

*Leave of Absence**Wednesday, September 27, 1995***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

The House met at 1.33 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have granted leave to the Member for Couva North (Mr. B. Panday) to be absent from today's sitting.

**PAPER LAID**

Report of the Auditor General on the accounts and financial statements for the year ended December 31, 1994 of the Programme in accordance with the Non-Reimbursable Technical Co-operation Agreement ATN/SF-3388-TT between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter-American Development Bank. [*The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Hon. Wendell Mottley)*]

*To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.*

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper:*

**Media Time for Opposition**

**89.** Would the hon. Prime Minister indicate:

- (a) Whether Government has taken or intends to take steps to ensure that the official Opposition in Parliament obtains state-sponsored media time to express its views on Government's actions?
- (b) The sums of money the Government spent on public relations and media time since it got into office? [*Mr. R. L. Maharaj*]

**Playing Fields Under Five Acres**

**96.** Would the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs state:

- (a) How many playing fields in this country are under five acres in size?
- (b) Whether such playing fields would be enhanced to encourage sporting activities?

- (c) If not, what alternative arrangements would be made for the members of such sporting communities? *[Mr. R. Palackdharrysingh]*

**Project Pride  
(Status)**

- 143.** Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government state what is the status of Project Pride at Piarco Airport since the turning of the sod almost one year ago? *[Mr. R. Hanoomansingh]*

**Application for Citizenship/Resident Status  
(Asians)**

- 160.** (a) Could the hon. Minister of National Security state the number of persons who resided in, or were citizens of, the Republic of China, Taiwan or Hong Kong, who have been granted citizenship and/or resident status in Trinidad and Tobago since his Government took office in 1991?
- (b) Could he provide the names of these persons, the dates of their applications and the dates of the grant of status?
- (c) Could the Minister state what criteria, if any, were used in the granting of these applications?
- (d) Could the Minister state whether any of these persons were issued with Trinidad and Tobago passports and, if so, how many?
- (e) Could he also indicate whether any of these persons migrated to the United States of America after coming to Trinidad and Tobago? If so, could he say how many, and how long after their grant of status did they migrate? *[Mr. R. L. Maharaj]*

**Road Repairs  
(Princes Town Constituency)**

- 167.** (a) Would the hon. Minister of Works and Transport state whether his ministry has any plans to repair the following roads in the Princes Town constituency:
- (i) Mandingo Road;
- (ii) Robertson Road?
- (b) If the reply is in the affirmative, would the Minister state:
- (i) Type of repairs planned for each project.

- (ii) Estimated cost of repairs for each project.
- (iii) When will the repairs begin on each project.
- (iv) Anticipated date of completion of each project? [*Mr. M. Haniff*]

**Crime Wave—Central Trinidad  
(Relief Plans)**

- 170.** (a) Could the hon. Minister of National Security please state whether he is aware of the recent crime wave in Central Trinidad? If he is aware, could he state what his Government intends to do to provide security and safety for the people of Central Trinidad?
- (b) Could the Minister state in respect of each police station in Trinidad and Tobago, the number of police vehicles that are required for the police to discharge its duties, and the number that is provided at each station for it to perform its duties?
- (c) Could the Minister state the number of police officers required at each police station in Trinidad and Tobago for the police to discharge its functions and duties, and the number of officers attached to each station in order for it to perform its functions and duties? [*Mr. R. L. Maharaj*]

**Queen's Park Savannah/Whitehall  
(Cleaning and Renovation Costs)**

- 176.** Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government state:
- (a) How much money has been spent in 1994 and to date in 1995 on cleaning the Queen's Park Savannah?
  - (b) How much money has been spent from 1992 to date on the renovation of Whitehall, Maraval Road? [*Mr. T. Sudama*]

**National Agricultural Marketing  
and Development Corporation  
(Cost of Operation)**

- 182.** Could the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources state:
- (a) The cost of operation of the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation on an annual basis, from the date of its establishment to the present?

- (b) In what tangible manner, and to what extent, if any, has the corporation promoted agricultural marketing or agricultural development in Trinidad and Tobago?
- (c) Whether in view of its performance record, this corporation should continue to function as presently constituted? *[Mr. T. Sudama]*

**Former Union Park Racing Facilities  
(Development of)**

**185.** Could the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources state:

- (a) What plans are in place for the full development of the former Union Park racing facilities which were handed over to Government when centralized racing was introduced in Trinidad and Tobago?
- (b) What specific sporting facilities are to be established on the site?
- (c) How much funds will be utilized on the project?
- (d) When will commencement take place? *[Mr. G. Hanoomansingh]*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**

**Goods and Services  
(Allocation and Expenditure)**

- 193.** (a) Would the hon. Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government state the sum allocated to, and the sum expended by, the respective districts of the Ministry of Works and Transport for goods and services for the years 1993, 1994 and 1995 under the different heads:
- (i) Recurrent Expenditure.
  - (ii) Development.
  - (iii) Road Improvement Fund?
- (b) Would the Minister also provide the allocation and expenditure for each transport section in the respective districts for the same period as mentioned above? *[Mr. M. Haniff]*

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the questions on the Order Paper today, the Government are able to answer questions Nos. 174, 180, 181 and 190. We are requesting a deferral of two weeks for the other questions.

*Leave granted.*

*Written Answer to Question*

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

**Mr. Robinson:** Did I hear a request for question No. 180 to be deferred for one week?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No. question No. 180 will be taken today. Question 174 will be the first one.

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

##### **New Police Station (Princes Town)**

**174. Mr. Mohammed Haniff** (*Princes Town*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Would the hon. Minister please state when construction of the new police station in Princes Town will commence?

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. John Eckstein):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, onstruction of a new police station on the site of the existing Princes Town Police Station will commence late December or early January next year.

Cabinet has approved funding from the 1995 Development Programme of the Ministry of National Security for the preparation of detailed design drawings and the preparation of tender documents.

Construction work is expected to last 9 months.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** Would the Minister state whether or not adequate provisions have been made for the housing of the police contingent in Princes Town?

**Dr. Rowley:** They will all be sent home.

**Hon. J. Eckstein:** When construction starts, I am absolutely certain that, as has been the case in the past, adequate arrangements will be made for housing the persons who now occupy the facilities.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** The Minister is not sure.

##### **Foreign Investment Act (Compliance with)**

**180. Mr. A. N. R. Robinson** (*Tobago East*) asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

Will the hon. Minister of Finance inform this House:-

- (i) What steps, if any, have been taken by the Government to ensure that foreign investors in Tobago and their legal advisors comply with the provisions of the Foreign Investment Act?

- (ii) Does the Minister propose to make orders and/or regulations as provided for by sections 6 and 9 of this Act? If not, will the Minister state his reasons?

**The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Hon. Wendell Mottley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, sections 13 and 15 of the Foreign Investment Act, 1990 spell out clearly the penalties for breaches of the Act including forfeitures of shares and land as well as fines. In the circumstances, any foreign investor and/or his legal advisor who is found guilty of breaches of the provisions of the Act is subject to these penalties.

No additional measures have been taken to ensure that foreign investors in Tobago comply with provisions of the Act. However, any information that is brought to the attention of the Ministry of Finance regarding possible breaches of the law, will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate legal action taken when necessary.

**1.40 p.m.**

The Standing Committee on Industry and Services is currently evaluating proposals for designating areas in Trinidad and Tobago as areas in which a foreign investor may not acquire land without obtaining a prior licence.

**Mr. Robinson:** What steps does the Government take to ensure that the promised investment does, in fact, take place?

**Hon. W. Mottley:** TIDCO, which is a private sector agency of the Government, has been specifically charged with going especially to sites in Tobago where such approvals have been granted to investigate what action has taken place there.

**Mr. Robinson:** Another supplemental question. Can the Minister then say that action has been taken in accordance with the promises in every case?

**Hon. W. Mottley:** I cannot, at this stage, make a clear reply on that. I have asked TIDCO for the specifics on their findings.

**Government Sponsorship Programme  
(MB.BS Course)**

**181.** Mr. Chandresh Sharma on behalf of Mr. T. Sudama asked the Minister of Planning and Development:

Could the hon. Minister state:

- (a) Why the Government sponsorship programme of Trinidad and Tobago students (other than scholarship winners) entering the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery courses (MB.BS) at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, has been discontinued?
- (b) The date when this decision was taken?
- (c) Whether the Government considered the consequences of this action in light of the unavailability of doctors to fill junior positions in the various health institutions?

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government Sponsorship Programme of Trinidad and Tobago students (other than scholarship winners) entering the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery courses at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, was discontinued in the following circumstances.

On the establishment of the Mt. Hope Facility in the 1989/90 academic year, Government undertook responsibility for the scholarship/sponsorship of 47 Trinidad and Tobago nationals comprising 41 MBBS students; 2 DDS and 4 DVM students to the full amount of their fees at a total cost of \$7,345,382. All other Trinidad and Tobago nationals totalling 45 had to pay the full cost of their programmes.

In the 1990/91 academic year, the intake of scholarship/sponsorship students was 45, increasing the number of Government scholarship winners and sponsored students for whom the tuition fees were paid to '92, while 30 new self-financing students entered, increasing this category to 75. By the 1992/93 academic year, the number of scholarship winners/sponsored students had risen to 180 and the number of self-financing students to 154.

As a result of complaints received from the self-financing nationals, in the 1992/93 academic year the Government introduced a programme of subsidies which totalled \$4,937,931 detailed as follows:

- (a) Year III students (1991/92 academic year) subsidy of 50 per cent of fees amounting to \$1,202,750;

- (b) Years I and II students (1992/93 academic year) subsidy of \$10,000 amounting to \$1,500,000;
- (c) Years III and IV students (1992/93 academic year) subsidy of 50 per cent of fees amounting to \$2,235,181.

In the 1993/94 academic year the Government reviewed its position with regard to the payment of subsidies and decided that in light of the fact that nationals were being subsidized at different rates in the medical faculty (sponsored 100 per cent, other years 50 per cent subsidy or \$10,000 subsidy) it would be more equitable if it treated all non-scholarship holders who were Trinidad and Tobago nationals equally.

Government, therefore, agreed that, since its commitment to pay full fees was only in respect of the scholarship winners, it would cease sponsorship and instead subsidize all other Trinidad and Tobago nationals to the extent of 50 per cent of the economic cost of their programmes. This decision was taken on November 18, 1993.

The Government has considered the consequences of its actions. In fact, this new approach to the payment of tuition fees for Trinidad and Tobago students attending the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex has resulted in an increase in the number of nationals pursuing medical sciences and has, indeed, increased the cost to the Government.

Whereas for the academic year 1989/1990 the cost to the Government was \$7,001,032, by the academic year 1994/95, with the subsidy for nationals in full effect, the cost to the Government was \$22,050,504 comprising \$13,223,292 as contribution and \$8,827,212 as subsidy for the self-financing national students. The Government has, therefore, spent much more than initially projected for the medical faculty at Mt. Hope, and by doing so, it has facilitated the education of a greater number of nationals at the Faculty of Medical Sciences.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

### **Commencement of Repairs (Mohess /Lachoo Roads)**

**190. Mr. Chandresh Sharma** (*Siparia*) asked the Minister of Works and Transport:

Will the hon. Minister indicate to this House:

- (a) When his ministry will commence repair works on Mohess Road as promised earlier this year in this House?



- (b) When will repairs commence on Lachoos Road, Penal, under the Road Improvement Fund Programme as promised earlier?

**The Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mohess Road is a local road which falls within the purview of the Penal/Debe Regional Corporation. The road commences at the 5.59 m.m. along the SS Erin Road and proceeds east for a distance of 4 km. The road has an average traffic of about 500 comprised mainly of cars and a small percentage (5 per cent) of heavy goods vehicles. It services approximately 1,000 houses and one school. It is also used as an alternative road to Barrackpore, when conditions permit.

At present the road is in an unsatisfactory condition. The first half of the road was constructed along the banks of the Curamata River and therefore prone to landslides. At present there are seven landslides on the road all of which have affected sections of the roadway. Apart from this, there has been the laying of approximately two miles of 150 millimetre PVC water mains.

Proper reinstatement of these trenches by the residents has not been done to date and efforts have been made to provide temporary relief using a combination of oil-sand and asphalt. To date a total of one mile has been sealed, but not properly, and with exposure to rain and traffic, the repaired section has deteriorated substantially. The road requires major rehabilitation. A Stage A estimate for the repair work stands at \$6 million broken down as follows:

Seven landslides	—	\$2 million;
Road repair works	—	\$4 million
		_____
Total	—	\$6 million
		_____

Under the 1995 Road Improvement Fund Programme, an allocation of \$100,000 is made to repair critical sections of the road and these are now scheduled to commence in October, 1995.

Lachoos Road, Penal, is one of the local roads being considered for repair under the 1995 Road Improvement Fund (Local Roads) Programme.

**1.50 p.m.**

#### ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Minister of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move, that the

*Arrangement of Business*  
[HON. K. VALLEY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

House now consider Private Motions, 11 and 12 at page 11 of the Order Paper before consideration of Government Business.

*Assent indicated.*

**UNIVERSAL AFRICAN IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
(INC'N) BILL**

**Senate Amendment**

**Mr. Jarette Narine** (*Arouca North*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Senate amendment to the Universal African Improvement Association (Inc'n) Bill, 1992, listed at Appendix 1, be now considered.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 3.*

*Senate amendment read as follows:*

"A. Delete subclause 3(a)

B. Reletter subclauses (b) to (g), as (a) to (f)."

**Mr. Narine:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move, that this House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (INC'N) BILL**

**Senate Amendment**

**Mr. Jarette Narine** (*Arouca North*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Senate amendment to the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee (Inc'n) Bill, listed in Appendix II, be now considered.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 3.*

*Senate amendment reads as follows:*

""In paragraph (j), delete the word 'absolute', appearing in line one.

**Mr. Narine:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House doth agree with the Senate in the said amendment. "

*Question proposed.*

*Olympic Committee (Inc'n) Bill*

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the House now consider Bill No. 1 on the Order Paper before a consideration of the Motions.

*Assent indicated.*

**COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
(PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES) BILL**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Hon. Wendell Mottley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move,

That the Commonwealth Development Corporation Privileges and Immunities Bill be now read a second time.

Sir, I rose in this House several weeks earlier on a similar Bill to confer the same privileges on a similar international institution. It was then MIGA. I now seek the approval of this House to confer these advantages and privileges on the Commonwealth Development Corporation.

The Commonwealth Development Corporation, more popularly known as the CDC, is a public institution established in 1948 by Act of the British Parliament. It assists overseas countries in their economic development by investing in new or existing enterprises with emphasis on the private sector. It makes equity investments or loans in these predominantly private sector institutions in developing countries.

The CDC is now the UK Government's principal arm of promoting private sector development, especially in the developing countries across all four corners of the globe.

The CDC, therefore, has a very specialist mission. It does not, like the World Bank or the IMF, lend to governments for structural adjustment purposes or for balance of payments support, or anything of this nature. The CDC is rather project-specific and highly concentrated in lending to private sector companies in the developing world.

The CDC has performed well and is a greatly respected institution since its establishment in 1948. The CDC has especially come into its own, following the

period when commercial banks lent heavily to projects and to companies in the developing world, and there developed the great crises of the late 1970s and 1980s, in which there was heavy default on these commercial loans, and thereafter, the private sector retreated from making such loans and investments.

In such circumstances, international investors in private sectors in countries such as ours, found a great problem in attracting international capital to their specific projects. As a result, the pace of development fell off in this area following the crises of the 1970s and 1980s.

The CDC is able, on the strength of its allocations of loans and borrowings from the UK Government and its specific mandate and expertise developed over years, to appraise projects in countries such as ours without the traumatic risk that commercial lenders had experienced. CDC was able to continue making investments in development all over the world despite the debt crisis.

The CDC has adequate levels of funding, because of, as I say, this pipeline from the UK Government. Therefore, the CDC has seen its rate of growth of investments increasing year after year, especially since some of these investments are now sufficiently old and the better ones are paying, sometimes, handsome rates of return.

Thus the CDC is of great interest to Trinidad and Tobago. It measures its investments in terms of their capacity to make a rate of return, but as an essentially government-led institution, it also has social considerations. It looks at a project, not only through the eyes of its commercial return, but it also looks to see the benefit that the country would get. Such benefit might be measured in terms of what is the export potential of the project—does it earn foreign exchange and builds the reserves of the country—and also its potential for employment, lowering of unemployment in the particular country.

**2.00 p.m.**

What has been the history of the CDC in Trinidad and Tobago? The CDC has been very active in this country in the post colonial period. Its current portfolio of investments reflects the corporation's strategy of selecting projects with due regard to their developmental as well as commercial impact. The major CDC investment in Trinidad and Tobago at this time is its investment in Development Finance Limited which it has supported, especially since it was re-oriented by the last government and placed on a firm financial basis.

The CDC, therefore, has been with DFL ever since and has given that institution considerable support. DFL continues to operate satisfactorily and the

CDC has a watching brief on the institution and ensures that it stays on that sound footing on which it is not only, therefore, to render commercial benefit, but also to, generate wider benefits to the community.

The CDC has also played a part in the syndicate financing of the rehabilitation and expansion of the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery, including the refurbishment of the lubricating oil plant for which it has provided flexible funding to the tune of US \$34 million.

The CDC is currently assisting with the advancement of Caroni (1975) Limited's aquaculture project at Orange Grove, and has offered its services in terms of securing a joint venture partner for the project. The corporation introduced Caroni to a Belgium freshwater aquaculture company that was able to advise Caroni (1975) Limited that the location of its present aquaculture project is too limiting, in that it did not cater for the expansion that would be necessary to make the project succeed on a global basis, which is how it would have to survive ultimately.

Therefore, Caroni (1975) Limited is again looking at this project in terms of identifying a much larger acreage which would allow this company—Gabriel S. A. from Belgium—to joint venture with Caroni to set up a world-scale aquaculture project which could then get CDC funding in terms of equity and loan support, and at the same time have the capability to be commercially successful on a major export basis.

The Government has also been having discussions with CDC in terms of providing support equity and loans for other utility-type ventures in this country.

On January 19, 1994, Trinidad and Tobago signed an agreement relating to operating conditions for the CDC. The agreement embodied certain privileges and immunities which would facilitate the CDC to carry out its function in this country. This agreement would come into effect subject to parliamentary approval of the Bill which is now before this House.

The terms of the Bill, therefore, as I have indicated, are very similar to what we do for all such international agencies—Omega, IFC and others are in the same vein.

The Bill confers on the CDC and its employees a legal personality and capacity in Trinidad and Tobago, and grants to the CDC, its employees and agencies making payment to the CDC, exemption from taxes, import and export duties and measures of similar effect. It also exempts the CDC from the requirements to be

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[HON. W. MOTTLEY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

licensed under the Moneylenders Act or the Financial Institutions Act and to be registered under the Companies Ordinance.

Further, the Bill provides that the exemptions and privileges extended to the CDC may be granted to any wholly-owned subsidiary of the corporation approved in writing for this purpose by the Minister of Finance.

There is precedent for this Bill and, certainly, the aims and objectives of the CDC are in alignment with Government policy; and the history of the operation of this institution in Trinidad and Tobago is entirely commendable.

Therefore, I ask the House to support the Bill before us in full measure.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh** (*Caroni Central*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course, within recent times, as the Minister of Finance has indicated, we have seen many organizations being granted certain privileges and immunities. Whenever such an organization is proposed in this Parliament by a Bill of this nature, it suggests that such immunities and privileges cannot be granted under the normal provisions of Chap. 17:01—especially the Fifth Schedule.

One has to ask whether or not there are certain well thought out diplomatic procedures before these privileges and immunities are granted. It is all well and good to say, "Look, we have entered into agreement with an organization; its policies and programmes seem to be in keeping with those of Trinidad and Tobago, therefore it must be given the sort of privileges and immunities that international organizations of repute are given."

The question is: Where will this end? We are yet to see some of the very tangible results from some of these organizations. If, as the Minister of Finance indicated, the CDC has worked well in this country for several years without the need for such provisions, I am afraid he has not been able to persuade us that this is really necessary.

This is crucial because when one grants organizations these immunities and privileges, in fact, one is creating a sort of mini-state of that foreign power in one's own land. Therefore, one is giving up a small measure of sovereignty. When that is being done, there must be justification for it.

**2.10 p.m.**

There is insufficient justification, except to say that it is an economic project keeping in line with what the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is following.

Clause 7 of the Bill gives expatriate employees all the benefits of Schedule 5, Chap. 17:01. The corporation does not have the same immunities and privileges and there seems to be some inconsistency since it means that while the employees of the corporation are shielded by immunity from suit and legal process, the organization itself is not similarly immune.

Again, we see a sort of inconsistency in the Bill in that the inviolability of the residence can be conferred on certain senior officials of the Commonwealth Development Corporation but the office of the organization is not so protected. I trust that the Government would explain that sort of inconsistency in the Bill.

Yes, the Minister has admitted that this organization, unlike organizations of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, has a social concern. We on this side want to know how the project spoken about is going to impact upon the social problems of our people.

Before these privileges and immunities are granted, what sort of social relief is it going to provide for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, and in what areas? That has to be critical for us because, if that is the case, it is important for us to know. We are experiencing, as never before, some of the most severe conditions that affect the human person in terms of its security and welfare.

The Commonwealth Development Corporation Act of 1978 to be found in *Halsbury's Statutes of England*, Volume 48, page 45, tells us about the purpose and the powers but, under those powers of the corporation are listed:

- "(a) to investigate and formulate projects for the promotion or expansion in overseas countries of new or existing enterprises falling within section (3) 1..."

But enterprises to which their corporation relates are enterprises like:

- "(a) agricultural enterprises, including any enterprise concerned with the livestock industry, with horticulture, or with forestry;
- (b) enterprises concerned with fisheries, including any enterprise relating to the taking of marine mammals;
- (c) enterprises for the working or getting of minerals;
- (d) industrial enterprises; and others."

It is important that the particular enterprises within the parameters of the Commonwealth Development Corporation be identified to the Parliament, and,

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. PALACKDHARRYSINGH]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

the evaluation, indicating what sort of benefits would come the way of Trinidad and Tobago before it embarks upon the granting of these immunities.

Yes, the Commonwealth Development Corporation is also designed to generate positive return from its investments. That means it is not really a welfare agency, and because of this certain exemptions would be looked for. I do not believe we can be satisfied as to exactly what is to be done, how it is going to impact upon this country, except to say, here goes another organization or corporation being granted privileges and immunities that ought to be accorded to international organizations.

The question is: If the granting of these privileges cannot be justified, where will this practice stop? The precedent has started and it seems that it will continue along the way. We wait to hear some of the details of the proposals..

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Chandresh Sharma** (*Fyzabad*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in presenting the Bill, the Minister indicated very briefly the history of the Commonwealth Development Corporation. The Minister told this House that the Commonwealth Development Corporation has a history of being very successful in its participation in countries—it is at this time in more than 50 countries.

When we examine some of the investments we see the Commonwealth Development Corporation having tremendous success in the area of power and water. The question that comes to mind is: In the recent invitation for partnership in the Water and Sewerage Authority, why was the Commonwealth Development Corporation not consulted?

It was very clear, as was said by the Member for Caroni Central, that the Commonwealth Development Corporation pays its way, it takes care of its investments making sure that the investments do, in fact, bring some degree of return. But in the case of the Water and Sewerage Authority we saw an external partner coming in the name of Severn-Trent whose history is very questionable.

We ask the question: Why was the Commonwealth Development Corporation not consulted in this particular instance? Also, in the case of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission with the coming of PowerGen, again, was the Commonwealth Development Corporation consulted? We have also seen in recent times the Commonwealth Development Corporation's involvement in hotels. In Tobago, for instance, there is significant participation in the building of hotels.



My own investigation indicates that there is no Commonwealth Development Corporation intervention at this time. The other area that comes to my mind is: Why has the Government not approached the Commonwealth Development Corporation, which is 47-years old at this point, for assistance on a number of projects? One of the answers that come to mind is that the Commonwealth Development Corporation does not grant loans.

We have seen in many instances where the Government has granted loans which have been misappropriated, and there is absolutely no attempt by the Government to invite CDC participation.

The Minister indicated that CDC is playing some role in the Pointe-a-Pierre project, which is only about a year old. But for the last 40 years—except when the CDC got involved with the Development Finance Corporation—the question has been: Where else has it invested? There was some investment in the Caribbean Tyre Company some years ago, a very small one at that.

In the absence of other investments we are not quite satisfied that the Government is utilizing the services of the Commonwealth Development Corporation. Also, we have seen the success of CDC in the area of housing. Trinidad and Tobago has an acute housing shortage and many citizens in this country complain about the high cost of housing. They also complain about the difficulty in obtaining loans and technical advice. While I am certain that the National Housing Authority will be doing its part, the fact of the matter is that the Commonwealth Development Corporation has a wealth of resources available.

In the area of agriculture in recent times, in many countries as far as Africa and the Philippines, the Commonwealth Development Corporation is playing an important role. Since we are trying to attract the North American market in addition to the European market for the export of our agricultural produce, we find it very strange that the Government has not engaged the services of the Commonwealth Development Corporation in this regard.

**2.20 p.m.**

We would hope, in lending support to this Bill, that the Minister would let us know what are the projections for the coming years. It is very instructive to note, and the Minister did make the point, that the Commonwealth Development Corporation came out of the United Kingdom by an Act and it has become the United Kingdom Government's agent for promoting private investment and being very successful at it. It pays its way.

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. SHARMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

What is the parallel organization in Trinidad and Tobago, if one does exist? If, in fact, one does exist, what kind of moneys have we been spending and what are the returns? Our information is that very little is happening in that area. We are spending large sums of money and we are not seeing the returns. We are sending missions all over the world, we are engaging the services of lobbyists but we are not seeing the returns. Perhaps it is a good time for the Government to examine its own agenda and be required to set up a similar outfit that can bring to Trinidad and Tobago similar benefits as the CDC is bringing.

When the Minister mentioned the default of commercial loans, one has to ask the question: Why did that happen, and to what extent? One of the answers that are available is the poor assistance by the Government; the lack of initiative taken by the Government to assist companies in Trinidad and Tobago. I hope that the Minister would assist us in that regard.

**Mr. Trevor Sudama** (*Oropouche*) Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have little problem in supporting the immunities proposed under this legislation. The Member for Ortoire/Mayaro seems to be in very high spirits this afternoon, but then he has no concern about anything in this House or outside it. I am therefore not surprised that this is an occasion for mirth on his part.

We are discussing very critical issues in this Parliament with respect to the development of the economy, something which is of little concern to the other side, once they feel that they can approach the next general election and hope to win as has been the case over the past 35 years.

The Member for Barataria/San Juan, this constant "steupser" in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, whose own performance both in her previous ministry and in her current ministry—

**Dr. Baboolal:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** What is your point of order?

**Dr. Baboolal:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Member sits I will tell him.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Would the hon. Member for Oropouche take his seat. Would the hon. Minister state her point of order.

**Dr. Baboolal:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was not even paying attention to the Member speaking, far less to "steups" and I will not have that remark directed to me any more. It seems as though the Members on that side have a listening or a hearing problem.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, please, I think we could conduct the affairs of this House without going to that level. As the Member said, we are debating an important Bill and I feel we can keep the standards up in the process.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are debating a serious issue, but when one is confronted with the reaction from the other side, this is the problem one has. Anyway, I will ignore her as her party is ignoring her.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I hope that the Member would proceed with the Bill at hand.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question of the relationship of the Commonwealth Development Corporation to our own economy is an issue here. The Member for St. Ann's East went to some length to talk about the role of the Commonwealth Development Corporation and the kind of investment it made in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, its history of involvement in this country, and that is very important to discuss, once the Member has raised that issue.

It is not a question of granting immunity to the employees of this corporation; it is a question of, where do we locate the Commonwealth Development Corporation in our external strategy of development?

The Commonwealth Development Corporation emerged from the Colonial Development Corporation. The Colonial Development Corporation was a paternalistic organization, as its name suggests. I hope that the Commonwealth Development Corporation has not inherited the paternalism of the Colonial Development Corporation. That is the first issue I want to address: its whole perspective of how it should relate to formerly dependant colonial territories.

Secondly, while we have had a colonial relationship with the United Kingdom—we have had a special relationship with respect to certain trading patterns—how has that influenced the operation of the Commonwealth Development Corporation in its dealings with us? From time to time we have people coming from the Overseas Development Office of the United Kingdom Government and carrying on with a public relations exercise—we have been on such good terms with the "mother" country and that should give us some kind of leverage in the operations of Trinidad and Tobago's economy in the offer of contracts.

How has Wimpey, a British firm, been awarded contracts here? Through pressures applied by the Overseas Development Office of the United Kingdom Government. This is something we would like to get investigated, but there is no mechanism of investigation under our present parliamentary system.

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. SUDAMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

We ask certain questions here; they are never answered and this excuse we have for media in Trinidad and Tobago will not raise and investigate these issues as to how these companies come in here, what is their background, their manipulation which causes them to get contracts, which, on any free basis, they would probably not have been awarded. It is what one might consider a legacy of a colonial relationship which seems to have come down to us in our independence era.

**2.30 p.m.**

And not only Wimpey. How, in fact, are they operating at the upgrading of the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery? Serious questions need to be asked, serious levels of corruption are involved. What has been the background of companies getting these contracts which should be under some sort of investigation? We do not know.

The Commonwealth Development Corporation was supposed to work through, and, in association with, the Development Finance Company of Trinidad and Tobago—I think the previous name was the Development Finance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago.

When you look at the performance of the Development Finance Corporation, when you look at the reasons why it had to be restructured and in its restructuring, hundreds of millions of dollars had to be written off because the Development Finance Corporation was in the habit of lending money to non-viable projects and companies, you are forced to ask, why was this so?

Today, if we had a properly functioning parliamentary system the performance of the Development Finance Corporation would have been before the public of Trinidad and Tobago to understand and investigate why that corporation had to be restructured with of hundreds of millions of dollars having to be written off.

When those moneys were written off, whichever foreign entities were involved with the Development Finance Corporation had to be paid . We had to meet our obligations to the foreign organizations, so, however one looks at it, we are financing organizations in this country at the expense of the taxpayer without any benefit to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. This has been a pattern for three and a half decades and this is why this economy is in the sorry state it is in now.

We hear all sorts of talk about growth and development, but growth for whom? Poverty levels in the society are rising and they talk about growth and

increasing employment. While there are growth and increasing employment, pauperization and poverty levels in Trinidad and Tobago are rising. How do you account for this? It means that we have an economy in which those who are in a position to benefit, benefit enormously, and those who are not in a position to benefit, join the poverty line.

If the Commonwealth Development Corporation has, in fact, proposed investment in the Trinidad and Tobago Development Finance Company, restructuring aimed at expansion in the areas of tourism, fishing, industrial and food processing sectors, then perhaps the Minister would have indicated to this House what has been the effect of that restructuring and equity investment.

On the expansion in the area of tourism, because of the restructuring of the Trinidad and Tobago Development Finance Corporation, and because of its equity investment from the Commonwealth Development Corporation, you are arguing that there is a restructuring of our local development finance institution to the extent there is expansion in the areas of fishing, tourism, food processing and so forth?

With due respect, I see no such expansion in these areas, particularly when I look at my own constituency, Oropouche. Whatever development—so-called—may be taking place in Trinidad and Tobago, simply does not filter down into the rural areas and particularly into the constituency of Oropouche. It does not. This is a kind of exclusive development taking place in our country.

If Members opposite could point out to me where in my constituency projects like food processing, the infrastructure for agricultural development, fishing or small-scale industrial expansion, have been undertaken, where that has impacted on the constituency of Oropouche or similar rural constituencies in Trinidad and Tobago, I would be delighted.

I am arguing here today that there has been absolutely no impact. As far as we and the people whom we represent are concerned, all this talk about getting investment or attracting investment from the Commonwealth Development Corporation to Trinidad and Tobago has little or no relevance to us.

For example, I wrote to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism. I said if you want to develop internal tourism in Trinidad as against Tobago, in my constituency in the Oropouche Lagoon area you could develop aqua sports, marine parks and many things of that nature.

I wrote in January 1995 as a result of discussions we had in the committee stage in this budget—this is September 1995—and I have not had the courtesy of a response. You understand where we are outside the pale of governmental concern.

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. SUDAMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

I wrote in January 1995 asking for consideration to be given to the development of an industrial estate which will concentrate on food processing in the Oropouche constituency and, to date, there has been no response, simply because, in their perspective, places like Oropouche never counted and will never count.

**Dr. Rowley:** That is not true.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** It will never count as long as they are in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Dr. Rowley:** It is not Oropouche; it is the Member.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** I have the records and one day, I am going to raise a specific question about the exclusion of the Oropouche constituency, or Tabaquite, or any of the other constituencies from the concerns of this Government. So when they talk about restructuring aimed at the expansion of tourism and we are talking about—

**Dr. Baboolal:** Change the representative.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** The Member will be changed just now. She does not have to wait too long, because Jerry Hospedales has been delegated to be—she will be dealt with just now. They have not had any confidence in her in her previous ministry and she could run around from here until thy kingdom come, she is not going to impress the Member for San Fernando East at all.

**Dr. Rowley:** Why is the Member upset? We love Oropouche, but we cannot stand the MP.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, they could come and contest against me in Oropouche any time they wish, they could spend resources however massive. We are talking about issues of national concern here in this Parliament, that is why we have come here.

**Dr. Rowley:** They want a new MP. The Member is a 40-year-old parliamentary disaster.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** A systemic discrimination in the philosophy of the People's National Movement is the reason that constituencies like Oropouche cannot get anything from this Government.

**Dr. Rowley:** Will the Member give way?

**Mr. T. Sudama:** For what?

**Dr. Rowley:** Just for clarification.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** I do not want to get in any row with the Member. I am making a point.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hasten to thank the Member for giving way. Since it is a PNM problem with Oropouche, what did he do for Oropouche between 1986 and 1991—

**Hon. Member:** Nothing!

**Dr. Rowley:** —when the PNM was not in Government?

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Between 1986 and 1991, I was in the Government for eleven months.

**Hon. Member:** For one day.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** All right, for one day. So I was in the Government for one day, and you wanted me to do in one day what you failed to do in three decades. Is that the case? This is your understanding of politics.

**Dr. Rowley:** You were offered a portfolio and you lasted one day; you are no use to man nor beast.

**2.40 p.m.**

**Mr. T. Sudama:** They want me to do in one day what they refused to do in 30 years of PNM rule and now they have come back here, all I am asking—

**Dr. Rowley:** You are of no use to man nor beast.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** The Member for Diego Martin West—

**Dr. Rowley:** I congratulate the Member for Tobago East on getting rid of you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order!

**Mr. T. Sudama:** You understand my problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

**Dr. Rowley:** No good to woman nor beast.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me continue. You understand the difficulty the Member for Diego Martin West has in sitting in this House?

**Dr. Rowley:** Your record is dismal.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** You understand that difficulty, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, I have dealt with him. When the time comes in the future to deal with him again, I shall have no problem with that.

I am talking about expansion in the areas of tourism, fishing, industrial and food processing sectors, where, as a result of the equity injection of the Commonwealth Development Corporation, we should have had some impact on areas in Trinidad and Tobago in which these activities are being carried out.

All I am here saying is that, wherever that impact has been, it has not been on my constituency and very many constituencies which we represent on this side. There has to be a reason for this, Sir.

**Dr. Rowley:** What is the reason?

**Mr. T. Sudama:** There has to be a reason for it, which they know in their hearts. When they sit down and draft policies, programmes and budgets, certain areas are not included in their purview.

**Dr. Rowley:** What is the reason?

**Mr. T. Sudama:** They know the reason for it.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us look at the other area in which there was equity injection—the Caribbean Tyre Company Limited. The Commonwealth Development Corporation made an equity injection into that company. With what effect? If they made an injection there, it had to be on the basis of some feasibility study carried out which indicated that the operations of the tyre company could be viable over a certain period of time. But on what assumption? Was it on the assumption that there would have been some measure of protection for the products of the tyre company? If that is the assumption, what has happened subsequently?

The Government has changed its policy with respect to protection for local manufacturers. As a result, the tyre company has gone into liquidation; in fact, has been taken over—

**Mr. Valley:** That is not correct.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Is it not correct that the Caribbean Tyre Company is no longer a viable commercial proposition?

**Mr. Valley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Caribbean Tyre Company was bought out by the Clico Group. They came and sought EPZ status; the Government



granted them EPZ status and then, even with that, they folded up. It had nothing to do with Government policy. There were other considerations.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Before they were given EPZ status, what were the concessions they were given to operate the tyre company?

**Dr. Rowley:** Monopoly.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** And they still "can't make" after 20 years of monopoly. So on that basis this equity injection in the Caribbean Tyre Company was of little or no value. If it was made in another area of the economy, it might have been a more viable proposition. And they admit that after 20 years they cannot make a proper tyre. Therefore, in any event, Caribbean Tyre Company Limited had to "go through."

What was the consideration behind getting the Commonwealth Development Corporation to make an equity investment in Caribbean Tyre Company Limited?

**Dr. Rowley:** Ask the board.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** What I am arguing is the manner in which foreign investment is influenced to go into different sectors of the economy. That is a critical consideration for the development of this economy. What we are endeavouring to do is to create a more diversified economy. The only way to create that is if you redress the imbalance with respect to investment in the various sectors of the economy.

If they are channelling their investments only into certain areas of the economy and they are telling us here today that they have been channelling those investments into areas of the economy which could not survive, for example Caribbean Tyre Company Limited, then what they are doing is just "spinning top in mud" as far as the proper development of the economy is concerned. This is the crucial point I want to make: that in fact, investment by the Commonwealth Development Corporation in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago under the influence of this present Government is not going to bring us much benefit.

First of all, they must bear in mind that it is not a grant for development purposes. It is an investment on a commercial basis, to bring in a return, and if that investment is being made in sectors of the economy, which, from the very start, are unlikely to bring in a return, be viable, then all they are doing is putting a damper on further investment in the economy. That is all they are doing by the manner in which they attempt to influence, or grant concessions with

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. SUDAMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

respect to investments which might come in through the Commonwealth Development Corporation.

What we are saying here on this side is simply this. When one looks at the geographic area of Trinidad and Tobago, one sees that different areas require different types of investment—both on a geographic basis and a sectoral basis. Therefore, if you have a lot of investment in the petrochemical, energy, or the gas-based sectors, it would directly impact on certain areas of the economy.

It would not impact on Toco/Manzanilla. [*Interruption*] So you agree with me. Therefore, if we are to have general development we must have development in Toco/Manzanilla, which will draw and mobilize the resources available in Toco/Manzanilla, as in the bordering areas.

Similarly with Mayaro, Oropouche, or Caroni. If there is not that kind of perspective with respect to development strategy, we would have billions of dollars flowing through this economy—billions of petroleum-generated revenues and foreign investment coming in here—and it really would not make any significant difference to this economy and the whole question of self-sustained growth.

**2.50 p.m.**

It is a question of having that perspective to start with and then putting it into an operational programme and then utilizing Government policies with respect to incentives, concessions and so forth, in order to influence that investment pattern which will really determine true development in Trinidad and Tobago.

Now you may not be able to influence it fully, but there are instances where you have to, yourself, make direct investment; then you have a direct control. Where you are trying to influence foreign or local private sector investment, you have to operate via the means of influencing that investment through whatever concessions and incentives you may want to grant.

But certainly, you could build 10 LNG plants on the west coast of Trinidad and Tobago and that cannot have the impact of creating sustainable employment throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Because even if you get the revenues from any viable investment, all that happens is that the Government gets the revenues in its own hands and then disburses it on "10-days" employment, or other short-term construction employment. That is not going to impact on any permanent basis on the economy.

I hope that I have made that point to the explicit understanding of the people on the other side who, in fact, do control Government policy. We on this side

have our own view on how we should proceed. I have stated time and time again that Trinidad and Tobago is not a poor country in terms of resources. Our poverty lies in the management of those resources. It is intolerable, in 1995, to have studies done to indicate that the poverty level in Trinidad and Tobago is in excess of 30 per cent. It is grossly intolerable and we have to put the blame where it ought to lie—on those who have had control over the political and economic destiny of Trinidad and Tobago for the last 33 1/2 years. That is where the blame has to be put.

So, today, as we come to discuss the relationship of the Commonwealth Development Corporation and what impact that could have on the development of the local economy, I trust that I have made my point. For example, I spoke about internal tourism and what you need to know in the constituency of Oropouche to develop internal tourism—and the resources are there.

I spoke about fishing, aquaculture. I think the Minister spoke about that. He is the Minister of Finance, and if he understands what the aquaculture programme is right now—it is an area, which, if developed, could provide employment, export earnings for this country, and a substitute form of food. The constituency of Oropouche—we have been making representations decades now—has the prime natural resources for us to develop a form of aquaculture for diversifying the economy and, indeed, diversifying the agricultural sector of this country.

But the Government will come here; it will draw up a Public Sector Investment Programme, it will draw up budgets, and so on, and there is no mention of this. Yet, on the hustings and elsewhere, we are talking about how this economy is growing. In what way? Only in their minds.

The Commonwealth Development Corporation engages in investment for the purpose of developing the infrastructure. Particularly in the constituency of Oropouche, the major elements of infrastructure, the water supply service, the roads and the drainage problems, require a greater input of investment. Today what is happening in the constituency of Oropouche is that 75 per cent of this constituency cannot get a supply of water in a month. Perhaps once in a month they get a supply of water. If you want to assist industrial or agricultural development in a society, I should have thought that the provision of adequate water, would have been an essential prerequisite.

The Commonwealth Development Corporation provides for this in its objectives, but an intolerable situation has emerged in a constituency in Trinidad, which is presumed to be part of that land area of Trinidad and Tobago, where

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. SUDAMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

neither people nor businesses—this morning I got a call from a bakery owner of S.S. Erin Road in Debe who has not had water through the pipeline for three and a half weeks. His recourse has been to pay for truck-borne supplies, which cut into his limited profits, in order to keep his business going.

There is this inconvenience it causes to residents, and the Members opposite come here in this Parliament and behave as if these things are non-existent. Here you have a corporation that has been in the habit of investing in the equity of public utilities for the purpose of expanding and developing them, and we have not had the courtesy to try to avail ourselves of this overseas investment resource.

The policies of this Commonwealth Development Corporation state categorically—and, you know, if those policies were being followed, the people who are affected would have had some kind of consideration given to them. It says here:

"In determining its policies, the Corporation must have particular regard to the interests of the inhabitants of the local territory and where it seems to the Corporation necessary to do so, must appoint committees to keep it informed as to the circumstances and requirements of the local inhabitants."

So if you had that kind of injection of investment, then perhaps the views of the people in Oropouche—if that investment were directed to Oropouche—would have been taken into consideration for the purposes of their own development.

I raise these issues here because you find yourself placed in a very invidious position as a representative in this kind of parliamentary democracy that we have in this country. You are asked to come here to make representations and you come here and make those representations, only to be confronted with a set of "steupsing" and so on, from the other side. That is the level at which the Government treats a representative in this House. Of course, as I said, with regard to the media, nothing we say here is of any import to them. They have their own bacchanal to deal with, and are consumed by their own irrelevancies. So you find yourself in a very invidious position.

**3.00 p.m.**

Where does one go from here? Is the system functioning? Does it make any sense to make representation at all or to go to the various ministries or agencies? My conclusion, as I speak here today, is that unless and until the people of Trinidad and Tobago or a substantial section of them are prepared to take matters

into their hands peacefully or otherwise, nothing would change in Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to relay a message to all concerned, that they take action—either peacefully or otherwise—or nothing would change. We can come here and talk, but we would be talking into the next century, under the present system, and the concerns about development would never be addressed.

How do we change this system? How do we secure development for people, development which is geographically spread across the sectors of Trinidad and Tobago and not only confined to the petroleum, energy and tourism sectors? The tourism sector is an important one, but as far as I am concerned, we should be looking at tourism to meet the demands of foreigners as well as the local people. There should be a reconciliation of the objects of local and foreign tourism in our country. That is of concern to me.

Unless there is a policy that incorporates real development in the agricultural sector, or in small-scale industry, there will not be any significant development. We are going to have growth without employment and growth without development. All we would have is merely growth in figures, statistical growth, that would have no effect on the general masses of this country. This would have no impact throughout the country with respect to other people being part of, or participating in, the effort of growth; as a result of which through their own efforts, they would have secured some measure of development for themselves, and in doing so, the economy would have achieved a measure of sustainable development. This is what we are arguing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have taken the opportunity in this debate on the Commonwealth Development Corporation Bill, which seeks to grant privileges and immunities to those who are employed by the corporation as they are resident in this country, to say that that is a minor aspect of the problem. The problem is really: How does one relate to this organization? How does one induce it to invest here so that there would be true development in Trinidad and Tobago? Those are the questions to be addressed. Those are the questions which the Member for St. Ann's East has alluded to somewhat in his presentation here this afternoon.

It is one of those issues that the Minister of Finance does not take very seriously. He looks at the macro-economic picture, which shows that there is some measure of growth in the economy. That is all he is concerned with. He is not concerned with the composition of that growth, which is critical, whatever it

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. SUDAMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

may be, and how that growth impacts on development and employment creation in the country. His economic, investment and financial strategies do not encompass that kind of thinking.

As a representative of the people of the Oropouche constituency, I have expressed their concerns. The next phase, as I said, is that those concerns, if not addressed, would have to be taken to another stage. That is the organic development of society. If one cannot achieve success at one level, then one has to go to another level in order to achieve it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley)** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the matter before the House is a pretty routine and straightforward one. I rise to take issue with some of the comments made by the last Member who spoke, because, when the record of this Parliament is read at whatever time in the future, it ought not to be devoid of a response to the Member for Oropouche's litany of frustrations.

It is unfortunate that the Member for Oropouche classed the plight or the predicament, as he might call it, of the people of Oropouche with his own personal lack of accomplishment. I, too, might feel some level of frustration and uselessness if I have been in the political arena for 14 years and could not point to a single achievement in party, government or in the street *[Interruption]* Is it 19 years? If there are those in a party or community who would support him for however long he remains in public life, achieving absolutely nothing, that is their right, and I respect it.

When the Member comes to the House and states that it is for the people of this country to choose other methods to have their problems solved, I take issue with that. I would like him to identify the other methods. In fact, the people of this country chose others to run the country and in the forefront of those who were chosen was my good Friend the Member for Oropouche. It was in a matter of hours that the people of this country realized that he was of no use to them.

That Member has the singular distinction of being recognized as a Minister of Government for one day. I want to go on record as congratulating the Member for Tobago East, the then Prime Minister, for his foresight, probably a bit late in the day *[Laughter]* in recognizing the uselessness of some Members and getting rid of them forthwith; otherwise, his tenure might have been even less successful.

**3.10 p.m.**

It is not anybody's fault if one goes through life and can point to no contribution, personal or otherwise. It is not my fault; it is not the PNM's fault; it is not the Government's or the NAR's fault. To come to this House to seek to give the impression that what exists in this country in terms of imbalance between rural and urban, between Oropouche and Port of Spain, has to do with racial considerations—

**Mr. Humphrey:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you consider the contribution insulting? I consider it insulting. The Standing Orders do not permit a Member to insult another.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am surprised that the Member for St. Augustine is insulted when the subject is not. *[Interruption]* For the Member for Oropouche to come to this House and place on the parliamentary record that the differences or imbalances that exist between the rural community of the nation and the urban community are based on public policy of racial consideration—

**Mr. Humphrey:** Absolutely correct! The PNM has always been like that. You cannot deny that. It is how you allocate resources.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take issue with that.

**Mr. Humphrey:** You take issue with the truth.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** The Member for St. Augustine is getting all hot under the collar.

**Mr. Humphrey:** This country is going no place under your stewardship.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Let us assume that was the case between 1956 and 1986, that the pattern, the allocation of resources was, as he said, based along racial lines, when both the Member for Oropouche and the Member for St. Augustine got into office I would have expected that they would have taken that opportunity to radically reform the way in which resources were allocated. If one looks at the records of this country, one will see no fundamental difference in national development in that period. It is either that this argument is one that arises only when they are in Opposition—because they were in the Government. I did not see a change in budgetary strategy. I did not see a change in allocation patterns.

**Mr. Sudama:** I was there for one day.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** That is the problem. He is only worth one day. I have a difficulty in accepting their argument that there is something fundamentally wrong with the way the country is run. When they had an opportunity to run the country, I did not see the fundamental change which I expected to see if, in fact, their argument had any substance.

When they formed the Government, if the allocations were wrong, I expected them to right them. Look at the budgetary documents. Is it that they embarked on a massive school building programme, on road building, water distribution, or agriculture in Oropouche? Or is it that they followed a pattern of reason which said there were certain inherent difficulties in balancing development between urban, semi-urban, and the rural and, in fact, the rural needs are not the same as the urban needs and vice versa?

To get up and say that the shortcomings in rural districts have to do with racial considerations is the cheapest of political shots.

**Mr. Humphrey:** I am absolutely correct, very accurate.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** I said recently, and the Member objected at a recent *[Interruption]* Mr. Deputy Speaker, I crave your indulgence. I have the right to speak in this House.

**Mr. Humphrey:** All of us have the right.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** He has the right too. The Member must speak on his own time. Recently my colleague the Member for Diego Martin East was speaking in this House, an issue arose and a question was raised by the Member for Oropouche. I had to rise to assist him with the answer. I wanted to put on record my experience with the way he conducts his public business.

I had to put on record that a number of his constituents come to me and my Parliamentary Secretary in the field of agriculture and complain that the only assistance and direction that they get when they go to that Member of Parliament is, that he tells them that their difficulty has to do with their ethnic origins and public discrimination. On that occasion the Member objected—it is in *Hansard*—but he got up here this afternoon and confirmed it.

In his contribution the Member said that people in Oropouche have difficulty as a rural community, because of racial considerations, and advocates to them that they should take matters into their own hands and use “other methods” to have their problems solved.



My Friend the Member for St. Augustine will say that that is right because he knows that is not a position that is new to him.

**Mr. Humphrey:** That is a social law.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** The Member has always been of that view. When the Member for Oropouche comes and places on record that he is advocating that his constituents use other methods, all I ask of him is, for the benefit of the national community, identify the other methods.

I have absolutely no doubt that it is that kind of narrow-minded, shallow thinking that has resulted in his 19 years of uselessness in public life. Had the Member taken another approach, seeking to contribute to national development, carrying along all and sundry in this country, speaking for the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago, I have no doubt that his 19 years or whatever, would have contributed at least a modicum of positive growth. Any person who takes that position is likely to end up that way.

I am saying to his colleagues if they do not want to end up like him, they should not take that position.

**Mr. Humphrey:** He is going to win the next election.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** That is the point. The Member for St. Augustine does not understand what I am saying. His winning elections over and over again has not done anything to relieve his frustrations. They only get worse. Clearly it is not the winning of an election; it is contributing to the national development of Trinidad and Tobago. One does not contribute to this development by advocating that the difficulties we face, whether in Tobago, Caroni, Tunapuna or in Toco, have to do with racial considerations.

Until such time as the Member gets out of that ravine that he is in, he will not see the light of day as a contributor in public life.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Member responded to some comments made in the debate. It has gone on far enough and we should really get back to the Bill at hand which is a Bill to confer certain privileges and immunities on the Commonwealth Development Corporation. I request Members to get back to the Bill. And may we have some order.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, until I am in violation of the Standing Orders my contribution will not be tailored by anybody on the other side. I am responding to an accusation made against the PNM, a party to which I

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[DR. THE HON. K. ROWLEY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

belong and I have that right to respond. Until you rule me out of order, Sir, if an accusation is made against the PNM, and as a Member of the PNM I find the accusation unfair and I choose to respond, I would do so without fear or favour.

The Member got up and said that over the years nothing has been done in his constituency; there has been no development programme, no infrastructural development.

The previous Government embarked on a marketing programme for agricultural produce and committed significant state resources towards developing marketing arrangements. A seven-million dollar programme, in Debe, in his constituency. The facility was completed and as a Member of Parliament he was invited to the opening—a public facility built with public funds, as part of public policy—and he publicly refused to attend, but comes to the Parliament to make an argument that people of that constituency are being discriminated against, that nothing is done in their area.

**3.20 p.m.**

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, would the Member give way to a clarification on that issue?

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no need for any clarification [*Interruption*] All right, carry on.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was invited to the opening of the Debe wholesale market. I asked the people who invited me whether I would be on the programme whereby I would be permitted to say something. They told me no, that I was not on the programme, that I was invited to be a member of the audience. I said, "Listen, as a result of what I did in the previous term of Parliament—we tried" to get the market there under certain assumptions—and if I am going to be invited to sit in the audience, as when I was invited to the opening of the Agricultural Access Roads—"

You cannot tell me that I was not there in the Oropouche Lagoon. [*Interruption*] I was invited and I sat down. Was I asked to make a contribution there, when I initiated that? I am therefore not going to a ceremony at which I am asked to be a part of the audience. No way! Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was not going to be part of that.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Member chooses to take a position with respect to invitations—I understand that if one is invited to a function one is an invitee; one does not determine the function. In other words,

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member laid down terms and conditions—which he was entitled to do. The Member is saying that unless he speaks at any function in his constituency he does not attend.

I am saying that the Member came to this Parliament and put on the record that no development projects come to his constituency. I am refuting that! He just said that he wanted to speak at the opening because of the role he played in having the project placed in his constituency. *[Interruption]*

He will deny it; he is saying that nothing is going on at the facility and I know why, because subsequent to not being allowed to speak at the function—where he did not turn up—he waged a campaign against the facility, encouraging farmers not to use it. *[Interruption]* That is okay. He then goes on to say, no development projects come to his constituency because of public policy discrimination practice.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. If the hon. Member is claiming that I waged a public campaign for people not to use the facilities at the Debe wholesale market, then I think he must show some proof—where that campaign was waged, and who were the people involved. I want to clarify this in the House. If people were going to benefit by the use of the Debe wholesale market, they were going to earn income and revenue, then it would be a hell of a thing that I could prevent people from acting in their own interest. I must be a very powerful man in this country if I could do that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never waged any such campaign.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad to hear that. The Member for Oropouche is a man of honour and I take his word that he never did that. However, the Member said that no development programmes come to the constituency of Oropouche and that is as a result of a direct government policy of discrimination.

We embarked on a programme of rural access road development, a multimillion dollar road programme to improve access roads in the country. One of the very first such roads improved was in the constituency of Oropouche where significant improvement was done in the Puzzle Island area, and he just admitted that he was invited to, and did, in fact, participate in the function on the completion of that development programme. Yet he says, there is active discrimination and nothing of a developmental nature.

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[DR. THE HON. K. ROWLEY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

I am not now talking about schools, health centres, community centres; I am talking about development programmes of recent vintage which the Member has had a hand in. The Member comes to Parliament and puts on the record that nothing of a developmental nature ever finds its way into the constituency of Oropouche.

What does the Member want? The Member also talks about tourism and he wants a cruise ship complex in Oropouche. That does not make sense. On the matter before us he then goes on to say that the Government has not taken any steps to take advantage of the Commonwealth Development Corporation in national development. When such statements are made, it makes one wonder how to take statements from the other side.

The Member for Fyzabad spoke about getting investment in the Water and Sewerage Authority, and why the Government did not look towards the Commonwealth Development Corporation and so forth. It is clear that the Members on the other side are not familiar with how the CDC operates, or they are not clear as to what position to take on certain matters.

The Commonwealth Development Corporation is an agency that uses government funding to advance development in other developing countries. There are certain terms and conditions which apply to the use of those funds. The fundamental term that applies is that it must not support state control and it must only be used to move development and control from the state into the private sector.

When the Member for Fyzabad chided the Government for not taking the CDC on board in the WASA situation, I would like to know whether he was signalling support for a policy which says that WASA ought to be privatized. That is the only condition under which CDC money would go into WASA. Commonwealth Development Corporation funds would not go into WASA for it to remain a state organization. In the event that one accesses CDC funds, it has to be under the expressed condition that the agency moves to a minority government interest.

In one breath we have an argument opposing investment in WASA which leads to private involvement, but in the other breath we hear an argument that we should seek funds from an agency whose mandate is to ensure that privatization takes place. Do they know exactly what they are talking about?

We sought every avenue available to us with a view to furthering the development of Trinidad and Tobago. As far back as May, 1992, I, myself, had

direct contact with the CDC, seeking to find out whether, in fact, there was a role that the CDC could play in agricultural development.

We worked seeking to find whether the mandate could be adjusted, whether there were possibilities to have CDC's resources being brought to bear on development in this country. We looked at Caroni (1975) Limited, and I ask my Friends on the other side whether they would have supported a call for CDC involvement in our economy, had I been able to succeed in getting CDC involved in Caroni (1975) Limited.

**3.30 p.m.**

Of course, it would have been under the terms and conditions of moving Caroni (1975) Limited from a state-controlled agency into the private sector. Had that been done, I have no doubt whatsoever that another kind of objection would have been raised.

The CDC looked at Caroni (1975) Limited and said, yes, they admired and supported what they were trying to do, but they could not be involved in that. They looked at Tanteak, and had a great interest in it, and we sought to work along with them. But we came up against the same block that one has to have a certain kind of arrangement if they are going to participate.

This Government did not agree with those kinds of arrangements that were available to it, so it proceeded by saying thank you, very much but it would prefer to go a different route. It is open to you to participate with other persons if you so desire. But, we must let you know that participation by CDC in Tanteak would have to be under terms and conditions where the state does not retain majority control. I only asked for support in that direction where Tanteak was to be divested and state shareholding to be reduced to a minority.

**Mr. Sharma:** Just to clarify the issues raised by the Minister. One must take into consideration the fact that CDC offers technical advice as well, not only financial arrangements, and it was in that regard that the matter at WASA as well as T&TEC could have been looked into.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** I am sorry the Member did not make it clear. I took it to mean that he was talking about CDC resources as made available. Also understand that the Commonwealth Development Corporation has a wider role; it lends moneys to our oil companies.

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[DR. THE HON. K. ROWLEY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

The context in which the statement was made had to do with further economic development with respect to equity investment. We spoke about the context in which the Government was seeking equity investment in WASA. The Government was not seeking technical support for the Water and Sewerage Authority; it was seeking a wider involvement, including financial equity participation. It was in that context the query was raised, that when the Government sought to deal with the Water and Sewerage Authority in this way, why did it not get the Commonwealth Development Corporation involved?

I am saying the corporation could only have been involved in that context if one goes along the route of making the Government a minority shareholder in WASA. I am asking whether, in fact, the Member saying that was supports that position which would allow us to have CDC as a partner on board. That is all I am asking. We had examined those possibilities. When the prospectus for WASA went out inviting participation, it was open to all, including the CDC.

**Mr. Sharma:** Is the Minister suggesting that an approach was made to CDC? Saying it was open does not say anything. The Commonwealth Development Corporation does not engage in that activity.

**Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member is not too familiar with what he is saying. Open tenders were invited internationally and the CDC, like any other investigating agency, was free to put in a proposal or a bid like anybody else.

They did, in fact, see the tenders and chose to participate where it was permissible or where they thought they had financial interest to back up. In the Coco Reef Hotel in Tobago, that investment was supported by the CDC. I do know what the Member is talking about. I am sure he is not too familiar with the details.

The bottom line is that the CDC's involvement in this country is not insignificant and we are hoping that it will grow. I make the point that it can grow only in situations where there is mutual interest and agreement. Insofar as there are areas where we would like them to participate, if the policy of the Government of the day is not to move down to minority shareholding, then it follows that conflicts with CDC's mandate would arise and, therefore, CDC's funds would not be available.

That does not mean that there are no other areas where the Government may have a policy which would say that it does not mind going down to a minority shareholding, in which case CDC would probably choose to become an investor.

We are seeking this afternoon to ensure that the CDC remains in Trinidad and Tobago as an active participant in the national economy, with privileges and immunities which are normally granted to this sort of international agency. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support the Bill.

**Mr. John Humphrey** (*St. Augustine*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to spend my time insulting any Member on that side, even though I hold certain of them in total contempt; I rise to correct something that the Member for Diego Martin West was suggesting.

A United National Congress Government would have no difficulty sourcing funds from institutions like the Commonwealth Development Corporation for financing WASA or Caroni (1975) Limited—two cases that the Member specified—for the simple reason that we advocate and have long advocated that in certain areas of state involvement in the economy a trisector partnership should be developed.

In trisector partnership the local private sector would be invited to participate as a one-third equity holder. The workers in the enterprise would be facilitated in acquiring a one-third equity and the state would retain one-third of the equity. In cases like that they could source funds. As the Minister himself pointed out, the conditions were that the Government should be a minority shareholder.

This Government has never shown the slightest interest in worker participation. In fact, this is an anti-worker Government. This is a Government of big capitalism, a trickle-down philosophy Government. This is an oligarchy—the Member is quite right—a small group of people who hold on to power and use the power of the state in their own self-interest and in the interest of their friends. That describes this Government.

The workers of WASA and Caroni (1975) Limited would welcome any initiative of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, whether it be this Government, which I do not think it is capable of doing—or the next one, to initiate moves to enable them to participate in the ownership of the enterprise. In fact, throughout the world we see failing enterprises that would normally go bankrupt and would retrench their entire work force, saved by workers participating in equity. We have seen it in many cases in the United States—in the airline business and in the steel business, for example.

Our party has long advocated this philosophy. I am afraid the PNM, certainly not the current PNM, would never dream of serious worker participation in the economic life of this country. It is anti-worker as we have seen quite recently in

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MR. HUMPHREY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

the dispute between the Oilfields Workers Trade Union and state-owned oil companies.

**Mr. Valley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to correct the record, with respect to worker-participation. The Member is aware that in the BWIA divestment, the workers are involved owning roughly 25.5 per cent of the airline. The Member ought to be aware that with respect to the Iscott divestment there is a clause—put in there by the last Government—that in three years 40 per cent of the shares must be offered on the market to include the workers in the ESOP.

The Member is aware that with respect to National Flour Mills, divestment there was an ESOP there. He ought to be aware that with respect to Plipdeco divestment there was also an ESOP there for the employees.

**Mr. J. Humphrey:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not the same thing. Token participation is not the same thing as meaningful participation. For example, the workers at Trinidad Cement Limited have participated, and I see right now there is a move for the Government to divest the remaining shares that it holds in that company. For the workers at TCL to share in the ownership, a campaign actually had to be waged by the then Chief Executive Officer of that company, who believed in the principle of worker participation. The workers do hold a meagre interest in that company.

### **3.40 p.m.**

That has been a very successful company because it is a monopoly with controlled prices, and profits are assured, but those profits do not go to little people; they go only to big people. The policy of the United National Congress, in contrast with that of the PNM, especially the PNM of today, is that the state's resources must be used where the people most need them; and the Member for Oropouche, quite rightly, said that after 40 years one cannot see signs of any meaningful development in his constituency. It is not his frustration that he vents here; it is the frustration of his constituents—as all Members on this side feel—because we see the waste.

A recent survey undertaken by the World Bank has indicated that the wealth of Trinidad and Tobago lags behind that of Guyana. *[Interruption]* Now they will make noise, but if one measures the capital worth of the people of the country as well, one has to realize that, under this PNM, the capital worth of the people of Trinidad and Tobago has depleted considerably. Why? Because the Government has sold out the assets owned by the people—and that is a fact. Guyana has not got the physical development, but, at least, the people still own their territory. In



this country we are seeing a tendency to re-colonize—to sell out everything of value to the foreigners.

**Mr. Sudama:** Massa come back!

**Mr. J. Humphrey:** And there is no doubt about that, Sir. The UNC would put the emphasis on the development of little people. When they suggest that the needs of people differ between the urban and rural communities, that is not so. Subjective conditions might differ, but the needs of human beings everywhere on the planet are the same—fundamental needs. Everybody needs to survive. The wherewithal of survival is a job—a wage—that enables consumption. To put people to work so that they can earn wages, the Government has to mobilize the resources of the country. When it sells out the country to foreigners wholesale, they are coming here to exploit, to take the profits for themselves; and they are not concerned with the development of your own people. So this regime has betrayed the trust of the people of Trinidad and Tobago and has betrayed the whole move to independence started by the founder of its organization. The balisier ties they wear should choke them, Mr. Deputy Speaker!

**Dr. Rowley:** Archaic nonsense!

**Mr. J. Humphrey:** You will see what the electorate says next election—whether it is archaic nonsense or not. The fact is, that when one looks at statistics, one should have some hope that they give promise, but when one looks at social conditions one finds that there is no promise from the statistics. No development is occurring in Trinidad and Tobago that redounds to the benefit of the little people of this country; and Members opposite cannot deny that.

The whole position the Government is taking is contrary to the interests of the majority of our people, and to stand up and give excuses as to why they cannot source concessionary finance which could be used to benefit the little people is a shame. The Government is really not concerned with the welfare of little people. I just wanted to make that intervention in response to what the Member for Diego Martin West spewed in this Parliament earlier.

**The Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, today, for yet another time, as one takes notes of the contributions of the Members on the other side, one sees a contradiction in terms—a hodge-podge, a higgler-piggler; no cohesiveness; no uniformity. There is no policy emanating from that side, Mr. Deputy Speaker—nothing.

**Mr. Sudama:** You have learnt some new words.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** The Member for Caroni Central asked: "When will this end?" and went on to say "Stop giving privileges to all these people" and so forth. Then along comes the Member for Oropouche—no problem. "We have no problem in supporting immunities under the legislation." So the whole tenor of Caroni Central's speech is, why must we give immunities and privileges to these people? Why? They should not get! The Member for Oropouche's opening statement is, we have no problem.

**Mr. Humphrey:** He asked you a question—answer it.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Then there was the Member for Fyzabad, mumbling, fumbling and making all sorts of statements which are simply not correct.

Let me deal with the Member for Caroni Central in detail. He made the point that the employees of the corporation, under this legislation, will have all sorts of privileges, immunity from lawsuit, and he actually quoted clause 7. Paragraph 7, is in fact in Part II of the Schedule. There is no clause 7 in this Bill, for the information of the Member for Caroni Central. There is a paragraph 7 in Part II of the Schedule and there is a heading in Part I of the Schedule: "Exemption from Taxes."

I make this point to illustrate the fact that the Members of the Opposition come into this Parliament every sitting without reading; they do not prepare; they do not understand; they make all sorts of—let me not use unparliamentary language—inaccurate statements.

Paragraph 7 in Part II deals with exemption from taxes. It says that employees who are not citizens of Trinidad and Tobago shall—

- "(a) not be subject to income or similar taxes in respect of salaries and emoluments...; and
- (b) be entitled within six months of arriving in Trinidad and Tobago to import free of customs or import duties, personal effects,..."

That is all it says. But the Member for Caroni Central made a big to-do and "tralala" about how paragraph 7—

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Member is misleading the House. That same paragraph 7, if he goes on to the last two lines, says:

"together with any other exemptions, concessions and privileges that are accorded to employees of international institutions."

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he cannot read, that is the point. What are those? This law gives no effect to the sort of diplomatic immunity he is referring to. For that to happen, it would have to be specifically stated in the Schedule.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** What does it mean?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Well, you go and find out. You do not understand. This piece of legislation simply exempts the employees from income tax. That is all it does. This is the problem. Week after week, month after month, year after year, they come into this House repeating the same thing over and over again.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** You will find out the reality of that. You!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Very well.

Then the Member for Fyzabad, in his usual unprepared style, asks the Government why we have not asked the CDC to invest in WASA and T&TEC. My colleague the Member for Diego Martin West very carefully illustrated the irony of what the Member for Fyzabad was saying. If the Members on the other side had taken the time to do some research about the Commonwealth Development Corporation and find out what it is all about, they would have found that the CDC is Britain's development finance institution.

I am reading from a brochure here, a British Trade Mission to Trinidad and Tobago in April, 1995. Its purpose is to assist overseas countries in the development of their economies. It does this by investing in new or existing enterprises across a wide range of industries focussing on the private sector.

The private sector! So, therefore, as my colleague the Member for Diego Martin West pointed out, if CDC was to get involved in WASA and T&TEC, then WASA and T&TEC would have to be privatized. So by asking us to get the CDC involved in WASA and T&TEC, they are asking us to privatize them. But the thing is, they do not understand.

**3.50 p.m.**

**Mr. Sharma:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Member is misleading the House. I have made the point over and over again. CDC's role is not only financial; you have technical advice and other areas of advice. It is wrong for the Member to keep repeating that the advice they offer is only financial. They are not only into investments. It is very clear.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** You know, I would ask the Members on the other side, particularly the Member for Fyzabad, that before they come to debate legislation of this sort in this House, they go to one of the embassies, or agencies. Go and spend half an hour and read some literature.

I have here a document published by the CDC which reads:

"The CDC is the UK's development finance institution. Its purpose is to assist overseas countries in development of their economies."

I am now going to repeat a sentence that I said already:

"It does this by investing in new or existing enterprises, concentrating on the private sector."

If one of CDC's primary functions is to provide technical assistance, I would be very surprised. If it is, no problem. If the Member can bring information in that regard, I would be very surprised. I would access that unit myself. But what CDC does, according to its own brochure is:

"provides finance and offers long-term loans and risk capital to new and existing enterprises."

I took careful notes. The Member got up during the contribution of the Member for Diego Martin West and tried to weasel his way out of what he said, by saying, "I meant technical advice." But I took notes, and this is a direct quote from the Member for Fyzabad. He asked: "Why has not the Government approached CDC to invest in WASA?" He said nothing about technical assistance. Typical!

What about housing? CDC invests 90 per cent of its funds in private sector businesses, but the Member is asking the Government—one assumes, if one is following the trend of what the Member for Fyzabad was saying: "Why do we not get them to invest in WASA, in T&TEC; why did we not ask them to help us with our housing thrust?" Does he want this Commonwealth Development Corporation to invest in the National Housing Authority? Is that what he wants?

Again, he makes another misleading statement. "What is the parallel organization in Trinidad and Tobago? None exists." That is what he said. But the Minister of Finance in his presentation made the point that the Commonwealth Development Corporation has invested in Development Finance Corporation, now Development Finance Limited. So there is the answer to his question. The parallel organization in Trinidad and Tobago is Development Finance Limited, if he must know.

The DFL, for the benefit of the absent Member for Oropouche, is an institution restructured by the former government with its orientation towards supporting development and investment by the private sector. CDC has invested equity in DFL and has given DFL access to capital, and as a result, DFL has been able to expand its range of operations in investing in private sector development in Trinidad and Tobago in a wide range of activities.

So this is one of the benefits that have come out of CDC's participation in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. The fact is, this corporation is only one of many international development finance organizations. You have large organizations like the World Bank, which lends to governments. There are other large organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank, again, that lends to governments or state organizations. You have the International Finance Corporation. It is the private sector development arm of the World Bank. You have MEGA, in respect of which the Minister of Finance brought legislation to this House recently to grant it certain privileges and immunities. This is the American development organization. You have the Overseas Private Investment Corporation of the United States and you have the Commonwealth Development Corporation of the United Kingdom.

What this Government is doing by this piece of legislation is allowing CDC to become more established, more entrenched in its operations in Trinidad and Tobago. At present, the CDC's Caribbean office is in Barbados.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I was just going to ask the Member to be a little more courteous to the Member speaking. I think the Member is experienced enough to know that he should not really turn his back to the Member speaking.

Will you proceed.

**Mr. Humphrey:** You ask for courtesy for that side?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I was just requesting it from you.

Will the Member proceed, please.

**Mr. Humphrey:** You allowed him to insult the Members on this side for more than half an hour.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** To be quite frank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had not even noticed. Thank you for drawing it to my attention.

But the fact of the matter is, the CDC's Caribbean base is now in Barbados. The CDC wishes to enter into an agreement with the Republic of Trinidad and

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

Tobago to allow it to establish a base in Trinidad and Tobago. What could be wrong with that? Why is it that every time we come to this Parliament with simple, straightforward legislation, geared towards assisting the development of this country, the Members on the other side raise smokescreens, red herrings, ghosts, witches, all sorts of diabolical plots? Why? As my colleague the Member for Laventille East/Morvant says, you give them a bouquet, they say it is a wreath. That is how they think. It is just beyond my comprehension.

We wish to afford certain privileges and immunities to the CDC, which evolve essentially around legal proceedings with regard to the corporation, exemption from taxes for the corporation and exemption from income taxes and so on for the employees. That is all this legislation is seeking to do. We do this because we wish to encourage the Commonwealth Development Corporation to set up offices in Trinidad and Tobago, we wish our citizens to have access to as wide a range of financial institutions as is available. But every time we bring something here, they raise a bogey—all sorts of things.

The Member for Oropouche even linked the Overseas Development Association to corruption. I took careful notes. He said, the ODA has pressurized Trinidad and Tobago into awarding contracts to Wimpey in a corrupt manner.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know where the Member got this ODA from. I never spoke of the ODA in my contribution. The point I was making is that we have had a colonial legacy where undue influence has been exercised by the United Kingdom Government. That is the only point I was making. So I do not know where he is coming from with ODA.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Oropouche is having one of his convenient memory lapses. Typical! I have notes here; I always take notes, you know, and he is always getting caught. What he said was that the predecessor to the CDC was the Colonial Development Corporation which used to operate in a colonial manner. Then he went on rambling about how these colonial organizations, like the ODA, put pressure on governments to award contracts to corrupt contractors, and used Wimpey as an example.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member will have to correct that. Nowhere in my contribution did I talk about corrupt contractors. I spoke about undue influence. I did not talk about corrupt contractors. Furthermore, I want to ask him: Is his Government willing to institute a commission of inquiry into the award of all these contracts? Is it willing to do it?

**4.00 p.m.**

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sticking to my notes. The Member for Oropouche said that there was manipulation in the background, and if things were done in a fair manner, contractors such as Wimpey would not get contracts. He said so! He said he wants an investigation because there is corruption. He wants an inquiry into the refinery upgrade. He said all of that. He should not deny it now! *[Interruption]* Oh, now the Member is agreeing? He is now admitting that he said that. No problem!

**Mr. Sudama:** Is the Government willing to institute an inquiry?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Oropouche then went on to attack his former boss, the Member for Tobago East, by making all sorts of allegations of corruption into the restructuring of the DFC, because it was done under the stewardship of the Member for Tobago East. According to the Member for Oropouche—

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not have to speak on behalf of the Member for Oropouche, but to make it clear, the point that the Member for Oropouche was making was that the DFC had to be restructured because of what had happened previously. That caused the restructuring. It was not the restructuring that caused the corruption, it was the corruption that caused the restructure.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am thankful for that intervention. All I know is that the Member for Oropouche said that the DFC's loans were written off and hundreds of millions of dollars were written off; he wants an inquiry, an investigation and so forth.

**Mr. Sudama:** Does the hon. Minister have a problem with that?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** All I can tell this House is that the loans the Member for Oropouche referred to, which were written off, were done under the stewardship of the Member for Tobago East. That is all I know. I am not getting into who did it and why.

**Mr. Sudama:** Could the hon. Minister tell us whether they were incurred under the stewardship of the Member for Tobago East?

**Mr. Robinson:** It is a common practice in financing circles that when there are bad debts which cannot be repaid, they have to be written off. The debts were incurred under the PNM Government which made bad loans and the recipients of those loans—many of whom were PNM members—could not repay the money.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is amazing. The Member for Oropouche called for an inquiry into the writing off of hundreds of millions of dollars in the DFC and the individual involved in the writing off of those loans got up to explain that they were bad debts which could not be recovered from PNM members.

There was one particular loan that was written off by the DFC in which a former PNM member had an interest. I wonder if that was a bad debt? I am referring to a quarry company in Tobago—

**Dr. Rowley:** Shhhhh!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** —of which the Member for Tobago East was a director.

**Dr. Rowley:** Shhhhh!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** That was one of the loans which were written off by the DFC and the Member for Oropouche knows that!

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I say that the individual who became the Member for Tobago East became a director in order to try to save a landowner [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Please, hon. Members, I am trying to follow the point the Member is making.

**Mr. Robinson:** —using his professional services from land which was disposed of by members of the PNM who had defrauded him. Other directors were Mr. Allan Alexander who could tell you about this, and Dr. Aeneas Wills.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand that under the new Companies Bill, directors would not be allowed to get away with that. The whole point is that I was not saying that there was anything irregular or corrupt about the writing off of any loan in the DFC! It is the Member for Oropouche who said so, and up pops the Member for Tobago East to defend him.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make it absolutely clear that no loan was incurred while the Member for Tobago East was a director. The loans had previously been incurred. The poor peasant was losing his land. Mr. Allan Alexander—who was not then the Member for Tobago East—and Dr. Aeneas Wills got together to try to save the man's land from being forfeited and written off which would have been a complete loss to him. It was to save a poor person from the degradations of PNM members that we intervened. I do not know if that makes any sense to the hon. Minister, descendants of O'Halloran and his crowd.



**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am thankful for the explanation from the Member for Tobago East as to why, when he was Prime Minister, the DFC wrote off a bad debt to a company of which he was a director. I have not alleged anything. It is the Member for Oropouche who made the allegation. I do not know why [*Interruption*] Yes, we know about that. Was that DFC as well?

**Dr. Rowley:** Yes, \$1.5 million.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Under him?

**Dr. Rowley:** Yes.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** One of his friends too?

**Dr. Rowley:** Yes; a pauper too!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** A pauper? One point five million dollars. And he was not a PNM?

**Dr. Baboolal:** No, he was NAR.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, please. The reporter is having difficulty. Could the Member continue please.

**Hon. C. Imbert.** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Member for Oropouche alleged that there is corruption in the writing off of debts at the DFC and so forth. Well, I have just been advised that one of the bad debts involved an associate of the Member for Tobago East, who can by no stretch of the imagination be described as a peasant or a pauper. But, anyway, let us forget about that.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I say that the Member is making an allegation and I categorically deny that any associate of the Member for Tobago East incurred any of those loans. I categorically deny that. Let him state the specifics of it.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I saw the Member for Tobago East and the gentleman in question on a political platform in Tobago together.

**Mr. Sudama:** I saw the Member and Steve Castagne organizing the campaign for the Member for Diego Martin East. What does that mean?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Yes, he got a loan written off too?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us go through what else the Member for Oropouche said. He complained bitterly that in the restructuring of the Development Finance

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

Corporation its investments in tourism, fishing, and agriculture have had no impact on the constituencies of the Opposition Members.

One assumes that he was not referring to the constituencies of Tobago East and Tobago West. I am quite certain the Development Finance Corporation has had considerable investments which I am sure have brought an adequate return in the constituencies of Tobago East and Tobago West in the area of tourism and so forth. I have to come to that conclusion.

**4.10 p.m.**

When one looks at what the Member said further about how we must direct investment, one sees that in an argument against the granting of privileges and immunities to corporations of this type, his opening sentence was, "I have no problem with granting privileges and immunities," and then the rest of his contribution was counter to granting privileges and immunities to corporations of this type.

The Member gave the distinct impression that we should not give privileges and immunities to the Commonwealth Development Corporation unless they were forced to invest in the constituency of Oropouche. The Member went on and on about no investment in anything in the constituency of Oropouche or in any of the constituencies of the Opposition and he used the example of an industrial estate.

Where is the largest industrial estate in Trinidad and Tobago? It is in the constituency of Couva South. Where is Point Lisas? If this Government so hated Opposition constituencies, as Members opposite falsely allege from time to time, it should have put the industrial estate on the east coast. Perhaps, it would have put it in the constituency of Ortoire/Mayaro, or in Toco for that matter. But no, this is a Government of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The Government decided that Couva was best in terms of its geographic location, in terms of the water depths available, in terms of the potential for harbour development, the land space.

The previous PNM administration decided that Point Lisas, the heart of Opposition territory, should be the site of major industrial development in this country. As a result, there have been billions of dollars of investment in Point Lisas and thousands of people in the Oropouche area, in Couva, Chaguanas and so forth, now work at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, where do you think those workers come from? Do you think that the persons who work in Ispat come from Diego Martin East? They

come from the constituencies that surround Point Lisas. They do not come from Laventille or Mayaro, they come from Couva, Chaguanas, Pointe-a-Pierre. They have a higher standard of living than many other persons in the country, all because of PNM policies and that puts paid to the lie that this Government is not interested in the development of the entire country.

One looks at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources; the budget of that ministry is several hundred million dollars a year. Where is that spent? Eighty per cent of the expenditure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources—I am using rough figures; correct me if I am wrong, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources—is spent in the constituencies of the Opposition.

Where do you think the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources spends its money? It spends it in Chaguanas, Oropouche, in Tabaquite, Couva and Caroni. There is where the bulk of the resources from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is spent. It is spent in the constituencies of the Opposition. Where does all the food subsidy go in the country, the subsidy on rice, cocoa? It goes primarily into the constituencies of the Opposition.

Rice is not subsidized in Laventille. Sugar is not subsidized in St. Ann's West. The money is spent in subsidies in the constituencies of the Opposition.

**Mr. Sudama:** Could the Minister tell me what the subsidy on rice is at this time out of a budget—

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I assumed the Member was rising on a point of order. As soon as he started to speak, I realized that he was rising on a point of irrelevance. The fact is over 75 per cent of the money spent by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources on agriculture is spent in the constituencies of the Opposition.

The Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government published an advertisement in the newspapers recently for a deliberate reason. It is because the Members on the other side are strangers to the truth.

The Member for Oropouche goes up and down the country bleating about discrimination and using all of his ethnic arguments, so I published in the newspapers the address of the contractors under our \$92 million Agricultural Access Roads Programme and, I published the names of the contractors so that he would see where the contractors come from. Most of the money is spent in the

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

constituencies of the Opposition and the majority of the contractors come from the constituencies of the Opposition.

The Member for Oropouche comes here week after week advancing all these ridiculous unsubstantiated arguments about ethnic bias in this Government. We spent all the money in the industrial sectors that are located in their constituencies. We spent money on Point Lisas, which is in Couva South.

We spent money on Caroni which is an Opposition constituency. Yet, on a simple Bill to allow privileges and immunities of a certain kind—the Bill is to confer certain privileges and immunities on the Commonwealth Development Corporation, and they are primarily financial. The Member for Oropouche's entire contribution is that nothing is being done in Opposition constituencies and that we should not allow the Commonwealth Development Corporation to come here because this Government will tell it not to invest any moneys in Opposition constituencies.

That is the thesis of the Member for Oropouche—do not let the Commonwealth Development Corporation come here because this Government will tell it not to spend any moneys in Oropouche. I have never heard anything more ridiculous in my life.

I can see what we are going to be treated to over the next 12 months as we gear up towards the 1996 general election. *[Interruption]*

*Mr. Sudama rose—*

Unless it is a point of order, I am not giving way.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Member is on a point of order.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never in my contribution talked about not allowing the Commonwealth Development Corporation to come here. The Commonwealth Development Corporation is already here. I spoke about the strategy of investment which ought to be influenced by the Government to spread across the sectors. Anyway, the Member comes from a class of persons who distort things.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the unfortunate tragedy of all of this is that we come to this House to make Trinidad and Tobago an attractive location for investment, to take Trinidad and Tobago forward towards its objective of becoming the financial capital of the region—because that is what this is all about. This legislation allows the Commonwealth Development Corporation to establish an office here.

If someone wishes to invest or attract investment from the Commonwealth Development Corporation he has to get in touch with the Barbados office. All this does is to allow the Commonwealth Development Corporation to set up in Trinidad and Tobago. One would think that the Members on the other side would support that, but, no. What they say is that we will influence these organizations to invest in PNM constituencies and tell them not to invest in Oropouche in particular. That is what the Member said.

We negotiated—I will have to go back to this Rural Access Roads Programme—with the Inter-American Development Bank a loan of \$250 million dollar loan, and when I sit in my ministry and see that the majority of the roads and bridges are in Oropouche and other similar areas, I do not call the Inter-American Development Bank on the telephone and tell them we had better scrap this loan because all of the money is being spent in Opposition constituencies.

I communicate with them and try to get the development programmes going as quickly as possible notwithstanding the fact that we are spending most of the money in Opposition areas in certain sectors. We are about national development.

In that same Agricultural Access Roads Programme, on the last batch of contracts, the Government spent \$18 million out of \$92 million in Tobago. Almost 20 per cent of Phase II of the Agricultural Access Roads Programme is being spent in Tobago.

**4.20 p.m.**

**Miss Nicholson:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister cannot start Phase II when he has not begun Phase I.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker [*Interruption*]

**Miss Nicholson:** True! Mr. Deputy Speaker, the two roads are right where the Member was born.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, if one uses any objective criteria to allocate expenditure in Tobago, if one looks at the percentage of road in Tobago compared to the national grid, one sees that it is about five per cent. If one looks at the number of cars in Tobago compared with the national number, it is about three per cent. If one uses any objective criteria one could not come up with a rationale for spending \$20 million on a programme in Tobago. But do you know why we are doing this?

**Miss Nicholson:** You are trying to win in Tobago but you cannot!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, from an agricultural perspective, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has determined that certain agricultural access roads and bridges in Tobago are in need of development. If they are upgraded they would contribute to the overall economic development of the island of Tobago. That is the reason we are spending almost \$20 million in Tobago under one programme. If one listens to the speakers in Market Square, one would hear about the rampant discrimination and alienation of the people of Tobago, just like the people of Oropouche; it is the same argument. If we were to switch the two speakers it would be the same thing.

This Government spent \$7 million on a wholesale market in Debe, Oropouche—the largest amount of money ever spent on a market apart from the Beetham Market in the country—but the Member says we are discriminating against the constituency of Oropouche. The first road under Phase I of the Agricultural Access Roads Programme was done in Oropouche, but we are discriminating against Oropouche. Most of the expenditure on dredging of agricultural irrigation canals is in Oropouche.

**Mr. Sudama:** Yes, but to what effect?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Oh, to what effect? Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member has just admitted that those works are being done. *[Interruption]* Every year the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources spends millions of dollars—New Cut Channel and the Trinidad River—dredging these irrigation canals in the constituency of Oropouche.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, would the hon. Minister give way?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not giving way unless it is on a point of order. No, I am not giving way.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, where would we dredge? On the hillsides. They would have to dredge on the low-lying areas.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, they want to play mas but they are afraid of powder. They want to go into the kitchen but they cannot take the heat. Every year when I look at the development programme of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, I see millions of dollars earmarked for development in the constituency of Oropouche; none in Diego Martin East, none in Barataria, none in Diego Martin West and none in Laventille. All the moneys are being spent in the constituency of Oropouche. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, I cannot have two Members standing. If this is on a point of order, would the Member for Diego Martin East take his seat, please.

**Mr. T. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin East is misrepresenting to this House when he says that all the drainage allocation is spent in the constituency of Oropouche. That is wrong, false and misleading. In any case, whatever money is spent, we are still having flooding in the constituency of Oropouche.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, having recognized from a global perspective, from a national holistic perspective that that is the area in the country where dredging is required, the Ministry of Works and Transport and Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources have collaborated for the last 20 years and spent most of the money in the constituency of Oropouche. I am glad the Member for Oropouche is now admitting that he has not been forthright in terms of his public statements about how money is spent in this constituency.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member's speaking time has expired.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Oh, how uncharitable that the Member for Tobago West would vote against my extension of time. [*Laughter*]

**Miss Nicholson:** It is because I love you. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Oh, my goodness! I thank the Member for that compliment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have got weak knees. [*Laughter*] I suspect that the term of endearment that was just thrown across the table was a strategem on the part of the Opposition to derail my contribution, and I must admit it has "confoffled" me. [*Laughter*].

The fact of the matter is that a number of the statements made by the Members for Oropouche and St. Augustine are not accurate. The Member for Oropouche made the point that 10 LNG plants will not have the effect of sustainable employment, and that is simply not correct. On a previous occasion in this House, I made the point that \$200 million per year goes into the local economy for goods and services, as a result of the operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Methanol Company. Where does that go?

It goes into all the service sector companies in Trinidad and Tobago in servicing of equipment, in provision of supplies—and this is the basic question that the Members on the other side do not understand. If one plant alone spends \$200 million in the economy, that generates hundreds of jobs; and there are a large number of petrochemical plants. There are more and more plants under construction as we speak and each of them is generating employment—hundreds of jobs, permanent sustainable employment.

It is an error to count the number of jobs actually involved in the mechanical operation of the plant; those are small, 100 to 300 and so forth, but there are thousands of jobs which are supported by the presence of these plants, through the purchase of local goods and services.

The Trinidad and Tobago Methanol Company—\$200 million alone. If any of these plants were to close down and leave this country the first person to bawl would be the Member for Oropouche, who would then find out the significant contribution to the local economy in Couva and Point Lisas that these plants make. They employ thousands of people, directly and indirectly, contribute millions of dollars to the GDP on an annual basis; something that the Members on the other side just do not understand.

The problem with the Members on the other side is that they cannot understand how this PNM Government has been so successful in just three years and nine months. They cannot understand how unemployment is now down to 16 1/2 per cent. They cannot understand why, for three consecutive quarters there has been growth in the economy. They cannot understand why the foreign reserves have been in excess of US \$600 million and growing daily. They cannot understand why, in one year alone, this Government has created 20,000 new jobs. When one looks at the official statistics there were 410,000 jobs in 1994, there are now 430,000 jobs in the economy in 1995.

**4.29 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.05 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, the legislation before the House simply seeks to confer certain privileges and immunities—I am repeating the word "certain" for the benefit of the Member for Caroni Central—and the Explanatory Note indicates that the purpose of the Bill is to confer on the Commonwealth Development Corporation privileges and immunities embodied in the agreement relating to operating conditions between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the corporation.



The privileges and immunities are stated in Parts I and II of the Schedule and refer, specifically, to exemptions from taxes, and the legal personality and capacity of the corporation.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to confer on the Commonwealth Development Corporation these privileges and immunities which will allow it to establish a base in Trinidad and Tobago. We wish to encourage all such private sector oriented investment organizations to set up shop in Trinidad and Tobago.

As the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism pointed out in his introduction, organizations like the Commonwealth Development Corporation provide an important source of finance to developing countries which is not easily accessible from international capital markets. The corporation's mandate is to contribute to the development of developing countries throughout the world.

The information that I have on the Commonwealth Development Corporation indicates that it has quite an impressive investment portfolio in the world. Its total investments worldwide are £1.7 billion or somewhere in excess of TT \$15 billion. Ninety per cent of its investment is in the private sector and almost £500 million or close to TT \$ 5 billion is invested in agri-business, food and beverages.

The documentation I have indicates that they have £355 million in power and water; £84 million in textiles, £330 million in industrial materials; £236 million in financial markets; £28 million in telecommunications; £62 million in hotels and tourism; £29 million in transport; £22 million in general manufacturing.

As I said, they also have £491 million or close to £5 billion invested in agri-business, food processing and so forth. The Commonwealth Development Corporation operates in 52 countries but has offices in only 21 countries. We hope that with this legislation they would see it fit to establish another office, perhaps its 22nd or 23rd, in Trinidad and Tobago.

I cannot see any reason why anyone, including the dyed-in-the-wool 1950s communist who represents St. Augustine would want to object to the passage of this legislation.

I support it wholeheartedly and support my colleague the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Miss Indera Sagewan** (*Caroni East*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise this afternoon to participate in this debate to set the record straight so that at the end

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[MISS SAGEWAN]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

of the day, this would be the straight record which would really be left for those who come after us to read and decide for themselves.

The Member for St. Ann's East, as did the Member for Diego Martin West, took the Member for Oropouche to task on his explanation of a concept of development which he sought to bring to the House. It seems to me that those on the other side think that spending x million dollars on access roads in Oropouche equals development; that could hardly be the case.

One can spend \$10 million in year one on one's access roads and another \$10 million five years later on drainage, and then one can spend after another five years more money on access roads, but what does that really do for agriculture? We have on many occasions got up on this side, and when we spoke about an agricultural policy, we spoke about a number of things that need to go together. To simply say that putting down an access road is the sum total of development in the agricultural sector is to be naive about the concept of development.

More than that, it was suggested by the Member for Diego Martin East that the Member for Oropouche has something against the setting up of an industrial estate in Couva. I think the Member for Diego Martin suggested that, maybe, the Member for Oropouche wanted a cruise ship port in Oropouche.

The Member for Oropouche was very clear in explaining that what may be relevant in terms of a development strategy for Oropouche is not necessarily appropriate for Port of Spain, for example. He made the point that when one is developing a regional developmental programme, one has to take into consideration the natural resources of that particular area in addition to the kind of human resource available. I think the Member went into great detail in explaining this. The Members on the other side were more than unfair in taking the Member to task in their interpretation, their distortion of his comments—less than sensible.

The Member for Diego Martin West, as did the Member for Diego Martin East, took the Member for Fyzabad to task when he said that the CDC was involved more than in simply investing in the private sector. More than that, the Member for Diego Martin West went on to say that unless Government has a minority interest in any enterprise the Commonwealth Development Corporation would not become involved.

I tried to get the *Hansard* in order to quote the Member for St Ann's East accurately. However, it was not ready. I remember the Member for St. Ann's East in his presentation referring to the CDC's involvement, whether it be direct or

indirect, in having a foreign company involved in Caroni (1975) Limited's aquaculture project.

In fact he went so far as to tell us that the recommendation that came out of that particular consultancy or technical support, concluded that the present aquaculture project was too small and that it needed to be put in a larger area.

**5.15 p.m.**

Members opposite say that we on this side contradict ourselves, but they do it as well. So one should be careful when one throws stones because, really, one may be throwing them in one's own backyard.

**Dr. Baboolal:** What is the point?

**Miss I. Sagewan:** Furthermore, we all do our research and find relevant sources from which to quote and therefore substantiate the points we seek to make.

The Member for Diego Martin East quoted from a document—I am not sure what the document is—and made the point that CDC would get involved only in private sector activities. I wish to read into *Hansard* from the Commonwealth Development Corporation Act—

**Mr. Imbert:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I said no such thing. I said CDC is primarily involved in private sector operations and 90 per cent of its operations worldwide is private sector, leaving 10 per cent—if the Member can do arithmetic—for non private sector operations.

**Miss I. Sagewan:** Is the Member for Diego Martin East saying that they will get involved in projects that are not state-owned enterprises?

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of clarification, point of order, the CDC's thrust is to encourage private sector investment. As a result, 90 per cent of its investment is in the private sector; 10 per cent is not and, therefore, once a project satisfies its criteria, it is satisfied.

**Miss I. Sagewan:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, then it must have been the Member for Diego Martin West. It was the Member for Diego Martin West, because I remember him taking the Member for Fyzabad to task on the point that he made and the Member for Fyzabad had to defend himself and specify what he was speaking about—technical advice, not necessarily direct investment.

I would like to read into *Hansard* the Commonwealth Development Corporation Act, 1978 and it is really for the edification of Members, so that we all understand better what the CDC is involved in. It is quite a bit of reading, unfortunately.

The first subhead is: "Purpose and powers of Corporation".

- "(1) The purpose of the Corporation shall be to assist overseas countries, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, in the development of their economies.
- (2) For the purpose mentioned in subsection (1) above, the Corporation shall have power, subject to the following provisions of this section and to sections 3 and 4 below,—
  - (a) to investigate and formulate projects for the promotion or expansion in overseas countries of new or existing enterprises falling within section 3 (1) below, and to carry out any such projects;
  - (b) to carry on undertakings in overseas countries which appear to the Corporation to be needed for or in connection with the promotion or expansion in those countries of new or existing enterprises falling within section 3 (1) below;
  - (c) to carry on any activities incidental to a project falling within paragraph (a) above or to an undertaking falling within paragraph (b) above which appear to the Corporation to be requisite, advantageous or convenient for or in connection with that project or undertaking;
  - (d) to assist other bodies or persons, either financially or in any other way, to perform any functions which the Corporation is empowered to perform by virtue of any of paragraphs (a) to (c) above; and
  - (e) to establish or expand, or promote the establishment or expansion of, other bodies to carry on (either under the control or partial control of the Corporation or independently) any such functions as are mentioned in paragraph (d) above.
- (3) Any power conferred on the Corporation by subsection (2) above may be exercised by it either alone or in association with other bodies or persons, or as managing agent or otherwise on behalf of other bodies or persons..."[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Sudama:** Those are the parameters to the investment, do you not understand that? I know you want to go home but—

**Miss I. Sagewan:** We proceed:

- (4) The Minister may give directions to the Corporation requiring it to obtain his approval, in such cases as may be specified in the directions, before performing functions in or in relation to an overseas country which is not a dependent territory; and the Minister may give his approval under this subsection to such conditions as he thinks fit."

More importantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will now quote the "Enterprises to which powers of Corporation relate" These are:

- (1) The enterprises referred to in section 2 (2) above are those falling within one or more of the following classes, namely,—
- (a) agricultural enterprises, including any enterprise concerned with the livestock industry, with horticulture, or with forestry;
  - (b) enterprises concerned with fisheries, including any enterprise relating to the taking of marine mammals;
  - (c) enterprises for the working or getting of minerals;
  - (d) industrial enterprises;
  - (e) enterprises for providing, maintaining or improving the supply of water, electricity or gas;
  - (f) enterprises for providing, maintaining or improving transport facilities or transport services, or for providing, maintaining or improving telegraph or telephone services, including wireless services other than broadcasting, but not including broadcast relay services;
  - (g) enterprises for the provision or improvement of houses or other dwellings;
  - (h) enterprises for the keeping of hotels;
  - (i) enterprises for processing, storing or marketing any products of one or more enterprises falling within any of paragraphs (a) to (h) above;
  - (j) enterprises for the carrying out of building, engineering or other operations in, on, over or under land.
- (2) In subsection (1) above—
- (a) in paragraph (c), ---

I do not think I need to read this 2 (a) and (b).

**Hon. Members:** Read it, read it!

**Miss I. Sagewan:** Okay, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll read it.

- (2) In subsection (1) above—
  - (a) in paragraph (c)—

This is so we understand specifically what the terms are defined as.

**Mr. Sudama:** Take your time. Read it through. They have a difficulty in understanding.

**Miss I. Sagewan:** The quote continues:

- (a) in paragraph (c) the expression "minerals" includes any substance in or under land of a kind ordinarily worked for removal by underground or by surface working; and
- (b) in paragraph (f), the expression "transport" means transport by land, water or air, and the reference to transport facilities includes roads, bridges, railways, waterways, and other installations for use in connection with transport by land, water or air.
- (3) If it appears to the Minister to be expedient to add to the classes of enterprises specified in subsection (1) above, he may, with the consent of the Treasury, by order direct that that subsection shall have effect with the addition of such class or classes of enterprises as may be specified in the order."
- "(4) An order under subsection (3) above may be revoked or varied by a subsequent order under that subsection.
- (5) The power to make orders under subsection (3) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument, and an instrument containing an order under that subsection shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament."

**5.25 p.m.**

For the benefit of the Member for Diego Martin Central who obviously missed the point, nowhere in what I quoted directly from the Commonwealth Development Corporation Act, 1978, is it specified that the CDC will get involved only in private sector enterprises. It outlines housing, which the Member for Fyzabad referred to; it also outlined water, which he also referred to, as areas that one could possibly look to get the CDC involved in.

**Mr. Imbert:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is the 1978 Act. The Members on that side are always out of date. The current CDC board's rules dictate that they can get involved only in projects which lead to the involvement of the private sector in a majority capacity in an investment.

**Hon Members:** Bring the rules!

**Miss I. Sagewan:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, he will have to quote directly from the source for me to take that.

**Mr. Sudama:** You lie too much; bring the rules here!

**Miss I. Sagewan:** In effect, our information is that the CDC can get involved in enterprises and in activities outside the parameter of purely private sector enterprises. In fact, the Member for St. Ann's East said that in his opening. He outlined the involvement of the CDC in Caroni (1975) Limited's aquaculture project. And Caroni (1975) Limited is a state enterprise.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have the Minister's contribution here. The involvement of CDC in Caroni is to find a partner to get into a joint venture operation with Caroni (1975) Limited where the private sector will have a majority shareholding, in a new business—for the Member's information.

**Miss I. Sagewan:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is exactly what I said when I referred to the Member's presentation. But CDC was involved in the process.

**Mr. Imbert:** To take it into the private sector.

**Miss I. Sagewan:** CDC was involved in identifying a foreign firm that came into Trinidad and Tobago and advised Caroni (1975) Limited on its aquaculture project. That is what happened. Whatever happens after now is for us to wait and see, but this is what the Member for St. Ann's East explained to us in his presentation.

This really is the reason I got up—to put the record, straight, as did the other Members, in justification of the positions that those of us on this side stood up and presented.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, let me thank all those who participated in the debate. I thought, of course, that this was an extremely simple matter—a Bill to provide some

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*  
[HON. K. VALLEY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

immunities to the Commonwealth Development Corporation so that it could be exempted from certain things, such as taxation in Trinidad and Tobago, but, of course, Member opposite went into a number of different areas. However, I think Members would agree that we have to encourage institutions such as CDC, MEGA from the United States, the IFC, to invest in Trinidad and Tobago. Of course, we know that accessing financing in the international environment is extremely important.

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 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*The Schedule.*

*Question proposed, That the Schedule stand part of the bill.*

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Schedule, Part II, I would like a clarification and an exact interpretation of the meaning of the last two lines as they relate to Part II of the Schedule: "Privileges and Immunities of Employees of the Corporation."

As stated here, it seems to me that the foreign employees of the corporation would be given "exemptions, concessions and privileges that are accorded to employees of international institutions." The reason for the Bill is precisely because this organization could not be accommodated under Chap. 17:01. So I would like to find out exactly what is the meaning of these two lines and what they refer to.

**Mr. Sobion:** Mr. Chairman, one has to go back to the Privileges and Immunities Act, Chap. 17:01 which provides for certain immunities for members, among other things, of international organizations and agencies. The agreement with the CDC is that the privileges which are given to these international organs and agencies will be applied to the CDC. As it now stands, those that are set out in the Schedule are the privileges which apply to international agencies.

All the last two lines contemplate is a recognition that if there is a change in the immunities granted to international organizations, there would be a



corresponding change in the Schedule to this Act. So it confers nothing until the Schedule is amended and in the event that the international organizations are exempted.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** Mr. Chairman, I find this matter to be ambiguous, because if you are going to talk about concessions and privileges that are accorded to employees of international institutions, should there not be some indication as to which Act this refers so these privileges can be circumscribed by the particular Act if it is Chap. 17:01? Because if that is the case, the original intent, according to the Explanatory Note to the Bill was that we had to pass this Bill because as it is said here in this Note:

"The privileges and immunities could not be accorded by an Order made by the President under section 9 of the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic, Consular and International Organisations) Act, Chap. 17:01 because they are granted only to international or regional organisations or agencies..."

**5.35 p.m.**

Now, the further question is: Are we also saying that the same privileges and immunities which would be granted to the employees of the corporation would not be granted to the corporation itself?

**Mr. Sobion:** I think the question that is raised is a repeat of the question I thought I had answered. The only Act under which organizations can get privileges would be the Privileges and Immunities Act, Chap. 17:01. Those last two lines refer to the fact that the agreement with the CDC was that even though a private organization, it would be given the same privileges which the Trinidad and Tobago Government would give to an international or regional body because of the nature of its work.

If the immunities with respect to international organizations are extended, as they can be under Chap. 17:01, then the Schedule to this piece of legislation can also be amended to include those additional privileges. What is set out in the Schedule is the existing privileges and immunities. There has been no agreement with respect to the organization, as an organization, and the privileges that are set out here are limited to the employees in respect of income tax and other taxes. In fact, it is less than what is granted to some of the international organizations which have diplomatic immunity and so forth.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** Mr. Chairman, I am not satisfied, but if that is his explanation, it is.

*Commonwealth Dev. Corp. Bill*

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

*The Schedule 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.*

#### ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House consider Motion No. 2 on the Order Paper.

*Assent indicated.*

#### PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES (CARIBBEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION) ORDER

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take pleasure in moving the Motion which stands in the name of my colleague the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which reads as follows:

*Whereas* it is provided by section 9 of the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic, Consular and International Organizations) Act, Chap. 17:01 hereinafter referred to as "the Act" that the President may, by order, declare that any international or regional organization or agency named or described in such order shall, to such extent as specified in the order, be accorded the privileges and immunities set out in Part I of the Fifth Schedule therein;

*And Whereas* it is also provided by section 9 of the Act that every order made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

*And Whereas* the President has on the 17th day of July, 1995 made the Privileges and Immunities (Caribbean Telecommunications Union) order, 1995;

*And Whereas* it is expedient that the Order now be affirmed;

*Be it Resolved* that the Privileges and Immunities (Caribbean Telecommunications Union) Order, 1995 be approved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one would see that this matter is extremely similar to the one which engaged the attention of the House earlier today, the difference being that this falls squarely on Chap. 17:01, as a regional institution. Since the

Commonwealth Development Corporation is not a regional corporation, one had to come by way of a Bill. In this instance, as it falls squarely under Chap. 17:01, one can do it by affirmative order.

In that regard, therefore, it is a very simple matter. The Caribbean Telecommunications Union is a regional organization which was established in 1989, and became effective in 1990. The purpose of the order today is to provide immunities because the headquarters of this organization is in Trinidad and Tobago. If the headquarters were in Antigua, Dominica or wherever, there would have been no need to have the order today. But, the headquarters of the organization is here in Trinidad and Tobago, hence the reason for coming to the House to grant immunities to this regional organization.

It is well known that the Government is attempting to attract regional organizations to Trinidad and Tobago, and, of course, some time in the near future the Government will be coming with a similar order to provide similar privileges and immunities to the ACS. As Members know, the ACS is headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago.

One would have to provide similar immunities to the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce, which has just moved its headquarters from Barbados to Trinidad and Tobago.

It is well known that the telecommunications area is one of growing interest. The attempt here is to forge this regional organization so that there could be some type of co-ordination in policy with respect to telecommunications in the Caribbean area. The vision of the Ministers of Telecommunications who worked on this was the desire to correct what they deemed to be the fragmented policy framework of the telecommunications sector, for example, the inadequate legislation.

Also, the continuing problems of frequency incompatibility. For example, radio stations in one Caricom state jamming radio stations in another Caricom state. We in Trinidad would know the concept of the Spanish radio station cutting in from time to time. One would want to correct that given the fact that one is already putting telecommunications in the forefront.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I expect that my colleagues on the other side would have no problem allowing this order to be approved. Members would know that from time to time orders require a negative sanction—they can just be laid in the House and, unless one asks for a debate, there is none. In other situations, one requires an affirmative resolution.

*Privileges and Immunities Order*  
[HON. K. VALLEY]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

This order requires affirmation and we seek the affirmation of the House at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**5.45 p.m.**

**Hon. Kenneth Valley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank Members on both sides of the House very graciously.

I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That the Privileges and Immunities (Caribbean Telecommunications Union) Order, 1995 be approved.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to apologize because on the last day I stated that we would be debating the Institute of Marine Affairs Bill. We were supposed to do the three items on the Order Paper.

When I planned the agenda for today, I did not think that we would have spent so much time on the Commonwealth Development Corporation (Privileges and Immunities) Bill. I apologize most sincerely to the Member for Tobago West. I assure her that we will do it next Friday.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. Kenneth Valley:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in moving the adjournment to Wednesday, October 4, 1995 at 1.30 p.m., may I inform the House that we plan to take the EPZ legislation which is listed as Bill No. 4 on the Order Paper today, through all its stages.

**Miss Nicholson:** Are you letting the country know?

**Hon. K. Valley:** Yes.

#### Vending (Cross Crossing, San Fernando)

**Mr. Trevor Sudama (Oropouche):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to facilitate the Member for Diego Martin Central. I will be very brief on this Motion, I am not like the PNM Government; when I make a promise, I keep it.

*Vending (Cross Crossing, San F'do)*

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

I raise this issue because we have been over this vendors issue, and there is no resolution of the issue to the satisfaction of this very hard-pressed group of people. I am talking about the threat to the vendors who are selling at the Cross Crossing Roundabout which happens to be not very far from where I live and in the constituency of San Fernando East.

The vendors came to me and told me they have no representation from their parliamentary representatives and they would like me to raise this matter in the House on their behalf. This is why I am doing this.

We had raised this matter before. I myself had moved a Motion as a matter of urgent public importance when the national police and other police hired by the Member for Diego Martin East, the Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government, went there and with an unbelievable degree of brutality, broke down these people's shacks in driving rain, damaged their produce and scattered their property.

Persons had purchased goods on credit—all damaged—in the hope that they would resell these goods and make a little income for themselves in a situation where employment is so difficult to obtain.

That Motion was raised and, subsequently the Member for Diego Martin East promised that they were at the stage of constructing or planning lay-bys to accommodate these people. Every time this question is raised in the House the response of the Member for Diego Martin East is that these people are breaking the law. In what way are they breaking the law? It is said they are an obstruction to the traffic and, therefore, their vending and attempting to earn a livelihood is being done in a dishonest and illegal manner.

We on this side are saying that even if that is the letter of the law, the Government has acted in various other instances where it has accommodated persons who have broken the law. In this case, since they have made a promise to construct lay-bys, they can regularize the position of these vendors at the side of the South Trunk Road where vehicles could get off the roadway, the people would have their vending places, customers make their purchases and lower down, get back onto the roadway. This was the whole concept.

We thought this would have accommodated their situation and there would not be this recurring problem where threats are issued and their shacks are broken down after a period, and these people have no option. They go back there and sell. They brave the rain and the sun, probably with a table; they try to vend nuts and other vegetables in order to earn something to keep body and soul together. I

*Vending (Cross Crossing, San F'do)*  
[MR. SUDAMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

want the Government to understand that these people are doing this out of sheer undiluted necessity.

Secondly, one vends where one will get customers. One cannot go and vend in Toco/Manzanilla on the Toco Road because there is very little traffic there. One cannot go and vend in an isolated part of the country where there is no traffic. One vends in a place where there is traffic and where it is accessible to customers. We are saying to regularize the situation if you feel that they are breaking the law.

My concern is, when some people break the law a blind eye is turned to them. When these poor, defenceless people break the law the Government comes down on them with all the force and might of the state. Sometimes I feel the Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government gets an evil glee in seeing such defenceless people terrorized. Sometimes I wonder if he is not the reincarnation of Marquis de Sade. It is an aspect of satanism. Why does the Member not do something to correct it as we suggested and they have agreed?

Furthermore, may I point out that the Mc Donald's establishment has been built contrary to law. It has already been opened. Up to today Mc Donald's in Gulf City—South Trunk Road—plans for that building have not been approved. The Member just would not understand. They have not been given approval by the local health authority. The Penal/Debe Regional Corporation in whose area that falls has not seen a plan up to today, but the building has been opened.

**5.55 p.m.**

The County Medical Officer of Health has not issued a food certificate to Mc Donald's and that is a requirement under the health laws. All these laws are broken, violated and nobody on the other side would do anything, but the full force of the state comes down on the poor defenceless vendors. Do you see the inequity in the situation?

Secondly, inequality under the law. When they had a problem with the craftsmen—the Drag Brothers who were vending on Independence Square—they relocated them at a cost of \$2.3 million. I have no problem with that, they needed to be relocated, they need to earn a living as well. The Government was willing to spend \$2.3 million to relocate the Drag Brothers, but it cannot spend a few thousand dollars to build a lay-by for the vendors on South Trunk Road.

Similarly, when they had a problem with vending on High Street, before they moved the vendors they built a large structure at the bottom of High Street—

*Vending (Cross Crossing, San F'do)*

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

Chancery Lane—in order to accommodate the vendors before they proceeded against them. It is different strokes for different folks; that is what is happening in this country. One law for Mc Donald's, but there is another law for the poor defenceless vendors who are trying to make a penny. That is the PNM Government of 1995.

If the Government has any compassion—something which is probably alien to their thinking, their philosophy—for poor, defenceless people, they would do something to alleviate that problem.

The vendors are in an area which does not fall within the jurisdiction of the San Fernando City Corporation. I am arguing here that the San Fernando City Corporation Police have no *locus standi* in the matter to issue any kind of threat or notice to them. Where the vendors vend is not within the precincts of the San Fernando City Corporation. The San Fernando City Police cannot be deemed to be agents of the Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government. If that is the case, then that Minister could deem anybody an agent and they could break down anybody's shack anywhere in this country.

The national police are not the municipal police. If the national police can be deemed agents of the Minister of Works and Transport, the municipal police cannot be so deemed. On the northern side of the San Fernando Roundabout—you probably know the area, Sir—is the City Corporation; on the southern side is the Penal/Debe Corporation and all the vendors are located within the jurisdiction of the Penal/Debe Corporation.

I have a notice in my possession issued by some Assistant Superintendent in charge of the Municipal Police Service, Penitence Street, San Fernando. It states as follows:

"Lutchman Gosine,  
Union Hall,  
Cross Crossing,  
San Fernando.

Dear Sir,

The attention of the San Fernando Municipal Police Service has been called to the fact that you have erected an unauthorised structure, to wit a wood and galvanize structure measuring approximately 8' x 10' at Cross Crossing Roundabout, San Fernando without the prior permission of the Highways Division, Ministry of Works and Transport in breach of the Highways Act, Chap 46:01, Section 51 which reads...:

*Vending (Cross Crossing, San F'do)*  
[MR. SUDAMA]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

As a result, prior to verbal notice served upon you on 22/8/95, this notice is hereby served upon you to have this unauthorised structure demolished within 7 days after the service of this notice on you, failing which the Police will take the necessary steps to have the unauthorised structure demolished immediately after termination of the notice.

/s/ Assistant Superintendent I/C  
Municipal Police Service,  
Penitence Street,  
San Fernando."

Quite apart from treating these people unequally, quite apart from the fact that the Government has spent money relocating other vendors and it is not doing the same for these vendors, I am arguing here today that the San Fernando City Police have no authority to act in this manner, simply because the vendors are vending within the jurisdiction of the Penal/Debe Corporation. Furthermore, if this threat is carried out, I would have to mobilize a legal remedy to deal with this problem. I would have to take the San Fernando City Police, and, if necessary, the Minister of Works and Transport, to court on a matter in which the San Fernando Municipal Police have no *locus standi*.

This matter could be easily resolved if the Government would take the suitable and proper action in order to accommodate these people and build a lay-by within the jurisdiction of the Penal/Debe Corporation—I can speak for that jurisdiction. They would get all the co-operation from the Penal/Debe Corporation in having this lay-by constructed to accommodate these vendors. The Government could take that route or it could take the route of confrontation—use the heavy weight of the law against these poor defenceless people and try to deny them earning a livelihood.

I am making a plea for reason by the Government, barring which, if reason is not acknowledged in this House and there is no action according to the principles of fairness and justice, we would have to take another route in order to deal with this problem. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am willing to go to jail in pursuit of justice; we are fighting the cause of justice. *[Interruption]* If I am going to jail I am not going to jail to "mamaguy," I am going to stay.

I am saying, let us try to resolve this problem. I did not come here to issue threats, but people are definitely in need of some kind of solution to this problem so that we do not have this recurring. I do not have to come here and raise this issue month after month after the vendors have received threats and so forth. I hope that the Minister would take these few comments into consideration.



*Vending (Cross Crossing, San F'do)*

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

**The Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Oropouche for being mercifully brief and not spending 75 minutes on a tissue of inaccuracies, distortions, misleading statements, untruths and so forth.

In a certain newspaper I saw a comment attributed to the Member for Oropouche on this very matter, where he made the allegations that the Government spent \$2.3 million relocating the Drag Brothers and has not spent a cent on vending and markets in Opposition constituencies; that we are guilty of discrimination, alienation and so forth. As a matter of fact that was the sum total of his irrelevant contribution on the Commonwealth Development Corporation Bill earlier today.

This is in the face of—and the Member for Oropouche is directly responsible for those vendors that he refers to being in a situation where they occupy areas illegally. Those same vendors come from Oropouche and they have no wish to go into the empty Debe Market, the \$7 million Debe Market—and I am going to say it a hundred times—which cost three times the amount we spent on the Drag Brothers.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no point of order in this.  
*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am on a point of order! The Member for Diego Martin East cannot mislead the House like this. The Debe market is a wholesale market. These people are doing retail vending and the Debe wholesale Market is situated four miles away from where they are actually vending.

**6.05 p.m.**

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the problems San Fernando has had—the matter reached the court and the Member for Couva South lost the case—is the unprecedented explosion of illegal vending on the streets of San Fernando and environs. It seems that the Member for Oropouche is not aware that vending is illegal, and he also is not aware of the economic and dangerous environmental consequences of insanitary vending—I am going to come to McDonald's. These illegal structures have no toilet facilities, no running water; the vendors throw their garbage at the side of the road; some of them live there, and it is simply an undesirable situation.

**Dr. Baboolal:** There was a funeral there.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** I understand that there was even a funeral inside one of those shacks. The person lived and died right there by the Cross Crossing Roundabout; right there in this open structure where there is just a table. There were actually houses where persons were living, yet this Member for Oropouche would come here week after week misleading this House talking about \$2.3 million for the Drag Brothers when we spent \$9 million in Debe and Chaguanas—four times as much.

**Mr. Sudama:** For what, a wholesale market?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** The sum of \$2 million dollars in Chaguanas, but he would never admit that outside—continually misleading persons in the newspapers. He is a stranger to the truth. In his contribution he makes the point that the restaurant to which he refers—

**Mr. Sudama:** You are a sadist.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only sadism in this House is the sadism of the Member for Oropouche inflicting pain on the Members on this side when they have to listen to his contributions. That is the only sadism in this House.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I think we could answer the question without going to that level. Please!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** The Member for Oropouche made reference to McDonald's Restaurant which he admitted was within the jurisdiction of the Penal/Debe Regional Corporation, an Opposition controlled regional corporation. What have the UNC done about that so-called illegal structure that falls within the jurisdiction of a UNC corporation? They have done nothing. He comes into this House and says they have no approval from the Penal/Debe Corporation; they have no approval from the Health Authority and so forth.

**Mr. Sudama:** Would you like to know? As Minister of Local Government, would you like to know? A notice was served on McDonald's in the first week of August.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Two Members cannot be on their feet at the same time.

**Mr. Sudama:** No. If he wants to know—he is making accusations—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** If he has misquoted you, then you could clear that up, but two Members cannot be on their feet at the same time. Proceed, please.

*Vending (Cross Crossing, San F'do)*

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

**Mr. Sudama:** I want to clear that up.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Member for Diego Martin, would you give way so that he could clear up a matter?

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the Member is bent on continually interrupting me, I am not going to give him the opportunity.

The fact of the matter is, the Penal/Debe Corporation have the opportunity and the power to take action against McDonald's; they have chosen not to do so and, therefore, any responsibility for that matter falls on the United National Congress. It is a UNC corporation. The only time there is any affirmative action in this country against illegal matters, is when it is taken by the PNM Government; not the Members on the other side.

From the information I have, the vendors to which the Member refers were on the northern side of the roundabout—and that is another inaccurate statement made by the Member for Oropouche—within the jurisdiction of the San Fernando City Corporation.

**Mr. Sudama:** They were not on the northern side.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Member has information to the contrary, he should please give me evidence because I am not taking his word for it.

The Member for Oropouche is encouraging indiscipline, lawlessness, insanitary conditions and crime. He is continually coming into this House and making misrepresentations about expenditure in his community when he knows very well that the vast majority of public funds spent on markets in the last four years has been in the constituency of Oropouche. And he is always going to the newspapers and presenting a different picture—something that is remote from the truth. He has no interest in the truth; he has interest only in spreading misinformation.

**Mr. Sudama:** You are a sadist of the highest order.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** The fact of the matter is, the purpose of constructing the Debe wholesale market was to provide proper facilities for persons to sell their agricultural produce but what has happened is that the Member for Oropouche has encouraged persons not to go into that market, and instead to set up shop on the pavement and on the streets of San Fernando and break the law.

I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I cannot get involved in activities that break the law. I cannot and I will not, and I am afraid that there is no way I can

*Vending (Cross Crossing, San F'do)*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

*Wednesday, September 27, 1995*

intervene in this matter and stop the proper authorities from taking action under the law to remove unsightly, insanitary and illegal structures from dangerous locations which cause traffic accidents and are a hazard to pedestrians.

There are reports that at that particular location, women are harassed on their way to and from home and work. There are even reports of the sale of illegal substances in these areas.

**Mr. Sudama:** Shut up and sit down!

**Hon. C. Imbert:** I am afraid I cannot condone that kind of illegal activity and I will not and I cannot support the Member for Oropouche.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.10 p.m.*