending them back to protect its good name?

Mr. Eden Shand: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member is grossly misleading the House in suggesting that this Government pressured the Canadian Government into sending back refugees. He is completely wrong. The Canadian High Commissioner has already discredited that remark and I wish he would withdraw it.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Mr. Speaker, in short, this budget has no social conscience and I am afraid that it has the potential for more social convulsions in the society. As already demonstrated, the pensions *etc*; have been mere crumbs which are not worth the effort to collect.

Mr. Speaker, the politicizing of the LID Programme is merely planting the seeds of destruction of the NAR Government because for every Government supporter employed, nine others are alienated in the community. They must stop the wholesale discrimination against non-members and non-supporters of the party and not only be just, but also appear to be just.

3.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, a country as rich as ours must find a scheme to meet the basic needs of food, shelter, health and education of the unemployed until appropriate jobs are found for them. If we go back to the manifesto again on page 20 we are going to find, and I quote:

"The NAR will restructure the National Insurance Scheme. Substantial resources accrued to the Scheme during the period of high employment. The Scheme will be modified to provide for the introduction of an Unemployment Insurance provision in addition to the existing benefits. Such provision will be carefully regulated and will allow a maximum limit of support for families in a given period."

No such intimations, after four years, were made in the budget for social relief of our people.

The country is experiencing a spiralling effect of decadence in other institutions. The education system is now becoming meaningless and inadequate. The education system is the heart of any society. Education ought to transmit knowledge, impart values, inculcate discipline and skills to its participants relevant to the needs of the society. The education system is the microcosm of the larger

society. It must provide the leverage for development—human, material and spiritual.

If we look at the Macro Planing Framework an attempt is made to operationalize the policy of the NAR manifesto. The education system according to the policy, seeks to promote—

- "—Development of a sense of nationhood and the building of a sense of self;
- Appreciation and concern for the environment.
- An understanding and appreciation of the cultural forms of our peoples, both local and regional.
- Self-reliance.
- A sense of the value for work and of learning.
- Reaffirmation of basic moral and spiritual values.
- A sense of excellence and the development of standards with particular reference to intellectual standards.
- A spirit of unity and understanding among all ethnic and religious groups while preserving diversity and individuality, and
- Enable students to become technologically literate so as to be able to function effectively in a technological world."

Mr. Speaker, these criteria cannot bear fruit unless we believe in them and promote their realization by funding them. The 1991 budget has indicated that a VAT rebate will be provided for targeted groups in the public school system at the rate of \$150 per primary school child and \$150 per secondary school child. Recipients will be identified by the Ministry of Education and school principals. I want to know about the criteria and mechanism for administering such a programme. Will there be a means test? I submit this process would be cumbersome and counter-productive.

Once again I call for the total removal of VAT on all books. The marginal addition of about \$20 million to the Treasury is destroying our most valuable resource—our young people, for when hungry and cannot buy books, they would be forced to curtail their educational development. VAT on books is being penny-wise and pound foolish. It has been pointed out to me that the United Kingdom has VAT but school books and educational resources are free to all students. Let

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me plead once more for accessibility of education for at least it becomes the preserve of a few—that is, the elite in the society.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to really take a look at the Education Reform Act 1988, of Britain, Chapter V in section 106 on page 111:

- "(1) No charge shall be made in respect of admission to any maintained school.
- (5) No charge shall be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil at any maintained school for any prescribed public examination for which the pupil has been prepared at the school.
- (6) Neither the parent of any such pupil nor the pupil himself shall be required to pay for or supply any materials, books, instrument or other equipment for the purposes of or in connection with—
- (a) education provided for the pupil at the school in respect of which by virtue of this section no charge may be made, or
- (b) any syllabus for a prescribed public examination which is a syllabus for which the pupil has been prepared at the school.
- (7) No charge shall be made in respect of transport provided for a registered pupil at any such school where the transport is either—
- (a) incidental to education provided for the pupil at the school in respect of which by virtue of this section the charge may be made, or
- (b) provided for the purpose of enabling him to meet any examination requirement for any syllabus for a prescribed public examination which is a syllabus for which he has been prepared at the school."

Would this Government be just enough to restore to our students part of their birthright, an education that is accessible? Students elsewhere receive free books, materials, syllabi and transportation. Our children are denied, much to the agony of their parents.

Roughly \$84 million has been allocated for development works and is listed for social infrastructure for building, refurbishing or improvements to schools. One recognizes that the education allocation takes approximately 12.9 per cent of the budget and how it is used is a different matter. At page 12 of the *Trinidad Guardian* on Friday, December 7, 1990, Director of Continuing Studies at

U.W.I., Edmond Ramesar is appealing for an urgent increase of the ratio of student pursuing tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago and I quote:

"The present university complement of 4,500 persons is considered unacceptable as it represents 35 per cent or barely 1/3 of one per cent of the country's population of 1.25 million people."

One might be tempted to argue that there has been an increase of student registration at UWI since the introduction of the CESS. Is it not a fact, that since the devaluation of the dollar in 1988, those students who would normally seek a foreign university have now found it cheaper to study at home and those with the marginally higher matriculation grades are ousting those who satisfy the basic entrance requirement because of greater competition?

Let the Government tell the population what percentage of the graduating students are repaying the loans. If they cannot find jobs will they have to migrate or be refugees? Tertiary education is hitting rock bottom. Recently UWI lecturers threatened action for they did not have a salary increase in six years, as shown by the *Trinidad Guardian* of Tuesday December 11, 1990. Dr. Singh said that the academic staff at St. Augustine did not receive salary increases since 1984 while campuses at Jamaica and Barbados had two consecutive settlements. There was serious deterioration of resources, facilities and relationships. The institution is on the verge of collapse because of the failure to conclude agreements for the academic and senior administrative staff. Student morale is very low at St. Augustine and the university is unable to attract high quality staff. There are 51 vacancies at present with another 19 staffers away on no pay leave. That leaves 21 per cent of the positions vacant.

3.35 p.m.

Would someone from the Government rise and explain to the nation, this state of affairs? Would someone explain why there is an 85—90 per cent failure rate in technical vocational courses, according to the former Minister of Education and about the system of allocation of students to courses? Tell the nation how much money goes down the drain for the costly failures and who is responsible?

After four years there has been no significant transformation of the education system. We get taken up with issues that are not critical to the lives of so many people in our country. Would someone explain what is the reason for keeping the Board of Industrial Training and the National Training Board as separate entities when they are doing apparently the same work? And can we say with conviction

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that in spite of the good work these organizations have done over the years those graduating have been placed in jobs in our industries? The special education fiasco of our schools, to hear the ex-Minister, Mr. Clive Pantin say, not enough was done for special education, is in my view a very hypocritical statement since he assumed the rein of authority in that Ministry.

We know very well that there is stagnation within the processes of the education system with respect to recognizing merit and quality. I have often complained and would continue to complain about the system of remuneration, and promotion in the primary and secondary schools. You know very well that by and large in very many schools promotion is done on the basis of seniority and there are many teachers in the system who would refuse, once they have attained the qualification, to continue to refresh themselves in courses and only wait until the time of promotion, and when there are bright teachers around they stultify the effort of those teachers.

It is time also to encourage, by way of incentive, the efforts of other people. There are many other people in the school system who would advance themselves educationally and professionally but there is no mechanism whereby they can be used effectively. They again have to go back under the administration and guidance of principals who may be close to retirement and are frustrated. Unless this matter could be addressed, the education system will not move forward. Special education would be a failure because by and large the principals do not recognize teachers with special qualifications and even the system does not recognize these qualifications. Apart from the lack of other incentives, recently there was an article which indicated why teachers like to stay away from certain things.

I want to draw to the attention of this House, the case of one of my constituents. I want an explanation why Dr. Sheila Rambissoon is still teaching at a primary school in this country. A lady who has the following qualifications: a Phd in 1988; MA in 1984, Masters of Education 1983, FCP 1981, LCP 1978, ACP 1976, T1 1973 and there has been every effort to frustrate the lady by not placing her in a position where she could make an appropriate contribution to the society. This is the concern for excellence.

Let us look at indiscipline in schools. Has anything been done about it? The campus principal has said that our school system has declined and I quote the *Trinidad Guardian* of Friday, October 12, 1990, page 1.

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

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Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. K. Ramnath*]

Question put and agreed to.

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh: Mr. Speaker, I quote the leading educator who is a campus principal. His name is Richards:

"The country's future success will be determined in good measure by our ability to rejuvenate the secondary school system and failure to do so will result in the reduced capacity of Trinidad and Tobago to solve its economic and social problems."

According to Professor Max Richards:

"The present crisis in schools has received little more than elegant rhetoric at best and at worst, a blatant failure to acknowledge that problems exist. The most significant challenge facing the country is to restore the former quality in secondary school education."

Mr. Speaker, I think this principal has spoken volumes. Therefore, we must not allow these serious comments to go unnoticed. As has been pointed out, we do not need elegant rhetoric; we need equality.

Mr. Speaker, permit me now to look at the health services. If there is any institution in our country under pressure, it is the Ministry of Health in 1990. I sympathise and I empathize with the former Minister of Health. It is my suspicion that everything had been done to make him look like a complete failure. Be that as it may, we have had so much public response to the health sector that it was one of the issues that brought about certain traumatic experiences for the citizens of this country.

Among the problems in the health service was the shortage of staff. Are our health institutions, at this point in time, equipped in terms of personnel, to meet the needs of our people? Have we adequate medical personnel? Where have many nurses of our country gone and why? It is an issue about which I feel sad.

I know for a fact that the late, hon. Leo Des Vignes left this Chamber on Saturday, July 28, 1990 to seek medical attention. On the day of our release, Wednesday, August 1, 1990, we were shocked to learn about the passing away of our colleague. Mr. Speaker, were all the mechanisms put in place at the Port of

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Spain General Hospital to adequately deal with that situation? I feel that matter will be hovering in the minds of many unless there is an enquiry into the operations of the Port of Spain General Hospital to get to the reasons for the passing away of our dear colleague.

Dr. Hosein: I thank the hon. Member for giving way. May I take the opportunity, at this stage, before the hon. Member for Naparima goes any further, to assure him and the nation that the Port of Spain General Hospital, which bore the brunt of all the injuries as a result of the events of July 27, 1990 handled them all—over 160 gunshot wounds, over 50 other major wounds caused by injuries, people cut with glass, including the treatment of the late hon. Member for Diego Martin Central, Mr. Des Vignes. We were able to handle them more than adequately—all the drugs, surgical instruments, bandages and everything imaginable. Indeed it was widely reported in the newspapers at that time that it was more than adequate and I wish to assure, not only the Member for Naparima and this House and the nation, but the family of Mr. Des Vignes that all was done for him. The eventual cause of death of Mr. Des Vignes is public knowledge and I think the Member for Naparima should desist from pursuing that line. I ask him to please withdraw that statement because the implications of what he is saying are very broad and most unfortunate. I thank you.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Mr. Speaker, I thank the former Minister of Health for his explanation but if my memory serves me right, he stayed with us in this Chamber until the very day that he is talking about, so I do not know whether he is talking from his own supervision or from reports that have been given to him.

Mr. Sudama: Why were you sacked from your Ministry?

Mr. Speaker: Order please. Let us stop the cross-talk so that the Member can continue.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Mr. Speaker, I thank the ex-Minister of Health for his explanation. I also thank him for his personal services rendered to myself and others, even the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, would the Government tell the nation at this time about the problems affecting the staff at the main operating theatre, particularly with respect to the intensive care unit? Why are patients being housed in the theater recovery room?

3.55 p.m.

I see here in the highlights of the Budget presentation, allocation to health increased by \$54.5 million or 10.3 per cent to meet additional purchases of drugs and food and for the refurbishing of health centres as well as the expansion of the San Fernando Hospital. Also, I see new services were brought on stream at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, namely children, out-patients services, same-day surgery and radiology services. I am not sure that some of the fundamental problems affecting the health care of our people are being looked at, for example, faulty and inadequate equipment throughout the health institutions, trolleys, wheel chairs and portable X-ray machines and ECG machines and so on. My information is that we do not have adequate provision for these equipment. That is why I was so happy that at least one doctor had the courage in an article in the *Trinidad Guardian* of May, 1990, page 8 to talk about the sorry state of the San Fernando Hospital. He outlined the deficiencies; the reasons for the loss of nurses; the bureaucracy; for other things packed in boxes like equipment that have been lying around for some length of time elsewhere. The doctor was good enough to print his name—Dr. Steve Smith, MD, BS, UWI, MRCK, Consultant Physician. *[Interruption]* They will not fire him since good sense and common sense will indicate that they must not interfere with a good citizen like this who ignored all the promises of promotion and spoke the truth. I commend this article to all those who are involved in the administration of the health services. It is a good article.

Has there been any attempt made to correct structural faults of the central block which results in the overcrowding in Wards 21, 31, 41 and 51 and Ward 16 falling into Ward 2 in the General Hospital? What sort of allocation in the budget is made to provide for the alleviation of these problems? I have a list of so many problems at the institution. I do not really want to get into them but only to say that the health institutions are crucial for our people. You must have at least a reasonable health care service for our population. Much has been said about it in the manifesto and in the *Medium-Term Macro Planning Framework 1989—1995*. If positive action is not taken quickly, it would be catastrophic even upon the psyche of our people who know that they cannot afford to get sick and who would consider moving to other countries where at least they know they would have adequate health services. That is important. I do not want to rehash all that has been said in all these clippings which I have in my possession.

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If ever in any year one problem stood out, it was at the Ministry of Health. Yes, they have spoken about improved facilities to Arima and Couva Hospitals. They have not even considered the Princes Town Hospital. During the past four years I have always asked persons in the Ministry of Health at least to do some sort of refurbishing and upgrading of the Princes Town District Hospital which is placed on Naparima soil but there has been no response whatsoever to that plight.

I would not get into the matter of agriculture. I know that another one of my colleagues will deal with that. I ask, merely, what has become of the Princes Town market? So long the county council has been removed at exorbitant cost to a rented building to facilitate the building of a market and nothing has happened. I merely wish to mention that because that too, is something outstanding.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot forget that we have experienced some anxiety in the constituency of Naparima and admittedly, I have made some requests of the Minister of Works and Infrastructure to whom he has responded in some ways, but I still want to remind the House that some of the problems in Naparima are still there. I hope that Naparima will be allocated a reasonable amount of the provisions made for the paving of roads to bring the roads to the level that is acceptable.

4.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I have also spoken to the Minister of Public Utilities and I have pointed out that the Telephone Company has put telephones in the most remote parts of Naparima and it ought to have been done. That is a good thing. What I do not understand is why one of the most populous villages, that of Borde Narve, where the people are in dire need of the service, and have been making representation for some time, does not have this service. I cannot understand the logic for the non-inclusion of the village of Borde Narve in the telephone system hook-up as against some of the other remote villages. Again, I ask the Minister of Public Utilities to consider that in the development programme and at least let me have that.

Mr. Speaker, I have always maintained some level of communication with most Members of the Government but I do hope that level of communication would not degenerate to a level where all that is needed is a pat on the shoulder. What is really needed are facilities to alleviate some of the perennial problems of the people in Naparima. I have spoken to the Minister of National Security and he has indicated to me that Barrackpore would get a police station, but I do not think I saw that provision made in the development programme. So many things could

happen but provisions have not been made, as in the case of the Princes Town market.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that I am not impressed at all with the level of development and the provisions for people and their welfare. I also want to indicate that unless we can, as a country, pull ourselves together, we cannot move forward. I am not at all very optimistic that the present system of this Westminster style of Government does justice to our citizens. Even if we are serious, we are going to concern ourselves with finding the kind of solution that would reduce the cleavages in our society and bring about the sort of integration which is necessary. We are a small country and in order to survive there is the need for national unity. I wonder if that spirit could be recreated. Unless that spirit of national unity and national government can merge again, all our hopes will falter into the abyss of rhetoric and lack of development instead of progress. Thank you.

The Minister of Food Production and Marine Exploitation (Dr. The Hon. Brinsley Samaroo): Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate my own Ministry with the others which have so proudly praised the Minister of Finance for the budget which he presented to us earlier this week. Even though all of us did not get all that we wanted in the intense competition for resources, we are quite satisfied with what we have and I am quite sure that we shall be able to give a good account of ourselves in 1991.

I wish to, however, express my very deep regret that the Member for Couva North is not here this afternoon, because I would have liked to pay him the compliment of saying that of all the people who have spoken on the other side, he was the best. We enjoyed him most of all. If I frame what I have to say very much in response to what he said, it is because he, more than anyone else on that side, raised a number of very important and relevant issues which I think we ought to look at very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, in listening to the Leader of the Opposition, I am clearly reminded of a statement which he made after this Government's first presentation of the budget in 1987 when he was on this side. In conversation with a few of us afterwards, he confided that his first reaction to the budget presentation was to stand up and oppose. Long before 1987 he had become so used to opposing everything, that even when he became part of Government, he could have done nothing but oppose. Even when someone else was Leader of the Opposition, be that Member a former Member for Siparia, or the present Member for San

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Fernando East, the Member for Couva North must have the office of Leader of the Opposition. On each occasion he would raise all hell to regain the crown of Opposition Leader. In this debate, to his obvious delight, he was happy in his usual home once again where, I am quite sure, he would remain as loyal Leader of the Opposition for the rest of his political life. What a pleasurable task that must be, Mr. Speaker. Power without responsibility; power to scandalize persons of high character without any moral obligation; power to make all kinds of charges without providing one shred of evidence. He said "there is corruption in cost overruns in many of the Government projects". But he did not give an example of even one Government project where there is that cost overrun and the corruption which is involved in that cost overrun. In other words, the lawyer assumes a different habit once he dons the apparel of a politician.

4.15 p.m.

The Leader of the Opposition seems to be particularly worried about Ministers and supergrade houses. Twice in his speech he said that all Ministers—and both times he used the words all Ministers—have been given supergrade houses. Can he indicate which house was allocated to the Member for Toco/Manzanilla, the Member for Arouca South, to the Member for Nariva, the Member for Chaguanas and the Member for Caroni East? Yet he said that all Cabinet Ministers got supergrade houses. If he is so much against the allocation of houses to Ministers, why did he accept one when he was Minister? He certainly did, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Couva North has such a callous disregard for the truth. Vishnu Ramlogan, he said quit as Chairman of Caroni to avoid being made a fool of by this Government. Ramlogan himself has stated very clearly and publicly that he was resigning because the union, of which the Member for Couva North is leader, was insisting that he should appoint a person whom he had dismissed for disciplinary charges. The Member for Couva North is himself on record as saying that he was out of the country when this happened and if he was in the country then things would have happened differently. Yet since that time, he has suffered a loss of memory and came to this House and said that Vishnu Ramlogan resigned because the Government was after him.

The Member for Couva North appears to be very anti-PNM. He talks about the PNM, NAR style. The venom of his presentation was directed equally against the PNM as it was against the NAR. One whom he described as "the distinguished Member for St. Augustine" seems to be very fond of the PNM. I would like to read

a statement from the *Trinidad Guardian* of Wednesday, December 12—Page 3. It says that:

“Humphrey said he was once a PNM member.”

and then it quotes the said Humphrey—whoever that is—

“And there is an old saying, ‘Once a PNM always a PNM’.”

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, if it is that the hon. Member is referring to the hon. Member for St. Augustine, let me assure you that the records of the PNM do not now include his name.

Dr. Samaroo: Just to repeat the quotation:

“And there is an old saying, ‘Once a PNM always a PNM’.”

That Mr. Humphrey, should tell you something. It certainly tells us something. Yesterday he was pointing out to the Members behind him and saying, "this bench, and I am happy to say, the Members behind us" and he included them in his sentiments. So, what we are seeing is an independent UNC in the Lower House.

The Member for Couva North proclaims that he has a multiracial party and it is the same Member for St. Augustine who, as late as the month of May of this year, said that the party is an absolutely racist party which does not like white people. It is the same Member for St. Augustine who said in a public statement that he now understands the problem that somebody called Robinson had with somebody called Ramnath, when Ramnath was in the same party with Robinson.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of charges that the Member for Chaguanas answered very effectively, but there is one particularly scandalous charge that the Member for Couva North made against this Government. He said, “that Government” and he pointed on this side, "prevented Caroni Limited from giving assistance to the Montano Farms, as if to show some political bias on the part of this Government.”. So, we killed the project that was being done at the Montano Farms at Carli Bay.

I would like to inform the country of the dishonesty of that charge and to put into the record, statements in that regard. On June 8, 1989, the Director of Fisheries in the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation wrote to the Managing Director of Caroni Limited:

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"Dear Sir,

Ray Montano Shrimp Farms Limited,"

and he gave to Caroni Limited, the options that they may follow if they wish:

- “(1) Caroni (1975) Limited may lease to Montano Shrimp Farm, 30 acres of land with the option to extend to 100 acres;
- (2) Caroni (1975) Limited may enter into a joint arrangement with Montano Shrimp Farms Limited;
- (3) Caroni (1975) Limited may wish to enter joint venture arrangement with Montano Shrimp Farms Limited and proceed directly with the development of 30 acres of land and on terms and conditions mutually agreed by both parties.”

The Government was quite clear in its support for the venture and the Minister indicated that the decision had been given by the Cabinet in 1977. Here in 1989 we were telling Caroni how to proceed.

Here is a letter from the Chairman and Managing Director of Caroni Limited which we received in our Ministry on July 19, 1989 and I wish to put this into the record:

“Caroni has carefully considered the contents of your letter of June 8, 1989 and the two evaluations of the technical reports that were done.

In view of the contents of the evaluations of the technical reports, Caroni has very grave reservations about making more land available to Montano Shrimp Farms at this stage. Should the Government insist however, then Caroni will have to make the land available.”

It is quite clear that it was Caroni which had found the whole experiment in shrimp farming being done by Montano unviable and so they said in this letter. Yet here you have the Member for Couva North saying to the public of this country that it is "that Government" which prevented Caroni from leasing additional land to the Montano Shrimp Farm Limited. I hope that the Montano family understands most clearly—in fact, they know that we have now taken steps, as the Member for Chaguanas has indicated, to review the whole project and to bring it on stream in 1991, once again. We have made very clear proposals to them in that particular venture.

I think the record has to be made very clear and the Member for Couva North must be far more careful in making these wild and callous statements against this Government. Coming from that kind of perspective of bitterness, one can understand the diatribe that he gave before this Parliament in his speech. For example, he sees nothing at all in the 1991 budget that will do anything to create employment. Has he read a document called the Public Sector Investment Programme 1991? On Page 28 it states quite clearly what the Government is doing about education. The Member for Couva North said that he heard a Minister of Government saying that many schools are in a dilapidated condition. That is very correct. It is because of that, the Government has proceeded to build—between 1987 and 1991, 36 schools.

I will give you the details now. The 18 primary schools to be constructed under this programme will be completed in 1991. Those 18 schools are Debe Presbyterian, I do not know in which constituency that is; Hindustan Baptist, Plum Mitan Presbyterian—work on Plum Mitan has already started—St. Augustine South Government—I do not know which constituency that is. A total of 18 schools are to be built in 1991. The construction of these schools will bring to 36, the number of schools built under the programme, a two-fold increase above the original number planned and providing a total of over 17,000 school places. The Learning Resource Center will be completed and commissioned in the early part of the year—again whose constituency?

We are talking about 36 new schools in only one of the Government's many programmes. Who have been and will be employed in these 36 schools as masons, carpenters, cleaners and teachers? People from Kuwait? Yet the Member for Couva North said that absolutely no kind of employment is being created. Even if he did not have time to look at the Public Sector Investment Development Programme, the least he could have done is look on page 49 of the Minister of Finance's Budget Speech where the Minister states that in addition to these 36 primary schools and the Learning Resource Center:

“Three (3) additional secondary schools will be built.”

4.25 p.m.

When a Minister in this Government said that the schools are in a dilapidated state and the Member for Couva North quotes that, he is right. We have noticed that and that is why there is this massive school building project providing thousands of jobs in this country. Has the Leader of the Opposition even reflected

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on the employment that is being created in agriculture, as we successfully feed 54,000 primary school children all over the nation and as we now contemplate an expansion of this programme in 1991? Or does he have any idea of the additional employment that will be created as we undertake the feeding of 6,000 persons in 1991 at a cost of \$7 million? The Member for Naparima said there are no indications for social relief. If there are no indications for social relief, what is this? We are going to feed 6,000 people in addition to 2,500 people that were fed in 1990.

Of course the Member for Couva North very early in his presentation derogates the use of statistics on the balancing of accounts and figures and so on. He said the Government is only concerned about accounting but in the very next breath he went on into great details, quoting all kinds of figures comprehensively to demonstrate the rise of unemployment and the debt payment. That is why his speech was so inconsistently illogical. On one hand he said we used too many figures, on the other hand he did exactly the same thing. Does he really believe that no employment would be generated when 92 LID projects get on stream in February 1991 at a cost of \$70 million as the budget speech indicates on page 18? In 1990 some 25,000 persons were employed with a smaller number of projects and less money. So are we now to expect that with more projects and money the employment will be lower? Only a mind that sees gloom and doom in everything can make such a prediction. What about the employment that is going to be created by those Ministries which have been deliberately given increased allocations in 1991, in labour intensive areas of the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization? Members of the Opposition must read and understand what is said about increases in this Ministry, on page 64 of the budget which I will quote:

"The provision for the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization for 1991 represents an increase of 2.9 per cent over the 1990 allocation of \$957.0 million.

The most significant area which will benefit from the increased provision is paving and maintenance of roads. The total projected expenditure for these activities increased by 29.4 per cent from \$42.9 million in 1990 to \$55.5 million in 1991. With respect to maintenance of roads alone, the provision increased from \$4.0 million in 1990 to \$11.9 million in 1991. The allocation for paving of roads increased from \$38.9 million in 1990 to \$43.6 million in 1991."

The Member for Naparima can rest assured that he will certainly have some paving done in his area but the most important point I want to make is—

Mr. Sudama: Would the Member give way to a question? Is the Member giving the assurance on behalf of the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization that these works will be undertaken in Naparima? I want him to clarify that.

Dr. Samaroo: What I can give is the undertaking that work will be done throughout Trinidad and Tobago. That is at Naparima, Oropouche, and every constituency in this country.

Mr. Speaker: The sitting is suspended for half an hour.

4.35 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.10 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Dr. The Hon. Brinsley Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we took the tea break I was dealing with the avenues that are being made available for employment against the background of the charges made by Members on the other side: that the Government was providing no opportunity whatever for any kind of increase in employment. I referred them to the increased allocations that have been made to the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization. They must also look at the increases in the allocations made to the Ministry of Settlements and Public Utilities outlined on page 69 of the budget speech where not only will more employment be created, but so many hitherto neglected villages and communities will, for the first time, be able to access necessities of life such as water and electricity.

Only three weeks ago, for example, the Minister of Settlements and Public Utilities commissioned a \$2.9 million water project that would supply water in 1991 to a large number of communities from a booster station in Guaico, to a large number of communities extending into Cunaripo, Nestor Village, Tamana and thousands of people in an area that was hitherto totally neglected. This she did, in addition to an allocation of \$500,000 for a project to provide water in another part of that neglected area, the Coalmine area. Already people from the area are being employed to work on these two projects.

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While the Leader of the Opposition revels in the increasing tirades about the alienation of people from the society, these very people about whom he is speaking are busily engaging themselves in self-help programmes aimed at improving the quality of life in their local communities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to page 41 of the Development Programme 1990 to give you an idea of what has been done in the area of self-help only in 1990. I am not going to talk about what has happened before on page 41—Aided Self-Help:

"The National Commission for self-help continues to pursue its mandate of facilitation, promotion and implementation of self-help projects in 1990. A total of 106 self-help projects were initiated by the end of the third quarter of 1990. Of this total, 49 projects involved the resurfacing of roadways and provision of drainage facilities."

Then they give a number of beneficiary communities.

"Several projects were also implemented in other parts of Trinidad and Tobago in addition to these mentioned. Self-help projects aimed at increasing accessibility of communities to water supplies number 26, while the commission continued, and in some cases, began work on 26 projects involving the provision of recreational and educational facilities."

In almost every constituency of this nation people have been rising up in their own interest, getting projects going, raising funds to help themselves and soliciting donations from state and private agencies. The people of the three eastern constituencies, Toco/Manzanilla, Nariva and Ortoire/Mayaro, have particularly benefited from these self-help projects, as areas which were neglected for as long as we can remember, now have water and electricity and are assisting themselves in the building of access roads.

On the one day those people listened to the talk of alienation, on the very next day they approached and are assisted by these very agencies which they are told are discriminating against them. These are areas in which considerable employment is being created directly and indirectly in addition to providing the facilities that so many of them require in these neglected villages.

It is that same forward-looking, careful kind of planning that has characterized developments in agriculture and in fishing. At a time of tight financial stringency which is now beginning to turn, the agricultural sector has been one of definite growth as the Minister of Finance has indicated on page 26 of his budget speech:

"This sector has performed consistently well. In real terms its contribution to GDP has increased from 2.5 per cent in 1986 to an estimated 3.6 per cent in 1990."

All of this, as the Member for Caroni East mentioned earlier, have come as a result of deliberate Government policy. I would like to illustrate to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how this Government's policy has been responsible for such encouraging growth and how we can detail the particulars of such developments. In the first instance, at a time when there is much debate internationally on the usefulness of subsidies, this Government has maintained subsidy payments in a number of areas which have been of considerable help in boosting agriculture and fishing.

Only last week, for example, Cabinet approved the final payment of \$29 million to our cane farmers for this year's production of 691,000 tonnes of sugarcane, the highest in 10 years. Of this \$29 million, no less than \$13 million is the subsidy payment. I have assured the cane farmers that they would receive the full \$29 million which they are owed before Christmas. The same can be said for cocoa and coffee.

In an effort to encourage greater production of our high quality cocoa, the Ministry this year reduced the price of cocoa and coffee from 75 cents to 50 cents a plant; initiated a programme of cocoa rehabilitation and of re-planting as the circumstances dictated, and pay our cocoa and coffee farmers the highest price paid for cocoa and coffee anywhere in the world: \$9.55 per kilo for plantation grade cocoa and \$8.66 per kilo for first-grade coffee. There is no other part of the world where such high prices are paid for cocoa and coffee.

The subsidy paid to our cocoa and coffee farmers amounted to \$10.4 million. In like manner, milk production has increased to the extent where one company, Trinidad Food Products Limited, is now offering to supply fresh milk to the entire School Feeding Programme, in addition to the other everyday uses of such milk. Milk collecting depots are now springing up all over central and south Trinidad as more and more farmers are getting into cattle rearing. This again, is not a shot in the dark. It is as a result of a milk subsidy programme that has paid just over \$9 million in subsidy in 1990 only. It is as a result of a functioning artificial insemination service and of the diligent efforts of our veterinary officers both government and private.

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5.20 p.m.

As we move now into the new area of an embryo transplant technology, which the hon. Minister of Finance mentioned in his presentation, milk and meat production will further increase. In addition to these subsidies, the Ministry has paid over \$1 million this year in subsidy on tractors and machinery, fishing gear, agricultural vehicles, boats, engines and fuel tax rebates for fishermen. In fact, the total amount paid by the Ministry of Food Production in subsidy this year including the \$13 million in subsidy to be paid to the cane farmers, amounts to some \$33 million. That has been a definite boost to the development of agriculture and fishing. These are not the only subsidies paid by this Government to agriculture. Two Thursdays ago the Cabinet again decided to pay \$3,074,000 million for outstanding balances to copra producers and these are not balances that were owed only by this Government. They were balances that were pending in some cases since 1981. We have now decided to settle the copra producers who have been at us for over one year now by this allocation of over \$3 million. We shall speak shortly of the rice subsidy.

The point I am making is that the subsidy payments have been very successful and they have had the desired effect of considerably increasing agricultural production. Besides subsidies, the Government has, by other deliberate policy decisions, been contributing to the development of agriculture and fishing. Through discreet negative listing we have effectively prevented the influx of agricultural products from non-Caricom areas thus allowing an umbrella for the growth of local agriculture.

The Leader of the Opposition questioned us about that and indicated that he was not satisfied with the way in which we were protecting local agriculture. I would simply refer him to page 24 of the Minister of Finance's budget speech where he gives the specific criteria for selecting items to the negative listing. Any examination of those conditions which he gave on page 24, would show how deliberately agriculture is protected. That policy of protection through negative listing will continue in 1991. Therefore, our farmers can rest assured that they would not be sacrificed for foreign competition.

In addition, the Government would bring into being anti-dumping legislation which was mentioned both by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Industry and Enterprise—anti-dumping legislation will be introduced in this Parliament in 1991. Such legislation would, of course, give added protection to our agriculture.

A third major area of deliberate emphasis on the part of the Government has been that of training of farmers and of those who wish to become involved in farming at the professional and production levels. As we move closer to the twenty-first century, it is necessary that our people be acquainted with modern technology and with business practices in agriculture. Our farmers too, must learn to deal with things like toxic chemicals for pest and weed control and with the requirements of the export market. The Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry continues to provide agricultural and forestry graduates as well as educators in agricultural science, not only for this country but for most of the Caribbean area.

Under a technical assistance programme through the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation and Agriculture, 11 seminars were held throughout the country on small business management for rural development in Trinidad and Tobago. A number of manuals have been produced by this institution which the farmers are using. The objective of that project was the training of farmers, farmers' co-operatives and agriculture entrepreneurs in the basic techniques of small business management.

Other initiatives are being taken; training courses and seminars being carried out by the Agricultural Development Bank, the Small Business Development Company and the YTEPP facility. The Farmers' Training Centre at Centeno and the Kendall Farm School in Tobago, provide practical courses in agriculture for all types of farmers while the Caribbean Fisheries, Training and Development Institute at Chaguaramas provides training in modern fishing and fish processing. The Farmers' Training Centre at Centeno deserves special attention. Between 1987 and 1990, they conducted no fewer than 77 courses to 2,942 farmers in such areas like crop and livestock production, food preservation, aquaculture, ornamentals, soil conservation and food preservation. One of the additional supports to the agricultural thrust in this country—again very deliberately engineered—has been the strengthening of the capability of the Agricultural Development Bank so that it could become an active agency for the development of farming and fishing.

I would like to give you just a very brief idea of what the Agricultural Development Bank has been doing in this year. I would not go into the good work it has done during the past years, but I would give you an idea of the significant contribution that it is making in the year 1990. Between January and October, 1990 the ADB approved a total of 1,669 loans valued at \$59.6 million which exceeded the performance of 1989 by 34 loans and by \$3 million. I want to give an

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idea of the geographical distribution of such loans: St. Patrick and Victoria—517 loans; Caroni—393 loans; St. George East and West—227 loans; St. Andrew/St. David—154 loans; Nariva/Mayaro—264 loans; Tobago—114 loans. An analysis of loans by size ranges, indicates that 672 loans or 40 per cent were between zero and \$5,000; 472 loans or 28 per cent between \$5,000 and \$10,000; 281 or 17 per cent between \$10,000 and \$25,000; 194 or 12 per cent of the loans were between \$25,000 and \$100,000 and 50 loans or 3 per cent of the loans were above \$100,000.

On an activity basis, the breakdown of loans approved can be summarized in the following way:

Crops—a total of \$13.1 million—the majority of the money went to small scale producers in sugarcane, vegetable root crops.

Livestock—\$10.6 million and this was concentrated in the dairy industry and pigs and poultry.

Fish—\$4.8 million was approved for fishing with money being allocated for the maintenance of pirogue outfits, purchase of new multi-purpose boats and the maintenance and purchase of new pirogues and other small vessels, particularly in Tobago.

Agro-industry—\$5.5 million.

Agricultural co-operatives—\$2.2 million.

Ornamental horticulture—\$1.1 million.

Aquaculture—\$8 million and other activities \$1.5 million.

The point of all this is that the ADB has been very active in assisting thousands of our farmers and not only assisting by these loans and the numbers in the distribution that I have mentioned, but also to the dispensation of technical and other services, including assisting in the whole training process for agriculture and fishing.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, by now I could seek to answer the question that would be typically put by the Members on the other side, namely: what has all this planning and deliberate policy in agriculture done to improve agriculture? What can you show by way of demonstration? How has agriculture improved? In other

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words, what are the tangible results of all these policies and of all this planning which we have done? I would answer by illustrating how this country has benefited.

First of all, if we talk about the holding of prices, keeping down prices and keeping the most used commodities within the reach of the average consumer; I have said on many public occasions that there is no other Caribbean country where one can obtain as wide a variety of fruits and vegetables as can be obtained in Trinidad and Tobago and at the prices which we obtain such fruits and vegetables in Trinidad and Tobago. In order to demonstrate this, I requested the Central Marketing Agency, in the month of July 1990, to conduct a survey of vegetable prices in the southern Caribbean region. These are some of the prices for commodities, by the kilo, given in the countries' currencies. I hope you will take careful note of that.

String Bean	Price per lb
Trinidad and Tobago	\$2.84
Barbados	\$5.94
St. Vincent	\$4.75
St. Lucia	\$3.76
Cabbage	
Trinidad and Tobago	\$2.39
Barbados	\$6.28
St. Vincent	\$4.53
St. Lucia	\$7.08
Pumpkin	Price per kilo
Trinidad and Tobago	\$1.58
Barbados	\$2.43
St. Vincent	\$2.18
St. Lucia	\$0.73
Watermelon	Price per kilo
Trinidad and Tobago	\$1.81

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Barbados	\$2.59
St. Vincent	\$2.46
St. Lucia	\$1.34
Cucumber	Price per kilo
Trinidad and Tobago	\$0.53
Barbados	\$1.38
St. Vincent	\$2.16
St. Lucia	\$0.99

As I have said before, I have quoted in the currency of the particular territory. As you will know the EC dollar is more valuable than the TT dollar. So if one were to convert it, the comparison would become even sharper. These are just a few examples and that is why people from all over the Caribbean come here to buy and take our commodities and sell in their own areas. The vessels which bring things like bananas and sweet potatoes from the other islands, do not return empty. They take these agricultural products and fruits from Trinidad and Tobago to sell in those areas.

Mr. Sudama: Do you have the figures for Grenada available to you, which is a more appropriate comparison to make?

Dr. Samaroo: No, I do not have the figures for Grenada with me. We also included Grenada and I could certainly give the Member the figures for Grenada. One could not do every island in the Caribbean. I chose a selection of vegetables and a selection of countries. You cannot use Guyana because the whole currency system is so skewed. They will say \$2.65 for one egg and \$200 per lb for a pound of cheese, so one finds difficulty in using Guyana as an example.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to reduction of prices of vegetable and fruits of everyday use, we have been able to significantly reduce our importation of a number of commodities. In fresh pork and poultry not only have we become self-sufficient, but we are now exporting pork products as well as chicken sausages and chicken emulsion to other parts of the Caribbean. Of the other meats which we import, such importation was 80 per cent of our total consumption in 1986. Today it is 70 per cent. The importation of fish has dropped by 12 per cent, from 84 to 72 per cent between 1986 and 1989. Cereal imports have dropped from 96 per cent

of total consumption in 1986 to 90 per cent in 1989. With the increased rice production, we expect a further decrease in our importation of cereals from this year.

Mr. Ramnath: Are you speaking about packaged cereals?

Dr. Samaroo: Packaged cereals like corn flakes and wheatabix as well as rice and wheat and so on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is the position with the export market in agriculture? The Leader of the Opposition suggested that we should begin the exportation of exotic fruits.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The speaking of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. W. Dookeran*]

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about the situation with the export market for fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as preserves in these areas. I would like to refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition, to a company in his own constituency, Chase Foods Limited; to visit Turban Products, Sun Kist or Matouk to see the amount of pepper sauce, kuchela, amchar and the local fruit juices, fruit slices, mango, pawpaw and pineapples that they are exporting. So we do not have to start because we have already started and the Government is encouraging these exporters, as the proprietor of Chase Foods said in a public forum at the University some time ago.

The Co-operative Citrus Growers Association recently drew up a very favourable contract with an entrepreneur in Toronto in which they are exporting vast amounts of canned orange and grapefruit juices.

Exports of chilled and frozen fish and shrimp to North America and the European markets have been steadily increasing, as have been the quantities of fruits and vegetables such as dasheen bush, ochroes, hot peppers, ginger, watermelon and ground provision. The greatest difficulty which we are now experiencing with further accessing the export markets for fruit and vegetables is the non-availability of cargo space. This has come about as a result of the unexpected high demand for such space and at the present time a concerted

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attempt is being made to ease this problem by our Ministry, working together with the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a special area has been the special emphasis on rice production. During the years of neglect, of the oil boom, and the allowance of salt water and oil seepage in areas like Oropouche and Caroni wet lands, vast amounts of those areas have been destroyed. De-forestation and disturbances in the drainage patterns have similarly affected the Nariva Swamp. In each one of these areas, limited rehabilitation work has started and in a short while I shall indicate what new works are being planned for 1991. Limited rehabilitation works have started; improved varieties of rice have been introduced; government subsidy has been maintained at 89 cents per pound and a programme of technical co-operation has been signed with the Japanese Government, whereby that Government has been sending technical experts, relevant machinery and giving scholarships to a number of our nationals who have gone to Japan to further their knowledge.

5.40 p.m.

A significant boost to rice production has been technical assistance in the design and manufacture of a wide range of rice equipment. The assistance has come from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation which has been working with CARIRI on the university campus. What they have devised has been created and made into all kinds of devices by the state-owned Metal Industries Company.

Through such useful and fruitful interaction, our rice farmers now have access and have been purchasing, through the help of the ADB, such devices as a rice thresher, rice dryer, irrigation pump, a rice harvester and a rice cleaner. The ADB also came to the assistance of rice farmers since 1987. This year that bank allocated some \$5 million for the rice sector which the farmers have been accessing. What have been the results of the Government's efforts to boost rice production? Rice production in 1985 was three million pounds, in 1989 it rose to 29 million pounds and we anticipate 30 million pounds in the year of 1991.

Mr. Ramnath: Will the Minister give way to a question? Could you state what is Caroni Limited's contribution to that increase?

Dr. Samaroo: Caroni Limited's contribution to that amount has been in the vicinity of about 40 per cent of the total amount.

What about the future of these rice growing areas? For the Plum Mitan area EEC funding has been obtained, a consultancy firm has been chosen and in January 1991, work will begin on a study that will give us detail, design and tender documents—it is not just a mere feasibility study. Also, an EEC contract has already been awarded for the rehabilitation, not of an indeterminate area of land in the Plum Mitan area, but of 980 hectares of rice lands, and for a report on the possible extension of the scheme to 3,000 acres. Similarly, for the Oropouche Lagoon funding has been provided by the Caribbean Development Bank. Also a specific consultant firm with local counter-parts has been chosen to carry out the following and I want to give a clear idea of what that firm will be doing—

- "(1) To conceptualize, prepare and outline plan of development for the entire area;
- (2) To identify land use projects for suitable parts of the lower catchment area, which will include aquaculture, wild life and bird sanctuaries.
- (3) To design and specify development projects for the mid-catchment areas including an infrastructural development plan, with engineering designs and agricultural development plan for 2,500 hectares between Penal, Debe along the Erin Road and the La Fortune Pluck Road to include Black Water Channel and neighbouring areas."

With this productive focus, plus the necessary forward and backward linkages, this project will effectively integrate land rehabilitation, agricultural development and import substitution schemes into a worthwhile venture of national significance.

With respect to the Caroni basin, the Government has applied—I am not saying we have given out any contracts as we have done in the other two areas—for assistance from the Caribbean Development Bank to assist in conducting studies on the rehabilitation of the Caroni Savannah area; the development of a major storage reservoir in the Basin and the development of the Guayamare, Cunupia and Madame Espanole water sheds; preparing management plans for the Tacarigua, St. Joseph and San Juan water sheds; conducting a feasibility study including—again preparation of detail designs on the irrigation, drainage and flood control proposals—for Arranguez, El Socorro and the Barataria food gardens. The terms of reference for this assistance are still being finalized and we hope in another month or so to have them drawn up.

I would like to make some comments on that very vexed problem of access roads. The problem of access roads continues to be a major hindrance to further

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agricultural development. During the years of the oil boom and the placing of agriculture on the back burner, our agricultural access roads were allowed to deteriorate into a nightmare. This Government has understood the seriousness of the problem and we have attempted to tackle it in a number of ways because of its seriousness and enormity. We have used most of our infrastructure allocations over the last three years for building access roads. Such allocations have risen from \$2.8 million in 1989 to \$3.7 million in 1990 and we expect some \$4.4 million in 1991.

In addition, we have been working with organizations such as the National Self-Help Commission and local government authorities to make available, road building materials from state quarries at Tapaná in Valencia, Morne Diablo in the south, Guapo, in collaboration with the St. Patrick County Council and more recently at Biche, in collaboration with the Nariva/Mayaro County Council. Many self-help projects have benefited from this facility. In addition, as the Minister of Works indicated yesterday, part of that Ministry's enhanced allocation for 1991 will be used in tandem with the Ministry of Food Production to further tackle the serious constraint to agricultural development. In 1991 these initiatives will continue.

At the same time, the Government has awarded a contract for the finalization of the feasibility study which is very clearly directed—including preliminary designs and costings for the provision of 166 kilometres of access roads in the six counties of Trinidad. Once that work is completed then we have no doubt that farmers would have further relief from this problem which we acknowledge to be one of the most serious hindrances to the development of agriculture in this country.

Now as time is running out on me, I want to move to another area that I think ought to be highlighted and that is the area of fisheries development, in which deliberate effort and emphasis has been placed. At the St. Mary's Bay in Cedros, through an EEC funded project, the landing beach facility has been established. Efforts are being made to resuscitate the facilities at Icacos and Erin. As a widening and deepening process, marketing courses have been conducted, as I mentioned earlier on, by the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute, in fish handling and processing. This has led to the development of small scale salting and smoking enterprises in a number of areas in the country. Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute continues its training of

fishermen in costal navigation and seamanship, fishing gear technology, engine maintenance and marine safety. Over the past two years at least 600 persons from Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the rest of the Caribbean have participated.

In 1989, the Government enacted legislation with respect to conservation measures for the in-shore fishing. Trawling has been prohibited from the costal areas with a view to protecting and conserving the fish resources which are exploited by the in-shore artisanal fishermen. At present, assistance is being sought from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN with respect to advising on the type of multi-purpose fishing vessel which should be supported for funding through the ADB. I should also mention that Trinidad and Tobago was the first country in the world to ban draft netting in our waters.

5.50 p.m.

In the area of aqua-culture a number of fishermen are moving towards the production of tilapia and cascadura as well as ornamental fishing. I should mention that regular supplies, particularly of cascadura, go from the constituency of Nariva to North American markets because of some of our farmers who have accessed loans from the Agricultural Development Bank and have many acres of very active cascadura ponds. At the present time there are about 850 farmers in small scale aqua culture and while the Bamboo Grove fish farm has continued to provide fingerlings, particularly for cascadura and tilapia, the Institute for Marine Affairs and the sugar cane—

Mr. Sudama: Would the Minister give way to a question? You mentioned 850 small-scale farmers in aqua-culture. Would you give us the location where those people are?

Dr. Samaroo: I really cannot give you the distribution of 850 farmers. What I can do in very general terms—

Mr. Sudama: Where are they located? I believe that is a figment of your imagination.

Dr. Samaroo: There are fish farms all over the country. What the Member wants is to go through the whole list and indicate, particularly where each fish farm is located.

Mr. Ramnath: If I may get you back on track, would you indicate what is happening with the Claxton Bay Fishing Complex and the request to have the area dredged so that these fishermen could make a decent living?

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the hon. member would give me three minutes, I will come precisely to that question. Finally in this particular area I wanted to mention that Members of the Opposition quite often say the Government does things without informing people in the country. We have now signed a contract for the fresh-water shrimp farming technical assistance programme with the Chinese government. We are now in the process of asking those who are engaged in aqua-culture to let us have their indication if they wish to have assistance for this programme. I hope that through this medium farmers all over the country would understand that we are now about to start with this Chinese assistance programme in shrimp farming and we are collecting names.

So far as assistance to the various fishing sectors are concerned, I wish to give an account of what we have done and what we are doing in 1990 in particular areas of Trinidad. The Member for Couva North had written me about the Claxton Bay area and I wish to indicate to him that if he goes now he will see work is being done on the Claxton Bay Centre. I shall give a breakdown of the kind of work that is being done. They are repairs to floor of net shed, locker rooms, market stalls, roof, cupboards, caretaker rooms, doors in main building, gate, plastering of caretaker room and meeting room, floor and net shed. The entire cost of the works that are being done at the present time is \$24,984. I have also spoken to the fishermen in the area and through the National Self-Help Commission we are trying to access assistance for further work on the beach itself through a self-help project with the fishermen in Claxton Bay. That project is ongoing.

Mr. Ramnath: Would you be so kind? I am sorry to take up your time. I was asking specifically about the severe problem of silting in that area; \$24,000 will do nothing for those people. I was wondering whether there is going to be dredging to assist them to come in during the low tide.

Dr. Samaroo: That is a very serious problem, not only in Claxton Bay but also in Orange Valley and Carli Bay. The fishermen indicated this problem to me. I have promised them that I will do my very best in 1991 to do some dredging in these areas. I am fully aware of the problem and I will do my utmost to see that some dredging is done. We are now talking to one particular contractor about the price of such a venture not only for Claxton Bay but also for Orange Valley and Carli Bay.

In the meantime what we are doing is trying to do the work on the docks themselves. In Orange Valley there is the construction of 200 metres of protective

sea wall, repairs to roof, locker of the building, ice and chill room, a total cost of \$265,000. St. Marie Fishing Complex in Cedros, we are now completing works that have been left undone in the building of the original complex. Repairs have been done in Blanchicheusse, Cumana, Salibia, Grand Riviere, Carenage, Las Cuevas and Toco. Those are the areas in which we are continuing to do work. During 1991 we hope to proceed with further beach developments in Otaheiti in the South and in Blanchicheusse. I indicated a little while ago that in Carli Bay and Claxton Bay, we have been trying with the limited funds we have to provide whatever facilities we could for these areas.

I conclude by talking about two agreements that would be of benefit to fishermen. I believe that I can announce, after two days of negotiation between Trinidad and Venezuela which ended yesterday, the Venezuelans have agreed to provide our fishermen with 70 permits for the whole of 1991. That is quite a significant achievement. It is 10 more than what we normally get. Whereas normally these fishing permits ended around May of any year, so that from May of this year our fishermen have been asking us to get special permits for them, that is no longer necessary and 70 of our fishermen would now obtain these permits from January—December, 1991. In addition, both Governments have agreed to a conference to look at the marine resources between Trinidad and Venezuela to be held no later than May, 1991. This we consider to be very important because one of the difficulties which we have had in negotiating with Venezuela, as well as in other parts of the Caribbean that are not fully apprised of the resources that we have, and now we can say that a programme of co-operation has been established between ourselves and Venezuela, not only to allow our fishermen to fish in their territorial waters, to demarcate the areas where fishing is allowed, but to join further with Venezuela and talk about marine resources that we hold between us.

The other important achievement I think that deserves some attention has been the finalization of a fishing agreement between Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. Rather than have our fishermen and the Barbadian fishermen fight and quarrel on the sea and our fishermen being taken in and fined in Barbados or *vice versa*, we have now reached a fishing agreement with the Barbados government which will be for one year and the season will be from January 1 to April 30, 1991. In return for the permission that we are giving to the Barbadians our Trinidad and Tobago fishermen would be able to sell 80 metric tonnes of whole and processed flying fish from January 1 to April 30, 1991; 160 metric tonnes from May 1 to

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December 31, 1991 and 60 metric tonnes of other kinds of fish from January 1 to December 31, 1991.

6.00 p.m.

Here is another area in which, instead of fighting, quarrelling and haggling, either with the Venezuelans or with our good neighbours, the people from Barbados on the other side, we have met, talked and come to an agreement so as to assist our fishermen in Trinidad and Tobago.

I wish once again to commend the 1991 budget to all hon. Members, and to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance for such an excellent document in a very difficult period of time. I am quite sure with the will and determination which this Government has, it will take this country safely through and roll back the recession completely. I thank you very much.

Mr. Govindra Roopnarine (*Siparia*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the Minister of Finance is only grand-charging. Surely, he does not want to wind up the debate today.

After listening to the Minister of Food Production and Marine Exploitation and the manner in which he has made mention of the Leader of the Opposition, one gets the impression that the Member for Nariva today is someone who is quite different from a Member of the Senate whom I knew in 1981. I remember him praising his leader then—the hon. Leader of the Opposition now—as the best Caribbean mind, a very astute leader, the finest leader in the Caribbean. To hear him today one cannot believe that it is the same Member who is making these comments.

I want to warn the Member that one thing he must not do is to take on the Member for Couva North; if he sees him in a fight with a lion, do not feel sorry for him, feel sorry for the lion. I give him that advice today.

Mr. Ramnath: Would the Member give way? Did you say that the Member for Nariva was a Leader of the Opposition in the Senate in 1981?

Mr. Roopnarine: I did not say that, but that was the position he occupied in 1981. Then he had to praise the Member for Couva North, today he is a Cabinet Minister and he has to praise someone else. In 1991 he might be praising somebody else, I do not know.

Mr. Sudama: He is a convenient praiser.

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the Member has forgotten the night he was dismissed from his Information portfolio when, he went under the Member for Couva North's home and was actually crying because of the manner in which he was treated in the Ministry.

Dr. Samaroo: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to categorically deny the statement that I was ever dismissed from any Ministry, that after such alleged dismissal, I ever went to anybody's home and cried. I also wish to say that the hon. Member is grossly misleading the House.

Mr. Roopnarine: Did you cry when you were kicked around by Mr. Barry Ogieste in the then Ministry of Decentralization? Is that the night you cried?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The point is well taken and recorded. Could you please continue.

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to make these few comments to show—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please. The point is well taken and recorded. Could you please continue.

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to elaborate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, the point is well taken. Let us continue with the budget debate.

Mr. Ramnath: A matter was raised during the course of the debate about the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition by the Member for Nariva, and I think it is only fair that Members on this side have an opportunity to rebut.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair acknowledges your submission. I had advised the hon. Member that his point was well taken. Let us proceed because the Chair has not stopped—

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move on. I also want to comment on the fact that the Minister, quite boastfully, mentioned in his contribution—I think he was replying to the Member for Naparima—that nothing was done to assist poor people in the community and that his Government was providing meals for, I think, 2,000 people as the case may be, on a daily basis. Obviously, he knows that will not solve the problem. Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you remember the old adage: "To give a man a fish you will only give him a meal, but if you teach a man how to fish, you will give him a living." Apparently, this

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Government is not aware of teaching people how to earn a living, educating people rather than giving handout. The same kind of policy that was the pre-occupation of the previous regime continues under the same vein today. Rather than educate our people on how to make a living and provide employment for themselves, they want to make them live on handouts. That will not work.

I heard him speaking about the self-help projects under the NAR as if self-help is a new concept under this Government. That is not a new concept. That has never been—

Miss Nicholson: This is the only time it has ever worked like that.

Mr. Roopnarine: During my tenure as the Member for Siparia—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Once more, could I urge the hon. Member to address the Chair. If you do, then some of this cross-talk would be eliminated. The Chair is all ears.

Mr. Roopnarine: I will Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would you look in the direction of the Chair, too.

Mr. Roopnarine: The self-help concept is nothing new to this country. During my term 1981—1986, I assisted villagers in 40 areas to provide electricity for themselves in five years. So to come today and talk about self-help projects as if it is some big deal with the NAR Government—that is nothing new. You have not accomplished anything new. Self-help is an old concept long before the NAR came into power. I am not giving any credit to the PNM either. The concept of self-help has arisen because of a need in the various communities and because of neglect of the past and present regimes. I just wanted to make these few brief comments before I deal with what I have to say this evening.

6.10 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was only four years ago that this Government took control of the Trinidad and Tobago economy which was in acute crisis, if I may borrow the opening line of the budget presentation by the Minister of Finance. The four years in question was like four decades for many. Many have not made it through this period. The lives of many people were reduced to shambles. Many of our frustrated youths have turned to drugs and many have committed suicide. Some are in our country's jails and others are in Chaguaramas. Even the middle-aged have buckled under the pressure. I just want to make the point by giving

specific examples. Only two weeks ago, a hard-working middle-aged father of three in my constituency could not take the jamming any longer. He used to make a living by cultivating a small plot of land. His daughter had entered the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus; one of his sons had graduated from high school and the other was still at high school. The NAR Government introduced a cess at the university. The girl had to drop out of the university because the small rice field could not feed a family of five and pay the cess at the university at the same time. The boys could find no work *[Interruption]* Mr. Deputy Speaker, can I ask for some protection?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please! The hon. Member is being disturbed.

Mr. Roopnarine: The hard-working middle-aged man who had a dream for his children wilted under the pressure. He hanged himself.

The unborn babies as well as new born babies have had their share of pressure over the last four years as well, as basic drugs and babies' milk was beyond the reach of many in the society. Many children under four years of age are malnourished. Many have not made it through the four years. I take no joy in saying these things. I feel sick and horrified.

My heart goes out to the aged as well. When I see old people lining up at the health institutions for a little medicine, and at the end of the day or when they almost reach to the end of the line, only to be told that the pharmacist has left, or that they would have to come back another day or that drugs have run out, I am disturbed. What makes matters worse, is to see the very people who have been responsible for all these hardships dancing and prancing on the television screen as if nothing has happened to poor people or the masses in this country; as if everything is all right. To me, that is insulting the intelligence of the nation. It is giving them a false sense of security; it is giving them the impression that today in this country everything is all right and it is time for rejoicing. It is time to dance; it is time to do the Tobago jig. That is the impression that is being given to the people of this country. That kind of propaganda is shallow propaganda. It is not reaching out to the people. The people understand differently.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people would begin to dance and prance when bare necessities are within their reach. They will only dance and prance when they are given the bare necessities of life. What do people really want? *[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please! The Member is being disturbed.

Mr. Roopnarine: What do the people want? They want jobs, shelter, roads. They need drinking water, recreational facilities, schools for their children. If they get these basic amenities in life, they too, would do the Tobago jig.

All the boasts mean nothing to a small rural community in my own constituency called Mohess Road and I will tell you why. There are 300 tiny tots huddled in a corner of the Mohess Road Hindu School whenever it rains. They do this to avoid getting wet. When the sun is shining, the scorching heat of the old, leaking galvanize sheets becomes unbearable. The cracked walls can come tumbling down at any time. The floors are like the roads at La Brea. Toilet facilities are old latrines in this modern day and age in this small village at Mohess Road. How are these "flowers of the nation" surviving? It is a miracle to many of us. I challenge anybody on the other side to show me a school in worse condition than the Mohess Road Hindu School.

"The most caring Minister" of the NAR Government, the former Minister of Education, wept for the school in 1987. I dare say those were crocodile tears like all the other times he has wept. Do you know there are advertisements appearing in the press these days about this same caring gentleman who is so soft and gentle that he weeps? He wept in 1987 for the flowers of the nation of Mohess Road and he gave the assurance to parents, students and teachers alike, that the Mohess Road Hindu School was going to be a first priority in the schools building programme. Eighteen schools have been built since 1987 to now, another 18 schools are to be built in 1991, according to the *Public Sector Investment Programme, 1991* and the Mohess Road Hindu School is not included on that list. I want to remind the House that the people of Mohess Road Hindu School were promised a school as early as 1987 and that is not a priority here at all. To hear about the achievements of the NAR Government means nothing to these people. *[Interruption]* I do not want everything at one time, but at least we want something.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the irony of this situation is that in the vicinity of this very school there are scores of oil-producing wells belonging to the Trintoc field. There are a couple of wells in the backyard of the school. If I were to take one of those producing wells which used to produce a minimum of 20 barrels of oil per day and I take the minimum price of US \$20 per barrel for this oil, I would end up with US \$400 a day from this well in the backyard of the same school. If I take

gross revenue from this well for a year, it would amount to US \$146,000 and if I convert US \$146,000 into TT dollars I will get TT \$620,500. This is in the backyard of the school and this is just one well in the vicinity. There are scores of oil-producing wells in the area where the school is located. The revenue which can be earned from one well in one year can build, not one school, but two schools for the people of Mohess Road or it can build one school in Mohess Road and another elsewhere.

The caring Government and the weeping Minister will never provide such a basic facility for 300 little children who have, in this day and age, to use latrines as toilet facilities and who have to huddle in a corner when rain falls; or who when the sun is shining, have to bear the scorching heat and who sometimes have to return home quite early.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not for want of representation. This cannot be said, because, as I said, the hon. Minister visited the school early in 1987. So the politics of spite and discrimination continue under the present regime.

Mr. Hem Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I am very well prepared to rebut the charge tomorrow, but when the hon. Member started to speak on spite and alienation, I felt that I had to rise to indicate that he is misleading the House. The school belongs to a particular Board. The Minister invited the Board to a joint management arrangement, whereby we would have been able to build the School under the IADB Programme as the Presbyterian Board and other boards have done, but the Hindu and Muslim Boards refused. Therefore, we are building 36 schools under the IADB Programme under a joint management arrangement. If the Hindu Board had come in, Mohess Road would have had a school already. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think your rebuttal will be well made when you make your contribution.

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would go on to elaborate what I mean by the politics of spite and discrimination in the course of my contribution here this evening.

Local government authorities in this country, the majority of which are not under the control of the NAR, are starved for funds. This has been a perennial problem. Year after year we come here and say the same things and nothing is done. I do not hope that anything will be done after I have made my contribution today anyway, but just for the records, I want to make the point again, that these

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bodies continue to be starved for funds. They continue to be inefficient because of the deliberate actions of central government. The attitude of central government towards them leaves much to be desired. Apart from inadequate releases, the system under which funds are released are quite archaic. The Minister of Decentralization acknowledges these facts but he will do nothing to improve or to change the present system under which local government bodies are being funded.

The present system is such, that funds are released under specific heads. This is clearly undesirable because from time to time, it is necessary to change the priority of projects as situations will demand and variation of funds has to get the approval of the Minister. Because of the bureaucratic red tape, this process is delayed, resulting sometimes in funds being returned to central government at the end of the year. I dare say that this is a deliberate policy of the Government to ensure that the limited funds which are released to these bodies are not spent so that at the end of the year they are returned to the central government.

Dr. Charles: I want to inform the hon. Member of two things. One is that in 1990 the releases for local government bodies were on time in the vast majority of cases, much improved beyond 1989. If he checks with the local authorities he would find it to be so. Secondly, virements are not the cause of delays in the use of funds because the Minister approves virements after the funds have been vired. After they have been spent and an audit is done, it comes to the Minister for ratification. So it is not because of any delay, because they can spend the money, vire it, and at the end of the year, come to the Minister for ratification. That is the system which we have operated over the past two years.

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am asking—and I have asked it several times in this House—why is the system of block release not entertained by the Ministry of Decentralization? Why can block releases not be made to the various local government authorities and allow them to spend the money as they see fit? Priorities change from time to time. You might want to do a certain project today, but because of weather conditions, the project might not be feasible, it cannot be done and you will want to do another project in its place. Because of the inordinate delay in variation of funds, it causes many delays and many times projects simply cannot be implemented.

I have various things in my constituency which have not been done because of the problem of variation of funds. I have two bridges in my constituency which have not been attended to since 1988. Although money was released in 1988 to do

the bridges, work started, then adverse conditions did not permit the completion of the work and today there are hundreds of people who do not have proper access because of these bridges. Moneys have been returned to the central government and to this date they have not been returned to the St. Patrick County Council. It is a problem of virement. That is what we are told. So that the money had to be returned at the end of the year and the works could not be done. After work started on two bridges in 1988, in 1990 we still have people suffering tremendous hardship because they do not have proper access to and from their homes due to inordinate delay, which the councils are experiencing because of the funding situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while Government Ministers go on unnecessary trips, wasting vast sums of taxpayers' money, local government authorities are denied much needed allocations. The Minister was saying that they got moneys on time. I was told that the kind of allocations which they received in 1989 and 1990 was insufficient to meet the current-day needs, in that certain local government authorities could not even pay certain people when they went on vacation leave. They could not get their moneys for 1990. People who negotiated sick leave bonuses could not receive those sums of money in 1990, if they did not take their sick leave. There are some negotiations where if they do not take their sick leave they are paid money in lieu of not taking sick leave. They could not get their moneys which were due to them and that has happened in 1990. I am not speaking now about money to purchase materials. That is out of the question, because in 1990 a lot of the money which was released to local government authorities, went towards paying wages. They simply did not have money to purchase materials.

6.30 p.m.

Dr. Charles: I thank the hon. Member again, but does he agree that this might be an illustration of the difficulties of the Government in paying public servants and Caroni workers all of the money owed to them, as his party suggests should be done, if we cannot even pay the leave pay of local government workers?

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. Member had a chance, I do not want to keep replying to him, I thought he was trying to find out something. I do not want to get into something that was done previously in the House.

Let me examine, to make my point, the development projects that were executed in 1990 by local government authorities. It is stated in the Report on the

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Development Programme, 1990, I turn to page 55. I just want to give you an idea as to what kind of work under the Development Works were executed by these local government bodies—

"St. Patrick County Council:

The work programme of the St. Patrick County Council included major works with respect to the stabilization and resheeting of precarious roadways."

The question is: How many metres of roadway were resheeted? Clearly this figure will not be revealed in this document because it might have meant two metres of roadway—21 kilometres of roadway. This is the Report on the Development Programme, 1990. In the area of drainage and irrigation a total of 213 metres of box drain was constructed. Big deal—213 metres of box drain was constructed in a county as large as or larger than Tobago. You have done 213 metres of box drain.

I heard somebody from the other side say that maybe it was due to improper or bad representation. I am wondering whether the Members for La Brea and Fyzabad are making any representations for St. Patrick. Are they? Are they making any representations for St. Patrick? If I look at Nariva/Mayaro County Council—

"The programme of the council comprises major improvement works." on several roads and drains. Hear what the NAR Government considers major—

"The construction of 113 metres of drain, 45 metres of curb wall, 50 metres of rubble wall, and the widening and strengthening of 100 metres of roadway."

You know that is major improvement works for the NAR. If I were to take all 36 of us in this House within one week with you all, I will build 45 metres of rubble drain and 45 metres of curb wall. One week if you give me all 36 Members of this House; and they talk about major works in a county that is as large as Tobago or even bigger than Tobago. That is the kind of work that the NAR Government is talking about. I just used two councils—all of the works that were done under Development Programme for 1990, were similar, I do not want to have to repeat. It is the same story all over.

The Minister of Decentralization also spoke quite glibly about his Ministry's involvement in self-help projects. On the one hand he was making the point that he was assisting villagers or communities with materials in executing self-help

projects in their respective areas. On the other hand he was arguing that his Ministry was saddled with a major problem, in that he did not have sufficient materials that were so badly needed in the country. So, there is a lack of materials in his Ministry, the workers in his Ministry sometimes cannot do anything when the day comes because they have no materials to work with. He admits that but on the other hand he has materials to give to people to do self-help projects.

Dr. Charles: I thank the Member again, but I thought perhaps I should save him some further embarrassment. I indicated that our shortage of materials was particularly in respect of our buildings division—repair of buildings, replacing toilet bowls and those things we have to buy. Self-help relates to use of pitch, gravel, sand and such things which you cannot use for repairing buildings. I just thought I would assist him in that particular matter.

Mr. Roopnarine: Is the Minister saying that he has enough materials to repair roads and construct bridges? Do you have enough materials to do these works? This is the nature of the works that were undertaken by the people involved in self-help—where they repair their own roads or they do some drainage in their area or fix a bridge. Do you have materials for that in the Ministry?

Dr. Charles: If you wish to mobilize your residents to do work with pitch, gravel and oil sand, of course. There are quarries for those things. The rest of the country seems immobilized.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair is frowning on this type of cross-talk. The Chair recognizes the Member for Siparia as making the contribution. Would you please continue.

Mr. Roopnarine: The point I want to make is that if the Ministry has necessary materials to do these jobs and it has people employed who are not doing anything because of lack of materials, why impose on other people to do these jobs on a self-help basis? These people can surely use their time in some other productive areas to help themselves. Things are so hard in this country. You must realize that, instead of mobilizing and trying to get their labour and financial resources as well, in doing these self-help projects. Why can the Ministry not execute these projects because you have the necessary work force?

I cannot get five cylinders to provide relief for 40 families in my constituency in the vicinity of Rami Trace in Debe. There are 40 families—some of their houses are still under water, after weeks, just because the Ministry of Works cannot provide five cylinders so that a small problem of flooding could be alleviated to

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help 40 families in the long run. Then they boast about self-help, where they provide materials for people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1990 saw the resurfacing of 41.4 kilometres of roadway under the development programme. Would you believe that not a single centimetre of roadway was resurfaced in the county of St. Patrick? Again I ask: Did the Members for La Brea and Fyzabad—whose constituencies also fall in St. Patrick—make any representation at all to have roadways resurfaced in the county of St. Patrick? Because the impression is given, and a Member of the Government has said it publicly, that if any community did not receive anything during the tenure of office of the NAR Government, that community did not ask for it. I am wondering whether the Members for La Brea and Fyzabad made any representation at all on behalf of the people of St. Patrick. If I look at the development programme—

6.40 p.m.

Dr. Charles: If the Member is referring to the paving of roads by the Highways Division of the Ministry of Works, I wish to assure him that every county in Trinidad had an allocation and money was spent and roadways were paved. I do not have the figures with me because I do not have all my figures. On a point of order. The Member for Siparia is misleading the House because every county had an allocation and in every county paving work was carried out by the Highways Division. I wish to put that on record. If I have to provide the figures, of course I will provide them.

Mr. Roonarine: I am using the figures quoted for us in the Development Programme 1990. I want to quote from page 19 of this report.

"County Caroni 7.6 km of roadway was resurfaced; Victoria East 1.9 km; Victoria West 11.2 km; St. George East 7.2 km; St. George West 13.5 km."

Nothing has been mentioned here about St. Patrick. If you are referring to the allocations of local government authorities, I have already mentioned that negligible work was done in that area. I am speaking from what I am seeing, so that if the Member has other figures, let him produce the evidence. I am quoting those figures to demonstrate the point that I made earlier on of the politics of spite and discrimination that continue under the NAR regime.

I want to refer to the LID Programme. The LID Programme continues the practice of nepotism and favoritism. I am amazed to sit in this House and hear

Government Ministers praise the system. Do you know why they can praise the system? They will praise the system because they can get jobs for their boys and their girls. As a matter of fact, nearly all of the unemployed officers of NAR constituencies are today working in LID Programme. Most of them have been given permanent employment in LID Programme for the duration of the programme for a particular year. That is the practice of the NAR Government, so they can praise LID Programme, but those of us who know the kind of discrimination that is practised in LID Programme, we can only mention the discrimination. We cannot do anything about it because the attitude of central government is that as Opposition we can say what we want, they do not have to take us on.

I am not even consulted as to where the project is being placed in my constituency anymore. They talk about consultation. What kind of consultation do they have? With whom do you have consultation? If they do not have consultation with the legitimate representative of the people, with whom are they having these consultations? In any event, the Minister of Finance stated in his budget presentation that 25,000 were employed in LID Programme at a cost of \$66 million in 1990. If all workers—and this is not so—in LID Programme received an equal amount of salary, each would have received \$2,640; that means that each worker would have received \$220 per month or \$55 a week. What can a man with a family do with \$55 a week? Can he buy a piece of pork for Christmas? Is that the kind of employment our people must be contented with? Surely not.

While the Government is talking about providing jobs, its policies are geared in an opposite direction. Let us examine one such policy. Let us look at the state enterprises which are supposed, in a way, to provide jobs, as well as other services and I want to examine the role of Tanteak.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. R. Palackdharrysingh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Roopnarine: Thank you very much Mr. Deputy Speaker and hon. Members. I am examining the performance of Tanteak in the context of providing employment. One of the stated policies of the Government is providing employment and the Government is doing exactly the opposite. State-owned Tanteak has been exporting teak logs from our plantation in its raw form to an Indian firm. It seems that this Government is bent on selling out the patrimony of

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our people to the Indians. Firstly, they have given them Iscott and now they are giving away our most valuable teak resource. Our forefathers have toiled and sweated for generations to produce such an envious teak estate only to be frittered away by this Government today.

Mr. Myers: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Member is grossly misleading the House. This is a matter which has been aired here before and he continues along a line that is totally erroneous. The matter raised with respect to exporting logs by Tanteak to this Indian firm is totally incorrect. It is grossly untrue and he ought to use the Parliament for something much more elevated than making aspersions which are not true.

Mr. Roopnarine: Like on the previous occasion, this Honourable House is again being misled today by the acting Minister of Health. I will tell you how he is misleading the House. I have personally investigated what the Minister is saying. What he is saying is furthest from the truth. The Minister is not telling the House the truth. From what I have seen I can state categorically that large-sized, high valued teak logs have been exported from the state forest. Let the Minister deny that. There are a number of things wrong with the policy of the central government.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I ask you to desist from that line. It is recorded and the Chair could not rule. Would you please continue? [*Cross-talk*] Hon. Member for Couva North, could you allow the Chair to continue ruling please? What the Chair has ruled and what the Chair is saying is all that has been said and has been recorded and the objection of the hon. Minister has also been recorded. I could not adjudicate on it right now. Would you proceed.

Mr. Roopnarine: I categorically state that I have seen for myself the size of the logs. The NAR is not keeping with its promise in the manifesto to maximize the value from our local lumber. Let us look at page 15 of the manifesto. "Forestry—Conservation, Expansion and Recreation:" and see what it has to say about our lumber industry:

"The lack of attention paid to a proper forestry programme has been one of the glaring blunders of the present regime and has resulted in perpetual displacement of a large number of our people and the constant erosion and physical disruption of vast areas of our beautiful land. The Government has

allowed indiscriminate squatting on forest areas, uncontrolled quarrying operations, excessive and uncontrolled residential construction on hillsides and an inadequate programme of forest protection to result in serious flooding problems in the central plains and in Port of Spain and environs...

The NAR will institute measures to prevent the denudation of hillsides and forestry areas...The intensive programme of re-afforestation which will be put into place will increase the supply of local lumber for high quality furniture, boat-building and woodwork industries for both the local and export markets. Construction and housing will also benefit from this increase of local lumber."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government promised—and I quoted from the manifesto—in its manifesto, a re-afforestation programme so that our furniture, boat-building and woodwork industries would benefit. What has happened today? We are now selling our most valuable teak resources to foreigners. What would that do to the local industry? Why should a country such as ours, faced with a problem of high unemployment choose to export—

Mr. Myers: The Member is misleading this House. Everytime he does that I am going to rise and object to it. He is misleading the House and it is very wrong. If he does not have the evidence, he cannot say that here. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could I once more appeal to the hon. Member. What you have said is already recorded. Could you proceed.

Mr. Roopnarine: There is the problem of unemployment facing the country and I am saying that the Government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has already ruled that the Member for Siparia has already made that contribution. It is only repetition now. I am appealing to him to proceed.

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not made my point as yet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair is asking you to proceed so as not to have a deadlock. Could hon. Members allow the Chair to control the meeting, please? The Chair has made one more appeal to you to desist from that line just to avoid the deadlock which we are approaching.

Mr. Ramnath: The Member for St. Ann's East is the Member for Siparia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think the Chair can take care of itself.

Mr. Roopnarine: I want to make my point. I have not made the point. I am making the point about one feeble policy of Government providing employment for our people. I am saying that it is doing exactly the opposite in that when it had the opportunity to provide the employment it did exactly the opposite. That is why I want to proceed with the point. I hope that you would not stop me. If the Minister has evidence to the contrary, let him make his rebuttal. I was saying: Why should a country such as ours, faced with the problem of high unemployment, choose to export its raw material—material that would be used by another well developed country to create employment for their citizens for the conversion and marketing process? Why must we allow that? The wholesale exportation of raw and converted teak logs from our limited supplies is of serious concern to us.

Mr. Myers: This organization is not exporting those teak logs; bring the evidence. Go and say it outside and I will deal with you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Chair is making an appeal once more. First, I appeal to the Member for Couva South—I appreciate the help that you are trying to give but it seems as though you are stirring up more problems. I appeal also to the hon. Minister that there would be ample time for a rebuttal. The Chair will not accept your jumping up every minute. Please accept the Chair's ruling. I am asking you to reserve whatever remarks you have until you make your contribution later on tonight or tomorrow. I once more appeal to the Member for Siparia, your point is well taken. Everybody here heard your point and you are just repeating it for the sake of inciting the problem. For good order and peace, would you proceed and move on.

Mr. Roopnarine: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me continue with what I have to say. I do not think you really want to stop me from saying what I want to say, because I am not breaking any rules of the House. I am stating facts that have been brought to my attention. The Minister has a chance to reply and dispute what I am stating. I am saying that a more responsible role should be taken with Tanteak. Instead of exporting valuable teak, this company should act as a holding house to purchase furniture that is produced by our local furniture manufacturers for export to the North American and European markets. In so doing a great number of jobs would be created in the furniture manufacturing sector, a sector that has suffered tremendously over the last four years. The foreign exchange earnings would also be greater than what it is, from the export or whatever you want to call it.

7.00 p.m.

This Government is guilty of exporting jobs at a time when our unemployment figure, according to the Minister's own admission, is still 20 per cent. That is disputed. It could be more than 20 per cent. The furniture manufacturers, woodworking and sawmill enterprises have complained bitterly about this insensitive government policy, but their complaints have fallen on deaf ears. In frustration, the aggrieved enterprises placed a full-page advertisement in the press to highlight their plight, yet nothing was done. Cabinet took a decision to replace the present system of royalty by one of competitive bidding for acreages of both thinnings and the selling of teak and pine. Sawmillers of my constituency have complained to me that despite this directive of Cabinet, the Minister has not yet afforded them this facility. Why should Tanteak be exporting valuable logs that took this country decades to produce? Whoever is purchasing this teak, is obviously making a killing through the lack of business acumen by those responsible for Tanteak. I have no doubt that the Minister concerned had a grand plan for Tanteak. He got rid of certain people from Tanteak and placed his own men in Tanteak so that his dictates could be carried out.

My latest information is that a gentleman who has only recently taken VTEP, was hired in Tanteak shortly after for a whopping salary of almost \$8,000 a month. The Minister responsible should also explain whether or not Tanteak's workers are involved in clearing private estates, similar to the LID Programme and doing cupboard work for private houses. My information also is that Tanteak workers are so involved. I also want to find out from the hon. Minister whether Tanteak is now in the business of clearing estates for people, building homes for people or building cupboards for people. Is that the business of Tanteak? It seems to me that accountability in Tanteak has gone through the window. Will someone have to sit on the steps of the Hall of Justice to get accountability from Tanteak?
[Interruption]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member for Siparia, if you were to address the Chair, I think all of the problems or at least part of it, might be solved.

Mr. Roopnarine: I am not pulling a farce on anyone in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am only trying to find out whether it would take someone to sit on the steps of the Hall of Justice to get some kind of accountability from Tanteak.

I have said that the Government stated one thing in the manifesto and is doing another all the time. The most vociferous Member this afternoon, the Member for

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Princes Town, is in charge of the Ministry of Sport. Has anyone heard about sport since the fiasco of our football in November last year? Do we have a Minister of Sport?

Mr. Wilson: On a point of order. Is the Member debating the Appropriation Bill before this House.

Mr. Roopnarine: The Minister of Sport is the only untouchable Minister in the Cabinet. Everyone else has been reshuffled in the NAR Government as my memory recalls. *[Interruption]* People are becoming restless. Had the House been adjourned at 6.00 o'clock no one would be restless. Everyone is talking at the same time. I am wondering, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether you have any control at all. Do you have any control?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Apparently not, because you are not listening to me. If you are addressing your words to the Chair, everything would go well.

Mr. Roopnarine: Sports can play a very pivotal role in the development process in our country. The Government's performance in this area is atrocious. To think that in a country where crime is on the rise, despite the assurances of the Minister; where drug addiction is soaring and unemployment increasing, sport is not given its just dues, it is just simply unforgivable.

The performance of the Ministry of Sport has been a miserable failure. To emphasize a point, let us examine what has happened in 1990 in a development programme as far as sport is concerned. If you turn to page 40 in the document, all that you would see happening in 1990 under the sports Ministry is that a swimming pool facility in Sangre Grande was refurbished. That is the kind of emphasis that this Government, in a time when people are unemployed, where youths cannot find jobs and are induced into drugs; when so many of our youths are on the streets today, all this NAR Government can do in 1990, is refurbish a swimming pool in Sangre Grande. If in 1990, the performance was an oversight, and they forgot there was sport, have they forgotten in 1991 as well?

If you look at the development programme for 1991, you see nothing under sport. So the young people in this country mean nothing to them. I would have thought—after seeing the Minister of Sport on television shortly after the insurrection, when her heart went out to young people, and for the first time she understood the frustrations of youth—that something would have been done for youths in 1991. Something must be done to take the youths off the streets. The

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Government cannot continue like this. It must provide meaningful recreational facilities for the youths. If it does not, what is going to happen? What do you expect is going to happen?

What has happened to the sports fund that was established by this Parliament? What has happened to the Opax Lottery Fund? Do moneys derived from the lottery go into the sports fund? There is not a single thing done from that sports fund. Where are the moneys from the sports fund? What is the money from the sports fund being used for? Why can we not get some kind of accountability?

7.10 p.m.

So with all the problems facing our youths today, we get a swimming pool in 1990, a refurbished one in Sangre Grande and in 1991 there is no hope whatsoever. Time and time again, I have given this Government good advice. It is extremely simple to provide recreational facilities for our young people throughout the nation. Wherever you go in this country there is an abundance of state lands. It does not cost anything to provide recreational facilities. I am speaking about the basic playing field where people can do a little running, play cricket or play football in the afternoons. We are not asking for Jean Pierre Complexes all over the country, just basic facilities. You have an abundance of state lands throughout the country and an abundance of equipment lying idle in the Ministry of Works. Instead of using the bulldozers to push down people's stalls, use them on state lands and provide recreational facilities for our young people. You do not need money to do that. Do not say that money is the problem. You do not need money to provide those basic recreational facilities for young people in this country.

This Government has treated sport—and I have said it before—like a step-child or like an orphan. In the inception of this Government in 1987, there was no allocation whatsoever—I think it was less than \$200,000—and the following year another \$200,000. You do not have any tangible allocation to the Ministry of Sport, so why do you not disband the Ministry of Sport?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are extremely fortunate in this country to have sporting organizations which have served this country selflessly. If we did not have these private sporting organizations, I do not know what would have happened in this country. This Government has taken a back seat when it comes to sports. I publicly congratulate all the sporting organizations in this country which are performing against tremendous odds. Despite the Government and the Ministry of

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Sport, they are doing a tremendous job in assisting the sportsmen and women in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am really terribly sorry for this country in 1991. God help us in 1991. All the figures which have been produced by the Ministry of Finance, all the things coming from the other side do nothing for the people out there. In 1991, if we do not address the problems, if we do not take the youths off the street, if we do not start educating them and provide the necessary facilities for them to develop, we would not have a country after 1991. I said that in 1990. We would have a serious problem. I said it in the 1989 budget debate, that we were heading for a dangerous situation in 1990. You did not heed my advice and I told you that the problems were mounting and that you had to do something immediately to take the youths off the street. We still have some time. Get working; get cracking. Get the Ministry of Sport working. Is there anything at all going on there? Get recreational facilities going for the people before it is too late.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I end my contribution, I appeal to Government to take what I have said seriously. I did not say what I said today because I love to criticize the Government. I have said it because I love my country and I want to ensure that this country remains a country for all of us, a beautiful country. I appeal to the Government to heed my advice and do something to take the youths off the streets of Trinidad and Tobago, before it is too late. Thank you.

Motion made and question proposed, That the House do now adjourn to Friday, December 14, 1990 at 9.30 a.m. [Hon. C. Charles]

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 7.15 p.m.