

Leave of Absence

Friday, April 02, 1993

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 02, 1993

The House met at 1.35 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have granted leave of absence from today's sitting to the Member for St Ann's East, (Hon. Wendell Mottley); the Member for Couva North (Mr. Basdeo Panday); the Member for Port of Spain North (Mr. Desmond Allum) and the Member for Point-a-Pierre (Mr. Cyril Rajaram).

PAPERS LAID

1. The Traffic Control Regulations, 1992 [*The Minister of Works and Transport. (Hon. C. Imbert)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Tobago House of Assembly for the year ended December 31, 1984. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. K. Valley)*]
3. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Tobago House of Assembly for the year ended December 31, 1985. [*Hon. K. Valley*]
4. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Tobago House of Assembly for the year ended December 31, 1986. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

Papers 2 to 4 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Sudama: When we are told that these reports are laid before the House, are we to make the presumption that they are here in front of us. Because I see no Traffic Control Regulations, 1992, neither do I have the accounts of the Tobago House of Assembly before me. I do not know what is the purpose of this item laid before the House. If the Government cannot do its work, it should admit that it is totally delinquent.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, if the Member would check he would find out that he received the Traffic Control Regulations before. It was circulated to all Members with the agenda.

Madam Speaker: I have been informed by the Clerk of the House that these were circulated with the previous Order Paper; perhaps the Member can check this.

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

**Solomon Hochoy Highway
(Street Lighting)**

112. Mr. Subhas Panday (*Naparima*) asked the Minister of Public Utilities:

- (a) Could the Minister state which agent and/or authority is responsible for the street lighting of highways in Trinidad and Tobago and, in particular, the Solomon Hochoy Highway?
- (b) Is the Minister aware that many street lights on the Solomon Hochoy Highway are malfunctioning?
- (c) What steps, if any, are being taken to rectify the situation?

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Morris Marshall): Madam Speaker, I wish to advise this honourable House that the authority responsible for maintenance of lighting along the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway is the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission.

I am aware that occasionally several lights malfunction along the Highway. This, however, is caused principally by vehicles which come into contact with the light poles causing serious damage to cables and other accessories.

I wish to inform this honourable House, Madam Speaker, that the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission carries out routine maintenance work on lighting facilities along the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway. In this regard, the great majority of lighting facilities along the Highway is in proper working condition at the present time. Thank you Madam Speaker.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Dr. Carl Singh (Tabaquite):

Students Revolving Loan Fund

133. Can the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister state to this honourable House:

- (a) The total sum of money which was available at the inception of the Students Revolving Loan Fund.
- (b) From what source was the fund made available?
- (c) To whom, i.e. names of students and areas of study and also sums which were made available to each student?

- (d) The conditions under which these loans were granted?
- (e) What measures are in place to recover outstanding debts?
- (f) How many of these students completed their areas of indicated studies and are employed by the national community?

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I would ask for a deferral of this question for a period of one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Board of Caroni (1975) Ltd. (Non-acceptance of Nominee)

139. Mr. Subhas Panday (*Naparima*) asked the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources:

Can the Minister state the reasons for the non-acceptance by the Government of the Trinidad Islandwide Cane Farmers Association's nominee to the Board of Caroni (1975) Ltd.?

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, the Government retains the option to accept or not to accept nominations to state boards.

Mr. S. Panday: Madam Speaker, if that is indeed so, why did the Minister not inform the proposer of that situation and invite further proposals?

Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, the Minister did in fact write to the interested party outlining that the nomination was not acceptable and invited such a person or organization to make another nomination. I am not surprised that the Member might not be aware of this. He probably does not go to his office at all.

Sale of Natural Gas (NUCOR)

140. Mr. Subhas Panday asked the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries:

- (a) Could the Minister state the price per cubic metre the National Gas Company will be selling natural gas to NUCOR, up and until it embarks upon commercial production of the product "steel carbide"?

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- (b) The amount of natural gas the National Gas Company expects to supply to NUCOR during research and development of the product mentioned in paragraph (a)?
- (c) Will the "steel carbide" product developed be patented?
- (d) If the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, could the Minister state who will be the holder of such a patent?
- (e) What returns, if any, do the National Gas Company expect to receive from the proceeds of the sale of the "steel carbide" by NUCOR for the period of one year after it embarks upon commercial production?

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, as you know, the Minister of Energy belongs to the Upper House. He was here on three occasions to answer the question; he is unable to be here today, and he was unsure whether the hon. Member for Naparima would show up. We are kindly asking for an extension of one week.

Mr. S. Panday: Madam Speaker, tell him I came back to deal with the international consultants—

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, on a point of order please. Can the hon. Minister say whether he is sure that anyone would turn up here? I take offence to that statement.

Madam Speaker: That is a non question.

Question, by leave, deferred.

1.45 p.m.

Unemployment (Reduction of)

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Krish Jurai (Nariva):

- 153.** With respect to a recent statement made by the Prime Minister in Parliament that "he would take steps to reduce unemployment in Trinidad and Tobago", would the Prime Minister state:
- (a) What specific projects will come on stream to relieve the chronic unemployment plaguing the Sangre Grande, Biche and Rio Claro areas?

- (b) What is the anticipated number of persons to benefit from such programmes?
- (c) How soon will these programmes come on stream?

The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives (Hon. Kenneth Collis): Madam Speaker, I discussed a deferral of this question with the Member and he agreed.

Mr. Sudama: Are you the Prime Minister? Clarify that point.
[Interruptions]

Madam Speaker: For how long is the deferral?

Hon. K. Collis: One week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Union (Proposal of)

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Miss Hulsie Bhaggan (Chaguanas):

167. Would the Prime Minister indicate the exact nature of his proposal of a union between Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Guyana?

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj): Madam Speaker—

Mr. Sudama: Another Prime Minister? How many Prime Ministers are there in this House?

Hon. R. Maraj: I have consulted with the Member for Chaguanas and she has agreed that the question should be deferred for—[Interruptions]

Madam Speaker: I am not hearing the Member for San Fernando West.

Hon. R. Maraj: I have consulted the Member for Chaguanas and she has agreed that the answer will be deferred for one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Caroni River Bank (Erosion of)

168. Miss Hulsie Bhaggan (Chaguanas) asked the Minister of Works and Transport:

- (a) Would the Minister indicate whether he is aware that the southern bank of the Caroni River near the La Paille Village is seriously eroded?

- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Minister indicate whether he has plans to deal with this situation, and would he provide details?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, yes, the ministry is aware that erosion is affecting an embankment which was constructed by the ministry many years ago.

In 1992, the Ministry did some realignment in keeping with the long-term proposals for the Caroni River. It is expected that these works will alleviate the impact on the southern embankment and reduce the potential for further erosion. The ministry will monitor the situation regularly and undertake works as required.

**IADB Loan
(Lot Sites Cost)**

173. Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*) asked the Minister of Housing and Settlement:

Could the Minister state—

- (a) The actual cost per square foot of the development of lot sites under the IADB loan on locations such as Union Hall, Debe Phase 2, Marabella, etc.?
- (b) The price per square foot at which these lots will be offered to applicants?

The Minister of Housing and Settlement (Dr. The Hon. Vincent Lasse): Madam Speaker, estimates indicate that the weighted average cost per lot for the 16 sites being developed, including the value of the raw land, engineering administration and site works would be approximately \$8.00 per square foot. The lots will be offered to applicants at prices in the range \$3.50 to \$5.00 per square foot.

The weighted average selling price of the 16 sites is approximately \$4.80 per square foot. Thus, there is a subsidy of 40 per cent for the programme overall.

**Tarouba Village
(NHA Lot Site)**

174. Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*) asked the Minister of Housing and Settlement:

Could the Minister state—

- (a) Whether the NHA lot site development at Tarouba Village, San Fernando, has been abandoned?

- (b) If so, could he state the reasons why?
- (c) The total expenditure to date on that project including debts outstanding?

The Minister of Housing and Settlement (Dr. The Hon. Vincent Lasse): Madam Speaker, the Tarouba site development works have not been abandoned. The works have been suspended since February 1992 due to limited allocations under the Development Programme of the National Housing Authority. However, the National Housing Authority is currently exploring other sources of funding. To the extent that additional resources become available, the project will be restarted in 1993. Part (b) is not applicable.

Total Expenditure on the project to date is \$4,437,162.06. In addition, a total of \$1,034,927.91 is currently certified and outstanding to the contractors. As indicated earlier, the National Housing Authority is exploring other sources of funding with a view to liquidating this and other debts outstanding.

Mr. Sudama: Madam Speaker, since this indebtedness is posing many problems to the contractors concerned, could the Minister indicate to this House the time frame within which he expects to get this funding in order to meet the outstanding indebtedness?

Dr. The Hon. V. Lasse: As I said before, the NHA is exploring the possibility of acquiring the funds to meet the outstanding debts.

Nursing Assistant Trainees

The following question was asked by Mr. T. Sudama (Oropouche):

- 177.** (a) Could the Minister of Health provide the names of the Nursing Assistant Trainees recruited during 1992 at the Port of Spain General Hospital, the St. Ann's Mental Hospital and the San Fernando General Hospital?
- (b) Could the Minister state who was responsible for the recruitment and criteria used in determining the final selection?

Madam Speaker: The Minister of Health?

Mr. Sudama: Is he here?

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): I apologize to you, Madam Speaker, and to the Member for Oropouche.

One hundred Nursing Assistant Trainees were recruited in 1992 to work at the St. Ann's Hospital and other related institutions providing psychiatric care in

Trinidad which fall under within the purview of the St. Ann's Hospital Administration namely:-

- (i) The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Centre at the Caura Hospital.
- (ii) Four extended Care Centres at Tunapuna, Couva, Sangre Grande, Point Fortin.
- (iii) The Tumpuna Rehabilitation Centre.
- (iv) The Psycho Geriatric Ward at the St. James Medical Complex.

No Nursing Assistant Trainees were recruited in 1992 for employment either at Port of Spain or San Fernando General Hospitals. The names of the Nursing Assistant Trainees recruited are hereby made available to hon. Members.

Vide end of sitting for written part of the answer.

Hon. J. Eckstein: The Recruitment Process.

The officer responsible for the recruitment of the trainees is the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health acting under authority delegated to that officer by the Public Service Commission. See Part 8, paragraph (a) of the Public Service Commission (Delegation of Power) Order.

In the discharge of that recruitment function the Permanent Secretary operates the following procedure: All eligible candidates for the position of Nursing Assistant Trainees are first interviewed, assessed and recommended for further consideration by a recruitment committee. This interview panel comprises representatives from the Ministry of Health, NIHERST, the Trinidad and Tobago Nursing Council, and the Trinidad and Tobago Registered Nurses Association.

The final selections are then made by the Permanent Secretary on the advice of the recruitment committee, headed by the Chief Nursing Officer, and includes the Director of Institutional Nursing, the Director of Community Nursing, the Director of Nursing Education and the Training Officer II in the Ministry of Health.

The criteria for recruitment are as follows: Academic—Three CXC passes—General Proficiency level, one of which has to be English. Preference is given to Maths and a Science subject.

Additionally, the candidates had to satisfy the interviewing panel and the recruitment committee that they are competent to pursue the profession of Nursing.

In the instant case the candidates also had to demonstrate to the panel and later, the recruitment committee, that they have a genuine interest in working among and caring for the mentally ill.

As I have indicated, those 100 Nursing Assistant Trainees were hired to work at the St. Ann's Hospital and the Associations that care for the psychiatric patient population in the country. No Nursing Assistant Trainees were hired either for San Fernando or for Port of Spain.

1.55 p.m.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

**Civilian Conservation Corps
(Recruitment)**

180. Would the Minister of National Security indicate the procedure and the criteria for recruitment of persons who will be or are involved in the Civilian Conservation Corps?

**Caparo River Course
(Misuse of)**

186. Would the Minister of Works and Transport state whether he is aware:

- (a) That there has been massive tampering of the Caparo River Course in the Montrose/Longdenville area?
- (b) That huge quantities of earthfill have been removed creating very large ponds?
- (c) That the area is now extremely unsafe to human and animal life?
- (d) That unprecedented flooding now takes place during the rainy season?
- (e) That the homes of many of the residents in the area are affected during the rainy season?
- (f) If the Minister is aware of the tampering with the Caparo River course, would he state whether those who are responsible had his permission?
- (g) If the answer to (f) is in the negative, would he state what actions he intends to take in this matter?
- (h) What measure he intends to put in place to rectify this serious problem and when?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, this question required a lot of detailed site investigation and this information has just been received so I would ask for a deferral of one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Corn Production
(Ministry's Incentives)**

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Krish Jurai (Nariva):

192. Would the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources state:

- (a) What has been the success rate of his Ministry's incentives to boost corn production in Trinidad and Tobago?
- (b) How much subsidy has been paid to date with respect to the production of corn in Trinidad and Tobago?

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, I crave your indulgence to ask for a deferral of this question for one week. I will answer this question at the next sitting. These questions require detailed investigation to provide accurate answers. The information has now come to hand and I give the assurance that the question would be answered next week Friday.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Nariva Swamp
(Development)**

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Krish Jurai (Nariva):

193. Would the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources state how soon work is expected to begin with respect to the development of the Nariva Swamp for growing rice?

Mr. Jurai: Madam Speaker, I would like to withdraw this question, because only on Wednesday last, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources made an extensive tour and he gave an undertaking that work will be commenced pretty soon, so I will await that response.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, as much as I would like to acknowledge the

presence of the Member for Nariva, I would hate to have him speak on behalf of the Government or of myself. I would not like him to make any commitment for the Government. I have the answer; I can give the answer as corrected and not what he is saying.

Mr. Jurai: I am withdrawing the question.

Dr. Rowley: But he is also speaking for me, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I think that was just an aside.

Dr. Rowley: No, Madam Speaker, he took it seriously.

Question, by leave, withdrawn.

Retired Workers (Severance Payments)

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Mohammed Haniff (Princes Town):

198. Would the Minister of Works and Transport state:

- (a) How many retired daily paid workers are presently awaiting severance payments?
- (b) The dates when these workers retired?
- (c) Why these workers have not received severance pay to date?
- (d) When will these workers receive their outstanding payments?

The Minister of Works (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, in order to answer this question, the ministry is required to go through the records of some 12,000 workers. The exercise was completed today and I shall be able to answer this question at the next sitting. I ask for a deferral of one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Retired Local Government Workers (Severance Payments)

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Mohammed Haniff (Princes Town):

199. Would the Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance state:

- (a) How many retired daily paid workers are presently awaiting severance payments in the respective local government bodies?

- (b) The dates when these workers retired?
- (c) Why these workers have not received their severance pay to date?
- (d) When will these workers receive their outstanding payments?

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, question No. 199 is similar to No. 198. It is merely applying to local government, whereas No.198 applies to the Ministry of Works and Transport. The research is being conducted and my office has not completed it. I ask for a deferral.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Ministry of Works (Vehicles)

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Mohammed Haniff (Princes Town).

200. Would the Minister of Works and Transport state:

- (a) How many vehicles are attached to the Ministry of Works, Victoria East Division?
- (b) How many of these vehicles passed inspection for the years 1992 and 1993?
- (c) How many of these vehicles were licensed for the years 1992 and 1993?
- (d) Will the Minister provide similar information concerning each of the other Divisions of the Ministry of Works and Transport?

Madam Speaker: The answer to this question is deferred for one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION (LEAVE)

Truck-borne Water

Mr. Mohammed Haniff (Princes Town): Madam Speaker, I had cause to pass a letter to you dated April 2, 1993 in which I sought your leave to move a definite matter of urgent public importance—the non-distribution of truck-borne water in certain areas of Trinidad.

The matter is definite since it affects the ability of our citizens to carry out basic health requirements.

It is urgent, because those citizens have been waiting and cannot wait any longer in a situation where there is no water and no alternative supply.

It is of national importance due to the dry season, and the problem is widespread, especially where supply in the lines is not available for weeks, in some cases, and, in many instances, if the water does come, it comes at night, causing extreme hardship to those citizens to be outside during the night.

Madam Speaker, never in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, for more than 50 years or so—have we had a situation where so much of the dry season has gone by and no water was distributed by Local Government in areas where there is no pipe-borne water. As a result, it raises a major concern as to the policy and the discrimination being handed down by this present Government, since the present Minister assumed the responsibility for local government.

As a result, what are we to do in such a case? We have a situation where January, February and March have gone very dry, and the citizens who depend on this water could not imagine that the Government of the day would have behaved in this manner, in not having started the truck-borne water supply.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member knows how matters under Standing Order 12 ought to be approached. You just make your salient points as to why it is urgent.

Mr. M. Haniff: That is exactly what I am doing, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Well it seems as though you are going into a debate on the matter.

Mr. M. Haniff: I am going to end by saying that those of us who represent the rural areas, in particular, are being bombarded on a day-to-day basis. Do you know what is difficult to bear in mind? We had messages coming from the Prime Minister and others about having a good Eid, "we wish you a happy Eid." There was no water at all in many areas. Do you know what that meant? You could not bathe and do the necessary things to attend the mosque and things of that nature. Yet, we had hypocritical statements about having a good Eid.

In the circumstances, this matter is of major importance, urgent and definite and I wish you would appreciate how urgent and important it is, thereby allowing a debate on this all important issue. I thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: I am not satisfied that this qualifies as a matter of urgent public importance within the spirit of Standing Order 12. The Member may wish to consult with the relevant Minister for a solution to the problem.

2.05 p.m.

**FERTRIN/UREA COMPANY LIMITED
(Divestment of)**

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I am authorized to report to this honourable House on the divestment of Fertilizers of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (Fertrin) and the Trinidad and Tobago Urea Company Limited (TTUC). Hon. Members will recall that I informed this House on September 11, 1992, of Government's intention to divest its interest in these two companies in keeping with Government's policy of becoming more of a facilitator in the economy and, consequently, divesting its non-strategic investments.

In keeping with the Government's commitment to accountability on all issues of public importance, I wish to announce that this divestment was closed on Friday, March 26, 1993, approximately six and one-half months after the start of the process. Two days earlier, on March 24, 1993, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Amoco Corporation entered into a definitive agreement to sell Fertrin and the Urea Company to Arcadian Partners L. P. for a total purchase price of US \$175 million. This agreement was consummated on March 26, 1993 when the ownership of the companies passed to Arcadian Partners LP and the purchase price was received through the account of the vendors.

In accordance with the prior agreement between Amoco Corporation and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the gross proceeds were divided equally between the two companies. Accordingly, as the ownership of the Government at the time was 51 per cent of the Fertrin plant, and 100 per cent of the Urea plant, 75.15 per cent of the gross proceeds accrued to the Government. After the payment of its share of the loans outstanding on the books of the companies, the Government received a net amount of US \$90.97 million.

This transaction constitutes the largest divestment effort to date in the Caribbean. Over 100 potential buyers in North America, Europe and Asia were contacted during the course of the marketing exercise which was managed by the First Boston Corporation which acted as the financial advisor to the Government and Amoco Corporation. Eleven potential buyers submitted preliminary non-binding bids by November 12, 1992, the closing date for preliminary bids.

On November 13, 1992, the negotiating team of the Government which consisted of Mr. Jerry Hospedales and Miss Jacqueline Quamina of the Central

Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and Mr. William Daniel of the Ministry of Finance together with a United States law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom, and Amoco Corporation, in consultation with their joint financial advisors, the First Boston Corporation agreed that eight of the preliminary bidders should move on to the second phase of the marketing plan.

During the period leading up to the submission of final bids, which took place on February 1, 1993, the eight potential investors undertook due diligence of the two companies. They were all provided with the opportunity for a one-day senior management presentation, visits to the plants at Point Lisas and access to a data room in New York to examine financial, legal, technical and business information on both companies under strict confidentiality arrangements. The management group did not participate in this process given their comprehensive knowledge of both companies.

On February 1, 1993, the final date for the submission of bids, four bidders submitted final proposals which were to be further clarified and evaluated by the negotiating team. I wish to inform hon. Members that the two local interests were in their final round. Unfortunately, I am informed that while none of the bidders was able to arrange their financing fully within the time frame outlined, Petrolam Trinidad Limited, one of the local interests, was interested in owning 50 per cent of the shares of the company now, but proposed to pay for this shareholding in October.

After some lengthy negotiations and discussions, fully financed offers both at the purchase price of US \$175 million were received from Arcadian Partners LP and Farmland Industries Incorporated, submitting a joint bid with Mississippi Chemical. Mississippi Chemical thus replaced Petrolam Trinidad Limited because of the latter's inability to raise its financing.

After review and further clarifications, the negotiating team agreed that the preferred purchaser was Arcadian Partners L P for the following reasons:

- (1) The terms of its purchase agreement were more favourable to the vendors than those of the other bidders.
- (2) Arcadian Partners LP did not attach any further conditions to the agreement except for those found in the Purchase Agreement. Most important is that Arcadian Partners LP did not request any amendment to the gas contract with the National Gas Company; the existing contracts remain unchanged. The other bidder requested amendments to each of the company's gas contracts;

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- (3) the terms of the long-term lease of the Savonetta Pier were not an issue for Arcadian Partners L P; the other bidder requested a licence for use of the Pier for a ten-year period on terms and conditions acceptable to them.

Substantial benefits will accrue to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago as the Fertrin/TTUC's facilities are consolidated and effectively restructured. I wish to advise hon. Members that over the last three years, 1990 to 1992, Fertrin made a profit only in 1991 and by the end of 1992, its accumulated losses amounted to \$347.6 million. TTUC made profits in 1991 and 1992, but its accumulated losses as at the end of 1992 were \$153.6 million.

Madam Speaker, I wish to draw hon. Members' attention to the following important commitments in the Share Purchase Agreements:

- (1) Arcadian Partners LP, in due course, will consider adding to the existing facilities, another urea train and building a co-generation plant to provide electricity to service the companies;
- (2) Arcadian Partners LP will look into the possibility of offering certain employees of the companies, the opportunity to work at their facilities in the United States;
- (3) Arcadian Partners LP, for two years following the closing on Friday March 26, 1993, will retain all of the companies' active full-time employees subject to certain limited exceptions and maintain all of the companies' employee benefit and welfare plans;

and most importantly,

- (4) Arcadian Partners LP warrantied that other than payments to its Legal Counsel and Accountants, they have not made or agreed to make any payment to or for the benefit of any person who is a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago or who resides in Trinidad and Tobago as a means of influencing or affecting the decision of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in approving the transaction with the purchaser contemplated hereby.

Madam Speaker, this transaction has taken approximately six and one-half months to complete within a framework in which the rules and procedures for all parties concerned have been as transparent as they have been fair and equitable. Similar guidelines and procedures have been utilized with respect to the sale of Farrell House (1975) Limited and Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging

Limited. The Government wishes to assure the national community that other state-owned companies to be divested would be subject to similar transparency and procedures. I wish to underline the Government's intention to keep hon. Members informed of progress on our divestment exercises in line with our commitment to greater accountability at all levels of this administration. A full report on this transaction will be made available to hon. Members later today.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

2.15 p.m.

Mr. Maharaj: I wonder if the hon. Minister would answer these questions.

Would the Government decide, in the light of its commitment, to let the public know that it was a transparent transaction and that there were no deals? Would the Government agree to have all the documents relating to this transaction laid in this House so that they can be inspected by the public? Would he tell this honourable House what the Government intends to do with the proceeds of the divestment in these two companies?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, with respect to the first question, I think Members are aware that this is a commercial transaction.

As a matter of fact, with respect to publicity, one has to get approval of the parties involved. We have had approval with respect to laying a report. As I mentioned, all Members would receive a full report with respect to the transaction. I cannot undertake in view of the circumstances to put on the table all the agreements relating to the transaction.

With respect to the second issue, we are on record as saying that the proceeds of this divestment would be used for foreign debt service. I think Members are aware that in February, 1993, the Government made a debt service payment, a debt maturity, a Japanese bond issue of about US \$106 million. When we started this transaction, it was envisaged that this would have been completed before that time to meet that payment.

What happened is that we really increased our overdraft with the Central Bank to make that payment so that this fund flow would reduce that overdraft. In other words, we tide ourselves over via an overdraft with the Central Bank. In effect, this transaction was used to mature that maturity.

Mr. Maharaj: Can the hon. Minister say whether the previous statements made by this Government and by him, particularly in the debate on the Appropriation Bill and the Prime Minister's Action Plan Statement, that no part of

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the proceeds of the divestment would have been used for recurrent expenditure, still hold good?

Hon. K. Valley: That still holds good. The repayment of a maturity, by no stretch of the imagination, could be considered recurrent.

Mr. Sudama: Madam Speaker, on a point of clarification on the Minister's statement. Would the Minister inform this House whether the party which was negotiating for the Government established a formula to determine whether the price available was a fair price, given the future potential profit stream of these two companies? If so, could he tell this House what that formula was?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, one can do that kind of analysis one of two ways. One can ask some expert to do a valuation, or rely on the market.

In the first method, the experts would make some assumptions concerning the future earning potential of the firm; use some discount rate and discount those flows back to the present, to come up with what the expert considers reasonable.

Let me just say that in another transaction, we used that approach and we came back with a figure that it was worth between US \$60 million and US \$150 million. Obviously, that does not help. The market—as long as there is no collusion—would do the valuation. What we have done in this case is to rely on the market to do that valuation. In our own minds, we had put a value lower than what we actually realized, so that the market is always perfect.

Mr. Sudama: After laying this report, would the Government consider a debate on it?

Hon. K. Valley: The Government has a certain legislative agenda. He can put it down if he wishes, as a Private Member's motion and we would debate it at any time.

Mr. Maharaj: Would the hon. Minister state whether the Government intends to use any of these proceeds of divestment in these two companies for the URP programme. I see it is reported in the press that the Prime Minister said so.

Hon. K. Valley: The answer to that question is, no. The Government's position is clear that there is a distinction between savings and recurrent. We would be using proceeds from divestment for re-investment, debt service and capital expenditure.

Mr. Maharaj: I wonder if the hon. Minister can tell this House if he is aware of the Prime Minister's reported statement that proceeds of the divestment—

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Mr. Manning: Yes, Madam Speaker. The statement was made by the Prime Minister in error.

Mr. Maharaj: Can I enquire whether it was a conscious or unconscious error?

Madam Speaker: Let us proceed with the Order Paper.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House consider item "Bills Second Reading" on page 16 of the Order Paper before "Government Business".

Assent indicated.

INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (INC'N) BILL

Question put and agreed to, That a bill to provide for the incorporation of the International Spiritual Baptist Theological Seminary, and matters incidental thereto, be now read a second time.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill referred to a special select committee of the House chosen by the Speaker as follows: Dr. R. Griffith (Chairman), Mr. E. Hart, Mr. J. Narine, Mr. K. Jurai.

HINDU SEVA SANGH OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (INC'N) (AMDT.) BILL

Question put and agreed to, That a bill to amend the Hindu Seva Sangh of Trinidad and Tobago (Inc'n) Act, No. 22 of 1988, be now read a second time.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill referred to a special select committee of the House chosen by the Speaker as follows: Dr. R. Griffith (Chairman), Mr. E. Hart, Mr. J. Narine, Mr. S. Mohammed.

2.25 p.m.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [March 19, 1993]:

Resolved:

That this House adopt the Report (1992—1993 Session) of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and

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Tobago on proposals for the expenditure from public revenue which were not included in the Annual Estimates 1993. [*Hon. W. Mottley*]

Question again proposed.

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): I rise to support the measure before this honourable House.

On the last occasion, the hon. Minister of Finance had cause to move this motion which relates specifically to certain movements between heads and subheads in the national budget. In particular he indicated that there were increases under “Heads of Expenditure” and decreases under “Other Heads”

The significant proposals involved an increase in the 1992 appropriation in the sum of some \$77.97 million. In particular, this reflected disbursements made under the loan facilities for the secondary recovery of oil and refinery modernization.

The Members on the other side, in usual fashion, sought to make heavy weather of this very simple piece of legislation. As an illustration, I would indicate the increase in the disbursement on the IADB loan for refinery modernization, where it was estimated at the beginning of the year that some \$218 million would have been disbursed. However, the actual disbursement was \$268 million. This relates to a particular investment, and to construction and other work related to the improvement of the facilities for our oil company.

As Members on the other side are well aware, especially the Member for St. Augustine, when one estimates the progress of a construction project, there can be an acceleration of the construction schedule and an acceleration of the drawdown for a number of reasons. What often happens is that the contractors achieve much better progress than they had expected and, therefore, more money is spent and greater efficiency is achieved. This is a very simple matter and, as usual I am amazed at the ability of the Opposition to make heavy weather of routine matters of this type.

Additionally, the Minister of Finance pointed out that there was a \$28 million increase in the appropriation for the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex which did not result in any cash in-flow and was essentially a book entry. When one peruses the statements made by Members on the other side, in particular the Member for Couva North, who gave an address which—if one peruses the speeches of the Member for Couva North in this House, for the last 15 years or so, if I use the cut and stick method, which essentially is taking sections of written

text and sticking them together, I am certain that could have formulated the speech for him, because he simply repeated what he has said in this House over the last 15 years, over and over, *ad nauseam*.

The Member for Couva North delved into general irrelevancy, did not address the matter at hand and made a number of inaccurate statements. In particular—like the Member for Oropouche—he made heavy weather of the fact that there were certain transfers between heads and he made the unfounded allegation that the Government had taken money out of health and education and placed this money into paying overdraft charges and so on. This is simply a falsification of reality.

In many instances, particularly with regard to the development programme—and the Member for Oropouche will be aware of this, because he was a Minister for a mercifully short period—*[Interruption]* A Cabinet Minister for an even shorter period.

Mr. Sudama: I would tell the Prime Minister I was not a Minister in error.

Mr. Manning: My information, Madam Speaker, is otherwise.

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. Minister is trying to give the impression that Members on this side have been erroneous when they referred to the actual Motion before us. At page 5, and I quote: “heads of expenditure reduced” the word “reduced” is used there and then enumerated, quite clearly, a reduction in Education of \$26 million; a reduction in the Ministry of Health of \$83.4 million; a reduction in Housing and Settlement of \$26 million. So it is not the Opposition who has alleged a reduction of the heads provided for in these ministries; it is the Government in this very Motion.

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, I thought the Member was rising on a point of order but it seems he was rising to make a speech.

As I said, the Member for Oropouche and the Member for St. Augustine, both ministers for mercifully short periods, will be well aware that in every year there are estimates in the development programmes in particular ministries and, for one reason or another, the ministries are unable to draw down on these funds. When it refers to imports from international agencies, in particular, because of the bureaucracy and the lengthy negotiations and paperwork required, quite often, while a ministry may intend to spend money out of its development programme, it is unable to do so and, as a result, there are savings in these particular ministries and the government transfers these savings to more critical areas of expenditure.

As I said, the two Members on the other side are aware of this yet they come to this House year and year, mislead this House, saying that we take money from Health and Education. It is simply a falsification of reality.

In my particular ministry, at the end of 1992. Because of savings in a number of votes—in vacant posts that, again, through the bureaucracy, because to fill vacant posts is quite a lengthy and complicated procedure, we were unable to fill posts as we had planned—we had considerable savings. In our rural access roads programme, we had savings under our development programme. These are projects which we were unable to execute in 1992. As a result, the allocation from these votes was available and in this particular instance in the Ministry of Works and Transport, we were able to find savings and transfer them to the Port Authority. In December, for example, we were able to transfer some \$9 million to the Port Authority from savings and thereby keep the Port running.

The hon. Minister of Finance in his budget presentation described 1993 as the year for the passage from stabilization to growth. I am happy to say that the current Minister of Finance is managing the finances of this country in an efficient and responsible manner. He is keeping very tight control over our fiscal affairs.

In 1992, for one reason or another, there were increased interest charges on the overdraft at the Central Bank; the Member for Oropouche queried this and I am certain that the Minister of Finance will respond to the queries raised. I read the *Hansard*, and I heard for what must be the first time in this honourable House, Members on this side complimenting the Member for Oropouche on a fine contribution. May I say, Madam Speaker, it was late in the day, we were well into the night hours and perhaps the Member for Oropouche was not his normal self and, as a result, he made some sense for a change.

The Motion before us is essentially the Government bringing into account all of its matters which it administered in 1992. As the Members on the other side will be aware, when the annual budget is made, it is clearly stated that the various heads of expenditure are estimates only. Every organization that is involved in formulating an annual budget, whether it be a private corporation or a governmental organization, can only at the beginning of the year make estimates of its actual expenditure. No organization or government for that matter can estimate the actual expenditure under any head with accuracy down to the last cent, which is what it would appear the Members on the other side would like.

It would appear that the Members on the other side, if they see an allocation of \$498,357,203.25 in the Ministry of Works and Transport, for example, would

like, at the end of 1993, that we would not overspend or underspend this amount by one cent. That is highly unrealistic and highly impractical. When the Member for Oropouche was formulating budgets, I am certain, if we go back into the *Hansard*, we shall see a contribution from the Member for Oropouche on a Variation of Appropriation Bill, some time in 1987 or 1988—I do not know if he was still around in 1988, but if he was—defending transfers from heads for various reasons. I am not certain where the Member was, but assuming that he was still in Government in 1988—Oh, he was on his way out, I am sorry!

When I looked at the contributions from the Members on the other side, particularly the Member for Couva North, what struck me is that he was referring to expenditures in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as money paid for which we have received no consideration. He went on to lambaste my colleague in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for wasting our money. But he was a Minister in that very same ministry and if one should go back into the records of 1987, I am certain one would find that the Member for Couva North was responsible for expenditure way in excess of the expenditure in 1992 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for missions abroad and so on.

At that time the Member for Couva North saw nothing wrong with it. He was a Minister in that ministry. He was responsible for considerable sums of money and expenditure relating to our foreign missions. Yet he has the nerve to come back in 1993 and speak about wasting money in missions in London, Washington, New York, Toronto. This is the kind of hypocrisy that we on this side speak about, absolute and total hypocrisy.

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The Member admits that he is not quoting the Member for Couva North, and he is assuming, but yet he describes it as hypocrisy. That cannot be in order in this House. I am calling on him to withdraw that. That cannot be hypocrisy. Come with facts, he should not speculate then charge the Member with hypocrisy.

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, I have here the *Hansard* contribution of the Member for Couva North. The Member for Couva North spoke as follows:

“I move to another situation that is only less ridiculous but equally insignificant. In answer to question No. 19 filed by the Member for Fyzabad we spend this kind of money for no service. In contract do you know what they call that? That is money paid for which we have received no consideration.

Overseas Mission	Total Expenditure
London	\$6,889,284.00
Washington	\$2,822,507.00

Mr. Humphrey: Now tell us the consideration to prove him wrong.

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, in 1987, as I said, the Member for Couva North was a Minister of External Affairs and he was responsible for expenditure in that ministry for the same missions and I can say that I am certain that under his administration they spent more money. I am also certain that the performance the Member for San Fernando West has been able to achieve in 1992, exceeded that of the Member for Couva North in 1987.

As I said, if one took the *Hansard* contributions of the Member for Couva North over the last 15 years and the Member for Oropouche—I am not certain how many years he has been here—one can take out sections and stick them together and come up with a complete speech and hand it to the Member for Oropouche, and all he would have to do is read, because that is all they do, regurgitate speeches over and over, *ad nauseam*.

Madam Speaker, this is very simple Motion [*Interruption*] I think this should be—

Madam Speaker: Maybe you can express it in less voluble terms.

Hon. C. Imbert: This Motion refers to the closing of accounts, to expenditure on overdraft and to the budget presentation, not directly, in which reference was made to debt servicing—and this is a matter which has been raised in this House and other fora—and I wish to refer Members on the other side to our manifesto on page 54. I have seen the Members on the other side with copies of this fine document, but it appears they never read it. I will quote from page 53, with regard to public debt:

“The PNM proposes to manage our external debt by:

- using the opportunity presented by the reduction in international interest rates to lock in lower interest rates through debt swap transactions and negotiations with lenders
- stimulating growth in foreign exchange through exports”

and most importantly by:

- earmarking part of the proceeds from the divestment programme for debt servicing.”

This is in our manifesto in black and white, and I do not understand why, week after week, the Members on the other side keep coming and saying “What are you doing with the proceeds of debt servicing?” It is here in the document and for the record, I will state, again, that the proceeds of divestment will be used in part for debt servicing, in part for re-investment in productive enterprises and for capital investment.

The Member for Diego Martin Central has pointed this out and this is in our manifesto. So I would ask the Members on the other side to not ask that question because I will simply pick up the document and read it to them again and again until they understand.

Madam Speaker, I wish to deny the allegations made on the other side that the Government takes money from poor people or the Ministries of Health or Education and puts it into debt servicing and interest payments. That is simply not correct. What happens every year, as has been traditional in this honourable House for the past 35-odd years, is that during the year, the estimates of expenditure are refined, savings are generated under some heads and increases are incurred under other heads. Because we are a responsible Government, and we wish to maintain a tight fiscal balance and not to exceed our budget allocations, wherever we have savings under one head, legitimate savings from projects which could not be implemented in the year in question or, as I said, from vacant posts which could not be filled for one reason or another, we transfer these savings into other urgently needed areas of expenditure. There is no voodoo or magic in that; it is as simple as that.

This Motion before us simply seeks to regularize the transfer of savings from various heads to other heads where the money was more greatly needed. I, therefore, commend this Motion to the House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, I want the hon. Minister to indicate how transferring from one head where there is savings to another head, incurs interest charges.

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, as I said at the beginning, the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1992) Bill involves a number of things. The Minister of Finance made this point that there was an increase in the 1992 appropriation of \$77.97 million and it reflected increased interest charges and a book entry under the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex.

In addition, as the Minister of Finance pointed out, there were a variety of transfers between heads. It is there in *Hansard*, if they read it. If he wishes me to read it, I will read it for him. I will refer to T&TEC, in particular.

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“... the financial restructuring of Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission, provision of supplementary funds. Cabinet agreed that the indebtedness to T&TEC as of May 31, 1992, be offset as against loans and advances received by T&TEC from Government ... that the outstanding balances of Government’s loans and advances to the Commission ... be converted to equity. The accounting arrangements had to be made to give effect to the set-off ...”

Therefore, savings from heads were transferred to that vote. It is all here in *Hansard*.

So that, if the Member for St. Augustine would only take the time to read the contribution of the Minister of Finance, he would have the answer to all his questions. I, therefore, support this Motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Miss Pamela Nicholson (*Tobago West*): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to make my contribution on this Bill, to supplement and vary the appropriation of a sum, the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 1992.

Firstly—

Madam Speaker: I think Members are aware that we are doing the motion concurrently with the Bill. So it is really the debate on the motion which is in progress as well as—the contributions are the same, but I think that I ought to bring this to the attention of Members. Yes, all right. Proceed.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to make my contribution to the Motion that was in progress.

Firstly, I must condemn the disgraceful piece of behaviour we just saw here. It is very sad to see a Minister of Government rising in this House and making very poor contributions. If he knows that he has nothing to say, he must keep his seat.

Madam Speaker, I have nothing more to say on what the Minister said here this afternoon. I would like to go into what we were discussing last week, the supplementary section, provision of supplementary funds for the Water and Sewerage Authority to meet part payment of arrears. That is, Head 08(b) “to meet arrears of salary increase to monthly-paid workers of the Authority”.

What we are seeing here is that money was taken from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and social Services, a very important Ministry as far as social

services are concerned in this country. You see it on the streets of Trinidad, day after day, growing in number, and an area like this, where you have children walking the streets, vagrants increasing on the streets of Trinidad, you are having a transfer of millions of dollars from such an important ministry into this other one.

It was to pay arrears. I think it is very important that I remind this country of certain things which occurred here. The public must always be reminded because the memory of some of them seems to be very short, and because of that they are taking certain decisions that they should not be taking.

When the Industrial Court was told “we do not have money to pay that two per cent, it was the People’s National Movement on the streets, led, as I always say, by Lieutenant Morris Marshall, the Member for Laventille West and General Mole Manning, the present Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, who were on the streets with SOPO, with Bakr—everybody—all the unions.

Today, Madam Speaker, when the same unions walk, they are told, “You can walk; you can prance; you can dance; I do not have any time with you, nothing is shifting.” But they were the party organizing these people, to prance—break up Trinidad and Tobago.

2.55 p.m.

What emanated from that, was that the two per cent was there to be paid, when it should not have been. Therefore, the Water and Sewerage Authority was forced to find funds to pay the workers. That, Madam Speaker, should not have taken place in this country.

Madam Speaker, what has resulted from all those changes, is that, today, after they have paid those people, workers must be sent home: They call it voluntary retirement, but it is not. Ours was voluntary. The WASA, PTSC and Port workers were confronted with a tight time frame within which to take this offer, and today the workers have to hustle even though they do not wish to accept the offer.

They were the people who were saying “not a man must go. You are not to accept that”—SOPO and the representative for Laventille West—I will always keep reminding him. I am not going to cease, over this five-year period, reminding him of “not a man must go”. That same individual, Madam Speaker, today is telling the workers; “you have to go.” It is in today's newspaper, *Trinidad Express*, Friday April 02, 1993, page 10, headline, “Marshall,” this is one, “water rates should go up.” I am on the wrong one, but in one of these newspapers—I cannot find my page, and I would not waste any time—he was telling—I think it was the Chamber of Commerce or some business group

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in the South, that they have to go. It is hard for him to take the decision, he said, but, they have to go. Same individual—"not a man must go"—fooling the people of the country, being unfair to the population. Madam Speaker, it is the dishonesty I cannot come to grips with.

That is why the representative for Diego Martin Central has said that, I am bitter. I am not bitter; I am grieved, for what is being done to the people.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, obviously this Member is debating an issue that we dealt with about two months ago? I thought she was dealing with the matter before her today.

Miss P. Nicholson: You leave me alone.

Madam Speaker: I am waiting for the Member to get on with the Motion before the House.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I am on the Motion because I pointed out that I am dealing with 8(b) on the supplementary. I pointed out to you, Madam Speaker, that that is dealing with the shifting of funds from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Social Services to the Ministry of Public Utilities. I am now telling you the result of that, and I am now going to get deep into it.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, may I say that that is an excellent introduction to the Motion.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member for Tobago West, is now an experienced Member of Parliament, and I just want to caution her against making her contribution in a manner that imputes improper motives to Members of this honourable House. I think she can make the point without doing that.

Miss P. Nicholson: I would not waste any time to go into that because the Member knows that I am speaking the truth.

Madam Speaker, the economic position that had to be made, based on the decision taken by the Industrial Court—although the Government of the day stated, "there are no funds." But with the turmoil that was created by the People's National Movement, they agreed—because PNM; SOPO and Bakr said so—and I will sit and let you all get up and say, no, you all were not with them—Lieutenant Marshall; 'Mole' Manning—

Mr. Manning: For the purpose of the record, I wish to make it quite clear that the People's National Movement was never a member of SOPO; in fact,

Madam Speaker, a member of the People's National Movement had an observer status at two or three of the meetings, and when the position of SOPO became clear, the general council of the PNM took a decision that we would take no part in the affairs of SOPO.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister has denied SOPO twice; I am waiting for him to deny SOPO thrice.

Miss Nicholson: Madam Speaker, the result is, today, in the same institution called WASA, you have what has emerged again as voluntary separation. I remember that when the last Government were dealing with WASA and the cut-back in disbursements, we were crucified by the People's National Movement—I am going to bring my facts to justify what I am saying. In a similar Bill like this today, a Variation Bill, Mr. Patrick Manning, who is now the Prime Minister of this country; on March 17, 1989, said:

"When a decision is taken to reduce disbursements from the Exchequer to the public utilities in Trinidad and Tobago what in fact is being done, especially as there has been a further commitment in the Letter of Intent that had been laid in this House some time in November last year, is the committing of the public utilities to a retrenchment exercise, which will result..."

We were telling the people, that because of the monetary situation of the country that was left by the PNM, because of the over-manning—that is what we were telling the people, that the utilities were over-manned, the utilities needed to become financial—it is in the budget. From 1987, 1988; 1989; 1990, if you read all the budgets, you will see it there. Notes were also sent from the Cabinet and Permanent Secretaries to that institution asking that these areas be addressed.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, if I remember, during that period, what was coming through from the government, was that WASA's people were lazy and should be taught a lesson. That is the point they were making. That is my recollection of that period.

Miss Nicholson: Madam Speaker, that is not the point. I am exposing—have your seat—you have no point of order

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order—

Miss Nicholson: Madam Speaker, is it a point of order?

Mr. Manning: Initially, Madam Speaker, I intended to await the conclusion of the entire contribution being made by the hon. Member, but it is already very clear that what the hon. Member is seeking to do, is to put a complexion on

contributions of Members of the Government, then in opposition, that is entirely incorrect.

In fact, what they did, Madam Speaker—

3.05 p.m.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, he cannot be making a speech now, I am objecting to that.

Mr. Manning: I am correcting the record, Madam Speaker.

Miss P. Nicholson: I am objecting to what the Prime Minister is doing, Madam Speaker. Now is not the time for a speech.

Mr. Manning: It was precisely the same attitude that was very much extant, Madam Speaker, when the Government took the decision to take away the Cost of Living Allowance from public servants. The argument was that they are lazy and they do not work and, therefore, they must be dealt with in this particular way. That is the difference.

Mr. Sudama: That is totally untrue.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I will come to this House every day and I am going to expose them to the public. I am going to educate the public on the contradictory behaviour of what we call the People's National Movement *[Interruption]* I will be dealing with you a little later on, specifically after this.

Madam Speaker, when we were saying what we were going to do was to have voluntary retirement in the institutions, he came here in this House and said that what we were doing was going to increase the prison population. What would result is an increase in the visitors to the prisons. So that when you read the newspapers—at that time he said:

"1,130 to go at the Public Transport Service Corporation' you may be sure that you are going to see the effect of that in the prisons somewhere. When you read in the newspapers that there are 1,300 workers on the Port to go, then you know that is going to have a sequel..."

[Noise]

Madam Speaker: Members of the public gallery, you are disturbing the hon. Member in making her contribution. I am hearing you up here on the Chair. If you wish to stay, please be quiet and listen to what is going on.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, some people take a little long to learn. I continue Madam Speaker—

"When you read in the newspapers that there are 1,300 workers on the Port to go then you know that is going to have a sequel in the prison population in Trinidad and Tobago; and when you read 2,289 workers at the Water and Sewerage Authority to be retrenched, you know that you are going to see the effects of that in the levels of economic activity; you are going to see the effects of it in our prisons; and in the number of visitors to inmates of prisons. We could expect the Government to come some time in future with a request for..."

subventions for prisons, and so forth, Madam Speaker.

We never sent home those numbers. Those numbers were speculations that were being made in the newspapers. But I want to ask, when the 1,000 go home from WASA, would there be an increase in the prison population? I am asking the Member for San Fernando East to answer that question. When you send home about 1,000 workers from PTSC, I want the Member for San Fernando East to answer if there would be an increase in the prisons. When you send home 1,000 workers from the Port, would there be an increase in the prisons, Member for San Fernando East?

Mr. Manning: The answer is no.

Miss P. Nicholson: When you send home hundreds from BWIA—up to yesterday some were sent home from Crown Point Airport.

Mr. Manning: The answer is no.

Miss P. Nicholson: When you send home hundreds from BWIA—up to yesterday some were sent home from Crown Point—would there be increases in the prisons, Member for San Fernando East? When you dump tyres into Trinidad and Tobago would there be an increase with the closing down of the Caribbean Tyre company? I could go on and on. I told myself I have to come to remind this hon. Gentleman about what he was doing. Listen, Madam Speaker, to the same gentleman when he was saying that we should not cut back on the disbursements to WASA, he is saying also, in his statement laid in Parliament on Monday, January 04, 1993:

"1993 would be a year which, although leading to growth would also mean recognition of the fact that there would be a clear need for Government's subventions, especially to the public utilities, to be reduced..."

The exact position that the NAR Government was taking while it was in power, and serving the country. This is what Mr. Patrick Manning, the Prime Minister, had the audacity on this day to come here to state that—

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"subventions...to the Public Utilities must be reduced significantly and for a process to be found to achieve optimum efficiency of these utilities."

He then understood it. He is now forcing the country, because many are afraid now, to accept this. He goes on—

"Additionally, it is also clear that there must be rate increases at the Port, at the Water and Sewerage Authority and at the Public Transport Service Corporation"

The man who is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Speaker—these were his positions; today he is taking a totally different position from what he took in the term 1986—1991, when he was Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Sudama: You call such a person a chameleon.

Miss P. Nicholson: And they are going out to the public and trying to fool the people, and that is what is my grief. I am not bitter about anything because the people have a democratic right to choose their Government. I am very cool with that. But it is what you are doing to those who are not free when literacy is a problem. At that same time. Madam Speaker, on December 01, 1989, the Privileges and Immunities (LOME) debate continued. This is *Hansard*, Madam Speaker, and I am quoting here from the contribution of the Laventille West Representative. I would not leave him alone. Listen to him. This is a different quotation from the last one.

"As a responsible Opposition it is incumbent upon us to point out some of the areas, some of the problems and some of the issues that are of concern to the people of this country and we must seize the opportunity to talk about the 2,000 WASA workers who are due to go on the breadline. This is a serious matter and it is quite unfortunate that the Government seems not to understand the implications of the path that they are on in dealing with this whole question of unemployment. This whole question of throwing workers out on the street—it is WASA, 2,000; 3,000 in PTSC “(he is increasing the numbers)”; it is NHA; the Public Service, County Councils.

Mr. Speaker, I make the point not for the political mileage but I want to make the point today that we are on a dangerous course, as a country, when we continue to put thousands of workers on the streets. We are in fact laying the basis for a type of social conflict that we have not seen in this country for quite some time;"[*Interruptions*]

This was the Member for Laventille West. The thing is still in their hearts, they are now remembering, Madam Speaker and they are now recognizing, because he conceded in the newspaper that he was wrong, but I cannot leave him alone.

"and I make the point for the benefit of those who are in control. When people are thrown on the streets and they cannot provide, I said repeatedly in this Parliament and elsewhere, things are going to happen..."

You know the things I always talked about, a guerilla movement in 1990 and so on, and before?

"things are going to happen that will not be in the best interest of this country. It is not my wish but 1990 is not going to be a charitable year for most of us, and the Government seems not to be concerned about that."

3.15 p.m.

I remind him. Now, thousands are going home, Madam Speaker. He is in charge of the Public Utilities. He has sent home a thousand from PTSC; he is sending home a thousand from WASA, he is sending home thousands at the Port, the same man who was saying, "we must not throw them on the breadline, there will be social conflict." He even went on to say, and I quote:

"They seem to be behaving in a fashion that gives the impression that they are penny wise and pound foolish."

Is the Member for Laventille West penny wise and pound foolish in what he is doing? Has he forgotten what he promised the people: not a man must go? So I really have to remind these people, because they are sending them home. What they are forcing on them and calling it voluntary separation, is not voluntary. I want to stress that. When you give somebody one or two months to take a decision, that is not voluntary. What the NAR government was doing was voluntary.

It was the Member for Laventille West, linking the NUGFW in WASA after they agreed with the Government—who organized a march. I could never forget them, circling the Ministry of Public Utilities where he is now. I could never forget them. This woman is strong, Madam Speaker, the same way you have to be in your seat there. I was not afraid at all.

Today they are doing it, and harshly. We were not harsh. We spoke to the unions; we looked at the social issues that surrounded them. For example, in WASA today, they are not dealing with it in a voluntary way, they are actually

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forcing certain people in top management at WASA whom they feel are not PNM supporters, to go.

Mr. Imbert: On a point of order—actually two points of order. Firstly, the Member for Tobago West is imputing improper motives and misleading the House, and, secondly, as you yourself have pointed out on the last occasion, Standing Order 70 which refers to Supplementary Appropriation Bills, states specifically that the debate on the second reading of the Bill shall be strictly confined to the matter for which additional expenditure is required. I would therefore ask the Member not to stray into this sort of misinformation and improper imputations.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I was quoting from a similar debate. That is the point I was making. We did not disturb a soul. It is the albatross around their necks today. That is what it is. It is not misinformation; it is here! Anybody with intelligence can read and understand. I am not fooling the population and saying that we are 95 per cent literate. You can fool 50 per cent of the population that might not be literate. What I want to do for that section is to teach them to read and write so that they can make independent decisions. That is what I want to do. I am not imputing any improper motives. I am sorry for them.

Let me get back to the issue. He wants to disturb the facts I am coming with. People in the top management at WASA are being kept in cold storage; they are actually telling them, "you have to go." It is so sad because more than half of them have no bearing on NAR; they are PNM. The people cannot take it.

Madam Speaker: It seems that you are now going into the realm of the voluntary separation plan and maybe you can put that as a private motion, if you wish. Could you stick to the matter at hand, please?

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I am sticking to it, but I am just saying what has emanated from the decisions which have been taken here. That is the point I am really trying to make, and I am reminding them about it. What I am trying to say is that when you serve the people, you cannot assume—

Madam Speaker: What the hon. Member did was mention a certain heading and this is where you began to stray into the voluntary separation plan. Would you come back to the Motion?

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, this is one of the actions that were taken that resulted in what I am telling the House about. That is why we have to be honest when we deal with the population; that is why we have to be

careful when we deal with the population; that is why we must recognize, whether we are in Opposition or Government, that we are serving a country and dealing with people and that we must not misguide people. That emanated from this and I am just reminding them.

I want to state that Head 08 gave me all those arguments there. I want to go to Head 26: Education; \$26 million was transferred from education. How does a government see education in a country. What priority do you give to education? Whom do we serve with education? The children of the nation; the people who are going to run the next generation. When you see that \$26 million was removed from Education, you want to know if the People's National Movement have changed their position from the one that they took and they always boasted about, under the late Dr. Eric Williams, when he said that the future of the country is in the children's school bags. Because if that was one of the themes or grounds upon which they functioned, you could never remove \$26 million from Education, because there is so much to do there.

When the Member for St. Joseph made his first statement on education, he was real bombastic. There were endless goals he would be achieving over the five-year period. When you set goals to achieve, obviously funds must be there to achieve those goals. So I want to argue that if he had said, certain goals, let us say, for 1992, and he did not get his \$26 million, why did he not come back to the public and tell them he removed \$26 million so, therefore, he could only achieve certain goals. Why did he not do that? Why did he leave it hanging, so that the people would be feeling, yes, they are there, when there are no funds.

3.25 p.m.

Madam Speaker, it is absolutely necessary to look seriously at education. Today, the principals of the schools are speaking out. As a matter of fact, the argument is that Malick Senior Comprehensive and others are just holding bays. In other words, the children just go to school, teachers are there, but there is no money to buy materials; whether it is for the science section or the technical vocational section. They are just there being bored. No money to deal with that.

Therefore, a social dilemma is in education today, because no money is going to the teachers. Why was the \$26 million not used for that purpose? Just as how money was shifted from head to subhead, shift money to education and give it to the principals to spend. Those are the children that the Government cares for. Those are the people whom the Government cares for in the comprehensive schools. One has to do much more work with the children in the comprehensive

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schools, than with the children who go to CIC, St. Hilary's, St. Augustine Girls, Hill View College, because the literacy levels are much weaker. Yet, those are the schools that the Ministry of Education, under the PNM, are making the holding bays.

No money is going to the schools for supplies and materials, so many students are just there in their gangs and so on, planning. What has resulted is the violence which has occurred, until the same school that I spoke about had something much worse which saddened many of us, where a student was killed by another student. The principal spends most of his time in the police station. He cannot be in the school because of the problems. No money for telephones to allow teachers to communicate with parents to call them in to try to address the situation quickly, when the problems arise. The \$26 million should have been serving that purpose in the Ministry of Education.

I am stressing this area because the children of Members of the Government do not go to South East Port of Spain or Malick Senior Comprehensive, it is the children of the people of Laventille, Morvant, San Juan, Tunapuna, Cocorite, the dispossessed, the poor and the oppressed. The Government is fooling those people day by day when it is their children who are exposed to all the ills of the society.

There are certain schools with anything like \$150,000 to \$200,000 overdraft. When those schools do not get money from the Ministry of Education, they call meetings, talk to parents, give things out to the students and in two weeks, the \$150,000 or \$200,000 is raised. Malick Senior Comprehensive, South East Port of Spain, St. Augustine Senior Comprehensive and the junior secondary schools cannot raise one cent because those are the unemployed people; the people who are being retrenched.

Madam Speaker, the \$26 million should be given to the schools so that materials and everything that is needed can be purchased. Recently, we heard the Minister say that the teachers should be more creative. What he is trying to do is to pass the buck to the teachers. As Minister of Education, there is a certain amount of funds that he should be able to get his Government to give to his ministry for the schools. He has to stand up and tell them "If you are not doing that, I am not sitting down here. You cannot take my education \$26 million when in Malick and several other schools there is murder, and stabbing. The Prime Minister's child who might have been in Presentation College is now at CIC, or Trinity." The children of the Government Members are not involved; it is the public gallery's children.

I am grieved, that is why I am speaking out like this. I know about this because, just like you, I was a teacher. The Minister of Finance must understand where priority lies so that these people can get their education and be free to make decisions in the future. As Paulo Freire said in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "If you cannot read and write, you will always be oppressed and enslaved". It is an emotional position that will be taken. Therefore, the violence that we have in the country today will continue.

The Minister of National Security in the *Trinidad Guardian* of April 1, 1993, said "Tidal wave of youth crime". He is throwing the blame on foreign movies, but I would say that is part of the problem. What is happening in the schools, where the teachers cannot get the materials to use? Teachers have to buy chalk; if the children have to play netball, they have to come together and buy clothes for them. Teachers have to buy things for the biology and science sections. Is this burning you, Member for Laventille East? It is the truth I am talking.

"National Security Minister Russell Huggins yesterday afternoon described as a 'tidal wave' the number of young people involved in criminal activities in the country.

Huggins told the annual general meeting of the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) at the Raja Yoga Headquarters in San Fernando that the situation had reached frightening proportions and blamed foreign movies for having such an effect on the youths."

I am not doing that. That is part of the situation. He goes on—

"Moreover, the spread of the drug culture; the decline in moral standards with the attendant rise in promiscuity..."

Those are responsible, but he did not talk about what is happening in the schools—whether they are getting their just dues—and in the homes. This is the caring Government that cares about the people and the students that I am talking to. What are they doing?

The hon. Prime Minister is trying to engulf poor Mr. Garcia by throwing the albatross around his neck. It is the Government that is responsible for what is taking place. Put the \$26 million in the Ministry of Education and you will see much more improvement.

I investigated a number of cases and spoke to a number of persons, for example, Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive, North Eastern College and a number of others. When the CXC examination comes around, if the Minister of Education

is not able to convince them to get money, there is a crisis. They will not be able to get the \$30,000 to go to Western Scientific—that is the place where they buy the materials for the children. I only hope I am assisting the Minister of Education to get the money. I am appealing for him here. The Government will not want to hear me again.

3.35 p.m.

That is a problem, and the principals of a number of the other schools are saying that that \$26 million should have been spent in the schools and not transferred anywhere because education should be the number one priority of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The Government are very uncaring. I want the people of the East/West Corridor to know that it is their children who are bearing the burden. Everybody would like their child to achieve the highest goals, but when they do not put facilities in the schools, they cannot achieve any goals.

Mr. Sudama: I just want to correct the Member for Tobago West. Everybody in Trinidad and Tobago, including the rural areas bear the burden, not only the East/West Corridor. I just want to clear that.

Miss P. Nicholson: I agree with him, but I want to stress that I am sorry for the people of the East/West Corridor with the way they are bombarding and fooling them. I just want to stress that. I agree with him, because when I talk about Tobago, they treat it as if it does not exist.

The people are saying that there is some level of insensitivity coming from the Ministry of Education. The principals are saying that they want better communication. Talk with them and let them see how they can resolve the problem.

Even to run basic seminars. Two weeks ago the Ministry of Education was supposed to run a geography seminar in Tobago but they did not release \$200 to buy a ticket for the lady to run the seminar. Hours before the teachers settled in they heard that there would be no seminar because the lady did not receive a ticket. When the schools are not given money to do certain things, the link between Trinidad and Tobago is separated even more. For example, in sports, such as netball and football, they come to Trinidad for the champion games. A few weeks ago, I think the netball and basket ball teams could not come because of limited funds.

Madam Speaker: The speaking time of the Member has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Miss P. Nicholson: Thank you, Madam Speaker and Members.

We do not want any more separation of the links from a cultural and sporting perspective. These are some of the very important areas that the people would like to have some discussions on and to see action. Even with the way in which the funds are distributed.

Let us say that they are giving only 10 out of 50 that they planned to give, you do not know if you would get 2,000 or 3,000 per quarter so that you can plan. That is another problem. If you beg another department for paper, you do not know if you would get back the money to buy back the paper for that other area or ministry.

The education area is in total disarray. What they are trying to do is wrong. Do not try to blame the teachers. Do not try to use the president of the parent-teachers' association who does not even know A, B, C to fool the children. Do not try to use Mr. Garcia. Do not do him that. You can talk to him against the backdrop of the union, but do not say that because he represents a union, he is against you and therefore he wants to create turmoil in education.

It is the \$26 million that he did not give to the schools; the lack of sensitivity and communication from the Minister. Many of the principals and teachers, even the committed teachers, are becoming very concerned today about the way in which they are functioning. They are saying that if the basics for the schools cannot be met, when they come with a big plan for a lot of money, they would not even discuss it. It cannot be discussed when the basics are not met and nobody speaks. When I will use this time to say 1,000 words and this person will say five, they say that is a smart guy.

The \$26 million that was transferred out of the area in education—I am talking on behalf of the schools, teachers, principals and the parents because everything affects them. The children belong to the parents. It is impacting seriously on the principals and teachers. They do not know what is going on and they have problems, especially in the schools, as I pointed out. I want to stress the comprehensive schools which are in the depressed areas. The Minister of Education might not know about it because his child is not going there. It is the people who go there who would know that that is the area they would like to have addressed.

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Under Head 18, Ministry of Finance, I saw that they were giving some recognition to the position that was taken by the NAR government. They try to squeeze in something now and again. They were saying that the position was taken that the Minister got certain powers. We do not only want them to talk about that, but also all the good things that you met.

[Interruption] You shut up. Pegasus is not quieting you at all. I do not understand. If I were you, I would be so quiet in here. I would resign. That is the kind of person I am. I would not be in here, because I know that in any country of substance I could not be in there at all. We even had the Prime Minister getting up and sayings that he made a very big statement in error. I have never heard that in my life.

The money that he got from the urea, Fertrin—

Madam Speaker: To err is human.

Miss P. Nicholson: No! Do not defend him Madam Speaker. You have to be independent. Do not defend him. Madam Speaker, in no other country would he be sitting down in here. He cannot make that error because he is out doing his politics. He should be exposed.

Mr. Bereaux: Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the tassa beating of the Member for Tobago East.

Miss P. Nicholson: I am saying that they must always give the recognition where it is due.

I want to raise a very important point on that same area. That area—
[Interruption] They are too hot for you. You cannot take it. I will keep pounding you all until the end. I am making these statements because I am a lamb. When the workers at the hospital marched, police were imposed. They said, "We can never do anything. Dance!" The workers at WASA say, "I am afraid to talk to you, Pam. I hear they tap my line." This is the feeling of the country.

A few weeks ago, *[Noise]*—Madam Speaker, please protect me from the members of the public gallery. I would not mind the Members who should be in here.

Madam Speaker: Members of the public gallery, the Member for Tobago West is seeking the protection of the Chair. That gentleman there, would you please leave the precincts of this House. Constable would you take him away, please. Please leave this House.

3.45 p.m.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, he did not do me anything; that is the wrong person. Anyhow, I would not go into that, I just made my statement.

Madam Speaker: Let me warn the members of the gallery that if this kind of conduct persist, I would clear the gallery and you would no longer be able to listen to the debate *[Noise]* Would you please also leave the public gallery. Continue, please.

Miss P. Nicholson: It is the opposite side they are putting out; the right side is sitting down.

Madam Speaker, what I am saying is that under Head 18, the recognition must always be given and they must tell the country openly the NAR things that they have been doing and that are desirable and effective. I want to raise a very important point under that area.

Madam Speaker, in the Tobago House of Assembly there was a situation, and I am stressing it in here because it must not happen again. The People's National Movement interfered with the funds of the Tobago House of Assembly to pay T&TEC. That is not the business of the central government. The Tobago House of Assembly is a governmental institution given funds. Funds are appropriated to do certain things.

There was an interference which impacts upon what is happening this year in the Tobago House of Assembly. When questioned, blame is put on the Budget Division. It is the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister and his Government that must take the full blame. They are not to interfere with the Tobago House of Assembly's fund. *[Interruption]* I am not afraid to say so. They have their appropriation. If they deal with T&TEC, T&TEC is their agent. If T&TEC has a problem, they communicate with the Tobago House of Assembly, it is not their business. It is illegal and unconstitutional for them to interfere with it. I hold my ground.

Madam Speaker, under Head 18, I raise that point because the Tobago House of Assembly should manage its funds. If you give \$0.10, it must manage that \$0.10, because it is running the internal business of Tobago. That is what it is doing. I am not going to bow to anybody. Tobago fought for something that it must get its just due from it. We are going to stand by that. Water separates these two islands and I am making my statement very clearly.

I believe that there are a number of areas that one must comment on and I want to tell the Member for Diego Martin East it is not funds saved, you

manoeuvre the funds and I ask him not to get up here and talk dotishness again. Funds are manoeuvred.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member for Tobago West is an experienced Parliamentarian. That language is inappropriate to this honourable House.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I could quote him so many times. His statement to the former Prime Minister, week after week, I am sorry I did not bring the document, “vindictive”, “wicked”, “a man of hate”. Those were his words and those are unparliamentary words. I am not allowing him to forget: “vindictive”, “wicked”.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, in the circumstances, those were most appropriate words.

Miss P. Nicholson: I will not even—who can be more vindictive? Who is impacting Hitler on the people of Trinidad and Tobago? They have people running the heads of certain business institutions calling the media to tell the media how to talk at this time, to suppress the media. People who belong to the People’s National Movement and are heading certain institutions in this country have called the media to talk about how to write at this time.

Madam Speaker, only last week I read about Hitler, and I am seeing many similarities in the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and him. I am pleased to make my comments to expose these people here this afternoon and I hope that education will benefit greatly from what I said because I am very concerned about the children of the nation. It is very sad what is happening, and I am sure, with my statements here this afternoon, the Minister of Education will benefit.

The Ministry of Health is another area, \$83.4 million transferred, and I am reading from page 1 of the *Express*, Wednesday, March 31, 1993:

“Surgery at your own risk at POS Gen.

Patients scheduled for surgery at the Port of Spain General Hospital are being advised to seek medical attention elsewhere or face the added risk of increased complications and possible death.

Authorisation forms drafted by the Department of Surgery are being distributed to patients, advising them of the ‘risks involved’ due to the poor lighting system in the main operating theatres. The form states that ‘The conditions at the main operating theatres at the General Hospital, Port of Spain, are such that the risk of complications during operation is increased significantly.’

It further advises patients that they have 'the option to seek attention elsewhere' and that 'operations may be performed under general anaesthesia' and to 'consent to any other surgical procedure that may be deemed necessary at this time.'

A second form asks patients to indicate that they are aware of conditions and are prepared to accept the 'added risk.' Patients are required to sign both forms in the presence of a witness, whose signature is also required.

Doctors complained to the *Express* recently that the lights in the theatre were dim and that they are hampered by this when performing operations."

In today's news—I will just give a summary of that—the Minister was stating that from last year they were looking for the lights, so they will be looking until 1994. It is the caring Government, again. So for more than a year they cannot get lights, because I think he said June 1992—I cannot remember the correct date, but it is some time like that—they were looking for the things. Then the world Health Organization and PAHO were communicated with, and then it ends where the two organizations were looking at the same institution to get the lights for the hospital.

I think this is very distinct and clear. You cannot be a caring Government for the people and have the hospital affected like this. People have a great need for the hospital. The hospital has probably over 1,000 beds, so that you cannot close it down and use the other hospital. I think they said that the other hospital has only 200 beds, because it was not built to perform the same role that the Port of Spain General Hospital is performing.

So, therefore, areas like the theatres and that kind of thing, it is very clear that one should keep a monitoring kind of system there. Why you reach a stage where you are transferring \$83.4 million from Health and you have that kind of situation, I think it is atrocious, I think the Minister has to take some of the blame for this; he cannot expose the people of Trinidad and Tobago and expose the poor people of Laventille, San Juan, Morvant and Tunapuna et cetera.

They have no money to go anywhere else, many of them are unemployed, many of them are underemployed, now some of them are going home and the money that they are getting from the Port, PTSC and probably from WASA, what will be happening is that they can go and pay off the loan for the house, because if they cannot do that, they are going to lose the house, and then they would have to start from square one.

There are persons 44, 45 and 48 years old, who are being sent home because they are not supporting PNM. They are doing exactly what their fathers did to a

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number of people: Eugenio Moore, Patricia Robinson and Cecil Dolly. There was an article in the papers up to recently. I will expose them all I am going to come in here and speak the truth, and I am hoping that the independence of the press, of the media, will let the people know the facts of life.

In the Scarborough General Hospital there is a no-this, no-that situation; a number of things they do not have, things that up to 1991 were flowing very smoothly. Right now there are problems, all because funds are not distributed properly. They are taking away \$83 million from Health to put it somewhere else. After education is health. Those are the priorities, especially during a period of economic problems. You have to sit and analyze your options.

I recognize that there is a problem in the camp, that certain people look as if they have no say, because if they had a say, the Ministry of Education, or the Minister would not have to give up his \$26 million, not for the children of the nation. That is the country. Tomorrow, when we are resting quietly at home, they will be running the country, and when he cannot get his \$26 million, something is happening in the camp. I think he is a deputy, too, or advisor to the Prime Minister—I cannot remember—and imagine he cannot get his \$26 million to give to the principals and teachers of the schools to run them.

There are many dilapidated primary and secondary schools which need action. For example, there is one in Tobago, if they allow it to break down, it will then be two more schools that they will have to build. I thought that seeing that they are all so effective and good, they would not have Scarborough Secondary being threatened by erosion. They would have brought in some Dutch people from Holland long time—because they have built houses and skyscrapers on water—instead of wasting this \$26 million.

Because to rebuild a school like Scarborough Junior Secondary, you will need more than \$26 million. It is better to take the \$26 million and save the school, so that you will just have to look for money to build the other wing of Signal Hill which we had in the 1991 budget; they did not put it in the 1992 budget; it never became a comprehensive school, because it does not have the tech-voc wing at that school.

Mr. Manning: Why did you not build that in 1991?

Miss P. Nicholson: I could not build everything. We did all the background work, and I told the Prime Minister, in 1991, that money was on the budget for it, but he made sure, in 1992, they did not see it. That is the level of wickedness.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, in 1991, I was in Opposition. It falls on the shoulders of the hon. Member to explain why an allocation was made in 1991 but yet it was not built when she had a say in the Government.

Miss P. Nicholson: I was doing the planning, the designing, all my home lessons. Just observe how the Minister of Housing and Settlement is happy with the hard work I put down. Money was in the 1991 Budget for it and, therefore, they should have done the work. They should recognize that if a school like that is lost, the question is, where are we going to put those students.

Mr. C. Imbert rose—

Miss P. Nicholson: On a point of order?

Mr. Imbert: No, no.

Miss P. Nicholson: It is not a point of order. We will chat after; tea-time.

Mr. Imbert: On a point of clarification. If the money was in the 1991 budget and was not spent, could the Member just tell me where it went to, which Head it was transferred to and how come?

Miss P. Nicholson: I know he is a basic time-waster, so I will not worry with him.

All I am saying, and I am sure the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister will understand, if you lose a school that 800 children go to, because that is the school that feeds Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive, there will be a huge problem for the government, so the best thing is to try to save it. I am just reminding them about it. They should not be worried about that.

I do not see a problem in reminding them that it is better to save that school than to have to build two new schools, because the Mason Hall school is there. Tobago has the lowest level of in-take into secondary schools; it is something like 47 per cent when the schools in Trinidad are somewhere like 80 per cent. That is why it was Mason Hall that one was paying attention to.

All I am saying is that the \$26 million could have been used. I mean, if he is so heavy, he is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, bring in some Dutch experts. I am just trying to tell him what to do, because those people build skyscrapers on water. Use the \$26 million.

Mr. Manning: I thank the hon. Member for giving way, Madam Speaker. Before she concludes her contribution, I would just like her to tell us why it was in circumstances where she is so concerned, that the Government of which she

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was a part did not construct the tech-voc wing at Signal Hill, to which reference has now been made?

Miss P. Nicholson: Yes, Madam Speaker, I know he has some time to talk after, so he can do his business then. I have no time to waste with that. The important thing is to expose to this country what they are doing. That is my business here. I want to tell him that he must not tap people's lines; do not impose the military on the people. He is beginning to look like Hitler, but on Fridays he is going to church and his mentor Canon Clarke continues—

Mr. Manning: Every day.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, I really do not know that is necessary. Let us keep the level of the debate at a high level, please.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, is it against the law to speak the truth of what is happening in the country?

Madam Speaker: What does Canon Knolly Clarke have to do with this debate?

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, if you read these documents, you will see his name is in them.

Madam Speaker: Will the Member continue to make her positive contribution as she was doing previous to the reference to Canon Clarke.

Miss P. Nicholson: Only that part is not at the high level.

Madam Speaker, I would like the Minister of Health to tell us today why we have this problem at the Port of Spain General Hospital and why he allowed their \$83.4 million to be taken away when those important things should have been done in the hospital. Remember, they made nurses march and dance and now they have doctors coming out and defying them in the open. That shows how poor the situation is. They do not want the people of the nation to be aware of it.

I am very concerned. I do not know if he has said anything at any other time, but up to today, I do not find that he has given any satisfactory answer. I really thought that he would have made a statement to the House on what is happening at the hospital because of the role that health plays in a country. I thought we would have had a serious statement made by him.

I would like to know why so much was taken out of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Social Services, because that is an area where there is always so much

to be done. From the time you have an unemployment situation in a country, that is an area that needs all the funds.

For example, many senior citizens in Tobago have complained to me that the \$300 they are getting cannot pay their water rates. There is talk about further increases in water rates and electricity rates. I would like to get an explanation as to whether senior citizens will be paying more water and electricity rates; I would really like to know about that. This is a situation where the senior citizens need more action. I am telling them what is happening on the streets of Port of Spain. I like to see the women in action and it is time that we saw something. We should not see children living on the streets of Port of Spain. If the Minister had plans, this money would not have been taken away from her ministry to be given to another ministry.

Madam Speaker, I believe that there is much in this debate. This is not anything simple and routine. Anybody who says that it is simple and routine, that individual does not belong to this House and should not be sitting in this House. It is not simple or routine. We must know why this was done, and we are the people to point out the alternatives. The alternative views should come from the Opposition.

When I read, and I am always reading *Hansard* because I enjoy reading it, I invariably start laughing because when I recognize what the Prime Minister was saying and what he is doing today, I wonder whether the country is analyzing who the individual is. Totally turncoat!

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member has two minutes. Could she wind up, please.

Miss P. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I want to say that this is a very important debate. Members must state very clearly how they feel about it, and it is the business of the Government to answer the questions.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank you very much. I am very pleased to have been able to make the statements that I have made here today. I just want to tell the press not to let them shut you up. Thank you very much.

The Minister of Education (Hon. Augustus Ramrekersingh): Madam Speaker, I join this debate to deal essentially with two issues. The first is that sum of \$26 million which seems to have become, by now, either very famous or very infamous. It depends on how you look at it. The second issue I wish to look at relates to the voluntary separation plans and matters relating to certain industrial relations agreements.

I wish to start with the second issue. When the Member for Tobago West spoke, there was a certain confusion between payments to workers at WASA and the Special Tribunal award. The Special Tribunal award of the Industrial Court for a five-year period involved workers in the public service, including teachers, nurses and so on. It did not include the workers at WASA.

This Government committed itself before getting into office to implement the award of the Special Tribunal to the public service, and in our very first budget we kept that commitment. It cost, but it was a commitment. The question I ask the hon. Member for Tobago West is: had the results of December 16, 1991 been different, whether the Special Tribunal award would have been honoured.

The arrears and the payments of people at WASA: Somewhere towards the end of November 1991, a significant period, some three weeks before a particular event, an agreement was reached with the monthly-paid workers of the Water and Sewerage Authority, having nothing to do with the Special Tribunal. It was an agreement between the representatives of the Water and Sewerage Authority and the union.

In that agreement, certain commitments were made: Payments of arrears on a monthly basis, lump sums based on the famous "collect-all", drive. It was all tied into that. This agreement was arrived at and was expected to be financed by the proceeds of the "collect-all", that WASA would go on a concerted drive to collect its arrears, three weeks before a particular event in December 1991. So the award of the Special Tribunal bears no relationship to the moneys owed to the workers at WASA.

Madam Speaker, you would remember, towards the end of last year, certain payments became due because of that agreement of late November, early December, 1991. A very significant period for settling an agreement.

Sending people home: It is easy to make the statement that people are being sent home. But let us take the undue emotionalism out of it; let us look at it rationally. There is a distinction between retrenchment and voluntary separation. What we have done is to agree with the unions on a programme or package of voluntary separation.

Miss Nicholson: Madam Speaker on a point of order. The point which I made was that this grouping or this party which is now running the country criticized that approach and today they are now implementing the same thing. That was my case and it was clearly made. Thank you.

4.15 p.m.

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Madam Speaker, I was referring to what was said about sending people home, and the word "retrenchment" being used. I am saying, there is a distinction between "retrenchment" and "voluntary separation." Indeed, agreements have been reached with the unions on an enhanced package and on that basis, the establishment at certain utilities will be reduced—and I make the point, Madam Speaker—agreed on with the appropriate unions.

I want to take us back to January 1987, when in the budget presentation of that year, the cost of living allowance and the merit increases of the public servants in this country were unilaterally removed. There was no consultation, no agreement with the trade unions—that was arbitrariness and subversion of the principles of collective bargaining and good industrial relations.

In 1988, as if it was not enough, we had the same arbitrary cutting of public servants' salaries by 10 per cent—a further subversion of the principles of collective bargaining and good industrial relations practices.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister saying, that something done by an Act of Parliament and passed in both Houses was arbitrary?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Madam Speaker, the terms and conditions of service between employer and employee—in this case, the Government as employer and the public servant as employee—are determined by the process of collective bargaining, and those terms and conditions ought only to be varied, through the same process of collective bargaining; not through the use of parliamentary majorities.

Mr. Robinson: May I ask the hon. Minister, whether he knows that the matter was taken to court and the court ruled otherwise?

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, I was trying my best not to comment. What in fact happened, was, after the illegal action was taken by the Government, and the matter was taken to court—while in court, the Government used its parliamentary majority, with retroactive effect to give legitimacy to an illegitimate act.

Mr. Robinson: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to bring documentary evidence to prove that?

Mr. Manning: That is public knowledge.

Mr. Robinson: That is what you said with respect to SOPO—bring documentary evidence.

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Madam Speaker, I am not getting into the midst of SOPO and all of that. I have made the point. In fact, even today, there is an appeal pending on the question of the suspension of merit increases. So that, Madam Speaker, we proceeded in a civilized manner by seeking acceptance by, or agreement with, the unions, before implementing the programme. So that I am concerned when we are accused of acting in a particular way by those who ignored the principles of good industrial relations, when it was their turn.

Madam Speaker, not only do we have an agreement over voluntary separation, also the package is enhanced; and we have added another dimension—that certain services are being put at the disposal of the workers who are opting for the voluntary package. Counselling services are being put into place. The facilities and the advice of the small business unit; the national training board; and the credit unions—we are putting together a package, so that people who are accepting the separation plan and have a certain amount of money, will be guided in the best possible ways to use that money, so they will not be reduced to penury. That, Madam Speaker, is an example of caring.

Madam Speaker, it is not putting people out of work. A voluntary separation plan is nothing unique, either to Trinidad and Tobago or to this Government. We have gone a step further—to put in place programmes that will allow these workers to make a new future for themselves; that it is not the end of the line.

We must be very careful when we come here with a lot of emotions and simply use words. The Government have not embarked on a programme of retrenchment in the Public Utilities; we have put forward a proposal for voluntary termination—agreed to with the unions, and it is going to be implemented.

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, would the hon. Minister indicate to this House, what follows should the workers not accept what is being offered?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Madam Speaker, the question does not arise, because the figures we have for the Public Transport Service Corporation and the Water and Sewerage Authority make the question redundant. The figures we are getting for the Port, seem to indicate that in a very short while, the matter will be resolved.

With respect to the question of the mysterious \$26 million—

Mr. Maharaj: Madam Speaker, would the Government, through the Minister, give a guarantee that the workers who do not take up this so-called voluntary scheme would not be retrenched?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Indications are, that the question will not arise.

Let me get to this mysterious \$26 million which was supposed to be removed from the development programme of the Ministry of Education, in 1992; it is on page 57 of the Schedule. I want to say that I must express my appreciation for the concern and solicitude of the hon. Member for Tobago West. But, Madam Speaker, in public finances, it is not just a question of, if the money is not used here, you can just use it elsewhere.

Let us see what this \$26 million is all about. It is made up of the following items:

- (a) Library books for type A and type C schools - \$22 million
- (b) Library books for the Learning Resource Centre - \$1.5 million.
- (c) Computer equipment for the Learning Resource Centre - \$500,000.00.
- (d) Valuations in respect of final payment for construction projects \$2 million.

4.25 p.m.

Let us take them in turn. A contract was not awarded in 1992 for the supply of library books for type A and type C schools—that involved \$22 million. What happened? During the course of the year, the books on that list which was prepared previous to 1992, were reviewed by the people with the competence.

The existing lists were voided and new lists were prepared and the matter went out to tender. Now, the tender process does take some time and, in fact, the tenders were not finalized in 1992. The tenders are being considered at this stage, because some time earlier this year the Central Tenders Board put out for tender for the supply of those books and I think 45 days was given for interested persons to tender. I think the 45 days has now gone and we can expect contracts to be awarded by the Central Tenders Board, so that \$22 million will be spent in 1993 on library books for types A and C schools, the purpose for which it was intended. In the same way—

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Will the hon. Minister give way to a question, please? Is he saying that their development allocation for 1993 will remain as is in conjunction with the \$26 million that was not used in 1992?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Let me explain this point. I will deal with that. What we are dealing with, essentially, is the IADB programme, and I will come to your matter in due course. In the same way, the tenders for the library books for

the Learning Resource Centre are being prepared now to go out. The work on the computer equipment for the centre had to be redone when it was discovered in 1992 that the equipment originally thought of was nearing obsolescence; and that superior equipment at better prices could be obtained. So that matter is being done over, the tenders will come out this year and the equipment will be bought this year.

Finally, valuations in respect of final payments. The construction phase involving the Inter-American Development Programme has come to an end and the final accounts are being made up and one would see where moneys are still owing and which bills have to be settled, and it is estimated that that will take about \$2 million. We expect to have all of that sorted out by September, 1993. The point therefore, is not a question of \$26 million being taken away from the Ministry of Education and being used for some other purposes. You have to look at the whole contract system—

Mr. Humphrey: Will you give way to a question?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Let me just finish the point and I will give way—that this money is there and the contract will be awarded by the appropriate authority. Moreover—

Hon. Member: But that is for 1993.

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh:—since the funds were allocated for a particular purpose and involved the IADB in part, you simply cannot take the money for a primary school building programme and put it into secondary schools or do this or that. It is intended for a particular purpose, Madam Speaker, so there is no mystery to it, it is not money taken away, it is there; some of the tenders have been done this year; the award will be made and the money will be disbursed.

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, will the hon. Minister tell this House whether those funds were transferred during the course of 1992, on the Ministry realizing that you were not going to expend them, or whether they remained in balance at the end of the financial year, 1992 and were carried over into 1993?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Madam Speaker, let us not make a mystery out of this thing. These are just book transfers and accounting actions. They are making a big mystery out of it. They want to do it for emotional and political reasons to say \$26 million was taken away from education, so the Government does not care about education, but that is too cheap a political point to make.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, merely on a point of clarification which is very important. The Minister said that these were loan funds from the IADB and that they were transferred.

Hon. Member: Not all.

Mr. Robinson: Now my understanding of loan funds from the IADB is that they cannot be transferred in that fashion. Can he explain how they were transferred?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: As the hon. Member for Tobago East will know, the IADB loan involves a certain amount of money and we have to put a certain amount—counterpart funds and so on. I was just making the point generally. The point is, I have shown where through the award of contracts in 1993 and the tying up of the loose ends, the final ends of the programme, this \$26 million will be dealt with, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Robinson: Excuse me, on a point of order. The Minister must be candid with the House. These are financial matters. Will he state whether the \$26 million was, in fact, transferred? Which is what he said. This could not be under the IADB programme. What happened to the \$26 million? How did the other items get the \$26 million? Would he explain to this House?

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.15 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will be very brief. We were dealing, essentially, with unspent appropriations. The Member for Caroni Central raised several points of significance when he spoke here two weeks ago. One of them was repeated by the Member for Tobago West, which dealt with the allocations to government and senior comprehensive schools, in particular.

In terms of government secondary schools, last year, under Office Stationery and Supplies, the sum of \$3.8 million was spent. The 1993 figure allocation is \$3.9 million. So basically we are at the same position. In terms of Repairs and Maintenance for secondary schools, last year, \$437,000 was spent. This year we have allocated just under \$1.5 million—

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Let me thank the hon. Minister for giving way. Would he care to indicate whether or not for the corresponding period in 1992, there were more releases of funds than in the same period, 1993, and why it is that principals are making the public statements they are making today?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Madam Speaker, I cannot, at this point, talk about the speed or the occasions on which releases were made last year. But in terms of the particular vote to which the Member is referring, two disbursements have already been made for this year. We expect a third disbursement will be made this month. So that the situation, in terms of the allocations for 1992 and 1993, is basically the same.

I have—and I think I gave this to the press some two weeks ago—the disbursements that were made. You have a sum of money allocated and it is disbursed over a period of a year. At some times, obviously, the disbursements will be higher. For example, as we move into a period where the examinations are near and consumables will be needed for purposes of the examinations, the disbursement will be higher than earlier in the year, or at another time of the year.

The fact is, though, that we do not have unlimited funds at our disposal. I could go through how much we spent in respect of the assisted secondary schools last year; \$7.7 million in grants. The 1993 estimates, \$7.7 million. So we are basically at the 1992 figures. All of us would like a lot of money; there are many things we would like to do, but we must face certain realities. The Ministry of Education, like every other ministry, received cuts in allocations for 1993, but when we analyze it carefully, we will see that precisely because the Government places a premium on education, the Ministry of Education was shielded more than most ministries from the cuts.

So that in terms of the disbursements to the schools, these are taking place. But some fundamental points were raised by the Member for Caroni Central. For instance, he raised the question of student indiscipline. I think it was mentioned also by the Member for Tobago West. I do not wish to go into an analysis of the reasons for student indiscipline. I have done that in other places. I did that during the budget debate. I simply want to say that student indiscipline, bordering on certain violent acts which we would not normally associate with students, has been going on for several years. We are not going to solve the problem in a day or week. We have to look at the family life. We have to look at standards and values; we have to look at the effect of the media.

I think it is important for us to recognize that the Government has been looking at education and the education system and for that reason, in our manifesto, we committed ourselves to having a comprehensive review done which has been completed and is now out for public comment.

We are not prepared to take, what I may call, a sticking plaster approach to the question of education, simply pasting it over cuts and bruises and not dealing with

the real problems. We are taking a holistic, a systems approach to it. Let us analyze the problem properly. It is important that we make the correct diagnosis, because if we do not diagnose properly, our prescriptions are going to be way off.

So that we started this process of the analysis and will be taking a holistic approach to the problem of education and moving towards dealing with the problems in a phased but resolute way, and we have our targets ahead of us. I make no apologies for saying that if radical surgery is needed in order to have our education system where we would like it, then I will not shrink from it. But I prefer us to take a studied view and to plan properly so that we can get it right. We cannot afford to make serious errors. I, therefore, expect that from late 1993 and over a period of years, the process of fundamental education change will begin.

In the Task Force report the point is made that education is unfinished business. That is correct. Education is always unfinished business, because there is no total solution, that we do this and everything will be correct for all time. As we make advances, things around us change and we must adjust. Therefore, as we plan for the future, one of the things we are proposing to do, is to have built-in evaluation mechanisms within the planning so that progress is being monitored and evaluated and we can adjust course as conditions change. Sometimes as we achieve something in education, as we make an advance, that very achievement, that very advance, creates new challenges for us. So it is unfinished business in that sense.

So that while we on this side recognize the validity of some of the concerns raised, we are taking a particular approach to it, not tinkering with the system, but dealing with it as a whole. We prefer to go that way and to take, as I said, a considered approach, characterized by proper planning. We know, too, from the population statistics, what the projections are for the year 2000 and it will demand a certain amount of money. The Government is looking, at the present time, at means of financing the further expansion of education and the reforms that will be necessary. It is expensive business, but I want to point out that we are not going to solve problems simply by throwing money at them.

We will continue to put money into education, as we will do in other areas, but we must ensure that it is money well spent, and the task of education reform is to create a system of education which delivers quality and justifies the money being spent.

Madam Speaker, with these words, I thank you very much and I commend the measure to the House.

5.25 p.m.

Dr. Carl Singh (Tabaquite): Madam Speaker, this is the second occasion on which I address this House in a debate of this nature.

The Member for Couva North mentioned that he had taken part in debates of this nature for more than 15 years, and it has come to his understanding, all along, that this is just an annual charade of rubber-stamping what has happened the year before.

The Member for Oropouche gave an excellent presentation on why we should change this *modus operandi* by setting up some type of committee whether it be a Joint Select Committee or a Standing Committee, to monitor the day-to-day expenditures or the uses of allocations made during the fiscal year. This would prevent us wasting time at the beginning of a new year to talk about what has happened before.

During the presentation of the budget, one is told what is anticipated and what we are going to do in the coming year. Allocations are made and at the end of the year we are here again to be told that these allocations were changed. Why? Added to that, parliamentary approval is required for the transference of sums from one head to another. In 1988, Cabinet had authorized the Minister of Finance to allow transfers within subheads within a Ministry, and this gives a tremendous amount of leeway. The Government is fooling people if at the beginning of the year one anticipates to do something, the money is voted for that project, but during the year one is at liberty to change, within the ministry, and do something else.

I can understand that exigencies of the service may arise over the year, and it would demand emergency expenditure. In the last year, I saw no such exigencies, but transfers were made to the extent of \$40 million, within subheads of different ministries.

I shall allude to remarks made by other Members concerning allocations in different ministries etc, but I shall stick more closely to the conditions in the Ministry of Health, as the health services are applicable to the society as a whole.

The Member for Tobago West alluded to the situation at the Port of Spain General Hospital. This is a sad situation. It is nearly atrocious that the Government is telling me that it is cheaper to transfer a patient from the Port of Spain General Hospital to Mount Hope Hospital for surgery and either nurse the patient there or bring him back to the Port of Spain General Hospital. Is it not

better to beef up the situation at the Port of Spain General Hospital where these mundane and daily types of surgical procedures can be performed? It is really difficult to understand that for the mere requirement of bulbs for an operating theatre, we have to wait one and a half years. These are equipment and facilities that must be ready at all times and, indeed, a certain amount of stock must be held in hand. One cannot wait until a bulb is blown in the operating theatre then to ask someone to make representation to buy one. This is ridiculous.

It has already been said that before the plans were put in place for the building of the Mount Hope Medical Complex, the country would have benefited much if the existing medical facilities were really beefed up and brought up to standard.

Madam Speaker, the allocation to the Ministry of Health for 1992 was \$631,370,057, and of this sum approximately \$84 million was transferred. Why? The Government has bled a dying ministry.

Over the years, the allocations have been reducing year after year. Most of the transfers were made to the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Ministry of Works and Transport. The road system in the country is nothing to be proud of, and things are even worse in the utilities.

Last year we had the tragedy at the St. Ann's Hospital where 14 people lost their lives. There was a quick internal investigation and today, approximately one year later one sees in the newspapers: "Lack of resources stops egg-nog probe". This is really stretching things a little too far. What are the factors responsible for the delay in the production of this report? I quote Dr. Elizabeth Quamina, one of the Commissioners, from the *Express* of Tuesday, March 23, 1993:

"Very shortly, as you know, one of our big problems is one of resources, simple things like paper, or paper of the wrong size, typists and this sort of thing. That has held us up quite a lot."

Can one imagine things like this? Is it that they are lulling the population into complacency to believe nothing really went wrong at St. Ann's, in bringing the report at the end of the year or two years later, when everybody would have forgotten what happened at St. Ann's? Is that the *modus operandi* to go lull the population and go around the country with idle talk to boost up the people's support? I cannot understand it.

Madam Speaker, things are so bad, one wonders where we are going. Here is another tragedy, not of the same dimension as that at St. Ann's, but a death from a jaw tooth abscess. This is the case of a 23-year old man who was admitted on Friday 5 to a public hospital run by the state, and died on Saturday 6, after the

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extraction of a tooth. Now tell me: Where are we getting the experts? Are we getting experts, really, to do this type of work? One goes in for an innocuous type of operation, to have a tooth removed—were the necessary septic precautions taken before, for this patient to end up in intensive care and to be dead? This is not what one would expect in our type of society and country. I am appalled to think that at a public institution, this has happened in this day and age.

Another disturbing point, Madam Speaker, is that moneys have been removed from these departments so that the necessary funds are not available to provide basic amenities and requirements for testing and working. As a result, patients of the country are moving out and going to private nursing homes. I wonder, according to Act No. 29:03, the licensing authority for private nursing homes—are these nursing homes just licensed and allows one to practice *ad hoc*; as one cares? Are the activities monitored from time to time or spot checks made to see if everything is running smoothly?

5.35 p.m.

This is very much reminiscent, of the boom years where money was no problem and finance houses were developing right, left and centre. And, who are the sufferers today? Many of the clients who put their money in these finance houses are either vagrants, mentally destitute or otherwise. This, we allowed to happen and it is nobody's business. We set up a nursing home. Who is to monitor this? Are we giving licence to kill people?

This is another headline: "Doctor runs after woman dies." Today, in this day and age, in Trinidad and Tobago: "Doctor bandages the corpse and heads for kiddies carnival." Where are these practitioners coming from? Where are they educated? Are they educated at all? Are we bringing people just like that to do surgery in Trinidad? Were they qualified to do that?

I would anticipate if I am going to do surgery, I would examine my patient before; do certain investigations; make sure my patient is fit to take surgery. If I am the anaesthetist, I would check the equipment. I would not leave it to the whims and fancy of the people who run the nursing home. Indeed, I would check these things before I put the patient to sleep and do any surgery. This is what is happening and we are allowing to operate.

This incident occurred on January 31, 1993. Two months later, it is believed an inspector is going to inspect the equipment. If I have defective equipment in my nursing home, would I wait for two months to correct it, when you would tell me next month an inspector would come to inspect the place? Is that what we are

coming down to? This is really horrible! I could not have expected to see such occurrences here.

Health offices: In the PNM's manifesto of 1991, general election—beautiful picture—page 33 states:

"A PNM Government will reorganise the primary health care system..."

The primary health care system of the country is the bedrock of the health system of the country. That is where we must spend our money and can do a lot for our people, but no. Because of the lack of funds, health offices are not operating as they are supposed to.

In La Romaine, a rather thickly populated area, the health office has been closed for more than two months. Tabaquite, my constituency, patients come to me from time to time to tell me that when they go to the health office and the doctor is there, the pharmacist would not be there, and when the pharmacist is there, there is no medicine to deliver.

They transfer from the Ministry of Health \$84 million in a year. Why are they doing that? Are we leaving it for next year or the following year? This is an atrocity. The health of the nation is tied up with the wealth of the country. Make no mistake, no state should allow the health situation to deteriorate to the extent that ours is. If it continues at this rate, as the Minister of Finance alluded, that last year the Government paid the foreign debts and local debts to the tune of \$360 million; this year a similar sum is to be paid, and by 1995, we will be crossing the hump—I do not know if it is the buffalo hump or which hump.

Tell me what will happen to these utilities that we are not nursing today to serve our people, 1.2 million people? We cannot get water once a week in a house. What are we doing when money was no problem, to supply a small population like this? It is an indictment against the Government, a government that has been in power for 30 years, and after a hiatus of five years, it is back in power.

According to the manifesto, page 33 states:

"establish twenty-four (24) hour emergency health care facilities in both urban and rural centres to ease pressures on the main hospitals and provide easily accessible medical attention."

How many of these units have been established in Trinidad, where you can go and get treatment publicly?

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In Couva, at present there is the case of five patients who suffered from an acute episode of fever and chills and developed meningitis. Believe it or not, one of these patients was taken to the hospital at Couva. This is not rural, this is Couva where, I believe, there are plans for building a new hospital. This patient went knocking on the door of the Couva hospital at 5.00 a.m. to find out if anyone was there, and was then sent to San Fernando, where a spinal tap was done and a diagnosis of meningitis made. The patient was kept.

Believe it or not, the next day another sibling from that family was taken to the hospital and treated by another doctor. This I question. Where are our doctors coming from today? This other patient came from the same house with fever, headache and comatose; was given an injection to suppress vomiting, and two panadol tablets, then was told to go home. The patient was not even sent to the San Fernando Hospital for further investigation, knowing that this patient came from the same house. The mere presence in the same house should have alerted the doctor to realize that this could also be meningitis and to take a little more precaution. Believe it or not, that child died at the hospital.

Are we relegating our services to investigation after the horses have bolted, or are we going to prevent the bolting? What are we doing? It is a sad situation. I do not know where we are going, but I am sure we are not going in the right direction. I speak basically on the health situation because it affects the population. We cannot forget that in no part of the world patients pay fully from their pockets; they pay in front and they pay taxes and from which subventions and good support must be given to the health services.

Pari passu with treatment at the hospital, you have to provide a good and adequate water supply. That is the important ingredient in the hygiene. But you get water once a week. You may get a bucket of water to bathe and that is it. No! These are the problems facing the country. Are we addressing them? We know what they are, but what are we doing about them? We are helter skelter moving \$84 million from this ministry to do something else.

For example, take Tobago with a population of about 40,000 people, how many medical specialists are there? Are you telling me that when someone is sick and needs emergency treatment, you would pack him up and bring him to Trinidad? Where would they get \$200 to pay the airline? What about the boats? Is it not more economical to have a couple of experts in Tobago to do the basic areas? You do not have that.

5.45 p.m.

Funds that were allocated for the purpose of increasing staff have been used for other things and transferred, when it is a dying ministry. Look at Mount Hope—\$20 million has been allocated this year and it has been declared a paying institution. Tell me, where would the paying population come from to supply enough funds to run Mount Hope? They are telling me that to transfer a patient from Port of Spain to Mount Hope for surgery, the Government has to find the money to pay for that. How can they do that? *[Interruption]* This is what I am saying. They are transferring from Port of Spain Hospital and they are going to pay Mount Hope. They are giving them \$20 million to run the hospital—how could they run that? That is just enough for the grounds.

Another important aspect of the health system is prevention. Over the last year the Insect Vector Control Department retrenched something like 180 to 200 people. They were doing an important job in the country, spraying especially mosquitoes, carriers of Malaria, Dengue Fever, Yellow Fever. They have removed these people and those who work there hardly get the chemicals and so forth to do work. Are we talking about prevention? I could imagine what goes on when it comes to vaccination and other measures that can prevent people coming into that hospital.

All that was said in the manifesto had the effect of fooling the population to support the party in power today. Today they are not in a position to deliver the goods and, as a result, we are having talks all over the country to allay the fears of the population. This is what they are doing.

I alluded to the sums we have to pay, we have paid and when we pay them. At the end of the period, after these sums have been paid to foreign debtors, the public utilities would have gone down to the dust. We will have none of it. We have to start from scratch. I am glad to learn that the Government will honour its obligation to pay its debt. That is quite gentlemanly. If you borrow, you must pay. We must not go begging for debt forgiveness. You must have your business put in place so when you borrow, you know you are going to pay. If you get debt forgiveness now, who is going to lend to you again? At the end of paying this money for these loans abroad and at home, we have to borrow again to start these services from the beginning.

My humble submission at this stage is that we rethink this payment and do so seriously. The lending agencies imposed conditionalities on our country and people—we suffer. It is not for the betterment of our economy, but they are

making sure we are in a position to repay and will keep us in perpetuity under the yoke of the lenders.

My humble submission at this stage is that we pay half of our loan this year; instead of \$3.6 billion, pay \$1.8 billion, and use the other \$1.8 billion to bolster up our flagging and dying utilities, or else the last stage is going to be worse than the first. I thank you.

Mr. John Humphrey (*St. Augustine*): I do not intend to be very long, Madam Speaker, but I want to pick up from where the Member for Oropouche left off on the last occasion.

I had asked the Minister of Finance to furnish me and Members of the House with the details relating to an increase in the overdraft facility at the Central Bank. The Member for Oropouche quoted from Government statistics and, in fact, in excess of the legal limitation from the Central Bank to finance its operations in 1992. We have heard no response from the Government side on the contribution of the Member for Oropouche.

In fact, although Members on that side congratulated the Member for Oropouche on his contribution, I have not seen any report in any of the media on the Member for Oropouche's contribution. If we look across at the public gallery; we see provision for members of the press to sit in on the deliberations of this House. When you look across, prior to 4.30, when we adjourn for tea, you see the seats and benches filled at the press table. But when you return after tea and you look across, again, there is nobody there, hardly anybody.

I think this is the reason that the business of this House is not projected generally to the society. For example, before tea, you look around, you have very bright lights and two or more television cameras taping the contributions of Members.

Madam Speaker: It is unfortunate, but the House does not have control over the media.

Mr. J. Humphrey: I am just pointing out a fact. I was just going to suggest, however, perhaps if we offer tea, they may have the tea, courtesy the Parliament and then stay on after tea. It has become so ridiculous that Members of this House—

Mr. Manning: They have deadlines for publication.

Mr. J. Humphrey: The Prime Minister has never worked in the media. There is no such thing as a deadline for publication in a radio station, a television station or a newspaper, for that matter, because there is the following day's issue.

Members have reached the conclusion that it is a waste of time to speak in this Parliament after the tea-break. Now, had I reached that conclusion I would not be on my feet now because whom am I speaking to now? *[Interruption]* I want to thank the hon. Prime Minister for guaranteeing that he will listen to what I say.

Mr. Manning: As the hon. Member would know, Madam Speaker, it is conditional on the quality of his contribution.

Mr. Sudama: I want to ask the hon. Member if it is really worth it to speak to the Member for San Fernando East.

Mr. J. Humphrey: He is the Prime Minister. Madam Speaker, it is a great pity that contributions of the quality of the Member for Oropouche on this matter are totally ignored by the media. But I am glad to see that the contribution was not ignored by Members. As I said, I want to expand from where he left off.

The Member for Oropouche demonstrated the fact that in 1992, the Government overdrew its account with the Central Bank. The Minister of Finance had indicated that to us in his documents and, in fact, had given us the reason for overdrawing the account. It was a provisional supplementary appropriation to meet interest charges on the overdraft facilities of the Central Bank to the extent of \$105.2 million.

Now, the budgetary provision for 1992 for interest to be paid to the Central Bank was \$155 million. The interest charged for the year was \$260.2 million. I had asked the hon. Minister of Finance to furnish us with details, because I suspected that what had happened was that the Government had spent more than the law permitted in its overdraft facility with the Central Bank—and, in fact, that is the fact. The Government spent more than the law permits. The law permits 15 per cent of estimated annual revenue to be borrowed on a short-term basis from the Central Bank.

Now, it seems to me that with the allocation of interest from the overdraft account in the budget, it was anticipated that the borrowing from the Central Bank would not be short-term. It was anticipated by the Government that there would be a cash shortfall, there would be difficulty with the cash-flow to meet the recurrent demands on the Government.

The point I want to make is this: The Government tells the country on diverse occasions that it cannot provide services because it has no money. In fact, the Government keeps insisting that it is virtually bankrupt, that it is having great difficulty in balancing the budget, that the revenues do not support expenditure. It

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insists, however, on balancing the budget, but it has demonstrated in this act of drawing more from the Central Bank overdraft than the law permits, the ability to find the money when it needs it. But this was to pay interest.

I wanted to find out from the Minister of Finance the source of those funds. How did those funds get into the Central Bank in the first place? If the source of those funds is the primary reserve requirement, no interest is paid by the Central Bank to the commercial banks for the deposits which are made in the Central Bank.

Now, the way I understand bank financing is, the bank takes your deposit and lends it to someone else at an enhanced interest rate, but in taking your deposit, the bank offers you an interest to attract the deposit, to encourage you to save. In lending it to another customer; the bank charges more interest to enable that customer to enjoy the facility and to enable the bank to make a profit.

How does the Central Bank operate? The Central Bank draws its funding from a primary and secondary reserve and it is the bank to the Government. So the Central Bank enjoys the revenues collected by the Government as deposits, but the Central Bank does not pay the commercial banks an interest on the primary reserve. The commercial banks, by law, have to provide a percentage of all the deposits to the Central Bank.

So I want to question the sense of managing finances in that way. We see that to pay this interest—it is not capital, it is interest—the Government has had to forgo on the expenditure of very important services for the people of this country. We got a complete list of the heads from which funds were transferred to meet this additional interest charged and we see valuable capital expenditure that could have facilitated job creation and the improvement of the infrastructure of this country, being transferred to pay interest to the Central Bank.

The point I want to make is that that is the financing of a driver who drives a racing car with no accelerator but only a brake pedal. He can go nowhere, he can achieve nothing, he wears a financial straitjacket. In the same way the Government cannot manage the resources of the country in the interest of the people. That is a prescription for failure to mobilize the resources of the country.

I have always pointed out to the Members in that front row that the Government has the power to create money. *[Interruption]* They put up their hands and say I am talking nonsense. Now the Member for Diego Martin Central will admit it, quietly, not for the record. But let me repeat what he said for the record: “That is exactly what the Central Bank does when it advances moneys to

the Government.” In other words, the Government does have the power to create money. I want the people of this country to understand that. The Government has the legal power to create money.

In fact, it is the only institution in society that enjoys that power. The banks do create a certain amount of credit. Very often they take a chance in doing it, by lending more than their deposits. They do it and to some extent they create money; new money is created. But the banks are taking a chance when they do it.

The Government does not take a chance whether they do it. There are two arguments which are used. They are saying that if you create money and you put that money into the system, it will encourage hyper-inflation. Then they give us cases of South American countries where those governments created money and you had hyper-inflation, as you are getting right now in the former Soviet Union, one of the super powers of the world. A country that was capable of annihilating the entire planet and everything alive on it is today in financial difficulties where the world community is condemning what is now Russia for printing so-called money that has no value.

We see the United States responding and saying they are going to establish a special account of hard currency to support the Russian rouble so as to achieve monetary stability. Little Trinidad and Tobago, incapable of rallying our own resources, in meeting our own basic needs, is saying “we must not do that”.

Apart from inflation, the other critical factor which is very much more important to us is that when the Government creates money to give the society an increased mobilization for production and to offer services which are needed, is that the citizens, because of our colonial heritage and our pattern of consumption, are inclined to spend more money on imports.

Nobody outside Trinidad and Tobago accepts TT dollars in settlement of our debts. We have to pay our debts in hard currencies. Now, that is a valid argument. Both are valid to some extent. Inflation occurs when you put more money into the system than you are capable of stimulating production and you, therefore, are pumping money to run after the same quantum of goods; obviously, the value of the money drops.

However, in this country, after we went through what is a decade of an oil boom, we accumulated a tremendous amount of surplus, surplus capital, surplus development in terms of developing our human factor, education, because when we had the oil boom we were in a position to send more of our youngsters abroad for university education, to improve our own university, to educate at the higher

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level more of our people. And we have enhanced both the human capital and the general physical capital of the society tremendously, to the extent that we now have tremendous surplus—idle people, people with skills who are not being utilized productively, people without skills, likewise, a heightening unemployment situation where you have people who can do things productively are not being given an opportunity to do so because the Government says there is no money. We have demonstrated that we can create it. They cannot use the excuse that there is no money. They have to use some other excuse.

They say they cannot solve the unemployment problem, they cannot stop the business failures, because there is no money. Let me give them an illustration. Foreign exchange is the critical factor, we all know that. The balance that we have, the reserve account, is the critical factor, because the law, very stupidly, ties us to that in the management of our domestic financing—that is the gold standard. *[Interruption]* I am glad to see that the Member for Diego Martin West admits that he recognizes that. Why do we remain stupidly in that financial straitjacket of tying our domestic finance to the paucity of the foreign exchange account of the country? Why? Nobody else is doing that stupidity except Third World countries.

Why do we allow Washington to tell us we must do that, when the very biggest contributors to those institutions will not do that? If the United States had done that at the end of the Second World War, they would have had to declare bankruptcy.

I will give you an example of the stupidity of the management of our monetary resource. Foreign exchange is the critical factor, but there are merchants in this country who import goods from abroad, pay for them with the nation's hard-earned, hard currency from the export of oil, mainly, have those goods on their shelves, cannot sell them because our people do not have the TT dollars—because they do not have to go and buy with hard currency, they go and buy the goods of the shelf with soft currency. The people do not have enough of it to go and buy the goods, so those businesses collapse; they go out of business.

I am proposing to the hon. Prime Minister—because he has the power to do it and since he is committed to listening to what I am going to say—that he does an assessment of the idle capital and human resources in the country. In the construction industry, for example, during the boom years, all the contractors were fully mobilized to the point of overheating and they imported a great deal of equipment which was being utilized at that time and which, after the boom years came to an end, they had in stock. Much of it was shipped out with the

devaluation, because there were no opportunities to put it to work in the country and the people who owned that equipment, and found it on their hands, recovered the equivalent in TT dollars to what they had spent, but the country lost by re-exporting. To replace it now, costs us that much more, but there is still some.

Do an assessment of the idle capital in the construction industry, visit the quarries, for example, see how many are producing. Those quarries could not be exported. To establish a quarry, you have to locate a suitable site where there is the adequate material to be quarried. You have to put a road for access. You have to put electricity, you have to put water. Then you put up the buildings. You operate the quarry on the basis of what you have established and you have a number of them idle in this country, not producing anything. All the ingredients for production are sitting there.

The Member for Diego Martin East is making comments, shaking his head and saying “no way”. Is he saying that I am not telling the truth? That there is not idle quarry capacity in this country? Is that what he is suggesting? I will give him an opportunity, please. *[Interruption]* That is one facet. I will give another facet of the construction industry—and the Member sniggers and laughs. It is very annoying to think that he was once a university lecturer.

There are factories in place producing a wide range of construction components. The simple components are blocks. There are blocks made of clay and cement or concrete. A number of these factories operating at minimal capacity could be producing 100 per cent more than they are producing with the existing capacity. That is idle capacity.

There are factories producing things like PVC conduits and pipes, pressure pipes and low pressure pipes for supplying water, for taking waste water and sewage away. There are these things. Madam Speaker, idle capacity, because we are operating at a very low level of capacity.

There are industries in this country producing from our own raw material resource base, a wide range of components for construction. For example, waterproofing; bitumen or pitch, is the world-favoured material for waterproofing in construction. We have a lake providing it for us. God gave it to us and said, “here it is.” What are we doing to it? Shipping it out for others to use, and we are left with leaking roofs—this very Parliament.

We are left with roads with massive craters all over the place and the Government is keeping the tune going: “We cannot fix the roads, we do not have the money. We cannot fix the roads, we do not have the money.” But we have the

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bitumen, the aggregate, the equipment, the trained and skilled engineers, the workers who can operate every single thing we have in this country—all the quarries, the tractors, the back-hoes, but we have no money. What exactly is that list? That is money! Please, Mr. Prime Minister, that is money and in fact, that is the hard-earned foreign exchange.

We derive these things by exchanging our oil for credits abroad and then transfer those credits into all of these things I have just enumerated and they are saying, "We have no foreign exchange, we have no money, we cannot do anything, we are crippled, we are strait-jacketed."

6.15 p.m.

Madam Speaker, they are crippled and strait-jacketed, by their own ignorance and unwillingness to stand up like men and tell the international lending agencies—"We are an independent sovereign state and you cannot tell us what to do. We are going to manage our resources as we see fit."

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, I am really trying to follow the argument of the hon. Member. I have been trying to do so for some time, but I am at a loss—and I am being genuine in the exercise. Is the hon. Member saying, that all the equipment, that he says is around and idle, should be appropriated by the state, recognizing that some of that equipment is not owned by the state? What exactly is he saying? More than that, the human resources of which he speaks, how are these people to be paid? I am not understanding something.

Mr. J. Humphrey: I think after I have explained it to you, if you fail to implement, you should resign, promptly, and let the people who can mobilize the resources of this country take the helm and get this country moving forward. Quite frankly, what is happening in this country today is that our future is being threatened.

What I am saying is, that the Government has the power to create money. *[Interruption]* No, but you demonstrated it with this very Bill. Therefore, they have the wherewithal to grant contracts to those who are in possession of these idle resources to enhance the nation's productive capability. That is what I am saying. Put it to productive work!

For example, resurface every road in the country because we have everything here already, and the little we do not have, if we manage our foreign exchange resources more intelligently, instead of allowing all these big expensive cars to be parked around the Red House at every meeting, you bring in the equipment

[Interruption] The Government could award the contracts and ensure that these idle resources be used productively. If we produce more of the basic requirements of the people, especially food and shelter, that will impact on the everyday lives of our people; several things will happen.

Dr. Rowley: Just for my own clarification, Madam Speaker, I seem to recall that the hon. Member tried this before and it did not work—the awarding of contracts without moneys to fund them.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Could the hon. Minister be more specific?

Dr. Rowley: In 1987, certain contracts were awarded for cleaning of drains across the country and the Ministry of Finance could not pay for it and a certain Member got into difficulties. Is that the same thing you are advocating now?

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, the drains and the rivers of this country were all desilted and everybody was paid. In fact, that is a good example of what I am talking about. I am glad that the Member has reminded me.

I got a report from a citizen, that the Diego Martin river had not been desilted for about 20 years.

Mr. Sudama: Under the PNM's rule.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Twenty years of PNM stewardship. They were afraid of flooding, because there had been floodings in Westmoorings before. In fact, I lost my car in the flood, so I know. I then called the Chief Drainage Officer—and in those days they used to take me very seriously—“Yes, Mr. Humphrey”—and I asked him, if that was a critical situation. He said that it was. He said, in fact, it was so critical that we had just gone through an intense dry season with an inordinate number of bush fires and with the coming of the rainy season, we expected to get a tremendous amount of increased siltation. I asked him specifically about the Diego Martin river and he said, that the people had a right to be worried, because it could have flooded.

I then called the Meteorological Office at Piarco and asked the meteorological officer, how soon did they expect the rainy season *[Interruption]* two weeks! Yes, you know about it. But this is the important part, Madam Speaker. At 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, I had a meeting with those people in the society, both within the public service and the private sector, whom my advisors and myself felt, could impact on the problem.

What we organized was that the ministry would evaluate everything on a unit basis, and the contractors who had the equipment, the wherewithal to do the work,

would be contracted on that basis. Where the ministry could supplement equipment or manpower, there would be a discount on the value of what the Ministry contributed. By Thursday morning—this is little Trinidad and Tobago—of the same week, Seereeram Brothers were mobilizing to start desilting the Diego Martin river. By seven o'clock that morning, the drag-lines were in operation.

Mr. Manning: Did that arrangement have a sequel in the Parliament, and if so, what was that sequel?

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, it had a sequel in the country, that when the rains came, there was no flooding: Yes, it had a sequel in the Parliament and I will tell you why, because certain people in the Opposition were so hard-headed and so “caring”, that they did not want it to happen, they did not want to desilt the rivers and the drains.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, the Opposition had no say in the matter, when we heard about it, it had already been done. In fact, as the hon. Member said, all the contractors were gathered in a room and contracts were awarded—

Mr. J. Humphrey: None of the contractors was at that meeting. Madam Speaker, if the hon. Prime Minister wants to run this country he should consult with people who know how to get the job done, because the little fella from Diego Martin East cannot get anything done.

The President of the Contractor's Association, the Director of Contracts, the head of the Professional Engineers Association were at that meeting. The fact is, that what we demonstrated is that this country can, when called upon, deliver required service to the benefit of the people.

Dr. Rowley: Madam Speaker, I was in the Opposition then. The sequel to what the Member spoke about required a change in the legislation, retroactively. The Member was then, a sworn Member of the Cabinet, to uphold the laws of this country. Is he, in fact, advocating that Members of the Government should break the laws to get certain things done?

6.25 p.m.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, if it is necessary to infringe on the laws of this country for the benefit of the people, you do it; and I will give you an example. You see, we understand, now, how this PNM regime is strait-jacketed. And in fact we have an example of it in this very Bill. I did not want to come to it, but you are forcing me to come to it.

Mr. Maharaj: They broke the law there?

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, clause 6 of this very Bill—listen to what it says—

"Notwithstanding anything contained in the Exchequer and Audit Act, the sums appropriated in respect of the Heads of Expenditure set out in the First Column of Part II of the Schedule by the Appropriation Act, 1992, and unissued at the commencement of this Act, may be utilized for the discharge of any liability incurred by reason of the increase in the expenditure in respect of the Heads of Expenditure set out in Part I of the Schedule."

In other words, an admission that you have offended the Act, that you have been in breach of the Act, but you are now remedying it with this clause. So what are you talking about? Is it that you, caring Government, have no regard for the Constitution and the law? But since they raised the point, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Sudama: Scribes and Pharisees.

Mr. J. Humphrey: I did not want to speak for long. Look at the hour. I want to relieve the poor people of this House to go home, staff and members, and myself, particularly.

In 1990 I was here in this Parliament on July 27, carrying on the lawful work of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. None of the Members of the Opposition happened to be there on that occasion—

Mr. Sudama: That is a very strange occurrence.

Mr. J. Humphrey: I stand corrected, one Member was here. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Sudama: But she was allowed to flee. [*Interruption*]

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, the point I want to make is this, that when it comes to saving the country—

Mr. Sudama: Blessed? They had the blessing of foreknowledge.

Mr. J. Humphrey:—certain people have to disregard the law. Because the Constitution was, in effect, suspended when the military took charge of the country—took power in this country, put down the insurrection and rescued us from the situation.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker—

Mr. J. Humphrey: In effect, the Member for San Fernando East, if he wants to challenge what I am saying, listen to everything I have to say about it.

Mr. Manning: I am asking one question, please, if you do not mind. Was a state of emergency declared?

Mr. J. Humphrey: In a state of emergency, is the Commanding Officer of the Defence Force in charge? Do you want to tell me?

Mr. Maharaj: Before the state of emergency was declared the Commanding Officer was in charge.

Mr. J. Humphrey: It just so happens, Madam Speaker, that the situation necessitated extreme measures which were not in conformity with the Constitution and the law. That is a fact, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Sudama: If they were taking instructions from politicians, we would have been dead, I tell you.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Nobody “took the height” of the then Prime Minister. Nobody did. Madam Speaker, at the time we were evacuated from this House, the power was resident in the Office of the Commander of the Defence Force, that is where it resided. The Ministers of the Government were considered humbug and kept out of the office; and a military solution, in fact, was used.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, just for the record, the information that is available to me suggests that politicians exercised the control at every stage; and that the military were taking instructions from the politicians.

Mr. J. Humphrey: He has a different source of information from mine.

Mr. Manning: But you were in the House.

Mr. J. Humphrey: And where were you?

Mr. Manning: Outside.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Yes, outside, but where outside. Where? You see, Madam Speaker, I had a vested interest in the situation.

Mr. Sudama: Where were you—in hiding?

Mr. J. Humphrey: I argued, yes, we have taken this oath to uphold the Constitution and the law, and when I argued the case before those very people who had the power at the time, they explained to me a fact of life, Madam Speaker. They said I am a dreamer. The bottom line in the power equation is this—SLRs and SMGs and general purpose machine guns, grenades and rockets. That is the bottom line.

Dr. Rowley: That is what you advocated.

Madam Speaker: I think the hon. Member has strayed far and wide—

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, I could not agree with you more but, do not condemn the hon. Member—

Madam Speaker: No, you began with the promise that you were taking up from where the hon. Member for Oropouche left off and you have strayed.

Mr. J. Humphrey: I have done so, but blame that side.

Mr. Sudama: May I advise this House that we were both hostages together, sitting and lying down side by side.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, it is good that we can laugh at experiences like those.

Madam Speaker: Healthy therapy, but I think, maybe, the Member can get back to the measure before the House.

Mr. J. Humphrey: The point I am trying to make, Madam Speaker, and I wish they would get it is that you are not, in fact, hamstrung by law. We are here to make law! And if the law is not adequate to the needs of the people, it is our duty to revise that law. It is quite obvious that in the connection of this Bill—

Mr. Manning: If that is so, why did Parliament not agree to change the fiscal year from January—December to October—September?

Mr. J. Humphrey: Because, Madam Speaker, we asked the Government at that time—to concede to accounting to the population by allowing this Parliament to function in a more meaningful way; and the Government said no; and we said if you say no, we say no. We were merely following the example of the hon. Prime Minister and Member for San Fernando East. He is the national leader. If he says no, we say no.

Madam Speaker, in dealing with this very Bill, the hon. Member for Oropouche and I, in carrying on from where he left off, have demonstrated that it is the very Financial Regulations and Acts that govern the management of national finance that hamstring the Government. Why do you have to come with a piece of legislation, notwithstanding provisions of the Exchequer and Audit Act? Why? Because those provisions hamstring you. I am sure you will get the support of the Opposition if you set about to serious reform of the whole legislative process pertaining to finance. You will get our support because, that is what will enable the Government of this country to mobilize the idle capacity, which is in abundance in this country, in the interest of the people of this country.

Mr. Manning: Madam Speaker, I have taken careful note of what the hon. Member has said about the commitment of the Opposition to co-operate with the Government to revise the financial arrangements by which the country is governed. Are there any specific proposals that he would like to make available to Government as a basis for these?

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, I have been reaching the stage of my life—

Mr. Sudama: I want to be part of your budget preparations.

Mr. J. Humphrey:—where the level of frustration—

Mr. Sudama: I want to have an input in the budget.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, will you please protect me from the Member for Oropouche?

Madam Speaker: I am sure the Member for St. Augustine will not be assaulted in this House, either verbally or physically.

Mr. J. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has asked if the Opposition would be willing to engage in, hopefully, meaningful discussions on the reform of the monetary system, and I would like to speak on behalf of my colleagues in this House, and on behalf of my party colleagues; the answer is definitely, yes.

Mr. Manning: Financial?

Mr. J. Humphrey: Definitely, yes.

Mr. Sudama: Accountability?

Mr. J. Humphrey: The reform of the monetary system. Without reforming the monetary system and so managing money resourcefully as to put the idle capacity of this country to productive work, we are going to find ourselves sliding more and more, as a society, getting into deeper and deeper trouble and heading directly for either anarchy or violent revolution. That is how I see it.

Because you are not solving the problems. In fact you are exacerbating the unemployment problem by implementing the provisions from Washington. The first thing I would advise the Government to do—go to Washington and tell them get off our backs. Go and speak to President Clinton and try to persuade them to get off our backs.

Madam Speaker: The speaking time of the Member has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

6.35 p.m.

Mr. J. Humphrey: I want to thank Members for their generosity, but I am not going to stay so long.

If the Prime Minister would give us the assurance that on the question of meaningful monetary reform he would enable us to interface with Members on his side, the senior public servants and members of the private sector, all who are concerned—because this is what we really need; we need a national forum, to examine the process, how the system works, for people to understand it, and then go out there and get the whole society educated on how the system works, why there is increasing unemployment, why the Government is not in a position to stimulate economic activity and to get things going, why there is more retrenchment, even though voluntarily.

I could not understand the Member for St. Joseph when I raised the question of the Port, which we are all reading on a daily basis, that if the Port workers do not accept the VTEP offered, they are going to be retrenched because the Port Authority does not have the wherewithal to continue meeting the expenses. It is a *fait accompli* that the Government has not got the financial resources; the World Bank is telling you straight, you have got to do this, that and the other, and pushing this country to anarchy and possibly violent revolution, where all the gains that we have made in independence will have been lost and where we will have to come and pick it up from the ashes and do something with it.

The Government needs to reform the police service, to build more prisons, it needs more legislation to control the citizens who are inclined to turn to crime and criminal activity. In fact, what the Government should be doing is finding a means of putting all our people to productive work. We are losing a whole generation of young people who are being forced by circumstances to turn to a life of crime, when all they want is to participate in a meaningful way in managing the affairs of this country and making their personal contributions to the development process. It can be done, but it needs leadership with vision and courage, leadership that will bring the forces and the interests of the society together for the purpose of building our nation. That is what it needs. Holding office is not going to do that.

I want to end my contribution on that note. Just to repeat, that we are ready, willing and able to consult with the Government and, hopefully, all other groups which are affected by the management of the monetary resource, so that we can find a formula for better managing the productive capacity of this society in the interest of all of its people. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, one minor matter bothered me in the hon. Member's contribution, which I thought was quite a good one, and that is the fact that he suggested that if need be he would, in fact, break the law. I consider that extremely serious, given that we have sworn here to uphold the law of the land as Parliamentarians. Obviously, when one takes that to its logical extreme, one is talking about anarchy.

Other than that, Madam Speaker—and perhaps I should deal with it first—the hon. Member dealt with what, perhaps, is now his favourite hobby-horse, this whole concept of Government creating money—

Mr. Humphrey: Would the Member give way? The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central is a Minister in the Ministry of Finance. Would he tell this House whether the Ministry broke the law in 1992 when it overdrew on its account with the Central Bank?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, I will deal with that—

Mr. Humphrey: The answer is, he did. Do not condemn me for that.

Hon. K. Valley: That is not correct, Madam Speaker. The fact is, when the Government came into power at the end of 1991, the overdraft was some \$1,236.1 million in excess of the limit. In other words, the overdraft at that time was \$2,389.1 million, at the end of 1991. We met that. At the end of 1992, the amount over the limit reduced to \$939.4 million. This Government has a commitment to move as quickly as possible within the limits of the law. The fact is, we met that overdraft. That is an overhang. The Member for Oropouche made the point. It is now permanent; it is there. When we left government in 1986 there was no overhang. Between the period 1987 and 1991, the finance, partly because of what the Member for St. Augustine did, partly because of this thing, calling contractors in a room and giving them contracts—he does not understand—and I want to deal with that—

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The Member knows he is misleading the House. I would ask him, please, to desist from misleading the House. He knows what the facts are.

Hon. K. Valley: He gave out contracts, Madam Speaker, and I am saying that he does not—

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. As a Minister, I never gave any contract to anyone. I should have put out a contract on the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, I take that very seriously, because when one considers that he is willing to break the law, I can understand what he is saying.

I am making the point that if one were simply to create money, then there are certain implications, and I would want to deal with that. But I am making the point simply, that, yes, we met an overhang and the Government is working to bring it down. As at April 1, which was yesterday, the excess was \$1,087 million. We came in; we met \$1,236.1 million and we are working to bring it down. It is in excess, but it is not going up, it is coming down. The trend is in the correct direction.

I want to deal with this whole concept of the money issue. Perhaps I should start with a quotation from the Member for Oropouche. He was making the point the last time we met, with respect to this whole matter, and he says here, at 9.55 p.m:

"If you do not specify a limit for the holding of government securities including Treasury Bills, then the Government can create money at random and will. All it has to do is issue securities and then ask the Central Bank to hold these securities. When the Central Bank takes up these securities, the Government's accounts would be credited and it would have money to splurge. Now, of course, there ought to be a limit on the capacity of the Government to borrow in that way. This is why some of these limits were put in the Central Bank Act."

It is more than that. I do not know why the Member for Oropouche does not speak to his colleague, the Member for St. Augustine.

Mr. Sudama: Let me, on a point of order, correct this. He does not quote the whole statement. The statement says there ought to be limits. I did not say that the current limits were, indeed, valid, given the situation in the economy. I never said such a thing, that the current existing limits were valid. All I merely said—if you are so legal-minded and you so want to uphold the law, did you, in fact, break the law by exceeding the limits. I also want to correct the Member for Diego Martin Central. He was not here in 1986, I was here. In 1986, the then government

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overdrew at the Central Bank on that section 47 of the overdraft facility of the Central Bank. They violated the law in 1986. I asked a question in this House.

6.45 p.m.

Mr. Manning: There was a \$1 billion surplus.

Mr. Sudama: One billion dollars in what? Reserves?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, firstly, I think we both agree that there ought to be limits. I would come back to that. But let me just again, quote from his contribution on March 19, 1993, where he was making the point that:

"The Bank's audited accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1986 showed advances of \$1,003.2 million and securities in its portfolio to a value of \$103.5 million, both within the statutory limits."

Both within the statutory limits for 1986; it is from 1987 that things started to go. *[Interruption]* I would give it to you if you want.

Mr. Sudama: I did not have the figures for 1986.

Hon. K. Valley: Do you want them? I would give them to you.

Mr. Manning: We call that clean square iron.

Mr. Humphrey: Is the overdraft now within the statutory limits?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, the answer is, no, it is not.

Madam Speaker, I want to deal, substantively, with the point raised by the Member for St. Augustine, if only I would be allowed to. I say to him that—as I mentioned to him privately sometime ago—his argument is partly correct. He made the point that if one is coming out of a boom period where one has a capital stock, which is easy to be mobilized to get back in operation, there is a window of opportunity and one can do something. In other words, in early 1987 one had a window of opportunity.

The fact is, that by now, first of all, much of that equipment would have been cannibalized—he is still saying that some is still there. The fact is that whenever one puts money into the economy—and that is what happens whenever money is created—certain adjustments must take place. Firstly, one is going to import; secondly, one may bid up prices; and, thirdly, there might be some growth in the economy.

To explain, Madam Speaker. The Member for St. Augustine is saying that what we need to do is to get these contractors working on the roads because

foreign exchange is very low with respect to the construction sector. That sounds good. But the point is that when we pay those people who are employed, they are going to demand foreign and domestic goods and services, so there will be a foreign exchange constraint. To the extent that they would demand foreign goods and services, one has to find the foreign exchange to pay for it.

Now, it was estimated some time ago, by a famous economist, that the coefficient of imports is \$0.40. In other words, for every dollar that comes into the economy, one would lose \$0.40 via imports. One sees quite quickly what happens if one talks about monetizing the economy that way. One would run out of foreign exchange very quickly, and that is the concept of financial irresponsibility. The concept the Member for St. Augustine has about this middle currency just would not work.

The Member, in his argument, tried to hedge against the foreign exchange leakage via a Caridollar. But if “A” has a relationship to “B” and “C” has a relationship to “B”, then there is a relationship coming through. In other words, if one has that Caridollar, there will still be a foreign exchange leakage. That is why it cannot work.

Mr. Humphrey: Madam Speaker, I wish the Member for Diego Martin Central would take my propositions a step further. Yes, what the Member has said so far is correct, but the proposition is to develop an insulator between the resourceful management of TT dollars to enhance production and the expenditure of foreign exchange. What I advocated as that insulator was an instrument for trading within the Caribbean to be issued by the Caricom Central Bank to consolidate all the reserves of all Caricom countries and issue Caridollars which would be fixed to hard currencies, and domestic currencies would float against the Caridollars, which would enable each citizen to hold two types of currencies; a soft—in our case TT currency would be the soft—and a hard Caridollar, which would be common to Caricom countries.

That is what was advocated, now deal with it.

Mr. Sudama: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I think the Member is deliberately and unforgivably trying to mislead this House as to what I said. I just found my copy of the *Hansard*. I was not indicating that those figures were correct. I was quoting the Minister of Finance when he said—and I said the Minister of Finance made a great claim—

Hon. K. Valley: Did you say it?

Mr. Sudama: —about the permissiveness of fiscal policies under the previous regime. The Minister of Finance said, among other things:

"The bank's audited accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1986 showed advances of \$1,003.2 million and securities in its portfolio to a value of \$103.5 million, both within the statutory limits."

That is what the Minister of Finance said. I have no way of verifying that, Madam Speaker. In any case, if the limit is within the prescribed legal limit at the end of the year, it does not mean that during the course of the year, the limit was not overdrawn. That is the point I was making.

It is dishonest, Madam Speaker, to indicate to this House that this is what I said. I was merely quoting the Minister of Finance. It is totally dishonest.

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member stood up here, and he said it. He might have been quoting someone, but he did not challenge the statement the last time. He stood up, he said it, he did not challenge the information. I thought he was getting up to say he never said that. *[Interruption]* I heard you say it with my own ears as I sat here.

Madam Speaker, the Member for St. Augustine is saying that the TT dollar would float against a Caridollar. But, the Caridollar has a fixed rate of exchange with the US dollar.

6.55 p.m.

Madam Speaker, if "A" has a certain relationship to "B", and "B" has a certain relationship to "C", then obviously, "A" must have some relationship to "C". I am saying that the insulator will not work.

I want to conclude on the Motion and the Bill before the House. What is the purpose of the Bill? Quite simply, it is to put Government's accounts for 1992 in a form that is auditable by the Auditor General. There is the constitutional provision—

Madam Speaker: I think the hon. Member has been having a bit of difficulty with making his presentation. Will the Members desist from—Please, proceed.

Hon. K. Valley: The Constitution provides that any spending undertaken by the Government must be authorized, and it may be authorized in a number of forms: One, it can be a direct charge on the Consolidated Fund, or it could be authorized by an Act of Parliament or, failing that, there must be an appropriation.

In other words, one cannot spend in any ministry, in excess of the appropriation. That is the basic concept; so that the appropriations set the spending limit.

This evening, there seems to be some misunderstanding with respect to the appropriation and actual expenditure. For example, concerning the \$26 million in education, or the \$85 million in health or what have you, the actual expenditure may be under the appropriation for a number of reasons. It could be, as in the case of the Ministry of Health, they were not ready with their plans, so that funds were not disbursed, and similarly with the Ministry of Education or what have you. It could be that simply, there were insufficient funds so that no releases were made.

The concept is that the appropriation is quite different. All the appropriation does is set the ceiling for expenditure. It says that you can spend up to this amount.

Mr. Sudama: This is a total misleading of the House, that all the appropriation does is set a ceiling. The appropriation specifies for what you must spend the expenditure on and if you want to spend it on something else, you have to come back to Parliament to get approval to do so. It does not just set a ceiling. I think he is misleading the House.

Hon. K. Valley: An appropriation to a particular head, subhead or sub-item sets a ceiling for the particular item of expenditure. That is what it is.

As I was saying, at the end of the year, it may turn out that you have spent lower than the appropriation, or in some cases, in excess of the appropriation.
[Interruption]

Madam Speaker: Order please! The Member is having some difficulty in making himself heard.

Mr. Humphrey: He is having difficulty, period.

Hon. K. Valley: I am.

Section 113 (3) of the Constitution, provides for what happens in a situation in which the amount that is spent is more than the appropriation. What it says is that one has to come back to Parliament to get a supplementary appropriation to bring it up. In other words, quite simply, before the accounts go for audit, the expenditure must not exceed the appropriation. All we are doing at this time is simply cleaning up the accounts to put them in a form that is auditable. It has nothing to do with actual expenditure. That happened already in 1992.

In those situations in which the expenditure exceeded the appropriation, rather than transferring, one could conceivably increase the appropriation and then one could have avoided this whole argument this evening, why did you transfer from here to over there? For example, in the case of the overdraft, one could have increased the vote for that overdraft by \$105 million and leave the other figures. It would not affect the expenditure. It is merely a legal requirement that expenditure cannot exceed appropriation.

One can contrast that with what happens in the private sector. In the private sector, if one has a budget, one knows that there might be a variance of, let us say, 10 or 15 per cent either way. If there is a variance, one gets it approved, and one would not have to go through the process of ensuring that one increases the budget to the level of the expenditure. That is unique to public accounts.

The major issues in the Bill, of which one was the overdraft of the \$105 million—one sees clearly that that was a book transaction. Here one had a higher level of expenditure and no actual funds passing. In fact, all that occurred was the level of the overdraft increased by \$105 million. There was no actual payment, but to put in a form for the Audit Department, one has to get the appropriation ceiling raised. Because there were areas in which expenditure was lower than the appropriation, one could have done transfers. The bottom line is that the appropriation is quite different from the actual expenditure. That is the fundamental concept.

There are two other areas. One relates to the Secondary Oil Recovery and the other is the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex. In both these cases, one sees that there is outside funding from IADB in the case of the Secondary Oil Recovery. What happens there is that the funds flow based on work done; as the work is performed, the money flows. The accounting people have to keep track to bring it to account from time to time. One does not know at any particular point exactly how much would be expended, or should be brought to account in a particular period. At the end of the period, one would always have to make that type of adjustment.

If you are building a plant, you cannot say with any degree of certainty that you would spend \$50 million over this period. You can estimate, but you would expect that you would be off by some figure. To the extent that you are off, you have to bring the excess into account after the fact. That is all that is happening in the case of the Secondary Oil Recovery.

The Minister of Finance said quite clearly that the other situation was an oversight. It related to a 1990 transaction, which was simply missed.

7.05 p.m.

There were some other issues relating simply to the overdraft, the effect the overdraft would have on the economy and so on, and whether we are paying overdraft at the expense of other indebtedness. I made the point that the \$105 million is simply an increase in the overall overdraft. There is no cash passing, at least at this time; it merely increases the overdraft.

In terms of the fiscal and monetary considerations, the point raised by the Member for Oropouche, as we discussed a while ago, the effect could be on foreign exchange. For example in February when we increased the overdraft to pay for debt, obviously we ran down our foreign exchange. If, on the other hand, we were to increase the overdraft to spend in the local economy, then we would be monetizing the local economy. There would be some foreign exchange loss again because of the demand for external goods and services by our citizens, but we would not expect it to be 100 per cent.

I do not know whether one needs to respond to anything else, Madam Speaker. Quite simply, we are merely cleaning up accounts here, dealing with the appropriation, not with actual expenditure, obviously, one does not have the sort of difficulties one had last year where, in fact, there was an attempt to get around the situation by using Treasury deposits and so on, to do things which one could not do directly.

Let me make one other point. The Member for Tabaquite thought that the power of the Minister of Finance to do virement between subheads amounts to fooling the people, given that at the beginning of the year we make certain appropriations to certain items of expenditure and that the Minister of Finance can then authorize the transfers. I would simply say that provides a certain level of flexibility in the management of a ministry.

Again, one is running a ministry and from time to time there would be need to move funds from one area to another. We have that situation at present. For example, in local government where the appropriation allocation for personnel expenditure is insufficient and we may very well want to move funds from the Development Programme or somewhere else to supplement the vote for personnel expenditure, obviously, it seems to me, there must be that type of flexibility. That is allowed under the Act.

The Leader of the Opposition also made the point that this is merely an annual ritual, and, in a sense, it is, because it is a cleaning up exercise. That is what it is. During the year if there is a need for supplementary appropriation, according to

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the Constitution, one must do that during the year. At the end of the year, there is simply the cleaning up of the accounts.

Madam Speaker, with these few words, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That this House adopt the Report (1992-1993 Session) of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on proposals for the expenditure from public revenue which were not included in the annual Estimates 1993.

**FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTATION AND VARIATION
OF APPROPRIATION) (1992) BILL**

The Minister with responsibility for Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Gordon Draper): I beg to move,

That a bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 1992, be now read a second time.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Question put and agreed to, That the bill be now read the third time.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

Motion made, That this House do now adjourn to Friday, April 16, 1993 at 1.30 p.m. [Hon. K. Valley]

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 7.10 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

The following reply was circulated to hon. Members of the House:

**Nursing Assistant Trainees
(Recruitment)**

Pursuant to his reply to question No. 177 earlier in the proceedings the Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein) caused to be circulated to Member of the House the following list of trainees:

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Port of Spain General Hospital

1. Ayoung-Chee Evelyn
2. Bachan Harriechand
3. Bernard Letishia
4. Blugh David
5. Bowrin-Cummings Michelle
6. Brown Allison
7. Charles Burt
8. Charleau Germaine
9. Louis Vernet
10. Drepaulsingh Rumonia
11. Gaspard Gillian
12. Grant Simon Sandra
13. Guerra Wendy
14. Harnanan Shivraj
15. Isaac Chesterlyne
16. John Augusta L.
17. Joseph Jennifer
18. Kent King Petra
19. Khadoo Asha
20. Khan Cranston
21. Knett Elliott
22. Lalla Kenrick
23. Leotaud Sandy
24. Linton Jacqueline
25. Martinez Gerald
26. Miguel Janice

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27. Mills Sherma Nicole
28. Noel Shiridan
29. Othello Karen
30. Rodney Patricia
31. Richards Molly
32. Richardson Jeffrey Isabelle
33. Sandiford Dianne
34. Saunders Oral A.
35. Seales Marion L.R.
36. Shockness Joyce
37. Singh Premnath
38. Smith Beverly M
39. Smith Irwin
40. Tuitt-Blake Denyse
41. Vargas Denise D
42. Wardally Kathy M
43. Wells David Ursula
44. Wharwood Lawrence Jennifer

St. Ann's Hospital

1. Baille Rolf Nigel
2. Barkarr Meera
3. Bernard Natasha Alicia
4. Best Brathwaite Marcella
5. Bocas Zamina
6. Brewster Annmarie
7. Cox Susan
8. Dick Phillip

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9. Drakes Esther
10. Franklyn Emily C.
11. Grant Nadine
12. Grant Vercile
13. Hazard Karen
14. Hosein Marilyn
15. Jack Veronica
16. James Lutric Nicole
17. James Sharon
18. Juman Hasseb
19. King Lydia Anora
20. Koonjan Krishendath
21. Layne Gertrude
22. Leacock Beverly
23. Le Maitre Arlene
24. Linton Jo-anne
25. Lugo Damian
26. Medina Raphael
27. Nelson Stephen
28. Peters Anthony
29. Roberts Keith
30. Roberts Ivan
31. Sealey Darryl
32. Sheppard Brian
33. Simon Ann-Mariena
34. Spence Allison
35. Stewart Collie Nixon

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36. White Jason
37. Williams Pamela
38. Vanderpool Lisa Ann

St. James Medical Complex

1. Blades Phaedra
2. Charles Plaza Gwendolyn
3. De Coteau Woods Natalie
4. Fraser Dianne Pamela
5. Hamidan Jokhan Ena
6. Hinkson Sherma
7. James Beverly Asha
8. Lalchan Ratna
9. Lindsay Shura
10. Maharaj Persad Fyatri
11. Neptune Rhonda Alicia
12. O'Garro Alicia
13. Pancho Dianne Althea
14. Quashie Donnaly Ann
15. Romeo T.C. Simone
16. Sieuchan Susan
17. Simon Nickolie
18. Walcott Anesta