

Leave of Absence

Friday, January 13, 1995

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 13, 1995

The House met at 1.30 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 Tobago East (Mr. A.N.R. Robinson), who has actually requested extensions of his absence until January 31, 1995.

I have also granted leave from today's sitting to the Member for Chaguanas (Miss H. Bhaggan) and the Member for St. Augustine (Mr. John Humphrey).

PAPERS LAID

1. Report on Public Participation in Industrial and Commercial Activities. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]
2. Minimum Wages (Security Industry Employees) Order, 1995. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Trevor Sudama (Oropouche):

**Provisions for Repairs
(Debe Community Centre)**

5. Could the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs state:
 - (a) Whether any provisions have been made in 1994 for repair work on the Debe Community Centre?
 - (b) If the answer is in the negative, could the Minister state why not?

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I should like to have this question deferred to a later stage of the proceedings. I am sure that we have the answer, but we have started today's meeting promptly.

Madam Speaker: Will you inform your colleague that we are starting at 1.30 p.m.?

Hon. K. Valley: She is aware of this, Madam Speaker. She is from the other place. *[Interruption]*

Madam Speaker: What I gather from the hon. Leader of Government Business is that the question will be answered, but the hon. Minister is not yet here. Would the Member agree to have it deferred at this point to a later stage?

Question, by leave, deferred.

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Sahid Hosein (Siparia):

**Mohess Road
(Repairs to)**

11. Will the Minister of Works and Transport indicate what work his Ministry proposes to undertake on the Mohess Road to effect repairs and how soon this work is to be undertaken?

The Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, I humbly ask for a deferral of two weeks.

Question, by leave, deferred.

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh (Caroni Central):

Acquisition of Land for Community Centres

16. Would the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs state:

- (a) What is the procedure for the acquisition of land for the purpose of building community centres?
- (b) Whether the Palmiste Village Council, via Longdenville has applied for the acquisition of land by following such procedure?

If the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, would the Minister state what is the status of such application?

- (c) When would such acquisition be completed?

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I seek a deferral of two weeks.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Hon. K. Valley: Perhaps, I should do what I am accustomed doing. Madam Speaker, the questions that we can answer today are Nos. 28, 29, 34, 36 and 40.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

**Disaster Preparedness Plan
(Point Lisas Industrial Estate)**

35. Could the Minister of National Security indicate whether:

- (a) a committee was appointed by his Government to prepare a Disaster Preparedness Plan for the Point Lisas Industrial Estate and its environs?

If it did appoint such a committee, could the Minister state whether the committee submitted a report and give the reasons for the appointment of such a committee?

- (b) If the committee reported, could the Minister state to this honourable House the material findings in the report and could the Minister state whether he would lay the report in the House of Representatives? If the answer to this part of the question is in the negative, could he give reasons for refusing to lay same?
- (c) Could the Minister state what plans (if any) exist to deal with a disaster at Point Lisas?

If the answer to this part of the question is in the negative, could he give reasons for refusing to lay same? *[Mr. R. L. Maharaj]*

**State Companies/Agencies
(Divestment/Privatization)**

41. Would the Minister of Finance state:

- (a) How many state companies/agencies have been divested/privatized from 1992 to date?
- (b) How many more state companies/agencies are currently being divested/privatized?

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- (c) How many other state companies/agencies are listed for divestment/privatization?
- (d) What sum of money government received to date from each state company/agency divested/privatized?
- (e) How is the money being utilized or what proposals are there to utilize same? *[Mr. M. Haniff]*

**Minimum Wages Schedule
(Security Guards)**

46. Could the Minister of Labour and Co-operatives state whether the Governments intends to establish a Minimum Wages Schedule for security guards employed by private sector firms? *[Mr. T. Sudama]*

**Issue of Visas
(Officers of Foreign Governments)**

47. Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs state whether the officers of foreign government responsible for the issue of visas in Trinidad and Tobago to their respective countries are entitled to stamp or write notations or markings of any kind on the passports of Trinidad and Tobago nationals other than the visa certificate itself? *[Mr. T. Sudama]*

**Ministry of Works and Transport
(Funds allocated for Victoria East)**

50. Would the Minister of Works and Transport please state:
- (a) The amount of funds allocated and released as at November 30, 1994, to the Ministry of Works, Victoria East District, for goods and services under Recurrent Services, Highway Divisions and the Transport Section?
 - (b) What is the order of priority of roads to be repaired with the Road Improvement Fund in 1995, in the Victoria East District, Ministry of Works? *[Mr. M. Haniff]*

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Buildings Tenanted by the State

31. Can the Prime Minister state:
- (a) The number of buildings which are tenanted by the State?
 - (b) The addresses of these buildings?

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- (c) The name of the landlord of each building?
- (d) The date of commencement of each tenancy?
- (e) The ministry and/or division of each ministry which is in occupation of each building?
- (f) The monthly rental of each building? [*Mr. S. Panday*]

Madam Speaker: What are you requesting with respect to questions Nos. 35, 41, 46, 47, 50 and 31?

Hon. K. Valley: We are asking for a deferral of two weeks.

Questions, by leave, deferred.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Petrotrin Handover of Lands

28. Mr. Sahid Hosein (*Siparia*) asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries:

- (a) Can the Minister indicate to this honourable House how soon Petrotrin intends to hand over lands on which there are public recreation grounds to the regional corporations under whose jurisdiction they fall?
- (b) Is the Minister aware that this matter has been pending for several years and can he indicate what steps have been put in place to expedite the handing over?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Barry Barnes): Madam Speaker, as the Member for Siparia is aware, such lands on which there are public recreation grounds have not been vested in Petrotrin, which has been mandated to focus on its core petroleum operations.

In recent years, prior to the formation of Petrotrin, Trintopec had handed over five public grounds to the relevant regional corporations as follows:

1. Lily Trace, Siparia
2. Scotts Road
3. Quarry Village, Siparia
4. Boodoosingh
5. No. 9 Road, Palo Seco

There are two public recreation grounds for which applications have been made, namely Guapo and Point D'Or, which remain outstanding.

Responsibility for the administration of the residual Trintoc/Trintopec real estate now rests with the Board of Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited and the Ministry of Finance (Investments Division). It is the intention that before any disposal of these assets, relevant ministries—for example, Local Government; Community Development; Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources—will have the opportunity to advise on their optimum usage.

Mr. Hosein: Will the hon. Minister indicate to this House, as asked in the question, what steps have been taken to expedite the handing over to the public corporations? I refer specifically to the last two grounds mentioned.

Hon. B. Barnes: Madam Speaker, the position I am seeking to make clear is that it is no longer the responsibility of Petrotrin, and that, in terms of those assets, the relevant ministries have been asked to have a look and to advise on the appropriate disposal. That is as far as I can go.

Caroni (1975) Limited
(Handover of Public Grounds and Cemeteries)

29. Mr. Sahid Hosein (*Siparia*) asked the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources:

Can the Minister indicate to this honourable House:

- (a) If he is aware that there have been proposals for several years now to hand over public recreation grounds and cemeteries which are on lands owned by Caroni (1975) Limited, to the respective regional corporations?
- (b) What are the constraints, if any, towards achieving this objective and under those circumstances, can he say how soon the transfer will be effected?
- (c) If Caroni (1975) Limited is prepared to release a parcel of land located at Hassanali Trace, Lower Barrackpore, for the purpose of establishing a recreation ground, there being none in that area?

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, the Minister is aware that Caroni (1975) Limited has received proposals for transfer of ownership of certain of the company's recreation grounds and cemeteries in the counties of Caroni and Victoria to the State.

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If is necessary to survey all the parcels of land and obtain valuations. This exercise is now almost complete and steps are being taken to effect the legal transfer of the sites to the State.

Caroni (1975) Limited has no objection in principle, to the acquisition by Government of a site at Hassanali Trace, Barrackpore, for the establishment of a recreation ground. The company would assess the application upon receipt of all the relevant information.

**Crime Committee
(Functions and Duties)**

34. Mr. Ramesh L. Maharaj (*Couva South*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Can the Minister indicate to this honourable House:

- (a) Can the Minister state the functions and duties of the Crime Committee which was recently appoint by Government?
- (b) Can the Minister give particulars of the matters the committee addressed since its appointment and state whether any report was submitted to Government in respect of such matters?
- (c) Can the Minister state whether his Government has any objections to the laying of the Crime Committee reports in Parliament (if there are any). If he objects, could he give reasons for his objections?
- (d) Can the Minister indicate what criteria were used in selecting the members of the committee? Can he explain why the Church, the trade union movement, the police and non-governmental organizations were not given representation and/or where relevant, a wider representation on the said committee?

1.40 p.m.

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Russell Huggins): Madam Speaker, in his address to the nation on July 18, 1994, the Prime Minister announced a number of measures to intensify the war against crime, including the establishment of a team to monitor and advise on the issue of crime.

The team comprised the following persons:

Sir Ellis Clarke	Leader
Sir Guy Persaud	Chairman of the Law Commission

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Dr. Ramesh Deosaran	Professor of Psychology, UWI
Mr. Austin Davis	Director, Hugh Wooding Law School
Mr. Jules Bernard	Commissioner of Police
Mr. J. O'Neil-Lewis	Retired Public Servant
Mr. Frank Mouttet	President of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce

Subsequently, Cabinet agreed that the team should be named the Advisory Commission on Crime with the following terms of reference:

- (1) To engage in research and co-ordination, public inquiry and advice and recommendations on policy and pertinent matters.
- (2) To advise the Prime Minister on:
 - (a) (i) Action considered useful and necessary to bring about an abatement in the incidence of crime to effect reforms in the law and administration of justice with a view to ensuring speedier trials of cases.
 - (ii) Such other matters as may from time to time be referred to it.
 - (b) The team has been discharging its mandate but has not submitted any formal reports.
 - (c) In light of the foregoing there are no crime committee reports such as those referred to by the hon. Member.
 - (d) The major criterion used in the selection of team was knowledge of and competence in relation to matters concerning law and law reform, crime and the criminal justice system, the social issues related to crime or the national administrative system.

Mr. Maharaj: I do not think that the Minister has answered part of the question. Can he explain why the Church, the trade union movement, the police—well, he mentioned the Commissioner of Police—and the non-governmental organizations were not given representation where relevant, or wider representation on the said committee?

Sen. The Hon. R. Huggins: Madam Speaker, the simple answer to that is at the time the team was selected and established, I assume that it was thought that these were the most appropriate members to put on it. I cannot really say why those specific bodies were not represented.

Mr. Maharaj: Can the Minister answer a supplemental question? Can he say why, since the team was appointed, persons from these groups were not put on the committee?

Sen. The Hon. R. Huggins: Madam Speaker, as I said, this is the way the committee is formulated; I guess it is really a judgment call. If we were to put all those people then somebody may ask why X, A or B was not put there.

**YTEPP
(Funding)**

36. Mr. Ramesh Maharaj (*Couva South*) asked the Minister of Education:

- (a) Could the Minister state whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was funded by any agency or agencies to implement the Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP)? If it was so funded, could the Government give the name or names of the agencies and the amounts contributed?
- (b) Could the Minister state whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago contributed to the funding of YTEPP and, if so, give the details of same?
- (c) Could the Minister indicate if use was put to the funds received and, if so, state the purposes for which they were used, giving the amounts spent and the purposes for which they were spent?
- (d) If moneys were used to pay salaries and rental of any buildings, could the Minister give particulars of the location of the buildings, the posts of the personnel and the amounts paid in respect of each?
- (e) Could the Minister state whether moneys were used by officials of the programme for foreign travel and, if so, please give the names of the officials and the purposes of the travel?
- (f) Could the Minister state whether retired public servants were employed in the programme and/or are employed in the programme and, if so, whether unemployed persons could not have done the jobs performed by the retired public servants?
- (g) Could the Minister give a summary of the activities of the programme?

Mr. Maharaj: Madam Speaker, we have agreed that the Minister would give me the answer to question No. 36 in writing because it is quite long.

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**Polyclinic
(Establishment of)**

40. Mr. Mohammed Haniff (*Princes Town*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) Whether Government has taken a decision to establish a polyclinic instead of re-opening the Princes Town Hospital?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister state whether the present building is adequate to accommodate this polyclinic?
- (c) If the answer is in the negative, will the Minister state what arrangements are being made for same?

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): Madam Speaker, the Government will be building a district hospital in Princes Town to provide a wide range of services. It is planned that the facility will offer the following range of services based on the health needs of the community:

Emergency Services:

24-hour service with observation beds.

Specialist Clinics:

- Medicine (Cardiology)
- Surgery (minor)
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Paediatrics
- Dentistry
- Ophthalmology
- Ear Nose and Throat services (ENT)
- Psychiatry
- Psychotherapy
- Nutrition
- Health Promotion

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Primary Care:

Health Centre Services:

- Immunization
- Family Planning
- Chronic Disease

Primary care services are already offered at the existing health centre and will be incorporated into the new facility.

Support Services:

- Laboratory services for simple diagnostic screening tests on blood, urine, *et cetera*.
- X-ray (simple)
- Ultrasound
- Electrocardiograph

The Health Sector Reform project consultants have looked at the services to be provided from the new district hospital and at the design and condition of the existing building known as the Princes Town Hospital. They have reported that the existing building is not purpose-built for providing the full range of health care services contemplated for the new facility. Considerable redesign, renovations and retrofitting work will be required and the consultants view this as being unsuitable, given the limitations of the existing design.

The Member is advised that there are three existing buildings on the compound: the old hospital, the health centre, and a recently constructed annex. The existing health centre and annex are to be incorporated into one modern district hospital facility. Design proposals for this are in process and are expected to be completed shortly.

In respect of the old hospital building it is noted that possible alternative uses are currently being explored.

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, a supplemental question, please. Could the hon. Minister say when this hospital would be constructed and when would it start?

Hon. J. Eckstein: I cannot say at this time precisely when construction will commence, but we shall try to do it during 1995.

DEFINITE URGENT MATTERS**Escalating Incidence of Violent Crime**

Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*): Madam Speaker, I seek your leave to raise a matter. In accordance with Standing Order 12, I hereby seek your leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance.

This matter has to do with the escalating incidence of violent crimes in the country in the last six weeks particularly the incidence of murder and armed robberies.

The matter is definite as it concerns violent criminal activity within a recent specified period. Within the last six weeks or so we have had the experience of 20 murders, approximately 60 felonious woundings, 50 rapes, 650 break-ins, 400 robberies and 100 incidents of drug-related violence. These are ballpark figures, as the police are not able to identify the nature of some of these crimes.

Madam Speaker: I would urge the Member not to go into debate but just to state why it is urgent and of public importance.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, I am making the case about the urgency and the importance.

When one looks at the large number of violent crimes in the last few weeks—the matter has become rather urgent because there is a frightening degree of anxiety, insecurity and trepidation in the whole population, and urgent action is required on the part of the Government to deal with this upsurge in wanton lawlessness and criminal activity in order to expeditiously allay the fears of the population.

1.50 p.m.

The matter is of public importance firstly, because the lawlessness and criminal activity have been occurring throughout Trinidad and Tobago: no area has been spared. Secondly, they have negatively affected the consciousness, the state of mind, and the well-being of the whole population. The worry and dismay are sensed in every nook and cranny of Trinidad and Tobago. It is also of public importance because it affects the image of Trinidad and Tobago, and therefore, it affects the thrust to attract investment to this country and to promote tourism. Therefore, for all these reasons I believe that the matter should be treated with priority for discussion as a definite matter of urgent public importance.

Madam Speaker: I am not satisfied that this matter calls for consideration under Standing Order 12, but under Standing Order 11.

Transport of Nuclear Waste

Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh (*Caroni Central*): Madam Speaker, I wish to seek leave to move the adjournment of the House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance. The matter relates to the calamitous risk involved to the environment and public health by the intended and unprecedented shipment of classified, highly radioactive plutonium waste through the Caribbean Sea. It is definite because it relates to a British ship transporting the deadly nuclear waste from the French port of Cherbourg via the Caribbean Sea to Japan. It is urgent, because it is reported that in February, 1995 the ship will begin its journey. Already *Greenpeace* has agitated to stop that shipment and subsequent shipments across the Caribbean and elsewhere. We cannot wait any longer to take national, regional and international action on this matter. The national posture must be made clear and regional action must be expedited by all governments.

Caricom, and the ACS grouping must collectively denounce these acts in every regional and international forum. The Caribbean must remain a nuclear-free zone as envisaged by the 1992 Caricom Declaration.

It is of public importance because this incident comes in the wake of a similar shipment of 1.7 tonnes of plutonium on board the ship *Akatsuki Maru*, two years ago, that caused international condemnation around the globe.

Many of our nationals throughout the country have raised their voices in protest against the shipment of nuclear waste especially through the Caribbean. They have called for national and international response on behalf of our people. If shipments of nuclear waste become the norm through the Caribbean, it would only be a matter of time before a catastrophe of Chernobyl proportions takes place. I am satisfied that this matter ought not to await a motion on the adjournment next week, having regard to the national and international agitation it has aroused. I was mandated to raise this matter by the UNC.

Madam Speaker: I am not satisfied that this matter qualified for consideration under Standing Order 12. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Members, there is one aspect of matters in this House which I find a little disturbing. May I remind Members that reflections on the conduct of the Speaker in the discharge of duties in this House is really punishable as a breach of privilege. Hon. Members who wish, may take matters in a proper way. It is a breach of privilege; you cannot do that. Proceed, please.

**MINIMUM WAGES (SECURITY INDUSTRY
EMPLOYEES) ORDER**

The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives (Hon. Kenneth Collis): Madam Speaker, the Minimum Wages (Security Industry Employees) Order, 1994—Legal Notice No. 231—was erroneously laid in this House on January 06, 1995. The correct order has now been laid in this House. Cabinet had at its meeting on December 01, 1994 decided that the Minimum Wages (Security Industry Employees) Order, 1994 would refer specifically to minimum remuneration and hours of work for this category of employees, and reference to other terms and conditions of employment should not be included at this time.

It was intended that six months after the Order went into effect, the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives would conduct a survey so as to assess the impact of the Order on employment patterns in the industry. After the survey was completed, it was intended that new provisions relating to other terms and conditions of employment for this category of employees would be made, as was found to be appropriate.

I should like to remind my colleagues that section 19(2) of the Minimum Wages Act, Chap. 88:04 is relevant to this order. Section 19(2) stipulates that where provisions already exist in the industry for the payment of other terms and conditions of employment such as sick leave, vacation leave, uniform and so forth, workers shall in no way be adversely affected by reason only of the making of a Minimum Wages Order. Workers and employers in the sector are accordingly advised. Madam Speaker, I humbly and sincerely apologize for the error made.

Thank you.

CONTINUAL DEFERRAL OF QUESTION

Mr. Trevor Sudama (Oropouche): Madam Speaker, I rise to talk about the integrity of this House. I have a question here which was filed since last year, that is, question No. 46 which has been deferred continually. The answer to it was given here partially today, so the Minister was in a position to answer.

Question 46 to the Minister of Labour and Co-operatives states as follows:

“Could the Minister state whether the Government intends to establish a Minimum Wages Schedule for security guards employed by private sector firms?”

I cannot understand why that question could not have been answered today when he has the answer. But it shows the contempt they have for this House, and particularly for Members of the Opposition when we ask questions.

Madam Speaker: Could the hon. Minister please take note with respect to the answer to question No. 46.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I am authorized by the Cabinet to make the following statement.

The Report on Public Participation in Industrial and Commercial Activities, which was laid in this House today, informs on the rationalization of the state enterprise sector being undertaken by this Government since coming into office in December, 1991. Government's state enterprise policy has been identified by its party's manifesto which states essentially that the state will be a facilitator for economic activity. Participation in the commercial sector will continue at appropriate levels only where the industry or enterprise is of strategic importance, where it is essential to the economic diversification drive, or where a foreign investor requires the state to be a partner in a major project. It is therefore also an integral part of Government's policy on investment.

This policy position is amplified further in the *Medium Term Policy Framework 1993/1995* which identifies a major imperative for Trinidad and Tobago, to be the implementation of policies designed to achieve sustained growth leading to a transformed and more resilient economy.

The rationalization of the state enterprise sector is identified as one of the several interrelated policy measures designed to achieve these objectives.

2.00 p.m.

The Medium Term Policy Framework 1993/1995 states that transfers to state enterprises will be reduced overall and eliminated in some cases through acceleration of the divestment programme and rationalization and restructuring of the sector as a whole.

In the case of the public utilities, Government is pursuing a comprehensive restructuring programme, which will ensure the delivery of efficient and reliable services in the long term. This programme involves the placing of the public utilities on a sound financial footing through organizational reform, productivity gains and the introduction of appropriate tariff policies.

This report is being presented at this time in order that the many issues that impinge on the current rationalization programme are fully understood. It

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therefore examines the evolution of the sector and places the entire experience in its proper overall perspective.

Accordingly, the report provides a backdrop to the analysis of the state sector by examining the rationale for Government's involvement in industrial and commercial activities. It set out clearly the considerations that informed the various approaches taken in the rationalization programme. It further provides statistical data on the performance of the state enterprise sector over the period 1982 to 1993.

The report elaborates current Government policy on rationalization of the state enterprise sector in the context of the failures of the sector, the state of the Treasury and the new global economic environment. In addition, the report describes the procedures established for the efficient execution of the associated rationalization programme and provides an evaluation of the rationalization process to date.

As at December 31, 1994, of the 87 companies that comprised Government's portfolio, as at January 1992 the Investment Division had so far reviewed 66 of those enterprises and submitted recommendations which have been approved by Cabinet. Fifteen divestments have been completed while 14 liquidations involving companies which had not been in operation were also completed. Five of these companies had already commenced liquidation proceedings prior to 1992.

I am aware that there has been some clamour for this report and it is really a pleasure for me to lay this report in the House this afternoon.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the hon. Minister could explain to this House why this report could not have been laid in the House and been debated before the major part of the divestment process had started?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, it would have been extremely difficult to lay a report on companies divested before we started divesting companies.

Madam Speaker: Is there another statement?

Hon. K. Valley: Madam Speaker, there is another statement that the Government wishes to make this afternoon, one by the hon. Prime Minister, but we ask that that be deferred to 3.00 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

**SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER
ON CRIME (PENSION RIGHTS) BILL**

Bill to make provision to enable the person appointed to the Office of Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Crime, Office of the Prime Minister in the Civil Service, to enjoy pension rights similar to those enjoyed by the holder of the post of Commissioner of Police, [*The Minister of Finance*]; read the first time.

**BWIA INTERNATIONAL AIRWAYS LIMITED
(VESTING) BILL**

Bill to make provision to vest the undertaking of Trinidad and Tobago (BWIA International) Airways Corporation in BWIA International Airways Limited, [*The Minister of Finance*]; read the first time.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I seek leave of the House to deal with Bill No. 1 under “Bills Second Reading,” rather than with Motions at this time.

Question put and agreed to.

**TOURISM AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
COMPANY LIMITED VESTING BILL**

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to repeal the Industrial Development Corporation Act, Chap. 85:50, the Trinidad and Tobago Export Development Corporation Act, Chap. 85:53 and the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Authority Act, Chap. 87:53 and to make provision for the transfer of assets, liabilities and functions of the corporations established by these Acts, to the Tourism and Industrial Development Company Limited, be now read a second time.

The underlying purpose of this Bill is to provide the institutional framework necessary or the framework that is consonant with our quest for international competitiveness at this time—an institutional framework which is facilitative and promotional rather than one that is regulatory or controlling.

The Industrial Development Corporation commenced operations in 1959, at a time when the economy of Trinidad and Tobago was quite different. Its major

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functions have been to stimulate, facilitate and undertake the development of industry in Trinidad and Tobago. Over the past 35 years the corporation has been the key institution in Trinidad and Tobago engaged in industrial and hotel development, investment promotion, industrial planning, investment facilitation and industrial estate development.

The second institution, the Tourism Development Authority came into being in 1989 on the winding-up of the Tourist Board and that company focused its attention, over its life, principally on tourism promotion and the development and regulation of the tourism industry.

The third institution, the Export Development Corporation, is charged with the responsibility of managing export development programmes. In particular, the corporation provided Trinidad and Tobago exporters with general advisory services and trade information, and assisted exporters in penetrating foreign markets and stimulating export awareness.

Members would no doubt recall that in the manifesto on which the Government fought the 1991 general election, at page 7 the Government stated clearly that the major imperative for Trinidad and Tobago is the development and implementation of a plan of action to stimulate economic growth, leading to a transformed, more resilient economy.

2.10 p.m.

Also, under “Administrative Framework,” the party pledged to set up a Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Coming out of that, very early in 1992, the then Minister of Trade and Industry—my former colleagues and former Senator, Brian Kuei Tung—established a team in April, 1992 to look at a national business plan. The team submitted an interim report in May, 1992. By way of background to what we are debating today, I want to draw on that report because it is that which informed the Government of the need to make the institutional change with which we are proceeding today.

First of all, in its report the committee noted that the world is changing at a rather rapid pace and it did not matter whether Trinidad and Tobago is a developing country or a developed one, there are new challenges with which it is faced. While business had the ability to adjust—in the world of environment business is accustomed to facing risks and so forth—business is also risk averse.

Therefore, if investment levels were to be increased, it meant that there was need for Government to play that facilitative role to reduce uncertainty in the

environment while, at the same time, it would have been charged with a responsibility to provide incentives to increase returns. By reducing the risks and uncertainty in the environment, while at the same time taking steps to improve the incentive environment, the adjusted returns to the investor are improved and one can attract increased investment. That was the basic argument of the committee.

The committee thought that one of the ways the Government could reduce the uncertainty in the environment was by reducing some of the constraints in the environment, one of which it identified as the bureaucratic delays affecting the investor.

After looking at the number of various institutions which impacted on the investor, the committee recommended that what is needed in Trinidad and Tobago is a single centralized investment promotion body bringing the main functions of these disparate elements under one head, and have it focus on investment promotion and marketing. That is the simple purpose of the legislation today.

It fits into the provision of the enabling environment which has been what the Government wanted to do since it came into office in 1992. The point was made in the budget debate that one, first of all, saw about providing that stable macro-economic framework. The Government is satisfied, now that the environment is there, we have to move apace on the legal and regulatory environment. Members would know that there is a pipeline of financial legislation that would be debated in this House during the first quarter of this year.

As the Government does that, it has to look at the institutions also to ensure that there is the fit: that there is consonance with what is done so that the investor can be facilitated in achieving his goal. The institutions served their purpose quite well in a certain environment, but because there is now that paradigm shift; because the country is now moving towards promotion and marketing rather than controlling and monitoring, there is need for a new type of institution in keeping with the times. That is the argument.

Of course, one of the issues coming out of the overall rationalization is the fact that there is excess staff. Here we are talking about different organizations and we are now establishing one organization that is to be lean and mean, requiring roughly about 25 per cent of the total staff of these three institutions—persons who had given long years of service to the state. Knowing that the change had to be made, the Government attempted to do it with the caring and concern that has been the hallmark of this Government.

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The Government instituted a voluntary incentive programme and with respect to the Industrial Development Corporation, 83 employees accepted the incentive package initially. Of the 77 other staff members, 61 of those accepted the incentive package after some time. So that as of today, there are merely 16 persons, approximately 10 per cent of the labour force there, who have not accepted the package yet. Ten of these employees have not accepted the package simply because they were separated and they got their 45 days' notice and payment for it. If they were to accept the package now, taking into account that they received the 45 days, they would be slightly disadvantaged. We are continuing to talk with them.

With respect to the Tourism Development Authority, all 54 employees accepted the incentive package. However, 36 of these employees are awaiting the enactment of this legislation so that their pension matters with respect to the former Tourist Board could be dealt with. Members would see that that is dealt with in Part III of the legislation, making arrangements for the former employees of the Tourist Board to qualify, for their service at the Tourist Board to be taken into consideration, in determining their pension benefits.

With respect to the Export Development Corporation, I am sure Members do not even know if anything happened there because it was extremely quiet. All the employees accepted the incentive package, and there was not even one line in the newspaper. That matter was dealt with.

It is never easy to deal with severance or retrenchment, but if the country has to move forward, some of these negatives have to be faced.

2.20 p.m.

The fact is we are convinced that in the medium to longer term, or perhaps, even in the short term, although not perhaps in the very short term, it is going to benefit all of us.

Mr. B. Panday: How short is "very short?"

Hon. K. Valley: Two or three years. As we have seen already the unemployment rate has started to decline and, in fact, the economy is now producing more jobs than it has ever done—and these are sustainable jobs. We expect that to continue. Our bottom line is: encourage economic growth; sustainable jobs in the economy.

Now the mission of the new organization, the Tourism and Industrial Development Company, is to promote the human and natural resources of

Trinidad and Tobago both at home and abroad through business, commercial relationship, in order to attract investments, increase tourist arrivals and provide focused national economic activities with the country's macro-economic framework. Madam Speaker you will see that we are setting up an organization to do what we say we want to do, quite simply.

We have said that we want to position Trinidad and Tobago as an export platform. We want Trinidad and Tobago to be considered a suitable location for investors, whether from the Far East, Europe, or South America; to access, not the Trinidad and Tobago market, not the Caricom market, but those large markets with which we have favourable market access agreements. That is why this Government has been very aggressive in the pursuit of these market access agreements, whether it be Colombia, Venezuela, or NAFTA. I want to make the point, because quite a number of persons have no problem with our looking for market access in Venezuela or Colombia, but when they hear the term NAFTA they say, "Why do you want to get into NAFTA?"

NAFTA is merely another market access agreement—the market access into Canada, the United States and Mexico. We are at present, for example, in preliminary discussions with South Africa to try to get similar agreements with that country, because if we were to do that, then we would be talking about entry into all of Africa. As we do that, if we want to position our country in that way, obviously, we must have the supportive institutions. That is the rationale for TIDCO, given its mission. So that the objective of the organization would be to assist the Ministries of Trade and Industry and Tourism in tourism and industrial development policy formulation.

So that one really has a quasi-private sector organization, basically a private sector organization: business people assisting the public sector, the ministry, in policy formulation with respect to industrial and tourism development; tourism and investment promotion, including marketing and image building; investment facilitation; the encouragement and facilitating of business investment in Trinidad and Tobago through the promotion of Trinidad and Tobago plant locations for local and foreign companies; and explaining and selling the benefits of this country as a business centre.

Another objective is to seek strategic alliances with foreign agencies with a view to fostering foreign investment in our country and, very importantly, the institution would act also as a one-stop shop with respect to investment. But we have been talking about this for quite some time with a number of different agencies which the investor has to go to in order to get the approvals. What we

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are saying now is that if he comes to TIDCO there would be somebody at TIDCO who is going to walk his proposals through, so that we want to take that worry off the investor.

We want to reduce the uncertainty with which the investor is faced, provide some incentives so that the risk-adjusted return would improve, thus providing the environment for greater investment. Of course, the company would work very closely not only with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, but also with other governmental agencies. That is the mission.

With respect to the functions again, Members may wish to note that—perhaps I should deal with the functions which were at the IDC first. Most of those functions have gone across to TIDCO, other than the industrial counselling function, which will now be the responsibility of the Small Business Development Company. Also the loan portfolio, which the IDC had, has gone across to Taurus rather than to TIDCO. The concept is that we want to keep TIDCO as a promotional marketing agency, not bothered by the day-to-day routine. So that the small business loan portfolio is over at Taurus, which is the bad debt company, associated with the First Citizens Bank. The industrial counselling is with the Small Business Development Company.

With respect to the Export Development Corporation, the certification of goods to ensure their consistency with the rules of origin criteria in respect of various trade agreements has gone across to TIDCO and also the functions such as accessing funding from multilateral agencies. For example, the Technical Assistance Fund would be at TIDCO. Some other functions would go to the Export Trading Company, which was established in 1985, incorporated and so forth. It has done very little work and the concept here is that we would now separate the functions of the EDC into its facilitation function and its operational function, the ETC, the Export Trading Company, allowing that company to act as a catalyst to mobilize small businesses in Trinidad and Tobago. The Export Trading Company is to be the buyer of domestic products under one label for export sales.

The Government would own 20 per cent of the company; existing equity in the company would remain, but there would be equity coming in to such an extent that the existing equity would represent merely 20 per cent of the new capitalization; and TIDCO would hold that interest on behalf of the Government. So that there would be that tie with TIDCO and the Export Trading Company. One of TIDCO's board members would sit on the Export Trading Company. But we

want the Export Trading Company to be a majority-owned private sector company and assist the small businesses in the export initiatives.

Of particular note is Government's intention to establish a branch of TIDCO in Tobago to facilitate investors and other businesses in the island to conduct their activities more efficiently.

In pursuing this objective, consideration will be given to the rationalization of the services that are being provided by agencies such as the Small Business Development Company.

2.30 p.m.

With respect to the TDA, the lifeguards and other daily-paid workers who carry out the maintenance of beaches and tourist sites, as well as the monthly-paid staff who are responsible for these workers, were transferred temporarily to the Ministry of Tourism, but it is proposed that this staff be placed under the Commission for Parks and Tourist Sites when that agency is established. That is an agency that the Government is now considering.

I want to touch quickly on what is expected of the relationship between TIDCO and other agencies. I have already mentioned that TIDCO would assist the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Tourism in policy formulation. In addition, the board of TIDCO would report to the Minister of Trade and Industry and the Minister of Tourism on a periodic basis. The Ministers would also approve the budgets of the company and recommend to Cabinet the appointment of board members.

The Free Zones Company would operate outside TIDCO, but of course, one would exploit the synergies that would exist between the two organizations. In areas such as office accommodation, they will share the same building, the former EDC building. Again, a director of TIDCO would sit on the board of the export processing zone.

I have already dealt with the Small Business Development Company. We believe that the small business initiative ought to be a separate initiative. We have left SBDC outside the TIDCO arrangement, but the same thing would apply—a director of TIDCO would sit on the board of the SBDC.

I think those are the important points. I have dealt with the disposition of the existing staff and I made the point that there are still one or two issues to be settled with a few staff members. Some of those issues would be settled on the passage of this legislation; pensions and so forth with respect to the former

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Tourist Board employees. There are still one or two other individual problems that we would deal with one on one with the persons concerned.

Simply to summarize: The vesting of the assets of these three organizations into TIDCO mirrors Government's policy to position the economy for international competitiveness, and to reform our institutions in keeping with the demands of the time. In doing so, we are aware that some persons would be disadvantaged and we have attempted to reduce that to a minimum. In that regard Members would note the establishment of the outplacement unit at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Given that we were undertaking this exercise, we thought it essential that the unit be set up. Even though there was this incentive programme, we thought that we should start a little unit to deal with the displaced employees to try to place them in the rest of the public sector and in private sector companies. I should mention that some of the former employees, of course, were re-employed by TIDCO, but given what TIDCO had to do, TIDCO's standards were extremely high; and more than that, given the number of employees and the requirements of TIDCO, many of them had to be placed outside.

I commend this Bill to the House and simply inform Members that this is just another piece of the jigsaw, another piece of that big picture that we are fitting into place, all in keeping with our quest to position this economy for international competitiveness.

I thank you.

Question proposed.

Mr. Gideon Hanoomansingh (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Madam Speaker, I do not think that we on this side would hesitate for one moment to give support to any measure by the Government that seeks to put Trinidad and Tobago into a position of international competitiveness, considering the fact that we understand that whatever measures are taken would benefit the nationals of this country. But at the same time, we would want to get assurances from the Government that its plans and actions are transparent and leave absolutely no room for any measure of doubt and suspicion in the minds of the population.

Initially the decision to merge the three corporations, referred to by the hon. Minister, occasioned hardships on hundreds of workers. Though the Minister eventually said that efforts were being made to minimize the disadvantage these people are suffering, we have to consider that these are people who are now on the breadline. These are people who do not now have the benefit of perhaps

permanent employment. These are people who have come out of a situation where they were trained by the taxpayers of this country, and who are not sure what is going to happen to their lives from here on.

The Minister mentioned that there is a unit at his ministry that is beginning to look at absorption. To what extent, he did not say. One gets the impression that in all the peripheral statements made by the Minister with respect to this move, not enough thought went into the quest for the merger that we are now looking at.

I get the impression that the Minister is saying to this honourable House that for people who have suffered loss of jobs, life stops after one receives an incentive package from the organization. What does that do to people in a country like ours, who have found themselves in a kind of syndrome where desperation is fast creeping up into thousands of households in this country?

We must look at the whole scheme of this attempt by the Government with a great suspicion because, in the very first instance, if we look at some of the provisions of the three dismantled organizations, we would realize that they are dissimilar in nature.

2.40 p.m.

Because of that, when we look at the intention of TIDCO to serve as something of a supernumerary organization with 85 people as opposed to 350, then we begin to think it is either TIDCO is going to be an organization which will provide the finest minds in this country, with all the various sectors of its responsibility, or it is going to be another organization that falls into the trap of name change without any great planning and thinking.

I say this, because if we look at the track record of some of the actions of the PNM administration, we would realize that to a large extent what has been happening is that for the convenience of the Government there has been the name change, and the appointment of new boards; but when one relates the name change and the appointment of new boards to the matter of productivity, there is very little that the Government can boast about.

That is what worries us on this side of the House. We feel that the Minister's presentation did not specifically state any aspect of what happened in the previous organizations as opposed to what is likely to take place in TIDCO, except to mention the functions of TIDCO.

Looking at the rationale of the proposed TIDCO, to begin its life as a promotional institution, we on this side question whether there has been, really,

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any comprehensive study that indicates the necessity for this super-ministerial body, based on analyses that the dismantled agencies have failed and the reasons for the failure. The Minister said that he was satisfied, and the Government was satisfied, that the TDA, the EDC and the IDC have served the country well. If that is the case, the question begs: Why is there the need to dismantle organizations that have served well and that have had the wherewithal to deal with the problems and come up with the solutions in favour of a super body that is to be called TIDCO?

I feel it is nothing but what I consider to be the vogue of the PNM to continue its policies of the last three decades: to concentrate on name change and the subsequent appointment of the boards. Looking at the people aspect of all this, and when we consider that the former employees of the three dismantled agencies have had to go through hell in this country, trauma, we on this side of the House want to assume that what is happening in this case is that a pattern is developing in this country where the Government, in the creation of TIDCO, is now providing opportunities to supplement its membership with job opportunities.

I say this because I have a report here that, perhaps, gives all the answers to the questions that we would like to raise on this side of the House. It is called "Advancing An Enabling Environment for Direct Foreign Investment" March 7, 1994. This was done by the Foreign Investment Advisory Service, which is, in fact, a joint service of the International Finance Corporation, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the World Bank. It states quite clearly in paragraph 132, page 27:

"TIDCO is envisioned to be a small, lean institution, projected to employ a staff of about 85 personnel. These individuals will not necessarily be drawn from the institutions TIDCO is replacing, but through a general recruitment process."

In other words, what it is saying is that it does not plan to give the staff from the existing institutions any preferential treatment in the recruitment process.

So what happens? The Minister spoke about the performance of the three institutions and said Government was quite happy with that; and here it is, there are people who are so well qualified and well skilled and who have done an enormous job for national development in the opinion of the Government, and what they have to do now is to apply as ordinary citizens of the country—people who have not had the benefit of the expertise and the training and the background—to be selected through the process of an application.

This reminds me of, perhaps, a subtle image of political witch-hunting, as has been the case in some of the state agencies since this PNM administration took office in 1991.

How can we treat these people who have had the expertise, who have given of their services, who have had recommendations from international consultants—how can we give them a kind of feeling that they are worthless at this point when, as the Minister is saying, they have a role to play in the further development of Trinidad and Tobago, in this super-ministerial body that is called TIDCO, in this highly skilled area of economic development, investment in tourism promotion?

How can we really tell these people that what they have done in the past is really worth nothing in the new scheme of things in Trinidad and Tobago? Yet, we say that these people are cared for, the hallmark of the People's National Movement, according to the Minister.

I cannot accept that as an argument at all. Further on, what is going to happen? Look at the members of the board of TIDCO and we would see exactly the point that I am trying to make. They are quite familiar names in the business circle, as the Minister says, but people who have come from a background of, perhaps, patronage—giving it and receiving it. We only have to go back to the incorporation of TIDCO as a private company under the Companies Ordinance. Two names appear. These are the two initial directors of TIDCO: Bernard Dulal-Whiteway and Ishwar Galbaransingh.

We know where these people belong. We know where their allegiance lies. If it is that we are seeing initially in this document which is from the Ministry of Finance—The Ownership of Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited—two names that are appearing with other names, then we begin to suspect that what we are hearing underground is that jobs are really being provided “for the boys”. What is going to happen, from what we have been told, is that there are functions within the dismantled organizations transferred to TIDCO that will be farmed out to organizations like Neal and Massy and the Chamber of Commerce. They are the people who will now benefit.

2.50 p.m.

We on this side of the House are aware that the Government is really hoodwinking the population when it says that it really cares for the entire population, for what we are seeing very decidedly is that the PNM cares for one section of the population.

Mr. B. Panday: Everybody knows what that section is—Neal and Massy.

Mr. G. Hanoomansingh: Madam Speaker, name change. What does it mean? Does it mean that the IDC, the EDC and the TDA merged into TIDCO will

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now become an agency of the Government that is highly productive? We have not heard any kind of explanation from the Minister with respect to that.

Let us go back to the TDA as an example. I keep referring to the Minister's statement that the dismantled agency served the country well, and that the Government was happy with performance. The Tourism Development Authority took over the functions of the Tourist Board in Trinidad and Tobago—millions of dollars spent on promotion; an office in New York; later on an office in Miami and all kinds of cottage sites in Trinidad and Tobago. What happened to that? They all were dismantled just like these organizations.

There is a particular individual who served, I think in this capacity on the Tourist Board, as a high functionary. When that was dismantled, he served as an advisor to the Tourism Development Authority. Between the Tourist Board and the Tourism Development Authority, this country has never seen any kind of productivity. This country has witnessed absolutely no returns for the millions of dollars invested in promoting tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. Yet, that hon. Gentleman—if I should refer to him that way—finds himself as the advisor to TIDCO.

What will his function be? Obviously, it is going to be to advise TIDCO on tourism promotion, if that is his expertise, or so-call expertise.

When we look at tourism development in Trinidad and Tobago, I think what we have to do is give ourselves a laugh, because the sister isle, Tobago, provides the most tranquil sites in the twin-island republic. When we look at the track record of the governments of the past, and we realize that nothing really substantial has been done to promote tourism, except to say that Tobago is a tourist haven, then we understand that, really, there has been no plan. If there was no plan before, how can there be a plan now when that plan has not been studied properly and enunciated in this honourable House?

How are we going to attract the tourists to come to Trinidad and Tobago? Perhaps, we are going to take TT \$2 million, go to England and say, "All right, we have a little money, we are going to promote tourism." One goes all over the world and which country does one see being promoted as a tourist destination in the Caribbean? Jamaica. One sees all kinds of billboards in New York, Miami and London promoting Jamaica as a tourist destination. What does one see of Trinidad and Tobago? One gets a booklet which is printed by the Tourism Development Authority with its address as 56A, Frederick Street, Port of Spain, and people end up at the office of the Leader of the Opposition asking, "Is this the Tourism Development Authority?"

We have to be serious if we are to map out a plan for the country. That is why I said initially that we on this side of the House would have absolutely no difficulty in supporting any measure that purports to increase Trinidad and Tobago's competitiveness in the international financial market. It would redound to the benefit of every individual in this society.

I made the point earlier on about those whose names appear on the board of TIDCO, and I went on to talk about the Tourism Development Authority and the failure of that organization. I should like to touch also on an aspect which I feel is worthy of mention in this honourable House. Trinidad and Tobago has, in my opinion, some of the most brilliant people in this part of the world, and from time to time we keep talking about the brilliance of our people. We know for a fact that nationals of this country have really represented us abroad, with distinction, in various facets of life, in different parts of the world, on different continents.

If we have to look at a utility in this country, like the water and Sewerage Authority, and look at some of the people who served on the boards of WASA, we would really realize that what I am saying bears merit. Mervyn Mc Connie—do you remember that name, Madam Speaker?—a gentlemen who topped the world in the ACCA exams; Ronald Amoroso, island scholar, excellent academic record; Mervelyn Sankerali, technical director; another island scholar; the present Minister of Finance was also on the board of WASA, and he too has a very good academic and physical track record.

In spite of all the finest minds and the great academic achievements of people whose names I just called, what has happened to the Water and Sewerage Authority? Today, the Water and Sewerage Authority has found itself in the greatest mess—and this is by succession. This is why we keep talking about and asking for transparency; we want to see transparency; we want to be in a position to say, "This decision of the Government is the right decision and it will work in the interest of the country."

It is obvious to me that if there are people like these on a board and the utility has had difficulty ever since, then it simply means that what is implicit in the situation is political interference. This is the bugbear that has been stagnating the progress and growth of development in Trinidad and Tobago.

What assurances do we have in this scenario—I mentioned two of the names of the people on the TIDCO board—that this will not happen in this case? When this happens and one finds that people who are displaced cannot find another job anywhere and frustration sets in and they get involved in wrongdoing, then one

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wonders who will hold his conscience responsible for taking a decision like this to create TIDCO to displace workers with political patronage and it does not work. Millions of dollars of taxpayers' money would be down the drain once again.

There is an advertisement which appeared in the *Daily Express* of Friday, May 6 called "Diary of a Criminal Act." It was issued, I think, by the Public Services Association, entitled "Government Soft Landing for IDC/TDA Staff." I would like to quote from this advertisement because there is a chronological analysis of what transpired—

Madam Speaker: Members will recall that this House agreed that the statement by the hon. Prime Minister would be deferred until three o'clock. The hon. Prime Minister will now make his statement.

3.00 p.m.

REPORT ON GOVERNMENT'S STEWARDSHIP

The Prime Minister (Hon. Patrick Manning): Madam Speaker, I am grateful to you and hon. Members. When the PNM were elected to govern a little over three years ago, we had already developed a vision for the society, and a basic set of strategies that had as its main objective, the stimulation of economic growth leading to a transformed, more resilient, and less oil dependent economy, capable of generating sustainable and productive jobs for our people.

On coming into office, we found a situation that was worse than we had expected. The economy was extremely fragile, notwithstanding the mirage created by the temporary high oil prices in 1990 and 1991. The country's external debt had risen to US \$2,391 million. The debt rescheduling agreement with Paris Club creditors and other commercial creditors imposed very heavy external debt service obligations for the year 1992—1994.

The previous administration had implemented a tight fiscal policy regime, but this was accompanied by an easy monetary policy with a resulting haemorrhaging of foreign exchange. The total number of persons with jobs was on the decline and there was a general state of unease among the population. The situation we found would have been extremely difficult for any government that had been elected. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that our basic philosophy is correct and we decided to proceed with implementing the policies we had previously devised, tempering their application by pragmatic considerations.

Our broad objectives remain constant, however. They were, and still are, sustainable growth of the economy, generation of an adequate level of foreign

exchange reserves and increased employment opportunities. The basic strategy involved encouraging increased investment, both local and foreign, increasing exports and prudent fiscal and monetary policies. Over the intervening three years, we pursued this course steadfastly. Our policies have led to increased investment inflows, considerable improvement on fiscal accounts, a cessation in the outflow of foreign exchange and absolute increases in the numbers of persons employed. By the end of 1994 most, if not all, of the relevant economic indicators suggested that we are slowly riding out of the period of pain.

The economy is estimated to have grown by 4 per cent in 1994. Inflation fell from 13.5 per cent in 1993, to 6 per cent by year's end 1994. Unemployment which had fallen to 18.1 per cent by the end of the second quarter of 1994 had fallen further to 17.9 per cent by the end of September 1994. The visible trade surplus for 1994 was significantly above that of 1993, given the trend up to the end of June. The overall balance of payments which was expected to record a surplus of US \$150 million now appears to have recorded an even higher figure. The Trinidad and Tobago dollar is showing remarkable stability since the change in April 1993.

Our fiscal management, projected to result in a central government deficit of an estimated 0.3 per cent of GDP in 1994 now turns out to be a surplus of TT \$18.5 million or 0.07 per cent of GDP. Our external debt is now down to US \$2,063 million. Significant new foreign investment has occurred, albeit primarily in the oil and petrochemical sector. The divestment programme and our measures to woo foreign investors have led to increased methanol production with new capacity under construction, announced new investment in ammonia production, a steel mill that has now become a successful producer and international competitor, a new lease on life for our national airline, a prospective massive investment of foreign capital in a liquefied natural gas plant, foreign capital participation in the generation of electrical power, and many other developments with important economic and social implications.

We targeted construction and tourism as the main sectors for job creation. Several hotels in Tobago are now being expanded and construction of a new major hotel in the sister isle is due to begin in the first half of this year. We are in discussions with an investment group of local and foreign investors for major hotel development at Chaguaramas. Very shortly also, the Government would initiate construction on a number of public sector facilities, and job creation in this sector will begin to rise.

Indeed, on my return to Tunapuna to complete meeting the people of that area on January 25, I propose to turn the sod for the construction of the new Tunapuna Administrative Complex. Over the next few weeks, construction will also be initiated on the Ministry of Works building, a new building to house the Industrial Court and Integrity Commission and on the library complex on the Hart Street site, the first building in the new city centre. All of this would mean more jobs in 1995. *[Interruption]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Hon. P. Manning: A major objective for Trinidad and Tobago now has to be the expansion of trade, as we constantly seek new markets for the output of domestic industry, as our job creation thrust inevitably leads us to increased industrial production. Already, together with our Caricom partners, we have access to the Venezuelan market without competition from Venezuelan manufacturers at home until January 1998. A similar arrangement with Colombia went into force on January 1, 1995. Our partial scope arrangement with Venezuela enhances the multilateral arrangement.

It has now become vital for us to maintain and deepen our special trading relationship with the European Union. Canada and the United States of America and as rapidly as possible gain greater access to the huge Latin American market. The recent decision of western hemisphere leaders to establish a free-trade area in the hemisphere by 2005, now raises the question of Caricom's and Trinidad and Tobago's relationship with the United States and NAFTA markets until that time.

We have already obtained clearance from Caricom to negotiate new access arrangements to South America. The Brazilian market has been targeted in 1995. We also propose this year to expand our trade relationships with Chile, the next NAFTA country, and President Eduardo Frei has been invited to visit Trinidad and Tobago. On January 19, Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada will pay a state visit to Trinidad and Tobago on his way to South America.

A Trinidad and Tobago Government team, headed by the Prime Minister, will hold talks with him, which will centre on, among other things, trade matters.

3.10 p.m.

We are also moving to operationalize, as quickly as possible, the Association of Caribbean States, involving 25 sovereign states and several non-independent territories. Trade arrangements among these countries are an essential element of this Association.

As a result of these priorities, it is clear that some adjustment will have to be made at home. Major reorientation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is called for, in order to place greater emphasis on matters involving trade and investment.

I wish to advise hon. Members and the national community that the Foreign Affairs sub-committee of the Cabinet has recently been reconstituted to reflect this new reorientation. The Prime Minister has also summoned home for appropriate discussions, the heads of all our diplomatic missions abroad. This will be the first time that this administration is meeting with all our ambassadors and high commissioners and the first time in seven years that such a conference is being held. It will take place in Port of Spain on February 6, 7 and 8.

The Prime Minister has also decided to set up a co-ordinating mechanism for this trade expansion thrust. I wish to announce that Mrs. Sheelagh de Osuna, now based in London, who has served this country well in several diplomatic appointments abroad, has been promoted to the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Trade. She will be based at the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Port of Spain, and will be devoted full-time to the advancement of Trinidad and Tobago's trade interests.

As we move forward, the challenge we face is to ensure that the gains we made so far are not eroded and, indeed, that we build on them. I have no doubt that with God's help we can rise to that challenge and carry out the task ahead.

The objective of the Government, as indeed the objective of any government, is to improve the overall quality of life of all its citizens. That we are determined to do, and our new initiatives in trade represent another manifestation of this determination.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**TOURISM AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
COMPANY LIMITED VESTING BILL**

Mr. G. Hanoomansingh: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister spoke about a new hotel development project in Chaguaramas. In the trend of talking about tourism development, one wants to believe that is a project which is likely to bring to the shores of Trinidad and Tobago thousands of tourists. But what happens when these tourists come to Trinidad and Tobago, end up at Piarco International Airport and have to spend several hours gaining entry and clearing baggage at that airport; go to hotels and cannot get an efficient water supply; and have to face the banditry which is prevalent in Trinidad and Tobago? We really have to reconsider very carefully what we are doing.

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The Prime Minister also spoke about a very timely drop in unemployment. Well, I should like to believe that the people from the three dismantled agencies of the Government have found jobs, because if he is saying that the unemployment rate has dropped, it would appear that those persons are absorbed somewhere in the job market.

When the hon. Prime Minister rose to make his statement, I was making reference to a headline “Diary of a Criminal Act,” in an advertisement which appeared in the *Express* of Friday, May 6, 1994—“Government’s Soft Landing for IDC/TDA staff.” I would like to make reference to some of the scenarios in this advertisement, only to show what has happened to people in these state agencies which have been dismantled.

“In January, a transition team, headed by PNM General Secretary, Martin Joseph, said IDC and TDA workers will have three options—to work with TIDCO, transfer into the public service, or separation. Nine days later, they told PSA and the workers, the first two options no longer exist, ‘only separation was now possible’. Prime Minister announced the creation of a Ministry of Tourism along with the Trade Ministry, effectively putting two Ministries to direct TIDCO—recipe for confusion.

March 04, 1994—Gordon Draper meets PSA—He says government not changing its mind about setting up TIDCO—No structure for TIDCO exists yet—government wants the ‘organisational memory’ of IDC and TDA to be kept in TIDCO, but no plans exist for workers to get jobs in TIDCO.”

Is there some measure of inconsistency in what I am reading here, what the hon. Minister talked about and what is written in the document by the Foreign Investment Advisory Service? Indeed there is, because the whole idea, as we had put forward earlier, seems to be catering for the needs of the “boys on the block,” and this is not inconsistent with the policy of the new PNM regime. There is evidence of that in some of the state agencies of Trinidad and Tobago. I say that only as an aside to make the point that I have been a victim of this attitude of the new PNM administration. Not only I have been a victim of that there are other people who worked with me at TTT, who have become victims of the same attitude.

Mr. Grenfell Kisooson, the man who turned around TTT, brought it from the red to the black and who has a tremendous track record at TTT, has been sidelined for a man who was responsible for throwing down the financial records of NBS Radio 610. Why? Because he belongs to the party in power. How can there be justice in

that situation? And how can we sit on this side of the Parliament, representing people in Trinidad and Tobago, and accept that attitude? It shows quite clearly that this Government does not know what it is about.

If the Government talks about caring for the people of Trinidad and Tobago, we expect it to care for every citizen in the country. When the Government continues to say, as the Prime Minister said a while ago, that the mission of the Government is to ensure that every citizen has a dignified life in this country—I am putting it in my own words—I wonder if the Prime Minister and Member for San Fernando East means that this is something new of governments in Trinidad and Tobago; that what is happening here is that we are creating something for the people. I think that should be the mission of the Government. Invariably, political patronage is so great in a society like ours, that if one does not support the party in power, “crapaud smoke your pipe.”

I continue from this “Diary of a Criminal Act”.

“March 08, 1994—Martin Joseph...”

and this is a name which is coming up regularly in this discussion because Martin Joseph, according to this—and Members of the Government will know—is a high ranking member of the People’s National Movement. I am not saying that he should not be positioned to enter into discussions like this, but he was seconded from the NIB, I understand, to the Ministry of Trade where he is a functionary and that is why he is involved in the talks.

3.20 p.m.

When these things become so blatant, we begin to question whether people have faith and would accept the decisions of a person who represents, on the lower level, the political party that is in government. How can it be? It cannot be that people who are affected, who are losing their jobs would want to believe that there is any real substance in what Martin Joseph is saying to them in his discussions with the PSA:

“March 08 1994—Martin Joseph informs PSA of proposals for technical benefits for IDC and TDA workers—PSA continues its objection to formation of TIDCO and dispensing with present staff of IDC and TDA.

March 14 and 15 1994—Chairmen of IDC and TDA boards send written proposals to PSA re terminal benefits, demanding responses by March 16—PSA responds with counter-proposals.

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March 28 1994—Negotiations begin—CPO brought into Transition Team—Team agrees with PSA that negotiations will be concluded before any letters of termination are issued—Joseph indicates he is not authorized to discuss some of PSA’s demands including for loss of career payments and leave calculations using salaries inclusive of increments from 1987—Joseph arranges meeting with Draper on these issues.

March 29—Trade Minister Valley goes to IDC for first time and tells workers they are going home in two days...”

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: No discussions you know—straight.

Mr. G. Hanoomansingh: We remember that, Madam Speaker—

“...after PSA denounces this, he withdraws his threat.”

Madam Speaker, I do not think I want to continue reading from this “Diary of a Criminal Act”, because it hurts my heart. When people in this country have been given a responsibility to govern, they must govern with fair play and justice. This does not mean that I have disrespect for the hon. Prime Minister and Member for San Fernando East. I recall as a journalist covering the Tobago House of Assembly’s election in Tobago many years ago, I had attended a PNM meeting.

On my return to the Crown Reef Hotel where I was staying I said to someone—and it reached the ears of the Prime Minister, who was then Minister of Information, I think that if there was anyone in the PNM to encourage or influence me to join the party based on what I had heard on its platform, it would have been Patrick Manning.

That was implied because I had developed a kind of attitude to listen to the views of people and respect them for their views. What happened eventually was that the downfall came when I saw other things happening. I could not relate the views being expressed to the actions of the Member, and this is where I lost some respect. I have respect for him as a human being but when the policies pursued by him as political head of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago adversely affect the people of this country, I have absolutely no respect for those policies.

The report that I referred to earlier on by the Foreign Investment Advisory Service, was about research on the same TIDCO project. In one aspect of its reporting, after looking very extensively at the whole situation, it also mentioned the fact that:

“The proposed merger caused quite a bit of confusion in the country.”

The Member for Oropouche was making reference, when the hon. Member for Diego Mart Central was making his presentation, to the fact that he did not remember the marches around the Red House and other places in the country, when people feel that they were being displaced and treated unfairly. Confusion in the country.

“The declared aim of TIDCO is that it will being its life as a promoter and facilitator rather than a regulatory institution. It is not yet clear, however, how this goal is to be achieved. There continues to be the intention of giving the new TIDCO organization the regulatory task of appraising projects to identify whether they should benefit from incentives. There has been little discussion in the formation of TIDCO as to how this appraisal process could be simplified, or of whether there should be a movement away from approval-based toward performance-based incentives.

It is not clear how TIDCO would attract sufficient and capable personnel.”

Earlier on we talked about what the situation is: skilled people who had been trained, people who have had the benefit of training at taxpayers expense are on the sidelines. They have been given incentive packages, but what must they do now? They would probably have to get involved in some kind of business unrelated to what they are accustomed. It is quite clear, according to the document, that these people will not necessarily be given preference in the new organization over other people who are applying for the jobs.

That is why I have to come back to the point: it is my feeling that all this is a subtle attempt at political witch-hunting. When the applications come in, those in authority would be in a position to carefully scrutinize to see who belongs to the team and who does not, regardless of meritocracy, the fact that these people are skilled and have the wherewithal to perform the functions to make Trinidad and Tobago, according to the TIDCO proposal, “competitive on the international market.”

Indeed, the Minister should say quite clearly how this process of recruitment will take place. The Minister should give assurances to this Parliament that nothing of the sort that I have spoken of will take place.

When we really examine, inwardly, what happens when a Government has to face the polls—and of course it is coming in a short time from now—when people do not get jobs, they become dissatisfied and then they have all kinds of things to say about the party they supported and the Government from which it came.

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I got the feeling when the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central was making his presentation saying that we have to move on in the modern world, he was admitting that the policies of the Government over the last 30 years had failed. But he must come to this Parliament and state quite categorically that, yes, we accept the fact that those policies have not worked and we are now trying to do something to change the image. If that happens, then certainly we would accept that.

This report is very interesting indeed, because when we look at the different disciplines of industrial development, tourism development and export development, even though under the scheme of promotions they will require different expertise and specialized skills—we cannot see how people in this super-ministerial body, this supernumerary organization that will be called TIDCO would be in a position to do tourism development as effectively as they would be able to do industrial development or export development.

As the Minister indicated, there are different synergies, and obviously the dissimilarities will require different expertise. He also said that TIDCO will be a highly skilled organization. In other words, he was saying that it would attract highly skilled people at a particular salary range. Incentives would have to be very high.

I do not see how under this organization productivity is going to come, because if cost is a factor for the dismantling of the three organizations, then I cannot see how that is going to be an argument for the Government. My understanding is that the IDC, EDC and the TDA in 1994 budget got less money than is proposed for the TDA in 1995, so where are we saving money with the dismantling of those three agencies.

The report says that:

“International experience seems to suggest that there are fewer synergies than expected associated with the marketing efforts of tourism, investment and exports. It is true that all three marketing efforts are in the business of marketing the country, but they each involve highly specialized marketing activities. They are marketing very different elements of the country. The marketing strategies that are used are different. Investment and export marketing both involved significant personal selling, but the target markets rarely overlap. A programme that markets a country as a tourism location has very different objectives and clients from one that markets the country for investment.”

And that is quite obvious.

That is why we have to continue to ask the question about the recruitment procedures that will take place from these people who are to form the new TIDCO and who have to bring about the desired results: achieve objectives and fulfill the goals of TIDCO as seen through the eyes of the Government.

An example is given of Ireland when it first wanted to promote the image of the country to North Americans and a predominantly rural country with picturesque vacation spots. Sun, sandy beaches, and leisure are fine for attracting tourists, but are not the ingredients of a programme of attracting investment, as will be required for industrial development in Trinidad and Tobago.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. G. Hanoomansingh: Madam Speaker, I am very grateful for the kindness of Members of this honourable House.

When we listened to the Minister talk about who will have responsibility for what, and the fact that there was this need to co-ordinate the programmes and the policies of TIDCO as it is going to be the single superstructure; and as was indicated earlier on, about the possibility of confusion, one has to ask the question: which organization should really be responsible for administering the approvals of the incentives? It really is going to take quite a lot for us to be convinced that what the Government is attempting would not create confusion, would not be an exercise in futility, would not really be an exercise that would send the hard-earned dollars of the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago down the drains of this country.

In one of the recommendations of this report it is stated that:

“TIDCO is set to begin its life with an unnecessarily cloudy sense of mission. The original intention was to have TIDCO undertake most of the current activities of the IDC, EDC, TTFZ and TDA. As suggested earlier, the fit among these entities is not obvious. There are very few countries in the world that have attempted to combine the activities of all these organizations into one organization.”

Perhaps Trinidad and Tobago would be setting the stage for something like that if it does succeed.

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It brings me back to the point where I was talking about the expertise of the people in the dismantled agencies. Let us take the EDC as an example. The EDC has had a very short life, but it has done quite a lot considering its budgetary constraints. The work that the Export Development Corporation has been able to do is phenomenal, considering its constraints, because the EDC has been organizing all kinds of promotions for our non-traditional exporters.

When we look at what has taken place with what is considered to be, by the experts, a very accurate and informative database in terms of information, we obviously must ask ourselves: What is going to happen to that database in the transfer that will take place in TIDCO? When that happens and we go back on the terms and conditions of employment, whether some of those people will find jobs in TIDCO, then we will realize that we have been wasting much time, energy and money.

International consultants have come to Trinidad and Tobago from the Commonwealth and from the European Commission and they have praised, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the work achieved by the EDC and its small staff over the short life it has enjoyed. We look at what the EDC has been doing in terms of promoting expositions in Trinidad and Tobago: tremendous job with a lot of constraints, a lot of bureaucracy. And now, what has happened it is not more. How can we really accept that kind of development and say very seriously that we are on the road to developing a nation of which we can be proud? How can we accept the fact that we are putting people against the odds in the society? It would appear that not much thought was put into the whole creation of this merger.

You see, when the Government invited FIAS to come to Trinidad and Tobago, one would have thought that the report would be one that gives credence to the idea of the establishment of TIDCO, but here it is the report rightly points out that:

“Merging the TDA into TIDCO further clouds the mission of investment promotion of the new agency. The TDA appears to still be in the process of identifying the role that it should play in the promotion of tourism.”

This is only about the TDA. This report has been very critical for the simple fact that it has been realized that many facets, many aspects for what the Government is attempting are missing; the questions are there, but the answers are not. If we have to take this report as being factual, then we must go along with this and ask the Government to rethink its position, and to rethink it very concisely and precisely, because it is going to affect people one way or another.

We know of the situation in this country where there are people who do not have food on the table. We have a situation in this country where the pre-colonial days are revisiting us. There are families who cannot provide for their infant children, and when we consider that, the possibility of utilizing millions of dollars to create an organization that is not likely to work effectively—we have not seen the scenario for that; (i) we have not been given the evidence; (ii) we have not seen all that the Government has in terms of transparency—we must raise the point that it has to be done.

I feel that we have given, in our perspective, a situation based on facts that the Government must take cognizance of and must behave in a responsible manner to ensure that all the doubts that we have raised on this side in this matter are cleared, not only for our benefit and the benefit of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, but also for the population at large. What we want to find out from the Government is that there will be no element of corruption in any of this—absolutely none. If jobs are being created “for the boys” then that is an element of corruption, because the Government is going against its word; and if it does so, then it is not speaking the truth to the population of Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you very much.

3.40 p.m.

The Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, before I get into the meat of the matter, there were a few issues raised by the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre that I must comment on.

We are here today to debate the Bill to repeal the Industrial Corporation Act, the Export Development Corporation Act, the Tourism Development Authority Act, and to make provision for the transfer of assets, liabilities and functions of the corporations established by these Acts to the Tourism and Industrial Development Company. Explanatory Note, to the Bill gives a clear indication of what we are about in this House today. Unfortunately, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, in typical fashion, assailed us with personal anecdotes and references to conversations. On previous occasions the Member referred to alleged conversations with persons who are now deceased and, as you know, Madam Speaker, dead men tell no tales.

It is really a matter of regret that the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, as a new Member to this House, rather than focusing on the issues that are relevant to the

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debate in this Parliament, whenever he gets up to speak continually refers to alleged victimization and harassment. The Member has not dealt with any of the issues in the Bill. He has taken this entire debate along a track of alleged nepotism, witch-hunting and victimization. He has not dealt with the Bill at all. Repetition for the sake of effect is not always effective. It is not necessary for the Member to come into this House and on every single Bill talk about alleged victimization in state enterprises.

There are always two sides to a story, and the Members on this side have been very restrained and have been very careful not to give the other side of the story with regard to the allegations made by the Member. I would caution the Member for Point-a-Pierre not to sink the debate down to that level. It is very easy to make allegations, and we on this side can counter with our own knowledge of the facts, some of which have already been published in the press by former employers of the Member.

Madam Speaker, let me deal with the matter at hand now. *[Interruption]* You did not understand the last part? What we are about today is to request this House to approve the collapse of the various agencies that were previously involved in tourism promotion, industrial development and export development into a single agency which will be streamlined for greater efficiency. I do not think any of the hon. Members on the other side could argue with restructuring state enterprises for operational efficiency. As a matter of fact, one of the few things that the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre said, is that he is in general agreement with that from a conceptual perspective. But, of course, he went off into other areas. Let me just give some idea of what TIDCO is intended to do.

The mission of TIDCO is to provide rationalized and focused national economic development activities within our macro-economic framework. These include tourism and industrial development promotion, including marketing and image building; investment facilitation, finance administration and legal advice; industrial estate and free zone management. That was the original intention of TIDCO when it was first developed way back in 1992/1993.

Since then, certain modifications have been made, policies have evolved over the last year or so and we have had some minor changes to these major objectives I have just outlined: tourism and investment promotion and policy formulation.

What was discovered was that there were a number of agencies—the Industrial Development Corporation, the Tourism Development Authority, in particular—which had a number of overlapping activities. That is really the crux

of the matter. Each of them had advertising and promotional departments, they had financial departments, legal departments personnel departments.

What one found was that a great proportion of the expenditure in these agencies was on personal emoluments. So that, like many of the ministries of government, their expenditure on wages and salaries was skewed. *[Interruption]* Yes, I will accept that. There are several ministries, such as the Ministry of Works and Transport, where the expenditure on wages and salaries is heavily weighted compared to the expenditure on goods and services. And we are dealing with that. But let me go back to TIDCO.

It was found that in all of these agencies, when one looked at them, most of the expenditure was on wages and salaries, rather than marketing promotion and investment facilitation, which is the primary mission of these agencies. So that one found over the years that they had gone a bit off course and they were not delivering the services that they were intended to deliver. That is one of the problems with bureaucracy.

One of the problems we have in Trinidad and Tobago is that many of our ministries and many of our agencies over the years have strayed away from their original missions—their original primary objectives—into other areas, and again one found that the focus was on input rather than output. The focus was on what was provided to these agencies—that is within the agencies—rather than what the agencies were providing to the public or the Government at large. There are many parallels I can draw with other agencies in the Government.

But when one looks at what those agencies were actually delivering, in terms of promoting Trinidad and Tobago, advertising tourism opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago and in facilitating investment, one must conclude that the output of the agencies was not satisfactory. So a comprehensive review was done of all the agencies. We broke down all the agencies into their various departments and a critical examination which was done by the former Minister, has been modified in some minor way by the present Minister.

3.50 p.m.

A critical examination was done of all the overlapping functions and departments of all these agencies and it was decided that it would be far more efficient to set up a single agency with the various units—personnel, financial, legal, promotional, investment facilitation and property management. It was decided that it would be far more efficient to set up a single agency with single

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departments than a number of agencies with overlapping departments. This is the rationale for the creation of TIDCO.

It was also felt that if this country were to compete with other countries in the Caribbean—the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre has made the point about Jamaica—if one has had the opportunity to look at some of the cable television stations, one would see—and I have seen it myself—that Jamaica is advertised on international television on the various channels outside there—CNN, Cinemax, Showtime and the Adventure Channel. I find the quality of the advertisement to be very high. If Trinidad and Tobago is to be taken in that direction, there needs to be a streamlined and rationalized mission-driven organization such as TIDCO, which will place emphasis where it is required.

The intention was that there would be a shift in expenditure within these organizations towards promotional activities. If, in fact, TIDCO has a complement of 85 persons, then its personnel expenditure requirements would be far less than the amalgam of all these agencies. Therefore, if one looks at what is left in the budget of TIDCO, one would see that there is a significantly increased allocation for destination promotion and investment facilitation. This has always been the intention of TIDCO: that a large percentage of its expenditure—more than 50 per cent—would be on destination promotion, investment facilitation, advertising and these types of activities. I think the Member should do a more thorough analysis of expenditure and allocation patterns and, perhaps, he would draw a different conclusion.

There is a draft Tourism Plan which the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism is working on, and TIDCO dovetails into this plan. The whole focus on tourism with the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism is to give that area of activity greater emphasis.

I was in conversation yesterday with the hon. Member for St. Ann's East, the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism, and he pointed out to me that on a recent visit to Antigua he was struck by the number of aircraft arriving and landing there—the amount of air transportation taking place. All goes back to tourism traffic.

There is no doubt that tourism is one of the key areas that must be focused on if additional sectors for employment in this country are to be generated. The hon. Prime Minister in his statement today pointed out that the two key areas the Government is looking at, in addition to several other areas for employment generation in the short to medium term, are construction and tourism. There are

many countries in the Caribbean which generate substantial revenues from tourism—Barbados for example. It is my understanding that more than 30 per cent of the GDP in Barbados if one works it backwards—is derived from tourism.

Mr. Valley: Sixty-five per cent in Antigua.

Hon. C. Imbert: The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance, the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central, has made the point that if one looks at the GDP of Antigua one would see that over 60 per cent of it is generated from tourism. It is a significant potential growth area and a major growth area which this Government has targeted for employment generation. As Member for Diego Martin East, I congratulate the Government on focusing its efforts on building tourism in this country in the right direction.

Mr. Sudama: Does the Member belong to the Government? He is congratulating himself.

Hon. C. Imbert: I am proud to be a Member of this Government that can recognize that tourism is a major growth area and that in order to participate in that growth area, we must get on the train now—if you would permit me to use mixed metaphors—otherwise we would miss the boat. There is no doubt about it!

Mr. Sudama: Which boat?

Hon. C. Imbert: The tourism boat.

Mr. Sudama: That was missed already!

Hon. C. Imbert: The Member for Pointe-a-Pierre raised some questions about the merging of industrial facilitation, industrial investment, tourism promotion and so forth and felt that they were not compatible. What is the major focus of the Government at this time? Investment facilitation, a core element of which is foreign investment. If one looks very carefully at what is required to attract foreign investment to this country, one would find that it is promotional and marketing activities. These activities are necessary to build tourism in this country and are extremely compatible with those which are required to facilitate and encourage foreign investment.

When one looks at the tourism matrix one is not only looking at the arrival of tourists in Trinidad and Tobago, but also at the major investment by foreign and local investors in tourism plant. The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism has made a number of statements about the expected major investments in tourism plant as a result of the initiatives of this Government.

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These major hotel chains and investors do not come to Trinidad and Tobago because, as the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre said, there is a brochure outside there which lists the office of the Tourist Board as 56 Frederick Street. They come here because over the last few years there has been a sustained effort by this Government to lay the facilitating and enabling environment for investment in the country and to reduce the bureaucracy with regard to approvals.

The Member for St. Ann's East had to point out to the Opposition on a previous occasion that much of the delay and bureaucracy which used to take place with applications for investments and approvals to invest in this country no longer exist. As a matter of fact, the Member for Couva North, quite erroneously, in his reply to the budget speech in this honourable House, recently painted a picture of tremendous delays for investors who wish to weave their way through the bureaucracy in order to get the necessary approvals, and the Member for St. Ann's East had to point out that such delay is over that applications are now processed in a very short time.

This Government is also surprising many foreign investors in terms of the speed with which it takes decisions. There are not many countries in the world where an investor can go and make a proposal and the Government can assess it, thoroughly examine it, look at the benefits and costs and make a decision to grant the necessary approvals in a very short time. In Trinidad and Tobago foreign investors can now come with major projects, major initiatives for huge projects costing hundreds of millions of dollars and, within months, this Government is capable of taking correct and appropriate investment decisions and clearing the way for facilitation of investment—the new ammonia project is a case in point.

4.00 p.m.

So that this is the focus that TIDCO will have. It will very heavily promote this country, and tourism in this country, and also promote the other aspects of the country—our highly developed infrastructure, financial system, very skilled workforce other assets such as easy access to energy, and other areas that investors look at when they are making an investment decision in any part of the world. This is one of the missions of the Tourism and Industrial Development Company on the industrial investment side, and one can see that it fits very well with tourism destination promotion.

It was also intended that at some point in the future when the company has developed itself, it would get involved with the private sector to launch joint missions overseas to attract tourism investment and industrial development. I do

believe that it is correct to create one single, streamlined organization. I have here with me one of the earlier organizational charts when the matter was being fleshed out in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, at the time; and one sees clearly what the intention was. There would be directors in charge of tourism policy, development marketing and promotion; industrial policy incentives; investment promotion; investment facilitation, and administrative services.

So there are clearly defined roles and functions for key personnel in the new TIDCO. Let us forget administrative services for the time being. There are four separate and distinct activities, or three, if you merge investment promotion and investment facilitation. These are industrial policy incentives, tourism policy and marketing, and investment promotion and facilitation—the three-pronged nature of the Tourism and Industrial Development Company.

I have here some of the other services that the other companies were providing. When one looks at the IDE, the EDC and the TDA one sees that each of these companies was carrying out many of these functions. Look at the IDC. The IDC was involved in the formulation of policy. It was, therefore, involved in the formulation of proposal incentives and the facilitation of investment. When one looks at the TDA, again, the formulation of policy in marketing and promotion.

The EDC had dual functions—promotion and facilitation of exports—and as a result, these functions have been split between TIDCO and a new company, an export trading company. So that the promotional activities will go where they rightly belong, into TIDCO, which as I said, is essentially involved with promotion and facilitation; and the other activities, the actual operational function of facilitating exports from manufacturers, will go into a separate trading company.

They separated it took the duplicated overlapping functions in EDC and put them into TIDCO, so all of the promotional functions of these agencies have now been merged into one promotion department in TIDCO.

In addition, Madam Speaker, there are several other reasons for the creation of TIDCO, and I should like to go through some of them for you. This Government has taken a very close look at all the bits of legislation: the mechanisms that are in place which impact upon investment facilitation. There is the Foreign Investment Act, the Exchange Control Act—well, exchange control has now been removed; the IDC Act, the Central Bank Act, the Companies Act, etc. We have approached this matter in a holistic manner. We have liberalized the exchange rate regime to allow free flow of currency and free flow of investment; and I can tell you that that single act to liberalize the foreign exchange regime has enhanced Trinidad and Tobago's image considerably in terms of foreign investment.

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One of the concerns in the past was the free flow of currency. Investors were always very wary of getting involved, on a permanent basis, in countries that had very rigid exchange control regulations. We are also taking another look at the Foreign Investments Act, as has been stated by the Minister of Industry and Trade on several occasions.

The whole point is that what we are trying to do is cut down the red tape, trim the unnecessary and duplicative functions, and create agencies and mechanisms within the Government that will facilitate and streamline investment and tourism.

If one looks at the Bill, what is it really doing? According to the Explanatory Note, clause 3 “would vest the assets and liabilities of the subject corporations in TIDCO.” Clause 5 would enable the president to transfer to TIDCO any other property of the state.

There are other very important clauses which impinge on some of the issues that the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre raised. For example, persons who, because no pension plan was established by the various authorities—IDC, TDA and so forth—were put at a disadvantage, will now suffer no disadvantage. We are proposing legislation to ensure that persons get the kind of benefits to which they are entitled. Any time we bring a Bill to this House that deals with restructuring of our state enterprise sector, a feature of that Bill—I saw it in the T&TEC Bill—would be to provide for the employees of those companies.

This is all part of demonstrating that this is, in fact, a caring Government. Another clause provides for the transfer of certain employees to the public service, with the approval of the Public Service Commission, and would deem their service with that authority and with the public service to be continuous and unbroken for pensionable purposes.

Clause 12 empowers the Comptroller of Accounts to make payments to persons who retired from the various corporations when these payments become due. Clause 14 amends the Corporation Tax Act to enable the Small Business Development Company to approve certain companies as small business companies for the purpose of that Act, because it was felt that one had to separate activities relating to small and medium sized businesses from the kind of industrial and promotional activities in which TIDCO was going to get involved.

It was felt that that company was better equipped to deal with all matters relating to small businesses and that this Tourism and Industrial Development Company would serve better if it were to focus on more substantial matters—and I am not talking here about the worth of the activity or the value of it, but in terms

of the six and the throughput. It was felt that TIDCO should focus on larger businesses and the Small Business Company focus on small businesses. So that SBDC, through this Bill, will have the authority to approve companies as small business companies for the purpose of the Corporation Tax Act and, therefore, benefit from the various fiscal incentives that are contained in that Act for small businesses.

4.10 p.m.

What this Bill seeks to do is to legislate all the necessary matters to allow TIDCO to function effectively. It provides for the former employees and the present employees; it provides for the property that belonged to the various authorities; and it cleans up a number of loose ends, as it were, that arose when the various authorities collapsed.

If this country is to be successful, we must have a vigorous programme of legal and regulatory reform. We must look at all sections of our legislation that affect the activities of investors. We must look at overlapping functions within the Government to determine how they impact—one would assume how they impact negatively—on foreign investment. We must look at things, even as simple as application forms. It may sound trivial, but if one can reduce the number of forms and documents that applicants for concessions have to fill in, that in itself is a major achievement.

In the past, potential investors had to fill in dozens of forms if they wished to get certain concessions from the various agencies of government: if they wished to get certain approvals. One of the things this Government expects TIDCO to get involved in is the reduction of the amount of simple paperwork that is involved in investment facilitation. I know that the Minister of Tourism is very concerned about that aspect of investment facilitation.

Let me look again at exactly what TIDCO is supposed to do. TIDCO, together with our missions abroad, is supposed to co-ordinate the promotion of Trinidad and Tobago as a tourism destination through the establishment, as appropriate, of various offices in foreign countries to link up with our various missions and to carry—as the Prime Minister pointed out today—our foreign affairs matters to another stage, where trade and investment become a major component of the activities of our foreign missions. I do not want to talk about that too much because that is not my main area.

TIDCO is also to co-ordinate the promotion of Trinidad and Tobago as an investment location. So that it co-ordinates our country as a tourism location

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through our foreign missions, and through advertisements in the international telecommunications media, and it also seeks to co-ordinate promotion of Trinidad and Tobago as an investment location.

Again, one would expect, as the companies fully develop, that we may have offices, as does Jamaica. Jamaica has offices in several foreign countries and these offices are devoted solely to promoting Jamaica as a premier destination in the world for tourism, in particular. As TIDCO develops, one would expect that eventually we may have offices in various parts of the world as considered appropriate, which would have as their core function the promotion of Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with our foreign missions.

When I look at what else was raised by the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre—he spent an awfully long time complaining about witch-hunting and who belongs to the team and so on, but I am not sure that I can really pull out anything else from what he said. I took several pages of notes but when I looked at them just now, I saw the word “witch-hunting” repeated on every page, “nepotism” and “victimization” on every other page. I was just looking through to see whether there was anything of import, but I am afraid that I have not seen any of that.

I may say that as the Minister with responsibility for ports, airports and air transportation—civil aviation and so forth—I have found with the coming into being of the Tourism and Industrial Development Company, that there is a greater nexus between my ministry and the activities of that corporation.

I have already had several meetings with officials from TIDCO and the issues that we have discussed to determine joint solutions are air transportation between Trinidad and Tobago; the whole question, for example, of the international reservations system and air transportation for tourists coming into Tobago in particular. This has been a joint effort between TIDCO and my ministry. I must say it has worked very well as far as I am concerned on many other issues, for example, one as simple as sign posting.

One of the problems in Trinidad and Tobago at present, from a tourism perspective, is the lack of proper sign posting throughout the country. A month or so ago I was visited by an official who is associated with TIDCO and he raised the issue with me, and I immediately saw the logic in rationalizing and improving a system of sign posting in Trinidad and Tobago. So that I have seen a greater nexus between my ministry and the tourism functions of another ministry arising from the formation of TIDCO, because TIDCO is now focused in the right direction—destination promotion and creating an environment that would

facilitate an increase in visitor arrivals and an increase in investment in this country.

I shall give another very simple example. One of the matters raised with me—and I must say this has not been all out at any level at all and certainly it would need the approval of Cabinet, but I simply mention it to indicate the kinds of issues that are now arising—is the whole question of license plates.

In many countries, the licence plates of rented cars are not significantly different from the licence plates for ordinary vehicles. The use of the letter ‘R’ in Trinidad and Tobago to denote a rented vehicle is peculiar to this country. In North America, rented cars have the same type of registration letters and numbers as other cars. While the Members of the other side may scoff at these issues, it was pointed out to the officers in my ministry that one should not seek to identify a person driving a rented car as being a tourist.

The mere fact that the registration plate of the vehicle starts with an ‘R’ immediately excites someone who may wish to get involved in some illegal activity to rob the tourist or something like that. In North America, they have recognized this and they no longer have different licence plates for rented cars. They bear the same numbers and letters as other cars; therefore the opportunity for persons who wish to get involved in illegal activities is reduced. Very simple. Someone may say “trivial matter”, but it has all come out of the new thinking of the Tourism and Industrial Development Company.

Let me now move to weightier matters. The Tourism and Industrial Development Company has been holding discussions with my ministry on sea transportation between Trinidad and Tobago, for example, because it is seen as an area of activity that impacts significantly on tourists and visitors to this country, and we have been looking at ways and means of improving sea transportation between the two islands.

4.20 p.m.

I mentioned these issues just to illustrate that I have seen a different focus and, what I consider to be, a considerable improvement in the direction that the tourism efforts of this country are taking. There are now several discussions, for example, between TIDCO and the Civil Aviation Division of my ministry in terms of the negotiation of bilateral agreements for commercial airline flights.

In the past there was not the kind of co-ordination one wanted. Therefore, when we sought to negotiate bilateral agreements with other countries in terms of

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air transportation, it was not in sync with our tourism priorities. One would expect from now that as TIDCO develops the markets that it expects to tap in terms of attracting tourists to the country, it may decide that it is appropriate for us to focus on a certain part of Europe, for example, there would be contact with the Ministry of Works and Transport and we may seek to look at improving air links to that country.

A typical example of that is the recently negotiated agreement on air services between this country and the Federal Republic of Germany, because it was recognized that a large proportion of recent tourist arrivals to this country came from air services agreement with that country. We are operating on an ad hoc basis and it was thought necessary that since we may be seeking to attract more visitors from that part of the world, we should get into a formal air services arrangement with the Federal Republic of Germany. So this is just a more weighty example of the kind of links that are now being established between the tourism arm of the Government and its air transportation policy-making arm. And these are not matters to scoff at.

When one looks at other countries in the Caribbean, one has to try to understand why these countries are successful in attracting tourists and why Trinidad and Tobago is not as successful. Another area that my ministry is looking at, together with TIDCO, is the development of cruise shipping in Trinidad and Tobago. For many years Trinidad and Tobago has been unable to attract the level of cruise-shipping activity that other countries in the Caribbean enjoy. There are countries in the Caribbean that have 100 times as many cruise ship arrivals as Trinidad and Tobago has annually.

I have had discussions with the Minister of Tourism on this, and what we have determined is that one of the problems with Trinidad and Tobago in terms of cruise ship arrivals is its distance from the starting point of major cruise visits. Most of the cruise ships operate out of Miami. That is their base. And one would see that Trinidad and Tobago being the southern-most islands in the Caribbean archipelago, the distance is the furthest, and therefore it is more expensive from both the perspective of the cruise ship operators and the tourists to travel to our country on a cruise ship.

So one of the things we are looking at is the facilitation of major investment in Trinidad and Tobago for a home port. What we are trying to do is to attract cruise ship operators to use Trinidad and Tobago as their base to serve the Southern Caribbean, Venezuela, Margarita, Curacao, Aruba, and the Southern Netherlands

Antilles territories. We have already had some success in this. There is one cruise ship operator—

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, as I was saying before I had to take my seat—and I thank hon. Members for graciously allowing me an extension of time—already one cruise ship operator, Windjammer Cruises, has entered into an agreement with the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago to establish a home port in Port of Spain for cruise shipping. It is a relatively small operation. They operate these tall ships that are made up to resemble ships from another era.

The fact of the matter is that it is a good start. Just this week officials of my ministry met with the cruise ship operator and he has advised us that if all goes according to plan, he has already sent out a brochure on the international market advertising Trinidad and Tobago as a cruise ship home port. That is what they informed us, and if all goes according to plan, at some point, in April or May, we would have the first—there was some activity in the past—permanently established cruise ship home port in Trinidad and Tobago, all out of the new focus of this Government.

We are seeking out other cruise ship operators. The Royal Caribbean Line, for example, with one of the largest cruise ships in the world, just visited Trinidad with over 2,000 passengers who came into Port of Spain. This has been identified by local investors as a potential candidate for also establishing a home port in Trinidad and Tobago. One can imagine the benefits to this country if we were to attract that kind of investment in terms of tourism generation.

If we were to attract a large major cruise shipping line to use Trinidad and Tobago as the home port, we could imagine the benefits. Not only would there be direct benefits in terms of the income that would be derived by the Port Authority from the shipping activities, but there will also be a number of spin-off activities, indirect inputs, such as provision of victualling of ships and other consumables that the ships require. One would see that the mushrooming of a ship repair industry has already started to take place in this country.

For example, if one were to go down to Chaguaramas, one would see that there are a number of foreign yachts which are moored in the Chaguaramas area. I

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have some knowledge of that area and I can say, categorically, that five or ten years ago the number of yacht owners that chose to come to Trinidad and Tobago to overhaul and to secure their craft in the winter season, has increased, at least tenfold.

If one looks in the Chaguaramas area, one would see a mushrooming of industry to service these yachts. A number of small shipyards are springing up, all geared towards the provision of repair and overhaul services for foreign yachts. Trinidad and Tobago is now established on the map as the premier location in the entire Caribbean for overhaul and repair services for ocean-going foreign yachts. That is all out of the renewed focus; a clear vision of this Government. I can say that, in particular—

Mr. Sudama: What is the income derived from that?

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, the Member on the other side has asked what is the income that was derived. I can say that whereas there was minimal employment in that area of activity five years ago, hundreds of persons—and I am speaking from personal knowledge—are now employed in the Chaguaramas area in the repair, overhaul and outfitting of yachts.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.04 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, before the interval, I was making the point that a major industry has mushroomed in the Chaguaramas area, namely, the repair and overhaul industry for ocean-going yachts. *[Interruption]* Yes, where there was very little activity, there are now hundreds of persons employed, and the economic output is significant. The investment in repair yard plant by local companies, such as Peake and Power Boat, is tremendous.

Where before in the northwest Peninsula there may have been just one overhaul facility for ocean-going yachts five to 10 years ago, there are now at least four or five that I am aware of, catering for vessels of quite significant sizes. This is a growth area. There is an added advantage to that kind of activity and also the home porting for cruise ship vessels which I spoke about.

Among the indirect advantages of these types of activities is the encouragement of persons who come to Trinidad and Tobago, to make repeat visits. One of the less recognized benefits of the cruise ship industry is that many persons visit an island or country in the Caribbean aboard a cruise vessel and then return by air for an extended stay in a hotel—having sampled the country in a day

or so that these cruise ships stay in Trinidad and having had a chance to look at the country and experience the hospitality of the people. Quite often these tourists become repeat visitors to the country. This is another aspect of this kind of activity which is quite beneficial.

There may be a few more Members from the Opposition side, making contributions after me and I ask them to focus on the issues of this Bill and exactly what it is intended to do. This is just a simple request I am making. Quite often I find that debates in this House are sidetracked by Members of the Opposition into all sorts of areas which cause the debates not to be meaningful, and do not deal with the salient issues.

Madam Speaker: I am the one who would have to handle that. The Member should simply make his plea.

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, I was not talking from a position of irrelevance; nothing like that. I just find—I am saying this in all sincerity—that there are Members on the other side who have the capability to make very worthwhile and valuable contributions. I have noticed this.

The Member for Oropouche and several others have that capability, yet, to my dismay, they are sidetracked by petty and trivial issues and do not focus on the mean to the matter before this House. That is the point I was making. It has nothing to do with irrelevance in terms of the authority of the Chair. Nothing like that whatsoever.

Let me just briefly return to the Bill before I wind up. As I said, this Bill seeks to repeal the Industrial Development Corporation Act, the Trinidad and Tobago Export Development Corporation Act, the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Authority Act and to make provision for the transfer of assets, liabilities and functions to the new Tourism and Industrial Development Company Limited. It is a vesting Bill essentially. It makes provision for the employees so they will not be disadvantaged with respect to terms and conditions of employment.

I therefore commend this Bill to the House and ask Members to support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Krish Jurai (Nariva): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the Bill before us today to repeal the Industrial Development Corporation Act, Chap. 85:50, the Trinidad and Tobago Export Development Authority Act, Chap. 87:53 and to make provision for the transfer of assets, liabilities and functions of the

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corporations established by these Acts, to the Tourism and Industrial Development Company Limited.

What this Bill seeks to do is to create a new organization that will streamline the operations of the now defunct IDC, EDC and TDA. This would be a sort of one-stop-shop for investors combining all functions, assets and liabilities of these various organizations.

TIDCO was incorporated on December 23, 1993 and was given a very strong mandate. Firstly, to strengthen Trinidad and Tobago's economy through fostering creation of a strong and internationally competitive tourism sector. Secondly, to ensure a favourable and internationally competitive investment climate for industrial development and growth, plus significant increases in Trinidad and Tobago's export activity. Thirdly, it will significantly increase the contribution of tourism and industrial development to the country's economy.

If TIDCO was incorporated in December, 1993, to assume the functions of the IDC, the EDC and the TDA, the question I ask now is: Why did it take this Government so long to bring this piece of legislation before Parliament for ratification? This is significant, moreso when we consider that the Government had been boasting about economic turnaround and growth in 1994.

Earlier today the Prime Minister informed this nation that the country was on an economic growth path. He has been talking about all the good things that this PNM Government has been doing. When we look at the report of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, we see that the economy contracted by 2.1 per cent in the third quarter of 1994.

According to the *Republic Bank Economic Newsletter*, this contraction was the second consecutive decline and would mean that the Central Bank's fourth quarter growth rate would have to be very high if the overall rate for 1994 is to come close to the 4 per cent growth anticipated earlier, and which was discussed at length in the budget debate late last year.

On the retail side, the newsletter indicated that retail prices rose by 1.4 per cent in the third quarter to bring the annual inflation rate in September, 1994 to 4.5 per cent.

If the Government wanted economic growth and turnaround as it anticipated in 1994, it would have brought this piece of legislation to this House much earlier to give this organization some teeth to promote economic and industrial growth in Trinidad and Tobago. But what the Government did was to deliberately keep this

significant piece of legislation on the back burner so that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Trade and Industry could handle the trade negotiations themselves. This piece of legislation would have placed this authority in that bargaining position where it would have undertaken its work with such vigour and vitality that it would bring further industrialization to this country as well as promote tourism.

5.15 p.m.

What the Government did was to bypass the very organization that would have done the job. If it was given the power to do so. I am referring here to TIDCO. With the creation of TIDCO, we can see that the Government is not serious about giving it teeth. Once again, we see the Government is creating an institution which it has no intention of giving power to do the very things that it is supposed to do. If this trend continues TIDCO would therefore become another failure, as was the case with the IDC, then the TDA and the EDC.

Let me show how TIDCO would become a failure. One of the major factors concerning the EDC and the TDA in the past was lack of funding. The FIAS recognized this very early and in March 1994, it suggested that TIDCO should have a budget in the vicinity of \$100 million in order to effectively carry out its programme.

Let me quote what the Minister of Finance said on October 28, 1994, as reported in the *Newsday*.

“Multi-million dollar plan for TT tourism.

Government will next year spend close to \$40 million in promoting Trinidad and Tobago as a tourist destination.

It also plans to spend an additional \$12 million in immediate projects aimed at improving this country’s tourism thrust.

Tourism Minister, Wendell Mottley, said the money for both promotion and the short-term projects will be provided for in the 1995 budget.

The Finance Minister said the Tourism and Industrial Development Company (TIDCO) had requested \$40 million for destination promotion, but would not be given all the money because Government could not afford the entire \$40 million.”

As I said earlier, TIDCO is destined to become a failure because FIAS had recommended \$100 million to have the programmes of TIDCO effectively

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endorsed, and the Government is not even allocating the \$40 million that TIDCO asked for. The Government is creating an institution that would not have the finance to carry out the functions which it is supposed to carry out.

In order for TIDCO to boost tourism in Trinidad and Tobago we need to have a plan to prepare for tourism. The Government has stated that it has a master plan for tourism, but we are yet to see it. How can this plan be kept as a secret plan? This plan should have been presented to the Parliament and to the country so that the people would know what to expect of the Government, and would be able to plan a future course for tourism to become a success in Trinidad and Tobago. To date, the Government has kept this plan a secret.

I want to go on to quote the Minister of Finance as reported in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated Thursday, March 17, 1994.

“The Finance Minister told the businessmen gathered for the signing of an agreement between Government and VISA international that during the first half of 1993, there was an increase in the number of visitors to this country and to ensure the continuation of this trend, the Tourism Development Authority has employed consultants to formulate a Tourism Master Plan for this country.

‘In keeping with the Authority’s strategy, the plan has emphasized the development of appropriate facilities and services. In this respect, international investors have already begun to examine investment prospects in the tourism sector.’”

The Government has given foreign consultants the go-ahead for preparing this plan which is already effected somewhat, and yet we as parliamentarians do not know what is taking place.

The report continued:

“He said the major thrust of the tourism plan is to create jobs. ‘For this country to achieve sustained economic growth and increased employment, we need investment and business activity.’”

In this country, if the people who are to be involved in tourism do not know what the plan contains, how can they be involved in order to create employment and increased business activity?

“Mottley explained that the policies and plans for tourism will be consistent with those being evolved for the rest of the economy and efforts will also be made to promote linkages between the tourism industry and other sectors.”

Again, here the Government is planning tourism. It is talking about linkages between tourism and other sectors, and the people of this country do not know what it is all about.

He further went on to say:

“This will ensure that maximum benefits are accrued from tourism development.

‘As part of overall investment drive, the Tourism and Industrial Development Company (TIDCO), described as a super agency, will assume the functions of the existing investment promotion and industrial development agencies. Its mission is to promote the human and natural resources of Trinidad and Tobago abroad as well as within the country.’”

Again, I say that we need to look at this plan so that the people of this country would be fully cognizant of what is taking place, so that they can prepare themselves for the tourism thrust that the Government anticipates will be coming here very shortly.

The first thing I have to tell the Government is that the tourism plan should not and must not be a secret plan, because a plan by itself cannot work. I am repeating my call and asking the Government to lay this plan in this House, so that we can study it and inform the people of the country. If the Government does not want to do it—how they can prepare themselves to benefit from the tourism thrust that we expect?

As I said, the tourism plan must be designed and implemented in such a way that it would attract tourists to this country, and the people as a whole would benefit from it. The plan must be broad-based and open for all to see, so that they can prepare themselves to benefit from same.

The Government has been saying that it is building hotels mainly in Tobago. Today, we heard the Prime Minister speak about a hotel which will be erected at Chaguaramas. What we need is not only hotels, but also a general plan that would include all the persons involved in the tourism industry. The farmers must know what to expect, because when tourists come, they would look forward to consuming locally grown foodstuff. The farmers would have to prepare their land and buy tractors and machinery. All these things take time.

If the Government is building hotels and is not informing the public, how would the public know to cater for same in order to benefit from this tourism

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thrust? The fishermen, as well, would have to gear themselves. Perhaps they would have to purchase or build new boats and it would take quite some time before their plans come to fruition.

5.25 p.m.

The taxi drivers are deeply involved in the tourism trade. They would have to cater for new vehicles. This is a costly exercise and they would need time to plan.

The list goes on—the craftsmen, boatmen, and the people, as my friend the Member for Diego Martin East said, including those who direct the Windjammer cruises—all those things take time. Apparently, he already knows about the plan, because he is planning for the Windjammer cruises. If the Member alone knows, why can the whole country not know as well, so that we all can prepare and benefit from this massive tourism thrust that is expected?

We also need to have the roads of this country repaired. Tourists do not come only to the city, or go to Tobago. In recent times we have seen eco-tourists, particularly on the east coast of Trinidad, who come to see the wildlife, and there is need for proper roads to take them to these places. The people from Europe do not want to stay in hotels, they want to stay in the countryside to see the plants and shrubs and to meet the people. However, the condition of the roads, particularly in my constituency, is so bad that we cannot attract tourists. No one is willing to drive on those roads.

If we are talking about tourism development, we also have to look at the bed-and-breakfast sector because that too, when added together, can make up more than some hotel rooms. In the Manzanilla/Mayaro area, due to a lack of water and an intermittent electricity supply, people cannot develop small hotels of the bed-and-breakfast type so that they can benefit. Not only is this so in Manzanilla and Mayaro, but throughout Trinidad and Tobago, so we need to put more emphasis on the bed-and-breakfast type accommodation.

When the Prime Minister went to the Miami conference, I think he lost a golden opportunity to promote the industrialization of Trinidad and Tobago where so many business people were gathered. The Prime Minister could have exposed Trinidad and Tobago to further industrialization and tourism, but he made no major impact at that conference. As a matter of fact, I understand he slipped out, before the conference, concluded to sign an agreement somewhere, either in Chicago or Houston.

Mr. Valley: If the hon. Member would give way, I wonder whether he has ever heard the saying: “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” My Prime Minister went to sign an agreement rather than to look for one.

Mr. K. Jurai: He could have exposed the country to a wider sphere, and I am coming back to that.

When he went to Houston, he went to sign another contract for the hydrocarbon sector, and later I shall show what that means to this country.

The Prime Minister said earlier that he is going to appoint an ambassador plenipotentiary to deal with trade. This is nothing new. What the Prime Minister said today is a mere rehash. I recall very vividly, that about two years ago the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated in this House that he would establish a trade section in every Trinidad and Tobago mission in the World. Today, I am sure he cannot mention a single trade mission established in any foreign mission.

Mr. Maraj: I would like to let the hon. Member know that in every mission of Trinidad and Tobago abroad, part of its responsibility is to promote trade and encourage investment. That is part of the portfolio of every mission.

Mr. K. Jurai: That certainly does not answer the question. I would like to know what new trade markets we have sourced through those missions—very few, if any [*Interruption*] Then why not let the missions themselves control it? Why appoint a super—

Mr. Valley: Because it needs co-ordination.

Mr. K. Jurai: You have your Minister of Foreign Affairs here. Why not let him co-ordinate? It is like having a Commission of Police, a committee on crime and looking for an adviser on crime. Where will it end? We need to draw the line somewhere so that people would take their responsibility very seriously.

Let me come back to the point I made earlier when I said that the Prime Minister went to Houston to sign a contract with respect to the energy sector. I should like to quote here from the Clico Investment Bank Limited, “Prospective Investment Trends in Trinidad and Tobago at the Tail-end of the 20th Century”, which says:

“Trinidad and Tobago historically has ranked among the top 25 recipients of foreign investments in the ‘South’. On a per capita basis, our ability to attract foreign investment looms even larger.

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The reason for this historic trend is straightforward. It is the hydrocarbon sector—oil, and more recently natural gas—which has been the overwhelming magnetic attraction for pulling foreign investment. This point is illustrated in the following table in terms of data on foreign investment flows into Trinidad and Tobago.”

Let me quote for you some of the figures:

	1973	1976	1980	1984	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Total (US\$M)	85	432	137	113	20	33	63	149	110	144	171	373
%												
Petroleum	85	88	75	90	155	73	88	58	59	87	89	94

That is the point I was making to the Minister of Trade and Industry, in that if they had exposed Trinidad and Tobago, the bias would not have been in favour of the hydrocarbon sector. That is why I said the Prime Minister should have further exposed Trinidad and Tobago at the Miami conference.

Recently, there was another report in the *Express*. It is a long one, but I should like to be very short and say that there are passengers travelling to Trinidad, and tourists coming here. In many instances, passengers tourists lost their suitcases. This was reported in the *Express* dated January 3, 1995. Even the official working at the airport have admitted that severe losses are taking place.

Also, when we look at the crime statistics in Trinidad and Tobago, as reported in the *Sunday Punch* of January 15, 1995—[*Interruption*] Yes, there is a serious article written here by Anthony Alexis. [*Interruption*] This is a very serious article. It is well researched and well written and that is why I thought I would bring it to the attention of this House. [*Interruption*]

5.35 p.m.

I will pass it on to you! This article was researched by Anthony Alexis and it says:

“World Murder Rates Chart, per 100,000 population

England	1.2	Germany	4.5
Japan	1.4	USA	10
Canada	2.2	T&T	11.2”
France	4.4		

This, in itself, says much about Trinidad and Tobago. The reason I mentioned this, is that the Government is not taking steps to curb the crime rate in our country. When we look at the number of murders that took place in 1993, 1994 and now in 1995, we are seeing a similar trend.

I urge the Government to take steps, firstly, to present that secret document to which they referred as the tourism plan, and also to take steps to abolish crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you very much.

The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Hon. Jean Pierre, TC): Madam Speaker, this Bill to repeal the IDC, the EDC and the TDA Acts, and to transfer their functions to one company, meets with very favourable reception from the sporting fraternity, and that is my direction in this TIDCO debate. I wish, therefore, to lend my support to this Bill.

The three agencies being disbanded have in the past supported the sporting industry through their respective functions. There is tourism in sport, there is industry in sport and there is a need for information on sport markets abroad, so my ministry and the sporting fraternity have had to liaise with all three agencies previously.

In respect of industry, some of the sporting industries have had their genesis through the assistance of the IDC. It would be fine to see Trinidad and Tobago producing certain types of sporting equipment. Instead of importing cricket bats—and the time is right now; our young friend, our sporting hero Brian Lara is on the map throughout the world—we may be able to produce our own cricket balls, Brian Lara balls and so forth. *[Laughter]* Presently, the garment manufacturers produce many of the sports clothing and this could be further expended.

In respect of exports, businesses with sporting concerns have benefited from assistance in finding and entering markets abroad so sport has had a strong link with the EDC.

As regards tourism, my ministry has had collaborative efforts with the TDA in seeking to promote Trinidad and Tobago as a destination for sport lovers and enthusiasts. Given all these interactive exchanges among the sporting fraternity and agencies involved in tourism, industrial development and export promotion, it is in my ministry's interest that these agencies be merged, for as they come together they would be strengthened.

With the establishment of TIDCO, the development of all aspects of tourism will shift into a higher gear. We know that event-tourism will be brought into

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greater focus through this new company. Sport tourism is a concept that is being employed successfully in several countries to enhance and expand their tourism base. Barbados, Cuba and Hong Kong need to be mentioned in this regard. The execution of the functions of industrial development, export promotion and tourism under the umbrella of TIDCO, will greatly facilitate this process.

One of the aims of TIDCO is to develop all aspects of the tourism industry of Trinidad and Tobago and to promote its efficiency. Our country is endowed with a splendid physical environment which was taken into consideration in the design of our sport tourism package. The natural attributes of Tobago lend themselves to water-based sports. For example, we have game fishing, yachting, sailing, surfing. *[Interruption]* Well, we have golf too, and we can have a big marathon.

Trinidad and Tobago has a tradition of hosting a number of regional and international sporting events, thanks to the existing infrastructure. Some of these were the 1990 World Cup preliminary matches, the 1979 world championships, invitational and international golf tournaments, international dart championship, world boxing matches, the Central American track and field championships, international cycling and so forth. I might add here that we have had champions from these sporting activities.

Some of the new and planned additions to the inventory of sporting infrastructure, are going to be built in Point Fortin, Chaguanas—*[Interruption]* Diego Martin in the not too distant future—San Fernando, Tacarigua. They are all set. *[Interruption]* Oropouche to come. All this will facilitate the tourism drive.

The exposure that Trinidad and Tobago gets through the hosting of major sporting events, for example, the up-coming Women's Hockey World Cup preliminaries in 1996, can have extended benefits in return visits by sporting professionals and enthusiasts as holiday tourists for relaxation.

The multiple functions now resident in TIDCO lend themselves to enhancing opportunities such as these that help to keep our hotel rooms fully booked. After the last cricket tournament, instead of the team leaving on the appointed day they decided to holiday in Tobago. Not only would the players enjoy themselves in Tobago, but we hope they would also bring their families.

Let me name a few of our sporting administrators who have excelled in their field by attaining senior positions at international level: Chester Dalrymple, Jack Warner. They have helped to increase international focus on our country. The ripple effect of this is that sporting enthusiasts are interested in visiting our country for good sport and holiday relaxation.

5.45 p.m.

These possibilities are further extended by the role of our famous athletes as good ambassadors. Hasley Crawford and Brian Lara, to name a couple, through their world-record-breaking achievements have made Trinidad and Tobago far more visible in the sporting fraternity. These young men and women are able to put us on the world map and give us that kind of image that nationals from other countries are able to rally around them to the extent that they want to know what else is happening in Trinidad and Tobago, and they want to come here and spend some time.

I have shown how sport can benefit from TIDCO's mandate, which is to strengthen Trinidad and Tobago's economy through fostering the creation of a strong and international competitive tourism sector, ensuring a favourable and internationally competitive investment climate for industrial development and growth, an increase in export activity and significantly increasing the contribution of tourism and industrial development to the country's economy.

My ministry looks forward to working with TIDCO in developing sport as an industry, finding markets for export and the overall development of good tourism on the whole in Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*): Madam Speaker, I rise at 5.45 p.m. to indicate to this House, first of all, that I am still waiting for the Minister of Community Development and Women's Affairs to come and give an answer to a question here. It just shows you the contempt in which this House is held.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, when I got my file you would recall that I indicated to this House the questions which the Government could answer today and I asked for a deferral of the others.

Madam Speaker: Not those standing in the Minister's name.

Mr. Valley: Yes, Madam Speaker, but I said that the Government would answer questions Nos. 28 and 29 and I went on. Before I got my file I had asked for a deferral. When I got my file and I realized that those questions would not have been answered, I asked—and the House voted—for a deferral of all questions other than those that we could have answered.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, the voting of this House, as you know, is a formality. But what I am saying is, last week that question was deferred for one week—the same question to be answered by the Minister of Community

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Development. We come here this week and this offhand manner in which questions are just deferred at the whim and fancy of the Member for Diego Martin Central is something to which we really have to take objection. As I mentioned earlier, this is question 46 on the Order Paper to which the Member for Laventille East/Morvant gave a response—

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member was not present when that—

Mr. T. Sudama: —as a statement. The Member for St. Ann's East has a response to question No. 48. You see, the responses are there. I do not like the arbitrary manner in which the Member for Diego Martin Central deals with these questions.

Madam Speaker: I must admit that I myself did not realize it was Nos. 5 to 28. My error also. I thought that we were still waiting on the Minister, but that question was deferred until next week.

The Minister wishes to say something. Do you want to give way to the Minister?

Mr. Collis: Madam Speaker, may I indulge the House in this. Question No. 46 today would have been answered because the Member for Oropouche had the answer in his hand last week Friday when I laid the—

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, it was not an answer to a question. This is what I am arguing. Pay a little respect to this House “nuh”. When we ask questions we expect answers, whatever your answers are. Pay a little respect to this House!

Madam Speaker: All right, let us continue. We will deal with questions at question time. Next week we will pay a little attention to these matters. Proceed, please, with the debate.

Mr. T. Sudama: I just thought I would make that point, Madam Speaker, because we come here week after week, get deferrals and questions are not answered.

I listened to the Member for Port of Spain South and, of course, I listened to the Members for Diego Martin East and Diego Martin Central. All I can say is that I was listening to pie in the sky. I want to advise the Members on the other side that it is one thing to have framework and “ole” talk about infrastructure and so forth, but it is quite another thing to do the nitty-gritty, simple, mundane, practical things to bring about industrial development, tourism development, and all the other things they want to do.

Here we have a Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs talking about making Brian Lara bats and balls, and all sorts of things, without a clue about the kinds of investments, and the kinds of skills it takes to make bats and balls. What is the connection between this “ole” talk about the tourism industry—and the Minister of Sport is party to that—and the actual practicality of getting an industry going to make these goods? That is to show you this whole debate is not about industrial development; it is about “ole” talk and bureaucracy. That is exactly what we are debating here.

Let me go on to deal with the Member for Diego Martin Central. Here he says that the objective is to provide the necessary institutional framework for competitiveness. They want to export to the outside world. Does he understand clearly that competitiveness does not have to do only with passing a law and merging three authorities? Competitiveness has to do with a whole gamut of things, including the question of developing the right skills, getting the right technology and expertise, and putting all these things in place before you can produce something which you can attempt to sell overseas.

But we seem not to be able to make that connection. The Member for Diego Martin East talks about a whole industry—overhaul industry for yachting and boating—without telling us really what are the net benefits to this country. He did not even indicate whether or not these yachts which come in at Chaguaramas are in the drug trade. Is that the kind of activity they want to promote? That is the question I want to ask.

He spoke about boating and the use of boats. I am asking: What is the net benefit that accrues to us? But if inclusive in that net benefit, there is a facilitator of the drug trade, is that what they want to promote in Trinidad and Tobago?

5.55 p.m.

The Member for Diego Martin Central says that one of the objectives is to reduce uncertainty and risk in the environment. I was expecting now a whole list of activities and proposals on how this would be brought about. In order to do that, you must have a discriminating policy. At least the Industrial Development Corporation, whatever you may think about their operations, operated within the framework of a policy. They had criteria set down through which assistance would have been given to particular industries; they had other criteria set down, in order to attract foreign investment and induce that foreign investment into certain areas. At least, they had a policy. You may argue that the policy did not work.

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The institution called the IDC served its purpose well. He said so. If it served its purpose well, could he tell us how they promoted industrial development, to what extent, at what cost, and what were the alternatives? What was not promoted?

You see, what has happened with the Industrial Development Corporation, is that they got lost in a maze of bureaucracy, patronage and corruption, and therefore were not able to fulfill their mandate, despite the moneys being spent despite the taxes forgone.

The Industrial Development Corporation really have not fulfilled the mandate which was given to them and what we have really, is no review. If we had a review of the mandate of the IDC and its functions earlier on in the regime of the PNM, maybe, as a result of that review they would have changed course and reoriented and redirected. But, you see the gravy was flowing; the patronage was flowing.

You go to the IDC with a good idea, the bureaucrats suppress the idea and later on, this same idea is given to one of their friends and lo and behold, you see that a pioneer industry is being protected and given all the incentives. That is what has happened with the IDC, and if they are honest with themselves, they would admit that.

My concern is whether the same thing is not going to happen with TIDCO. What is the guarantee that there would not be the favouritism, the nepotism, the favouring of certain applicants and non-favouring and suppressing of other others? We have not been told how we are going to get around that problem.

I do not want to spend too much time; we have a public meeting at Fyzabad, and we have to be very brief.

The two points I want to emphasize as regards the IDC are: firstly, that they have filed in their mandate to promote the kind of industrial development we ought to have in Trinidad and Tobago. They got involved in a lot of corruption.

Secondly, that the Government today, while it is disbanding the IDC, does not have an industrial policy to guide its actions and its bureaucrats, so that there will be mass confusion as to how these people would operate at that level to facilitate industry and the encouragement of foreign investment, and indeed, local investment. It does not have a clue of what is intended.

Let us look briefly at the Export Development Corporation, which had as its mandate the provision of marketing and trade information services to exporters. I

understand some marginal benefits were availed to small exporters. I again come to this point of dealing at the stratospheric level without coming down to the practical mundane level.

The Export Development Corporation is promoting exports, but you know what the small exporters in Trinidad cannot get? They cannot get a proper schedule to have deliveries sent overseas. They go to BWIA and say, "we have a cargo shipment." BWIA gives them a date and time and then BWIA arbitrarily cancels that date and time, so here you have people with perishable goods unable to operate with a fixed schedule of exporting. But the Government wants to promote exports.

The Government is looking only at infrastructural framework and that kind of thing, and not at the practical aspect of how exporters avail themselves of communication and transport.

The other point is that in Trinidad and Tobago there is a shortage of freezing facilities, particularly for perishable goods. What happens is that we have small producers, by and large who cannot make up a container. What is needed is for some people to get together and collect the produce of the small producers, store it in a certain place until they get a container load, and then ship that load.

I have suggested that at the Debe wholesale market, which is at the centre of a certain agricultural area, the Government could promote freezing facilities there to assist in the export trade—perishable fruits and vegetables.

Do you think Members opposite would take on that idea? They are incapable of acknowledging a good idea, let alone acting upon it, and moreso acting upon something which happens to be in an Opposition constituency.

So that is a non-starter, but I am trying to tell them that merely putting down a bureaucratic framework there is not going to do anything—needed are the infrastructure, the airline services, cargo, refrigeration facilities. Then they have the boldfacedness to come here and say how much private sector initiative they have promoted.

The private sector had to pay its way to Colombia in 1992. It got no assistance from the Ministry of Trade and Industry in order to go and get markets there. None whatsoever! But they have the boldfacedness to come here and say, "We are facilitating trade; we have the infrastructure to assist people to go and seek markets overseas."

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The President of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association is on record as saying that the ministry turned its back on the mission which was going to Colombia.

6.05 p.m.

I again come to the issue of export insurance, especially for the small exporter. The whole issue of export and credit insurance, especially for the small exporter, is a critical thing. Credit should be provided beforehand to facilitate the small-scale exporter because that person is in need of it. The Government does not have to set up any big organization to do this. Once the Government understands what is needed to be done, it would promote export. A simple thing such as having an inventory in Trinidad and Tobago to tell people what are the customs regulations in the United States, Canada or the European countries—tell them what is required with respect to health standards, particularly for vegetables and fruits.

This information should be disseminated throughout Trinidad and Tobago so that all the people engaged in such production would know what these are, so that they could get involved in exports. The Government is incapable of doing these small things, but there have been pie-in-the-sky statements here this afternoon. We have been regaled with pie-in-the-sky statements about how many sports industries can be created with Brian Lara bats and balls and all these other illusions.

On the marketing thrust overseas, I heard a statement from the Prime Minister here today—a reorientation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thrust. When the NAR got into office, in the first few months it had re-oriented the foreign mission thrust under the able leadership of the Member for Couva North who, unfortunately, did not stay very long in that Ministry. The foreign mission was supposed to not only concentrate on diplomatic services but also on the trade and investment thrust. We did that in 1987; but three years after this Government has been in office, it is now talking about reorientation of the foreign policy thrust.

The Member for San Fernando West is being set up, because the implication is that he did not have the proper orientation for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a set-up to have the Minister displaced. I am warning him! Gordon Draper and others were taken to Haiti, but the Minister of Foreign Affairs was not taken there to establish those diplomatic relations which the Government feels necessary. Do you understand what is happening? *[Interruption]*

The Prime Minister needed an actor, so he chose the Member for San Fernando West. I cannot say anything about the Minister's acting ability.

I cannot evaluate how he has done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. What I am saying is that the way the Prime Minister is going, I think it is very unfair to the Member for San Fernando West—totally unfair remarks made here. The statement made in this House could have been easily read by the Member for San Fernando West. Politics is being played in this whole area of foreign development thrust.

I want to say something about the budget and staff of the Tourism Development Authority. I agree that when these organizations are set up they lose sight of their mission and become bureaucratic—jobs for the boys and girls. In 1992, the Tourism Development Authority had a staff of 150 persons and a budget of \$105 million. Of this amount, 88 per cent was used to pay salaries and very little was earmarked for promotional activities. What I am arguing is whether the Government would be creating another bureaucracy, having people fill posts using that as an avenue of patronage, and lose sight of what they are there for, to give people jobs. That is our concern.

6.15 p.m.

The point was made outside that although all this money was being spent in the Tourism Development Authority, Trinidad and Tobago was not known outside as a tourist destination. The Member for Pointe-a-Pierre made that point. This country is not known outside at all as a tourist destination. Our citizens in Toronto, New York, Miami and all over are complaining. When we were overseas they complained to us: "How is it Jamaica could advertise? They are poorer than we are. St. Lucia could advertise and people here know about these tourist destinations." What I am saying, it is pie in the sky. The Government wants Trinidad and Tobago to be a tourist destination but they are not advertising in places where the tourists live.

After 35 years of the PNM in office, the Government now decided it would do that. But if it wants tourists to come here, and if it is spending all these promotional resources, quite apart from advertising, what about the airline services? How will the tourists arrive in Trinidad and Tobago? Is the Government addressing the problem of the cost competitiveness of coming here? If it is more costly to come to Trinidad and Tobago—Hotel bills, taxi fares and so forth—why would the tourists want to come here? Are they addressing this problem of reducing costs and attracting tourists on the basis of a more competitive cost structure?

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What about the social environment? The Member for Nariva spoke about the crime situation. Every time there is an upsurge in criminal activity it gets foreign headlines. Which tourist would want to come here to be mugged, robbed and murdered? Yet, the Government is not looking at all these matters but talking about big promotional activity. *[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: Get rid of all the lawyers.

Mr. T. Sudama: Madam Speaker, I want to put on the record also that the Government does not deal with the truth when speaking in this House or to the population at large. It is always prevarication, and this has to do with the issue of the retrenchment of workers at the IDC, the EDC and the TDA—massive retrenchment. Without the workers having been given any proper explanation as to what their future would be.

I want to put on record here that being on the ball, I asked a question since June 1993 because I knew what was going to happen. People came to me from the various institutions where assets are now being merged. They came to me and said, “You know we are going to lose our jobs.” I said, “I have read nothing: there has been no official statement made.” They said, “Yes, rumour is rife. We are going to lose our jobs.” I said, “Well, okay, I will ask a question to get an official response from the Government.” So I filed a question, in June 1993—18 months ago. The question was to the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism:

- “(a) Could the Minister state whether the Government intends to establish either a private company or single agency to incorporate the functions of all or any combination of the following organizations:
- (i) Industrial Development Corporation;
 - (ii) Management Development Centre;
 - (iii) Tourism Development Authority;
 - (iv) Export Development Corporation;
 - (v) Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards and
 - (vi) Free Zone Company?
- (b) If so, could he state the purpose of this reorganization?
- (c) The number of jobs that would be eliminated in the exercise?”

Today it is an issue, but if it were dealt with truthfully, humanely and in a caring manner by this so-called caring Government, I do not think the issue would

have been of the intensity that it is today—the kind of grief that has been caused among those retrenched workers.

Now, I want to put on record what the former Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism had to say. He was the Minister who did not take a vow of poverty, if you recall, Madam Speaker. That one. Scores of licences were given out to certain selected businesses, particularly in the auto parts industry at Bamboo Settlement in the few weeks before he demitted office. One understands how the PNM operates.

The former Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, who did not care anything in the world about tourism or industry and its promotion, because he did not take a vow of poverty, came here to buy a motor car. He got into office to buy a motor car to get the tax exemption and then demit office. This is what he said—caring Government—in response to my question:

“Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism is finalizing the review of the activities of these organizations which was aimed at identifying areas where there are duplications and overlapping of functions, the objectives being to enhance delivery of the services at present being offered by these organizations...”

Now, Madam Speaker, this second sentence is very important—

“Should the question of surplus staff arise, the preferred option would be retraining and redeployment.”

So that an expectation was given in June, 1993 that should there be redundancies in the reorganization, there would be retraining and these people will be redeployed somewhere in the public service.

Now at that point, I am submitting to this House, Government had no intention of redeploying anybody—it was a straight case of retrenchment. But the Minister came and misled this House, as is the habit of the PNM: He gave false assurances to the staff that was to be retrenched. So I asked a direct question:

“Is the Minister saying that, as a result of this review and possible restructuring, nobody employed by these various organizations would lose their jobs?”

I wanted a direct answer. This was the response:

“We are anticipating the results of this review and really I have stated that if the question of surplus staff arises, then the preferred option will be retraining and redeployment.”

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Now I want to ask whether that option was ever put to the staff who were retrenched in these three corporations now being merged today.

On every country, when one looks at it, whether it is that these corporations have fulfilled the mandate for which they were created—we have had no review, no monitoring and, in certain instances, it is obvious that very little, by way of promotion, was done. There was very little industrial development and tourism development over the years that these corporations have existed. Then there is the whole question of the arbitrary, uncaring and inhumane manner which the staff was dealt with at these three institutions. This is why they had to come around this Parliament and demonstrate. They did not come here to demonstrate because they had nothing else to do: they came here to demonstrate against a Government in which they had no faith at all.

I shall not raise the other points that I wanted to raise here because of the urgency of our public meetings where we have to express our views later on tonight. I would certainly urge the Government about the very first statement I made. Please, please! Highfalutin plans! Let us have fewer of those. Let us have more practical work done in promoting the development of Trinidad and Tobago's industrial tourism development.

Thank you very much.

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking the Member for Oropouche for taking part in this debate, because I sat here wondering what I would have responded to, before he spoke. I thank him most sincerely for giving me a few points to which I can respond. At the same time I want to thank my colleagues, the Member for Diego Martin East and the Member for Port of Spain South for making such excellent contributions to this debate.

I think I should deal with the comments made by the Member for Oropouche. The least said about the contribution of the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, the better, because, quite simply, every time I hear that Member, there is pity. It comes to me how difficult it is to get rid of bitterness—

Mr. Maharaj: Injustice hurts. It breaks down mountains.

Hon. K. Valley: —and how could one look so good on the outside while a cancer on the inside eats away at the very soul of the individual? When one has cancer sometimes one is on drugs and hallucinates so one sees all types of jumbies. As I said, I think the less said about the Member's contribution, the better.

The first point the Member for Oropouche raised was that competitiveness requires much more than passing laws, and of course, that point is valid. One knows that. What we are attempting to do this afternoon is to put legislation in perspective.

I made the point that the committee which was established by the previous Minister identified certain constraints—certain risk factors. I did not deal with all of the risk factors. I dealt with the one that was appropriate for the discussion at hand. If the Member wants, I can inform him that the committee identified some 15 risk factors, some of which we have dealt with already. The committee, for example, spoke about the fact that we were operating in an environment of exchange control—fixed exchange rate. Members would know that we have since dealt with that. That is no longer a constraint—it is no longer an area of uncertainty. So that the Member would know that, over a period we have been dealing with these issues.

The committee identified at that time the problem associated with the artificial rates of return because of support mechanisms and the protection. The fact that the environment is now liberalized, rates of return are now approximating market rates, so that we are attempting, simply, to put the legislation before the House in that overall environment, stating how it fits in with what the Government is doing in the economy as a whole. There was no intention to suggest that all we had to do was to pass laws and there would be competitiveness.

Reducing uncertainty and risk: I think I have dealt with that. One does not simply pass law to reduce uncertainty and risk. As I said, we have been dealing with the other risk factors—the other uncertainty factors in the economy. The fact that we now have a stable macro-economic framework has really brought quite a bit of business confidence back in the economy. It is not by chance that the economy is expected to grow by some four per cent in 1994.

As I say that, perhaps I can take the point made by the Member for Nariva in reading from a Republic Bank document and stating that because there was a reduction in economic growth in the third quarter, the growth rate will have to be phenomenal in the last quarter to come close to the projected four per cent growth. The Member is confusing two things. When one looks at the economic growth for a year, one compares with the previous year. When an economist says that there is a quarterly decline of 2.1 per cent, he is talking about the quarter compared to the quarter before.

6.25 p.m.

Quite simply if one were to look at the information coming from the Central Bank, one would see that in the last quarter of last year, growth returned to the economy. The economy grew by 2.9 per cent in the last quarter. That was followed by a higher level of growth in the first quarter of this year, so that quarter on quarter, there was 2.9 per cent in the last quarter and then in the first quarter, it increased even higher by 4.5 per cent.

So that although in the second quarter, compared to the first quarter, there was a slight decline, remember we were already up there at the plateau, so if there is a marginal decline, and if in the third quarter there is another marginal decline, year on year, we are still ahead of last year. The figures from the Central Bank would show that although it showed that in the second quarter the decline in the economy was 0.3 per cent and in the third quarter, it was estimated to be 2.1 per cent, the same table showed that year on year for the three quarters, the economy has grown by 4.1 per cent. There is no magic about that.

That brings me to the other point that the Member for Oropouche made—that we have to deal with things on the ground if we want economic growth and we must not deal up there in the stratosphere, as it were. While I take the point, there is an old saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If, in fact, we are having economic growth, if we have returned to growth, that is evidence that we are taking care of matters. Because we are not only dealing with things up there, we are also dealing with things on the ground.

The Member spoke about the small exporter who has difficulty with cold storage and so forth. If he had spoken with the Exporters Association, they would have informed him that they had audience with me on three occasions and that we are working on that problem. They have met with Customs, and various institutions are setting up to deal with those issues. That is what we are doing. We are getting in there and trying to remove the constraints that the businessman faces, whether he is a large businessman or a small one.

Targetting incentives: The Member makes the big point that we do not know where we are going because we do not have an industrial policy. Up to yesterday the Member could have said that we do not have a report on the divestment programme but saying that we have no industrial policy could not be true, because since 1992 we have been guided by this policy, as is known, there is information change and updating and so forth. I make that point simply to say that at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, we have been working on our industrial policy paper, but even before I got to the ministry, they started way back in 1992.

The Member for Caroni East when she worked with me, I remember once she was in charge and this is not telling tales out of school: We were doing a strategic plan and she was spearheading the effort, and one day I asked, “Where is our plan?” She turned and told me: “We are implementing it.” The fact that we do not have a document to lay in Parliament does not mean that—

Mr. Sudama: That is not what she told me.

Mr. Maharaj: She did not tell us that at all. She said you have no plan.

Hon. K. Valley: If we do not have a plan, ask her, because she was spearheading the effort.

The fact that we do not have a document that can be handed to an individual does not mean that we do not have a plan. Let me inform the hon. Member: Yes, we are guided by certain initiatives. All right? The industrial policy—I hope it is now in its final stages; they are doing some re-writing. I can tell the Member that the Government is clear with respect to about five initiatives, and he knows them. He knows we are pushing the whole transshipment concept.

We have spoken about market access. We have spoken about Orincoco/Apure. We have spoken about the information technology. We have spoken about those things in this House. We have spoken about the special initiatives and the need to go down—

Mr. Sudama: That is the point I am making. Just a set of “ole” talk.

Hon. K. Valley: Things are happening. That is why we are having growth.

The Member also wanted to know what assurance—

Mr. Maharaj: Things are happening and we have no water.

Hon. K. Valley: I will come to that.

The Member also wanted to know what assurance we can give to say that whatever negatives the IDC had with respect to the approval process would not carry over to TIDCO. I remember I spoke here about two or three weeks ago seeking approval from this House for the continuation of the Section 56 Order. I gave the assurance to this House that we are moving to clear guidelines for approval.

But more than that the FIAS Report that we heard about earlier today, recommended that we move to performance-based incentives, and that is what we are doing at TIDCO; so that one gets the incentive automatically based on the achievement of certain things.

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For example, there is the tax incentive with respect to exports, meaning quite simply, that if an exporter were to sell extra-Caricom, he would pay no tax on that percentage of his sale; so that an exporter who sells 100 per cent—and this is in the non-oil sector—of his production outside Caricom, for example, to Colombia or Venezuela, would be entitled to zero corporate tax. That is performance-based incentive and that is what we would be emphasizing from here on, rather than giving the incentives up-front.

Export credit: There is an export credit institution in Trinidad and Tobago. As a matter of fact, we have just taken steps to have that institution capitalized a bit more. More than that, that institution is moving into the export/import bank concept and it is getting some consultancy to move in that direction.

Customs regulations: I cannot remember what point that was.

Mr. Sudama: Knowledge. Foreign customs regulations.

Hon. K. Valley: Yes. I just wanted to say that that information is available. The EDC with its data base has that information which is now transferred to the ETC. I make the point also that one of the reasons for gearing the old EDC into that ETC is to solve part of the problem identified by the Member to really work with the small exporter to give him direction in that export market. Yes, we have to set it up to ensure that there is capitalization, but that is a clear initiative for 1995 and we are moving in that direction.

TIDCO's budget: Again, 88 per cent spent on wages. I think the Member is agreeing that we are moving in the right direction because that is part of the problem. There was this overlapping. Certain things were done at IDC; the same things at EDC; same things at TDA. If they came together, however, there could be some common expenses and so effect savings on salaries and wages, and have more funding going into advertisement and external marketing.

For example, as I do every other Friday, I met with the people from TIDCO and they were telling me that 80 per cent of their tourism budget is now geared towards advertisement. That is what it is; because tourism, is spending money out there advertising. We are moving in that direction. That is what we are doing.

Lastly, the Member implied that my former colleague, ex-Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, was being less than honest. He ought to know. He has some colleagues who, of course, are versed in that. Let me disabuse the Member's mind. At the time the ex-Minister answered the question, he was being quite honest. I have here with me minutes of various meetings. This one is dated August 3, from which I shall read.

“Meeting with Mr. Clive Weatherhead, President of PSA, on August 4, 1993, to discuss in detail outstanding Industrial Relations/Human Resources issues affecting the TDA. At that time three options were being looked at:

- (i) Employment in the new company
- (ii) Absorption into the Public Sector
- (iii) Separation Incentive Plan

Numerous problems were encountered with respect to options (i) and

- (ii) In the case of option (i):
 - (a) the terms and conditions of employment were expected to be radically different from those that currently obtained;”

All right. They were setting up a new organization and the new organization said, “Look, we are going to be performance oriented.”

They were saying that we cannot just take people over; they have to apply because we want top-of-the-line people. It goes on:

- “(b) staff would not have been automatically transferred but were expected to apply for positions;”

6.35 p.m.

What we have done by the Outplacement Unit is given them preference. In other words, TIDCO saved the staff they needed; the Outplacement Unit sent their people and they either qualify or they do not qualify. But they are given first preference. If we are setting up this new organization we must have top-of-the-line people. We might have made all types of mistakes in the past, but in the world out there today, we have to be sharp, and that is what we are going for.

With respect to (ii) that is: “Absorption into the Public Sector,” seniority was a major problem. There are persons with years of service and if they had to go into the public service, some of them would have had to parachute into these organizations, and one can see the types of problems that would arise. Everybody is looking for promotion and suddenly somebody comes from TDA or IDC who is now your boss; there are unions; you know everybody in Trinidad and Tobago is a politician. There are more politicians out there than in here, you know, Madam Speaker.

So those were the issues. At the time the Minister answered the question, there was that intent to pursue those alternatives. It turned out that the only feasible

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option was to provide an incentive package and retrench the employees; those who qualified would go into TIDCO. We have set up the Outplacement Unit. We are working with them and they are finding jobs in the public service. This afternoon I had—he is still here, I think—an officer who came over who works in my Ministry—very good officer. I had another one over in Investment; some in the private sector. Because I am also in charge of the state enterprises, the Outplacement Unit have that advantage, and they can talk with the people and work with them in keeping with the commitment I gave when I met with the staff on March 29. That is what we are doing.

I just want to make the point that that was an honest answer. I can say that I worked with Minister Kuei Tung for quite some time and I do not know him to be a dishonest person. There is nothing else to respond to in this debate. I want to thank Members on this side and the Member for Oropouche, sincerely, for participating in this debate. With those few words, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Clauses 1 to 16 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

First Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Second Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Preamble ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be reported to the House.

House resumed.

Bill reported, without amendment, read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Friday, January 20, 1995 at 1.30 p.m. We would be debating the BWIA Vesting Bill.

6.45 p.m.

Health Services Crisis

Dr. Carl Singh (*Tabaquite*): Madam Speaker, my Motion reads as follows:

The crisis and chaos in the health services in Trinidad and Tobago and matters incidental thereto.

The chaos that exists, and which was responsible for the go-slow at the San Fernando General Hospital over the New Year's Day weekend, was all part and parcel of a general bungling of the regulations with which the ministry and officers are supposed to function.

The senior medical officers of the San Fernando General Hospital are guided by the 1978 Industrial Court decision with respect to the accumulation of compensatory time off for extra duties, for example, on-call duties. On-call duty is simply what it says: the officer has to be on call—whether for a surgical procedure, to manage a medical case or any emergency—physically or by telephone. It is simply that.

The medical services, particularly the specialities, are composed of firms in which there is a consultant, a registrar, a house officer and one or two interns. In some of these services there are four such firms representing this particular service. On the basis of the Public Service Regulations, the members of the medical profession in the services were embraced in this particular manner under the public service on a 40-hour week. Each service has four firms, and it was on the basis of this that a consultant would be on call on one in four days. Because of the shortage of everything in the medical services—staff included—some of these consultants are on call sometimes every other day which necessitated this type of compensatory time off for extra on-call duty.

The impasses at the hospital resulted from the interpretation of this particular decision of the Industrial Court, whereby the administrator of the San Fernando General Hospital unilaterally made the decision that from a certain date in 1994, no more compensatory time off would be allowed to accumulate. Discussions went on, but apparently they were not fruitful enough to settle the matter. Again, I should mention that the institution allowance is given on the basis of being called out once in four days. Because of the shortages, these officers are called to perform, as I said before, sometime every other night or weekends as the case may be.

The administrator of the Port of Spain General Hospital was also having problems of this nature, but my information is that what obtained was that senior medical officers were allowed to accumulate the time off whilst this condition did not obtain at the San Fernando General Hospital.

I now quote from page 7 of the *Trinidad Guardian* of January 6, 1995:

“In a memorandum to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health dated February 2, 1994, POS Hospital Administrator, Lennox Williams identified seven SMOs who have racked up more than 3,088 days in compensatory time off, amounting to \$1,068,488.”

These as I mentioned before, are the more frequent on-call duties that these senior medical officers were asked to perform.

“He then warned the PS that he would be paying those officers Institutional Allowance based on his own interpretation of the Court award.”

That is to say, he completely repudiates the court award and takes it upon himself, as the administrator of the hospital, to pay as he thinks fit. This is the attitude [Interruption] I am reading from what is reported in the press. There was a letter written by the administrator of the San Fernando General Hospital to the senior medical officers somewhat in the same vein.

Indeed, the administrator of the San Fernando General Hospital stated that if the senior medical officers take time off for their private practice that is fine with him, providing they do not bill the hospital for duties on public holidays and weekends. This is a bad precedent to create for an administrator to say, ‘Go ahead, do your private practice, as long as you do not bill us for extra time over the weekend and public holidays’.

I continue:

“He added: ‘If by doing so, I would have opened a can of worms then so be it. Sometimes, one has to create conflict in order to address a problem or what might be perceived as a problem.’”

This is the type of tone and attitude in which these types of arrangements and negotiations were made to iron out this problem.

I now quote from an editorial in the *Sunday Express*, dated November 27, 1994, headlined “This man is not beyond the law”, to show the attitude of the administrator:

“Through the medium of your newspaper, I wish to advise Vijay Narayansingh, Consultant Surgeon, that when an allegation of misconduct or

indiscipline is made against a public officer there are certain procedures to follow. If by following these procedures Dr. Narayansingh is of the opinion that I have insulted Dr. Neville Jankey then so be it.

I also wish to advise Dr. Narayansingh that no amount of O-levels, no amount of A-levels, no amount of scholarships, no amount of publications or for that matter, no amount of working on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays can make anyone immune to having the regulations enforced against him or her. Just as no one is above the law, similarly—”

Madam Speaker: May I just indicate that we have three Motions on the Adjournment and having regard to the time, and in accordance with the Standing Orders, 20 minutes is allocated to each Member to complete his or her contribution. *[Interruption]* Yes, that is what I mean, 20 minutes per Motion.

Dr. C. Singh: Madam Speaker, if I may say, that was the type of atmosphere in which the negotiations were taking place. One person can be above the law, but another must not be even equal to the law.

6.55 p.m.

This is what the editorial in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated Thursday, January 12, 1995 stated:

“Question of change.

It would be too much to expect that the revolution taking place in the nation’s health service would be free of problems or devoid of critics.”

It is not that the medical profession was against decentralization. This was agreed upon, but the manner, the method and the factors that were contained within these, created the problem in this whole exercise of decentralization.

Having received a letter written to the doctors in San Fernando by the administrators an apology was required. This is what the editorial of the *Trinidad Guardian* stated:

“Having called for such an apology, it is expected that the doctors would now accept their ‘victory’...”

This was a rather sadistic way of looking at that. There was no victory, but that was the manner in which it was reported. The editorial went on to say:

“It seems only natural that Smith who holds a Masters degree in hospital administration should seek to readjust this system which had been worked out

before the institutions came under professional control. But in spite of the reaction, change must come with the new regime.”

Again, this is the mode in which this editorial addressed this problem. Instead of trying to pour some oil on these troubled waters, there was a kind of inflammatory effect on the whole negotiation process. Those were some of the factors of that particular incident.

I come now to the public servants who are in a particular area, and who have the option to be transferred. After the passage of the Bill, I do not think that every person in a particular area would automatically be transferred. The options were: to remain in the public service, be seconded, or transferred. Here we have in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated Friday, January 13, 1995:

“RHA implementation in danger.

The Public Service Commission (PSC), under the chairmanship of Kenneth Lalla is unwilling to delegate any of its power to the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) in order to effectuate the administration and management of the new health system.

Public servants in the new dispensation have three choices, namely:

- (i) to remain as public servants, under the aegis of the PSC and DPA, while taking orders from RHAs...

The PSC is not prepared to entertain the first option, a situation which jeopardizes the implementation of the RHAs, said the senior official.”

One cannot be in the Region, and under the aegis of the Public Service Commission. This is what they are saying and they are not going to delegate the responsibility for their control of officers or that right.

Another point I want to make. I am sorry about the time, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You have two more minutes to wind up.

Dr. C. Singh: Citizens in the Central Regional Health Authority are at a great disadvantage with Mount Hope being the major hospital or facility; Couva is at the end of its line, so too is the Caura Hospital. To gain admission and to access treatment in any of the institutions of the country, with the exception of Mount Hope, one can present oneself at Casualty as a patient, be sent by a private doctor, be referred from a health office, or from another peripheral hospital for which no fees are charged. One can do the same thing at Port of Spain, but it cannot be done at the Central Regional Health Authority. If it was anticipated that one

would pay a fee for treatment at this central unit at Mount Hope, then with the bringing of the Regional Health Authorities Bill, simultaneously the National Health Insurance Scheme should have been brought.

There is now a disparity whereby people can access treatment in Port of Spain or San Fernando free of charge, but those in Central cannot be referred by a private doctor, or go as a private patient, unless they are willing to pay. There is disparity and inequality in the treatment meted out to persons in the Central Regional Health Authority.

Madam Speaker: Is that the nature of the Motion?

Dr. C. Singh: Basically, Madam Speaker, those were the three points: the chaos, the crisis and the inequality in the treatment of citizens at the government institutions.

Thank you.

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): Madam Speaker, I have great difficulty in responding. I must confess that I am not convinced that the Member for Tabaquite proved that there was either crisis or chaos in the health services. The bulk of his contribution dealt with the administrator of the San Fernando General Hospital.

As far as I am concerned, terms and conditions of service are matters for determination between the management and staff and their representative associations. If talks break down at that level, then there is the Industrial Court. I do not think that Parliament is the place for resolving industrial conflict. There is machinery in place for dealing with matters of those kinds.

The Member made reference to an editorial. It is my view that the editorial in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated Thursday, January 12, makes the point that there is apparently problem between the administration on the one hand and the doctors on the other, and that they need to sit and work out their problems in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. That is also my view. There might be intemperate remarks made from time to time, but I think people only become moderate as they gain experience. My hope is eventually the doctors and the administrators would sit and work out whatever difficulties they have in the interest of the people. I do not feel that the issue will be resolved by parliamentarians taking sides on it.

There is an article today in one of the newspapers about the commission not wanting to delegate its authority over public servants. I attended a meeting with

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the commission and I did not get that impression. In the course of that meeting, the commission indicated to us that it wanted to be absolutely certain that everything was correct. Arising out of that meeting a committee of lawyers was appointed. The commission is careful and it wants to be satisfied that in the exercise of delegation it does not contravene any laws.

It was concerned, for example, about the composition of the tribunal. In other words the commission has a power that it might wish to delegate but in a responsible manner. It is seeking to be assured that everything is correct and quite correctly so. When we passed the legislation we made it clear that the commission is an independent body. Parliament was not obligating it, but was giving it an option to delegate if it so desired. If the commission in its wisdom does not wish, that is its right.

As I said, I did not get that impression, but rather a desire to ensure that whatever it did it would be in accordance with the law. It is seeking assurances and that is being worked on now. Hopefully, in due course, we would have that matter resolved.

The legal advice available to the Government from the Solicitor General's Office is that the doctors have not changed their status; they continue to be employed by the Public Service Commission; they take instructions only from the Permanent Secretary. They are paid by the Government and they are not instructed or directed in any way by members of the Boards. They would be given options to transfer to the Authority at an appropriate time.

7.05 p.m.

What the RHA is doing in the meantime is observing and familiarizing itself with the work of the health ministry. This is a vast area of responsibility and it is acquiring some basic knowledge, so that if the public servants elect to come across voluntarily through transfer or through secondment, it would be in a position to take over the management of the service.

Finally, the RHA system places no restriction on anybody in terms of where he or she accesses care. A person may go to any hospital in Trinidad and Tobago to access care just before. The introduction of the RHA system does not alter that situation. The people in the central region can come to Port of Spain; they can go to Tobago; they can go to San Fernando, Sangre Grande, anywhere. Every citizen going to every hospital will be treated in the same way.

The legal advice available to us, once again, is that once that hospital treats everybody in the same way, there is no discrimination. So everybody who goes to

San Fernando is treated in the same way; everybody who goes to Mount Hope is treated in the same way, and under the legislative arrangements that is entirely in keeping with—

Dr. Singh: Is the Minister saying then, that a patient can access treatment at the Mount Hope Medical Complex without paying a fee, if he goes on his own, or if he is referred by a private practitioner?

Hon. J. Eckstein: I said, once the institution treats everybody who goes there in the same way, there is no discrimination. That is the advice available to us. So that every citizen who goes to San Fernando is treated in the same way; everybody who goes to Mount Hope is treated in the same way.

I have completed my response because I have found it extremely difficult to answer this case, which, in my view, did not justify the hypothesis expressed of there being chaos, confusion and crisis in the health services of Trinidad and Tobago. I understand that the Member did not have the time. I apologize on his behalf.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Remember that each Member has 10 minutes to make his contribution.

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, if in 10 minutes we could have got water, I would sit after one minute.

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Mr. Mohammed Haniff (*Princes Town*): Madam Speaker, on January 9, 1995, I sent a letter stating that I should like to raise this matter of the shortage of water throughout the country.

I have been speaking with Members of this House and my information is that every Member, in his respective constituency, has a problem with the shortage of water. I have not heard anyone say that is not so. However, I should like to point out that in the South in particular, the situation is much worse.

The situation is extremely bad. We have entered the dry season and I do not know what would happen. What I do know is that in 1994 there have been a number of blockades and demonstrations but in the interest of time, I shall not go into the details as I had planned. The situation is bad and is likely to get worse.

Since I came to this Parliament, I have raised this issue on numerous occasions about my own constituency. If I raise it as an urgent matter, the Speaker

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of the House would not agree with me, and I am compelled to go by her ruling. However, I must say that I am not in agreement with that position, but I would have to abide by it.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The Member is being rude to the Chair. He cannot disagree with the Speaker.

Madam Speaker: If the Member disagrees, can he just keep it to himself. If he disagrees he can express it to his colleagues. He should not express his disagreement with the Speaker in the House. That is what I was trying to tell you all this morning. You know the comments on the actions of the Speaker in the House. It is the institution.

Mr. M. Haniff: Madam Speaker, if a member got the impression that I am rude, I am just saying that is not the intention, except to say that I did not agree. If you say that I should not say it, then I would withdraw it.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Once you keep the institution in mind.

Mr. M. Haniff: It is not my intention to be that way.

Madam Speaker: I accept that from the Member.

Mr. M. Haniff: Starting several months ago and during the Christmas holidays—that is why I became concerned and made an effort to raise this matter on the last occasion—there was a problem in the George Village area. I have spoken with and invited the hon. Minister and spoken to all the other officers in WASA South.

The first working day after the Christmas holidays I had to go to WASA South to meet with the engineers, and the same shortage that is being experienced in Princes Town is being experienced in many parts of the country, but as I said, especially in the southern districts. I do not get the impression that the authorities are giving their best efforts in a situation that is bad.

In that situation, in my own community, for 14 days from December 7 to December 21, there was no water. When the water did come, after all sorts of efforts, many residents did not get, and up to today still have not got a supply of water. In the Robert Village area, that has continued for months. In the Siparia constituency—I have a list of villages that I can call: Oropouche, Fyzabad, Pointe-a-Pierre, Tabaquite, Naparima, and as a result, I am forced to say that we are not getting the consideration of WASA and the Government of the day, in trying to bring about some measure of relief.

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If we have a situation where there is no water, for God's sake, would this Government take some steps to send water—even truck-borne water—so that some relief would come the way of these residents. They are paying taxes and water rates and these Government Ministers and Members of Government say they care. People cannot survive without water.

Madam Speaker, let me tell you what happens. In Princes Town, there is a water hydrant and if you live in Rio Claro, Moruga or wherever, and you come to Princes Town at that hydrant because there is no water in the line, you will not get water even if you walk with your receipts, having paid all your rates. You are told by an officer that you must go to San Fernando to get a chit from the security people so that you could go back to Princes Town and get your van, truck or contractor to bring water. Where is the concern? Where is the effort being made?

I have noted that the hon. Minister was speaking about the system under which water was charged, the rateable value system, which is not related to supply. What is happening? Is there any effort being made to relate it to the supply?

7.15 p.m.

I am very concerned because there are efforts to put in meters and the full charge is on the consumer. One must pay in advance; one must pay for servicing these meters and all other services, but nothing is happening with the improvement of the water supply.

It is in that situation that I raise it here today, with the concern that the dry season is upon us, some 900-odd days have been lost in schools throughout the country, but particularly in South in 1994. I have been listening to the news and I understand that situation is being taken care of. I hope it is being taken care of.

But I want to point out that in approximately 90 per cent of the cases, those water tanks need to be cleaned and prepared for that water. In too many cases the water is not pure and cannot be used immediately it is pumped into the tanks. That is the fact of the situation.

Efforts have been made to call in the Ministry of Works to clean those tanks, where the primary and secondary schools fall under the Government, but in many cases the response is not there. Similarly, the other schools suffer the same fact.

The water situation is bad and as such I should like to hear from the authorities, the Minister in particular, whether any short-term and long-term efforts are being made to deal with it. Weeks and months go by without water in

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the lines; people are paying rates, they are not getting a supply, yet no effort is being made to even supplement or to give them assistance through the truck-borne supply that used to be available some years ago. This Government came and stopped that supply of truck-borne water. As a result, when one drives throughout the country one sees children and adults, at all hours of the day and night with pans, buckets, vans, trucks and what have you, looking for water. The situation bad and it is getting worse.

We have heard here today about all sorts of growth but when the visitors come there is no water. There is an article in today's newspaper saying that, I think it is in Maracas, if one goes, one cannot get water to bathe. Well in many parts of the country one cannot get water to drink or to cook far less to bathe after one bathes in the sea.

In the interest of time, and in all humility, I would want to hear from the hon. Minister what steps are being taken so that some relief would come in the short term to those who are suffering. I have heard about loans; I do not know whether they are here, and if they are, when things are going to come on stream. I want to get some assurance that the Robert Village area water supply will be improved; that the Realize, Mandingo, Lengua Road areas will be improved and the Oropouche and Siparia constituencies in the deep south will be improved.

I await the response of the hon. Minister. Thank you very much.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Barry Barnes): Madam Speaker, we have had several Motions on the subject of water I do not wish to repeat myself to this honourable House, but very briefly, I would say that the WASA system in terms of production is five million barrels per day. WASA has more than 3,000 miles of transmission mains throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago, a system that developed on the basis of the northern watersheds and the need, therefore, to pump water into the south.

The matter was raised before by the Member for Oropouche. It is the start of the dry season; it is also the start of the sugar crop at two sugar factories and that is what changes the balance. It is unfortunate that the sugar crop coincides with the dry season. It is not as the Member for Oropouche suggests—Point Lisas—because that demand is continuous throughout the year. The sugar crop is one of the major differentials.

However, that is not really the point. Let me start by saying that WASA's impounding reservoirs have all spilled over so that raw water is available. As I indicated last year, in the Caroni/Arena, Navet and North Oropouche systems,

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nowhere in the WASA system was there spare pumping capacity, so that if a pump went out there was an immediate effect.

What WASA has been doing over the rainy season is seeking to refurbish the major waterworks. The problem there is that one obviously cannot refurbish a pump that is operating. It would have to be taken out of operation. So that one sought to do this over the rainy season so that the effect would be, perhaps, less noticeable.

As of last week, Caroni/Arena was up to 63 million gallons per day, out of a total capacity of 65 million gallons per day. For the first time in a long time 12 million gallons per day as spare capacity, in terms of pumping capacity, is going into the system to give WASA some insurance. The Navet system has been refurbished. There is work still to be done on North Oropouche. WASA did not quite make the beginning of the dry season, but what I am really saying is, by and large, that work has been done on the major waterworks over the period in preparation for the—*[Interruption]* I am coming to that. In addition, as I think the Members know—the well fields.

In Penal, one new well was drilled, one well refurbished, a second well is being drilled. In Granville, wells returned to service; in Arima, Arouca, Wallerfield. In bringing the well fields back into service WASA is trying in a way to augment the northern supply as a means of supplementing the southern supply by the transfer of additional water into the southern area, particularly to supply the big St. Patrick project where storage have been installed, though one last piece of that new system is still to come into operation.

In addition to that—I think that I have mentioned to the House—WASA has launched a leak repair programme. One gets a very negative report—3,800 leaks have, in fact, been repaired over the period October 18 to December 18, and the only response one gets is the features in the newspapers showing that WASA is digging up the roads again. There is no way that WASA can repair the leaks without, in fact, doing some digging because all the mains are underground.

Government saw the need for an emergency short-term rehabilitation programme—I think I have said that in this House—and secured approval from the World Bank for a loan of \$50 million. Approval was secured on August 24, 1994; loan effectiveness was November 27 1994 and the first disbursement of funds was December 23, 1994. It is not \$50 million in one disbursement. It is disbursed as the orders for equipment and pipes, go out. So that as much as Government would have liked to see this loan finance coming early in the rainy

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season to allow much work to proceed, the fact of the matter is that the administrative mechanism has caused the disbursement to commence on December 23, 1994.

The equipment has been ordered. The programme of work is detailed, work has commenced and it is precisely to ensure that there would be no further deterioration in supply in the dry season.

7.25 p.m.

The Member for Princes Town is right, in that not now, but for the last several years it is only 20 per cent of this population that has approximately a 24-hour supply; 80 per cent of this population is served in one form or another on the basis of schedules and rationing, so that the basic water supply is fundamentally unsatisfactory. There is no question about it.

We need to go beyond that. We are talking to people and they are asking if they could only have a two-day supply on a regular basis. In 1995, there are several other countries in the world where a 24-hour supply is taken for granted. Quite frankly, we still have a long way to go.

The \$50 million loan that we have got will not do it for us. All it can do is assuage a fundamental situation that is unsatisfactory. What I can say is that with the co-operation of WASA's unions, the leak repair programme runs on the weekend, without double-time and overtime, as a concerted effort and with the additional availability of equipment and a very real identification. Perhaps I could just take a little bit more time, Madam Speaker, to mention these areas.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, you have eight minutes more.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: Union road, Macaulay, Charlieville, Warren Road, Springman, Old Southern Main Road from Chin Chin Road to Montrose, Daisy Transmission Main, Katwaroo Trace, Ecclesville Road, Manzanilla, Arouca, Guanapo, Picton, Ross Lands, Mt. St. George and Tobago are areas that have been identified for emergency attention.

Mr. Sudama: I have not heard Oropouche at all.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: we are dealing with you on a separate basis. But areas that have been identified as critical in terms of inadequate size of transmission—I have not quoted Maraval and I have three more minutes, but the main on Saddle Road is six inches in diameter and it is 45 years since it was put down. There is absolutely no way that the required quantity of water can now be pumped through that six-inch main to Fairways, Andalusia and so forth.

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Mr. Sudama: I just want to ask a very, very significant question. Those residents who do not get water in their taps for weeks on end, are they obliged to pay the same water rates as those who are getting a 24-hour supply?

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: Madam Speaker, we have touched on this before. The matter of water rates is a matter for the Public Utilities Commission. The Public Utilities Commission had said to WASA since 1993 that it can implement a 35 per cent increase in rates if it is prepared to rebate that rate for the people who do not have an adequate supply.

The PUC has now authorized WASA to implement the rate where the people are on a 24-hour supply basis, so that for the rest of the people the increases are not going to be charged. There are difficult areas in virtually every constituency where, in fact, there is no supply—because they are at the end of the line and because of system difficulties. They go for periods of longer than one week, two weeks and three weeks.

Mr. Haniff: Probably it is intended for those areas where they will not get water.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: Generally all those areas have been examined. Systems analysts have been in and where it is a question of inadequate pipeline size, there are programmes to have those changed.

Mr. Haniff: But it will not be done in the dry season.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: It will be done in the dry season.

Mr. Haniff: We would still have a situation where for months they would not get water—*[Interruption]*

Madam Speaker: Well, we shall see when that happens. If the Minister's pipelines are now down, you can raise it again with the hon. Minister privately through his office and it might be solved.

Maxi Taxi (School Transport Concessions)

Mr. Krish Jurai (*Nariva*): Madam Speaker, my Motion on the Adjournment deals with the Government's failure to make provision for maxi-taxi school transport concessions for children within the Sangre Grande, Biche, Rio Claro and Mayaro areas. Ever since I entered this House, I have been trying to get the Government to provide some form of public transport for school children, but to date I have had no positive response, hence the reason I am forced to bring this

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matter to this House once again. I have in my hand a series of correspondence which I have written to the Minister concerned but, to date, nothing has been done.

I want to refer to a question that I raised here in October, 1992 to the Minister of Public Utilities. Just briefly, the response was:

“The Minister of Public Utilities assures this honourable House that the Ministry and the Government remain committed to the task of resolving the transportation problems being endured by the nation’s school children.”

This is a definite commitment from the Government but nothing has been done since October 1992. on this very question the Minister gave the names of the persons who were on this committee to examine the provision of transport for school children. When I look at it I see names like Mr. Hugh Lee, Mr. Philbert Morris, Ms. Anna Mahase, Mr. Albert Aberdeen among others. I cannot conceive that these people would not have given some consideration of providing maxi-taxi transport for the Nariva area. Some time later published in the *Sunday Guardian* of the October 23, 1994 was: “New transport system for students”

The Prime Minister reportedly gave a commitment which is reported as follows:

“Manning said the time had come for Government to change the basis of the school bus system. PTSC will no longer provide transportation, it will contract these services to private maxi taxis and other individuals.”

When I look at an advertisement appearing in the newspaper—I am referring here to one in the *Newsday* of Wednesday, October 19—I see “Application Form, Ministry of Education—Maxi Taxi Concession.” It outlines most of the areas in the country with the exception of my area. I question: Why was Nariva left out? My friend the Member for Toco/Manzanilla and also the Member for Arouca North know the kinds of difficulties that students in my area endure; they are familiar with that area.

As I said, I cannot see how the members of this school bus committee did not make positive recommendations for the school children in my area. In areas like Four Roads, Tamana; Biche and Plum Mitán children need transport. Some go to Sangre Grande; they go either to Mayaro or Toco. Others go to Rio Claro or Mayaro, and the return fare is between \$16 and \$20 per day per child.

What is happening at the moment is that where parents have more than one child attending secondary school they send one child this week and then next week that one stays home and the other goes—and the children's education suffers.

7.35 p.m.

I want to quote from a well-written article in the *Sunday Guardian* of October 23, 1994, headlined, "The long trek home" written by Debra Samuel. I am going to read only part of the article.

"To school at dawn, home at midnight. That is the written motto of many students attending Toco Composite.

I presume this can apply to any child who is going to one of those schools.

"News viewers last Tuesday night, sat up when the announcer reported that students of the school were stranded due to no transport. Parents are being asked to make arrangements to fetch their children at 7.30 p.m.

'At times students remain at school much later than 7.30 p.m. up to 10 p.m. and once or twice even midnight, before something can be sent to take them home,' said Lennox Charlerie, Vice Principal.

Students of such rural schools must often travel many miles for their education. They have the same workload of homework, revision and preparing for exams as others with timely private transport. Yet for too many of them it's a strain just to reach to the school gates. And the sole bus service is overcrowded and not sufficient to cater for all children.

'Transport is proving to be the greatest test of many children's school days. It contributes to irregular attendance and even the rate of school drop-outs. About ten students drop out in a given school year,' said Charlerie.

Hermit Mungo, a form two student of Toco Composite, said she is awake at 4 a.m. every morning in her attempt to get to school."

Madam Speaker: That is Toco Composite School. You are dealing with Sangre Grande, Biche and Rio Claro.

Mr. K. Jurai: This person is from Tamana. This is in my constituency.

Madam Speaker: No, hon. Member, you are doing a disservice to yourself! It is the Government's failure to provide the maxi-taxi school transport concession in Sangre Grande, Biche, Rio Claro and Mayaro. I thought you would have

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highlighted what was happening in your area, so that the hon. Minister would then target your area and decide what he would do with that. You are talking about Toco Composite. Let somebody else deal with that.

Mr. K. Jurai: madam speaker, if you would bear with me you would see the point I am making, and I am going to repeat it.

“Hermit Mungo, a Form Two student of Toco Composite, said she is awake at 4 a.m. every morning in her attempt to get to school”.

Madam Speaker: That is Toco Composite!

Mr. K. Jurai: I continue “Mungo, who lives in Tamana, lamented:...”

She lives in my constituency and has to travel to Toco and that is why I am asking for transport to take the children to school.

“It is really hard, I have to leave home at 5 a.m. on mornings”.

Tamana is in my constituency. That is what I am talking about. Nariva has no secondary school—none whatsoever.

“It is really hard. I leave home at 5 a.m. on mornings to get the bus to Sangre Grande, and if the bus breaks down I have to get back to Tamana.’

Mungo never gets to school before 8.30 or 8.45 a.m. Her sojourn takes three and a half hours one way. On afternoons she tries to find her way back to Sangre Grande, sometimes arriving at 8 p.m. usually later. This is her deepest fear, for the last taxi to Tamana from Sangre Grande leaves at about 7 p.m. ‘Then I have to call my mother, and she sends someone for me in Sangre Grande, and sometimes I reach home at midnight.’”

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member, has one minute more.

Mr. K. Jurai: Yes, Madam Speaker, I expect the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance to say that the cost is exorbitant to provide for all children throughout the country, but I should imagine it is the role of the Government, and you cannot provide maxi taxis for some areas and not provide for my area. There must be equality for children throughout the country. I am hoping that the Minister of Education would respond very positively to me here this evening. Thank you.

The Minister of Education (Hon. Augustus Ramrekersingh): Madam Speaker, prior to 1995, school transport was the responsibility of the PTSC. As of 1995, it has become the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

What we have been doing is taking over the transport system that was run by the PTSC as well as the maxi-taxi system. We are now in a state of transition. We are putting in place all that existed before. We are also examining the areas of weakness. But I want to say that it is not possible to have transport for every single child.

In the first place there is the overall question of cost. Secondly, we looked at the density of the population in relation to people going to school. You cannot hire an entire maxi taxi to take three persons.

So that we are looking, in fact, at areas of weakness which within the constraints of our resources we will try to remedy, and it has nothing to do with any particular area.

In fact, at present, we are looking at the Marac/La Lune area in relation to Princes Town; and we then have to look at the Mayaro area in relation at the schools around.

So that the best news I have for the hon. members is that we are seeking to expand what we inherited, but we are limited by: one, the moneys available to us; two, population density; and three, in some areas no persons with maxi taxis are willing to accept the concessions. We shall have to look for alternatives.

So that, progressively, during the course of the year, I expect improvement. But I cannot promise 100 per cent. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 7.43 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

YTEPP (Funding)

The following question was asked by Mr. Ramesh L. Maharaj (Couva South):

- 36.** (a) Could the Minister of Education state whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was funded by any agency or agencies to implement the Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP)? If it was so funded, could the Government give the name or names of the agencies and the amounts contributed?

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- (b) Could the Minister state whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago contributed to the funding of YTEPP and, if so, give the details of same?
- (c) Could the Minister indicate if use was put to the funds received and, if so, state the purposes for which they were used, giving the amounts spent and the purposes for which they were spent?
- (d) If moneys were used to pay salaries and rental of any buildings, could the Minister give particulars of the location of the buildings, the posts of the personnel and the amounts paid in respect of each?
- (e) Could the Minister state whether moneys were used by officials of the programme for foreign travel and, if so, please give the names of the officials and the purposes of the travel?
- (f) Could the Minister state whether retired public servants were employed in the programme and/or are employed in the programme and, if so, whether unemployed persons could not have done the jobs performed by the retired public servants?
- (g) Could the Minister give a summary of the activities of the programme?

The following reply was circulated by the Minister of Education (Hon. A. Ramrekersingh):

- (a) The Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme is being funded from the proceeds of a loan of US \$20.7 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD – World Bank) to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.
As of November 30, 1994, the drawdown on this loan was US \$9.8 million.
- (b) The Government of Trinidad and Tobago provides counterpart funding of US \$11.2 million for the YTEPP project. The date, the Government's contribution totals US \$5.0 million.
- (c) The funds so far received were used for the purchase of capital goods and other related expenses for the implementation of the programme. The following represents the categories of expenses for each year in which the programme has been funded.

Programme Elements	1991	1992	1993	Year to 1994	Total to Date
Goods and Services	1,505,989	6,585,056	8,129,771	3,025,514	19,246,330

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Programme Elements	1991	1992	1993	Year to 1994	Total to Date
Training and Supervision	1,009,646	2,081,910	2,852,158	2,306,481	8,250,189
Staff and Tutors' Salaries	11,140,162	7,699,837	9,217,249	7,819,558	35,846,806
Technical Asst.	255,181	495,451	500,330	293,800	1,544,762
Administration	2,801,500	2,665,928	3,529,924	2,075,746	11,073,098
TOTAL	16,712,472	19,498,182	24,229,432	15,521,099	75,971,185

d) YTEPP is currently renting the following facilities at the amounts shown:

No.	Facility	Amount per	No. of	Salaries per
1.	Warehouse at Industrial Estate	8,235.03	2	4,683,40
2.	Head Office - Guardian Bldg. St. Vincent St., POS	18,542.03	60	209,031.00
3.	South Regional Office Coffee Street, San F' do	2,000.00	6	17,526.00
4.	North/Central Regional Office	4,500.00	6	21,353.00
5.	East Regional Office	5,000.00	7	26,206.00
6.	Area Advisory Office - Eastern Main Road, Sangre Grande	660.00	1	1,000.00
7.	Tobago District Office - Scarborough, Tobago	660.00	5	13,916.00

e) The following persons travelled overseas on company business for the reasons shown:

Company Official	Destination	Date	Purpose of Visit
National Co-ordinator, Vocational Skills Training	Sutton Surrey United Kingdom	1992	To attend the public bid opening for the procurement of tools, equipment and

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Company Official	Destination	Date	Purpose of Visit
			materials under World Bank Loan #3328TR
Head, Research Evaluation and Documentation	New Orleans, USA	1993	To present research paper on YTEP Programme to Southern Conference of American Economic Assoc.
Head, Public Relations National Co-ordinator, Post Training and Support Services	Conference of Overseas Nationals of T'dad & T'go Washington,	1993	To establish partnership support for YTEP Programme
Chairman and one Director/Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education	Sweden	1994	To visit with AMU- a training institution in Sweden.
Community Project Co-ordinator	Flint, Michigan, USA	1994	To attend a one (1) week workshop in community development methodology.
National Co-ordinator-Career Enhancement	Washington USA	1994	To attend workshop in development of new approaches to career enhancement methodology.

- f) In the earlier years of the programme, a number of retired public servants were employed by the company in both full-time and part-time positions.

At the present time, there are no retired persons on the permanent establishment; however, there are approximately nine such persons employed in field positions on a part-time basis out of a total establishment of approximately 1,000 staff, that is, less than 1 per cent employed on a part-time basis in field positions in technical areas and they bring to the programme particular skills that are needed and that are not readily available in the marketplace.

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- g) YTEPP was started in 1988 under the aegis of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs as a social intervention to address the high incidence of youth unemployment in the country at the time. A limited liability company, YTEPP Limited was incorporated under the Companies Ordinance, Chapter 31 in October 1990 to manage the programme.

The training is conducted on a part-time basis over a nine-month school year from October to July of the following year. Classes are held on evenings using existing school plant throughout the country. Career enhancement and vocational skills training is conducted in four skill areas ranging from food preparation to garment construction, agriculture to applied arts, auto mechanics, metal fabrication, beauty culture and craft. An average of about 100 courses are offered in any given cycle. Some portion of the students are exposed to micro-entrepreneurship training.

Since 1988, YTEPP Limited has trained approximately 67,252 young persons between 18 and 25 years. Of these, 38,198 or 56.8 per cent completed the full programme. Of those who did not complete the programme, a significant number (23 per cent) of the younger group returned to the formal school system to continue their studies, while 23.9 per cent of the more mature trainees left the programme permanently to take up employment (usually because of the newly-acquired skill).