

Leave of Absence

Wednesday, September 18, 1996

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 18, 1996

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to indicate that I have received communication from a few Members of the House who have asked to be excused from today's sitting.

The hon. Prime Minister and Member for Couva North (Mr. Basdeo Panday) has asked to be excused as he is out of the jurisdiction on official business.

I also have communication from the Member for Port of Spain South (Mr. Eric Williams) who is out of the country and has asked to be excused up to September 26, 1996.

The Member for Ortoire/Mayaro (Mr. Razack Ali) has asked to be excused from today's sitting because of illness, but he is present.

The Member for San Fernando East (Mr. Patrick Manning) has also asked to be excused due to illness.

**JOAN SEALEY
(DEATH)**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, it was with sadness that I noted the passing of a former Member of this honourable House, Mrs. Joan Sealey, who had, in fact, served in Parliament as the Member of Parliament for Laventille from 1976—1981.

I am sure that all of us on both sides note with sadness the untimely passing of this former Member and I ask you all to rise for one minute's silence, out of respect.

The House stood.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. President of the Senate with respect to a Joint Select Committee. It reads as follows:

Joint Select Committee
[MR. SPEAKER]

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Dear Mr. Speaker,

Resolution—Joint Select Committee

With reference to your letter dated August 9, 1996, I wish to inform you that at a sitting held on Tuesday September 17, 1996, the Senate agreed with the following Resolution which was moved by the Leader of Government Business, Sen. the Hon. Wade Mark.

‘Whereas the Working Paper on Equal Opportunity Legislation was tabled in the House of Representatives on Friday February 16, 1996, and in the Senate on Tuesday February 13, 1996:

Be it resolved that a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be established to receive and consider comments from members of the public and to submit a report to the Parliament thereon.’

The Resolution is accordingly returned with the concurrence of the Senate.

Yours faithfully,

/s/ President of the Senate.”

I would simply indicate, hon. Members, that it may be urgent that both sides agree on the people who should, in fact, comprise this committee so that during the session we may have something positive.

Thank you.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Supervisor of Insurance for the year ended December 31, 1995. [*The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Public Utilities Commission for the year ended December 31, 1995. [*The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj)*]
3. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board for the year ended December 31, 1984. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]

4. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board for the year ended December 31, 1985. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]
5. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board for the year ended December 31, 1986. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]
6. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board for the year ended December 31, 1987. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]
7. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board for the year ended December 31, 1986. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]

Papers 2 to 7 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

1.40 p.m.

ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND BUILDING EQUITY

The Minister Extraordinaire and Minister of Tobago Affairs (Hon. A.N.R. Robinson): Mr. Speaker, with the emergence of the new poor, the homeless, and the street children, together with reports of their abduction to foreign countries for various forms of abuse, the issue of poverty has come under increasing focus in Trinidad and Tobago.

One of the immediate challenges is to agree on a definition or criteria of poverty which capture its social and cultural dimensions within the society; in addition to the economic criteria used internationally. For example, according to the 1995 World Bank study of Trinidad and Tobago entitled *Poverty and Unemployment in an Oil-based Economy*, based on income criteria as a starting point, a combination of factors has led to a significant increase in poverty levels in Trinidad and Tobago and to a shift in the character of poverty with the phenomenon of the “new poor”.

According to the same study, the poor in Trinidad and Tobago comprise approximately 21 per cent of the population with about 50 per cent of these extremely poor—that is, those who are unable to afford the cost of a minimum food basket. The figure of 21 per cent is significantly up from earlier estimates of 3.5 per cent in 1981 and 14.8 per cent by 1988, indicating the effect of the years of

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progressive economic decline and structural adjustment of the economy. Significant sub-groups among the poor include the female-headed households and unemployed male youth with low levels of education.

Trinidad and Tobago has traditionally shown commitment to the provision of a social safety net. However, the focus of the programmes designed to address poverty, caused by structural adjustment, has been imprecise and unco-ordinated largely because poverty issues have not been addressed by an integrated and multisectoral strategy within the overall macro-economic framework. A recent study on the delivery of social services conducted for the Government by the UNDP found that many policies and programmes often considered that the pro-poor are only partially so, in that the vast majority may be supportive and remedial in the short term, but do not address the rehabilitative and developmental aspects necessary for eliminating the root causes of poverty.

It has been accepted for some time now that *ad hoc* social safety nets need to be complemented by safety ladders which help the poor to climb out of their, apparently, hopeless position towards sustainable livelihoods. That concept itself implies a greater mix of community-based strategies to complement the over-reliance on the traditional approach of attempting to continuously expand the economy in order to create individual employment opportunities. Given changes in the world trading system, as well as the technological changes which have permanently reduced the labour input required for most economic activities, traditional employment opportunities by themselves can no longer be relied upon to reduce poverty levels significantly.

The Government therefore recognizes the need for fundamental reform in the approach to poverty reduction and eradication. Trinidad and Tobago's experience of a declining quality of life and increasing social problems, including poverty, is part of a more widely experienced problem which has, in recent years, come under focus by the United Nations.

Between 1990 and 1995, for example, the United Nations System organized a series of international conferences which, together, have demonstrated that all the issues covered are interconnected and complex and that none of them can be solved in isolation from action on the others. The conferences referred to are:

World Summit for Children, which was held in New York in 1990;

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992;

World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993;

Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island States held in Barbados in 1994;

International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994;

World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995; and

Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

These conferences have made clear that sustainable human development will require an approach based on a holistic vision, intersectoral action and partnership between governments and civil society. This poses an enormous challenge to individual countries and international organizations since both, traditionally, are organized to respond to sectoral challenges and have not yet fully established the framework and procedures for participatory planning among a variety of stakeholders to address, effectively, those complex issues which cut across sectoral responsibilities and resources.

The United Nations Administrative Committee on Co-ordination has recently made a significant contribution by creating a matrix of sustainable development issues and sub-issues which could collate, guide and monitor such intersectoral collaboration while reflecting the contributions of individual agencies, national or international, governmental or non-governmental.

The United Nations matrix seeks to orchestrate poverty eradication efforts in five main areas: the enabling environment; basic social services for all; jobs and sustainable livelihoods; advancement of women; and regenerating the environmental resource base. The matrix has, however, not yet been put to the test as a methodology for identifying potential linkages between international agencies and individual countries as well as among governmental and non-governmental agencies within countries in support of joint action to promote sustainable development.

Moreover, the matrix could remain no more than a device for recording progress or lack of it in respect of the individual items unless it can be transformed into an action tool. This requires consensus on at least one cross-cutting priority. Both national experience and the series of international conferences already referred to have clearly demonstrated that action against poverty is the most urgent and most complex challenge on the way towards sustainable human development.

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Dealing with poverty will require the mobilization, commitment and collaboration of a wide variety of sectoral programmes, both national and international. In the United Nations system the United Nations Development Programme has been assigned the lead role in that mobilization effort for which it has created its poverty strategies initiative fund.

Addressing the root causes of poverty and building social equity have been placed high on this Government's development agenda. The 1996 Budget and the *Medium Term Policy Framework, 1996—1998* pay particular attention to the social issues of poverty and crime as well as maintaining macro-economic stability.

It is in that context, Mr. Speaker, that my ministry has been entrusted with responsibility for interacting with the United Nations system and other international agencies in order to support a holistic and integrated response to poverty and equity issues to be defined through a process of collaboration with all sections of the national community. The ministry will discharge that responsibility in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development through a national Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building (CMU/PEEB).

The ministry has already obtained the support of UNDP's poverty strategies initiative in order to ensure that the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building will be capable of providing needed technical skills and methodologies.

1.50 p.m.

The unit will serve as the Secretariat for a National Social Development Council (NSDC). The council will be established to oversee national action to follow up the Declarations and Programmes of Action of the World Conference on Social Development and related international conferences I have already mentioned.

The council will operate at two levels, ministerial and technical, both intersectoral. The technical level will involve both government and civil society.

At the ministerial level the council will comprise the Cabinet Ministers responsible for the following subject areas:

- Finance
- Housing and Settlements

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- Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources
- Education
- Sport and Youth Affairs
- Labour and Co-operatives
- Health
- Social Development
- Planning and Development
- Community Development, Culture and Community Affairs

with the Minister Extraordinaire and Minister of Tobago Affairs as Chairman.

At the technical level it will comprise representatives of those ministries together with representatives of the:

- Tobago House of Assembly
- Employers' Consultative Association
- National Trade Union Centre of Trinidad and Tobago
- Association of Local Government Authorities
- Foundation for Enrichment and Enhancement of Life (FEEL), an umbrella organization for approximately 140 national Non Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations serving the poor.

In addition, the council will be mandated to "ensure that all stakeholders, including poor communities themselves, are brought into the process of dialogue and collaborative planning by adjusting the membership of committees of the National Social Development Council" and by innovative communication strategies. Specifically, the council will address the core issues of poverty eradication, expansion of productive employment, and enhancement of social integration. In view of the complex intersectoral nature of these issues, the council will adopt the United Nations sustainable development matrix, with appropriate adaptations, as a holistic vision of social development for Trinidad and Tobago and as the framework within which to build collaboration with and among line ministries, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in which the contribution of each ministry and sector can be clearly seen to be essential.

The process of building on the United Nations matrix has already been initiated through a joint UNDP/ECLAC project to develop an interactive data base for collating national information on social development initiatives and needs on the basis of that matrix.

In the particular circumstances of Trinidad and Tobago, where the unemployment and educational levels of young males, and their involvement in violence (including domestic violence), give great cause for concern, the UN matrix has been adapted and expanded to include “Empowerment and Advancement of Young Males”. Similarly, the phenomenon of “Street Children”, which is now emerging in Trinidad and Tobago as a manifestation of poverty, will be a focus on the council’s attention.

On the other hand, the council will restrict its overview of environmental matters to the impact of poverty on the environment and *vice versa*, since another national agency has overall responsibility for environmental matters.

A critically innovative dimension to the work of the National Social Development Council and of the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building is that the existing municipal boundaries and the island of Tobago will be adopted as the physical framework for their integrated social development planning. That framework will ensure greater precision in planning as well as a flexible response to particular needs since municipal boundaries correspond to the basis on which the population data collated by the Central Statistical Office can best be interpreted by the GIS technology. Population profiles will therefore become available, at the click of a button, for each of the 150—200 households which constitute an enumeration district within a municipal boundary. The identification of municipal boundaries and the island of Tobago as the social planning units also enhances the possibilities of involving all stakeholders—from central and local government, from NGOs and CBOs, from the private sector, and from the communities themselves—in a participatory process of identifying both needs and solutions.

In summary, the project is designed to help provide the following:

- (1) Methodologies and tools for identifying, collaboratively, the location and causes of poverty within the society and the impact of existing services and strategies (governmental and non-governmental), both generally and in relation to particularly vulnerable groups;

- (2) Arrangements for interactive access to data and sharing of views among stakeholders, including poor communities themselves, which increasingly suffer from “information poverty”;
- (3) Collaborative planning of integrated strategies with the participation of both government and civil society, including the poor themselves, and with access to the accumulated experience of international and regional agencies;
- (4) Implementation based on:
 - (i) achieving a multiplier effect with the human, material and financial resources available nationally, through creative collaboration among existing programmes and agencies, governmental and non-governmental;
 - (ii) additional support from the funding resources of international organizations.

The overall purpose of obtaining UNDP’s assistance is to support the National Social Development Council, through its Secretariat, the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building, as an effective and replicable mechanism for integrating multidimensional aspects of poverty eradication and equity-building into mainstream national planning and implementation for sustainable human development.

This project’s emphasis on the participation of civil society, including the communities themselves, would appear to fit in well with the ITU/UNESCO community telecommunication centres project, already demonstrated in, for example, Costa Rica. This project would accordingly seek to attract, as complementary resources, that and other current United Nations projects relevant to its objectives.

The project offers an opportunity to demonstrate, within an entire country, whether it is possible to develop a successful and replicable process for integrating such experience into national and local planning for societal development. Such a process would have to ensure that all stakeholders—i.e. those with needs, ideas, commitment, resources and the power to make and implement policy—can together design flexible responses to the complex and interrelated issues of poverty eradication and the building of social equity within the country as a whole.

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Finding a model for such an integrative process is also urgent from the point of view of maximizing the effective use of the resources available for social development which, both nationally and internationally, have been severely reduced in recent years.

The UNDP has already allocated US \$150,000 from its Poverty Strategies Initiative Fund to assist the Government in establishing the Change Management Unit as the Secretariat for its National Social Development Council. This in itself has opened the way for Trinidad and Tobago, as an international demonstration project, to attract support from the entire United Nations system and from other international agencies for its efforts to eradicate poverty and build social equity through an innovative process of collaboration between government and civil society. The key to Trinidad and Tobago's success in developing an effective and replicable model for eradicating poverty and building equity, however, will be—and I emphasize—the degree of enthusiastic support which this collaborative approach elicits from the national community.

What is required is nothing short of national mobilization against the scourge of poverty. It is highly significant and fortuitous that as we were seeking to develop our own holistic and collaborative approach to this intractable problem, our ideas found ready acceptance by the United Nations system. Trinidad and Tobago, as a consequence, became the first nation to access resources from the Poverty Strategies Initiative Fund while it was still being established by the United Nations Development Programme as early as April of this year.

No one, Mr. Speaker, must underrate the task ahead of us. By the same token no one must any longer say that the eradication of poverty as a national goal is beyond us.

The National Social Development Council will be dedicated to the attainment of this goal. It will be launched, fittingly, on October 24, United Nations Day in 1996, declared by the United Nations to be the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (IYEP). The national community will, thereafter, and by this means, be summoned to the supreme challenge of sustainable livelihoods for all our citizens and an end to the indignities and dehumanization associated with the persistence of the unacceptable standards of living described as poverty.

2.00 p.m.

**LICENSING OFFICE
(TRANSFORMATION OF)**

The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Sadiq Baksh): Mr. Speaker, the importance of the Licensing Division cannot be over-stressed. As the agency responsible for the safety and road worthiness of all motor vehicles, it touches the lives of all our citizens. As the agency with the responsibility for the issuance of all motor vehicle licences and drivers' permits, the division holds in its hands, the lives and safety of all road users.

In 1994, the agency renewed the registration of 166,168 vehicles and, in 1995, it renewed 159,350 vehicles. In 1994, it collected \$110.6 million and, in 1995, it collected \$127.2 million. In 1995, this division performed over 344,000 transactions of varying types. This figure is roughly one-quarter of our total population, therefore, we can no longer take this division lightly. The long lines cannot continue. The inferior service that the public endures is unacceptable. The archaic system must be rooted out and in its place, a modernized transport system must arise.

Over the past two months, the Licensing Division has come under the close scrutiny of Government. I have the distinct pleasure to report that we are indeed doing something very positive about it. We are going to transform the Licensing Division and we will not stop until our goals are achieved.

Mr. Speaker, by the end of the year, the division will not be the same. Change is upon us. We have a strategy to bring about this change which has two major components: an immediate to short-term programme and a medium to long-term programme which digs deep into the transformation process.

What are the objectives of our immediate to short-term measures? Our objectives are as follows:—

1. To bring immediate relief to the public who transact business at the Licensing Division.

What business? Inspection, licensing first and renewal, obtaining or renewing drivers' permits and the transfer of motor vehicles and other transactions.

2. To cut out the long lines, the loss of productive man hours and the undesirable touting and fleecing of the public.

Licensing Office
[SEN. THE HON. S. BAKSH]

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How are we going to do this? What is our strategy in the short term? What are the measures?

Mr. Speaker, anniversary date licensing will become the order of the day and will commence on October 1, 1996. We intend to introduce the licensing of vehicles on the anniversary dates. It begins first with the newly registered vehicles. The Attorney General is currently framing amendments to the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Chap. 48:50, Regulation 27, to give effect to this particular measure. It does not stop there. The Licensing Division intends to be proactive about this anniversary date system. It will send out notices one month in advance of the anniversary renewal date to remind owners that renewal is due.

But, Mr. Speaker, it must be stated that this anniversary system will be operating parallel to the current system which would continue for other vehicles until the medium to long-term plans take effect. Currently, the licensing of such vehicles takes place during the period December 15—31 for the following year, but now we propose to be renewing licences for public service vehicles from October 1 on an annual basis. So, instead of two weeks, we will now be giving taxis, taxis and other public service vehicles, 12 weeks to renew their licences for the following year. The effect of this measure is to reduce the congestion and chaos that takes place at the Licensing Office during the early part of the year. We are appealing to owners of such vehicles to please take advantage of this facility.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General is currently framing amendments to the law to give effect to this measure. I am advised that currently under the Act, private vehicles are not restricted by time limits and can be registered at any time. Currently, inspections at the Transport Division involve long lines and wanton loss of a tremendous amount of productive man hours. To address this problem in the short term, the division plans to make use of the facilities of the Public Service Transport Corporation to increase the number of inspection outlets servicing the public. Unlike in the past, where all services were restricted to the licensing compounds at Port of Spain, San Fernando and Scarborough, inspections will soon be done at Arima, South Quay, Beetham, as well as selected sub-offices of the Transport Division. All these sub-offices will be upgraded to perform inspection services. Change is here.

The Attorney General is also amending section 27 of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act to give effect to this measure. Very soon, the public will be charmed with the introduction of a one-stop shop for the purpose of registration of

vehicles. A number of steps will be cut out of the registration process so that the public will no longer have to spend endless hours to register vehicles at both Port of Spain and San Fernando.

In terms of the medium to long-term programme, there are two principal components. In the first phase, Government must determine the kind of institutional arrangement that must be put in place to so transform the operations, so that the delivery of service to the public would not only be acceptable, but would be one that would also be a delight to the public of Trinidad and Tobago. In the second instance, the Government must determine the appropriate managerial, technological, commercial and legal system that must give support, and correspond it to the institutional arrangement that is chosen.

Under the public service strengthening project, administered by the Ministry of Public Administration and Information, Government has negotiated with the World Bank for the assistance of a consultant to help in the determination of an appropriate institutional arrangement. The consultant has already tabled his recommendations which form the basis of a consultative process embracing all the stakeholders of the Licensing Division.

There was a workshop held on Wednesday, August 21, 1996 involving groups including motor car dealers, fleet owners, garage owners, trade unions, consumer associations and other stakeholders. On Tuesday, September 10, another workshop was held for the entire supervisory staff of the Licensing Division as part of the consultative process. As we speak, the entire staff of the Licensing Division is attending a consultation at the Naparima Bowl, San Fernando, at which the question of institutional choice will be further discussed. The objective is to engage the entire organization in the change process.

2.10 p.m.

My team which has worked tirelessly on this project will carefully analyze all the comments, opinions, contributions from staff, the public and all interested parties. After that is done, we shall make a final decision on the choice of institutional arrangements to govern the Licensing Division. Once the decision has been made, we will develop an action plan to bring about the necessary transformation. This would involve steps to put an appropriate legal framework in place; the determination of an appropriate information system; the determination of the appropriate skills mix of the work force and retraining. It would also involve

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decisions on possible out-sourcing of functional areas, for example, inspection and significant re-engineering of processes.

A new culture must develop. The Licensing Division must be more customer-oriented. Within the next two weeks the Attorney General will be seeking your support for the necessary legislative amendments to facilitate the proposed short-term measures. You can also expect a subsequent approach from the Attorney General which would seek a comprehensive overhaul of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act to effect the necessary changes required for a safe and efficient transport system and road environment.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEFINITE URGENT MATTER
Prime Minister's Statement re Teachers

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I received from the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, communication under Standing Order 12. I now call upon him to present it.

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 12, I hereby seek your leave to move the adjournment of this House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, that is to say, the Prime Minister's description of teachers quite recently as "criminals" and his contention that they should be treated as such.

I submit that this matter is definite because it pertains to a specific issue, namely a public statement by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. The matter is urgent because the statement has had a degenerative impact on teachers; it has infuriated citizens across Trinidad and Tobago; it has brought the industrial relations climate into jeopardy since teachers are, according to reports, about to embark upon a programme of work-to-rule, obviously to the detriment of the nation's children. If this situation is not arrested urgently, it will plunge the industrial climate of Trinidad and Tobago into an all-time low.

I submit as well that this matter is of public importance because it is a statement coming from the Prime Minister and it is having a widespread negative impact, as indicated earlier, on teachers, students and the wider citizenry, all across the Caribbean, even parents. They are alarmed by the Government's insensitive, heavy-handed and raw approach to dealing with industrial relations at a time when

Trinidad and Tobago could least afford any such matters that seriously threaten this country's drive to social stability and its economic expansion.

Having argued that the matter is definite, urgent and indeed of public importance, I seek your leave to adjourn this House so that we can discuss this matter of national importance and concern to every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the question of a matter being definite, urgent and of public importance is, in the parliamentary sense, not necessarily what it is in the ordinary sense, and the learning on that could easily be found in *May's Parliamentary Practice*. I am referring to the 21st Edition. Indeed, if one looks at pages 300 and 301, it is exhaustive on that.

In the circumstances, I am not satisfied that within the parliamentary meaning of the term, "urgent, definite and public importance", this matter could, in fact, be raised in the manner in which the hon. Member has proposed. I may say that our Standing Orders provide tremendous possibilities in terms of discussing the issue which the Member sought to discuss.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House proceed with Motion No. 1, under "Government Business", and then to "Bills Second Reading", Nos. 1 and 3.

Mr. Valley: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to discuss a matter with the Leader of Government Business before we take the vote.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj and Mr. Valley confer behind the Chair.

2.20 p.m.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I have to amend what I just said. We would proceed with Motion No. 1 and then proceed to "Bills Second Reading", No. 3 and then No. 1.

Agreed to.

LAND ACQUISITION

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Reeza Mohammed): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Land Acquisition
[DR. THE HON. R. MOHAMMED]

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"Resolved:

That this House approve the decision of the President to acquire the lands described in the Appendix for the public purposes specified."

For the benefit of Members of this House, these acquisitions, as requested by the Ministry of Works and Transport, are for the purpose of improvement and development works to the Uriah Butler Highway and the Caroni River Basin.

It should be noted that the proceedings for acquisition of the parcels of land described at Appendix "A" were initiated as far back as 1979. These lands are located at Charlieville in the borough of Chaguanas, in the county of Caroni comprising five parcels situated south of Sumaria Trace on the western side of the Uriah Butler Highway for highway improvement.

Proceedings for the acquisition of these lands, under section 3 of the Land Acquisition Act, were initiated on July 5, 1979 and authority to commence work under section 4 of the said Act was issued on July 31, 1979. The cost of the five acres of land is \$110,000.

Mr. Speaker, the lands listed as No. 2 in Appendix "A" situated at Kelly Road, Piarco in the ward of Tacarigua, in the county of St. George, were acquired for Phase III of improvements to the Caroni River at a cost of \$165,000. Proceedings for the acquisition of the two parcels of land were initiated on November 30, 1988 with a section 3 notice published following which the authority to commence work under section 4 of the Act was issued on June 27, 1989.

Hon. Members, these acquisitions are in keeping with the authority of section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a short enquiry of the Minister. I support the Motion and I think the state owes an apology to the people whose lands have been acquired and probably used for a long time. I simply want to reminisce about the times when I had the responsibility of bringing similar motions to this House, and having presented the Motion much in the same way as my colleague from Princes Town presented it, I invariably would have gotten a lecture from my Friend, the Member for Oropouche, who would severely criticize any minister who had dared to bring any request for land acquisition to Parliament in this way.

In fact, certain very specific suggestions were made on every occasion to the effect that Parliament ought to be made to look at these requests before any acquisitions are done, and it is only if Parliament agrees that the matter is for public purpose that the acquisition should be proceeded with. I heard that so many times from those who are now on the other side that I am a little surprised that my Friend, the Member for Princes Town, is doing basically the same thing that has been standard practice in the House for a long time.

I wonder whether, in fact, Members on the other side are still of the view that, before any parcel of land is acquired, Parliament should determine that such a parcel of land is being acquired for a public purpose, since the whole issue of the public purpose for which the land is acquired was a matter for some concern, as I have heard from time to time. Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the Member for Princes Town whether in fact that point of view still resides with those who are now in Government.

Secondly, can the Minister advise us as to what is happening with respect to the proclamation of new land acquisition law, whether in fact things are working fine and money is being set aside to ensure that people are being paid promptly for their lands that are acquired, as the new law requires. If the Minister could advise us I would be very grateful to him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Reeza Mohammed): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the population would accept the apology which came from the Member for Diego Martin West, particularly because the proceedings to acquire these lands were started by the last government as far as these two parcels of land are concerned; one goes back to 1979 and the other to 1988.

The necessary process for the acquisition of these lands was done during the period—particularly with regard to the parcels required for the Uriah Butler Highway—of the PNM regime so the apology coming from the hon. Member for Diego Martin West is quite appropriate since the delay was as a result of the delays which came out of that regime and not from this present Government. I just would like to have that noted in this House.

Land Acquisition
[DR. THE HON. R. MOHAMMED]

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2.30 p.m.

With respect to questions raised by the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, I was of the opinion that Cabinet is the institution which takes the decisions to acquire lands and that the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago gives approval for these decisions to come to the Parliament and this is what we are doing today.

With respect to the other question raised by the hon. Member as far as the allocation of the appropriate funding for the acquisition of lands, this Minister is informed that there is a vote within the framework of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources which is called the land acquisition vote. This vote is adequately funded with respect to the proposed acquisition of lands during any period of time.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That this House approve the decision of the President to acquire the lands described in the Appendix for the public purposes specified.

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF LAND	PUBLIC PURPOSES FOR WHICH TO BE ACQUIRED
<p>1. The following parcels of land containing 5095.1 square metres, more or less, situate south of Sumaria Trace, Charlieville in the borough of Chaguanas, in the county of Caroni, described in the Schedule hereto and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated July 19, 1995 executed under Survey Order No. 55, 56, 57/92 and filed in his office.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>THE SCHEDULE</u></p> <p>Five (5) parcels of land containing together 5095.1 square metres, more or less, situate south of Sumaria Trace on the western side of the Uriah Butler Highway, Charlieville, in the borough of Chaguanas, in the county of Caroni and comprised as follows:-</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Highway improvement</p>

DESCRIPTION OF LAND	PUBLIC PURPOSES FOR WHICH TO BE ACQUIRED
<p>(1) 220.5 square metres, more or less, said to belong now or formerly to Zakir Mohammed;</p> <p>(2) 998.8 square metres, more or less, said to belong now or formerly to Zakir Mohammed;</p> <p>(3) 961.2 square metres, more or less, said to belong now or formerly to Boodoo Alladin and others;</p> <p>(4) 781.3 square metres, more or less, said to belong now or formerly to Boodoo Alladin and others;</p> <p>(5) 1133.3 square metres more or less said to belong now or formerly to Deonarine Sewdass.</p> <p>These parcels are more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a plan filed in Book 1140, folio 183 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Department, Red House, Port of Spain.</p> <p>2. The following parcels of land containing together 39948.9 square metres, more or less, situate at Kelly Road, Piarco, in the ward of Tacarigua, in the county of St. George, described in the Schedule hereto and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated July 4, 1995 executed under Survey Order No. 155/90 and filed in his office.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>THE SCHEDULE</u></p> <p>Two parcels of land comprising together 39948.9 square metres, more or less, situate off the Kelly Road, Piarco, east of Golden Grove Road, in the ward of Tacarigua, in the county of St. George and consisting of:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Improvements to Caroni River, Phase III</p>

DESCRIPTION OF LAND	PUBLIC PURPOSES FOR WHICH TO BE ACQUIRED
<p>(1) 339.0 square metres said to belong now or formerly to Eddy Bachan;</p> <p>(2) 39609.9m² said to belong now or formerly to Frederick Siu Butt.</p> <p>These parcels are more particularly shown raw sienna on a survey plan filed as J.8. 89 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Department, Red House, Port of Spain.</p>	

COUNTING UNREMUNERATED WORK BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Daphne Phillips): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to require the Central Statistical Office and other public bodies to produce and maintain statistics relative to the counting of unremunerated work and to provide a mechanism for quantifying and recording the monetary value of such work, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt in spearheading the work done on this Bill, and the contributions by the Non Governmental Organizations and others as well, to bring this Bill to the fore. The Bill refers to those activities conceived under the rubric of social reproduction which refers to:

All the physical, mental and emotional efforts to keep families, communities and the whole society going—from giving birth to children to training and encouraging them and others when they are low; from planning and shopping and making ends meet to protecting the environment and sources of energy, to surviving pollution and war.

Work which is typically not remunerated is work, firstly, of a domestic nature and necessary for the sustenance of life and health; work which relates to caring for the elderly, poor children, and the handicapped; emotional work, which is understood largely as women's work. There is a claim that much of this work

involves caring, affection and love, and that these are intangibles which cannot be measured or valued and, especially, they cannot be given a monetary value. There is the claim that this is why these activities in the home have not been valued or remunerated.

I suggest that in the domestic domain, while these kinds of caring activities are not remunerated because they are counted as intangibles, in the market domain, they are counted and measured all the time. Sometimes the same activities which are carried out outside the domestic domain are valued, measured and remunerated.

We know that when receiving services at hotels one has to pay what is called a service charge. Another example, is if one goes to the bank to negotiate a loan one has to pay various charges for intangibles. Several intangibles are evaluated, valued, measured and given a monetary value in the market domain.

On the issue of being unable to measure intangibles, I draw this honourable House to the fact that intangibles are measured all the time. In fact, for a long time in social sciences we have learnt to measure attitudes and to put a statistical value to them. Therefore, the issue of not counting caring work in the home is not due to the fact that it is intangible, but to the fact that it takes place within the domestic domain, and not in the market domain.

I bring to this honourable House some negative examples of the consequences of not valuing caring work. There are two examples which face us now in Trinidad and Tobago and, indeed, in many other parts of the world. In Trinidad and Tobago, the phenomenon of street children is one of the consequences of not valuing and counting the work that takes place in the domestic domain.

A survey done in 1994 by a family services division showed that there are numerous street children in Trinidad and Tobago and indeed there is evidence of this all around us. Children live on the streets. They sell, beg, fend for themselves—unaccompanied by adults. They range in ages from under 5—18 years and they are continually in search of food. They have various stories to tell of abuse, abandonment and poverty, and we have learnt recently that they are used in all kinds of orgies; they are exported and are totally abused.

Some of them work on the streets to assist in maintaining their families. The boys hang out, but most of the girls and, indeed, some of the boys are quickly snared into various types of exploitation, sexual and otherwise. They face the most

vile forms of existence on the streets and they learn from very early to fend for themselves. This is one consequence of our historical lack of valuing the work that is carried out in households and, consequently, the lack of adequate policies in maintaining and enhancing the integrity of the household.

Another consequence of our continuous undervaluing of domestic work is the incidence of juvenile crime and violence among us here in Trinidad and Tobago. The juvenile criminals. These are the young criminals. Some are very violent and engage in the most heinous crimes without, apparently, having a conscience, without remorse and without concern. Others fall into circumstances in which they are vulnerable but they commit illegal and/or immoral acts. There is also the increasing trend of violence in schools, some of this being gender violence. These behaviours threaten the safety and security of our communities, our homes, our environment, our villages and they threaten our national environment and the comfort of our entire society.

Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about trivial issues. We are talking about intangibles, but intangibles which impinge on our lives, on the quality of our environment and our homes, and I dare say, resulting from our historical undervaluing of caring work in the home.

2.40 p.m.

Children and youths have become the latest tragedies in our system of valuation that is attributing no value to some kinds of work, especially work carried out in the households. I note the relationship between gender, crime and anti-social behaviour as well.

A summary of the proceedings of an international conference in Canada on the measurement and valuation of unpaid work in April, 1993 found that the courtrooms were not populated with women as offenders, but as persons providing emotional, financial and psychological support to young males who find themselves on the wrong side of the law. The Minister with responsibility for the status of women in Canada said that there were three kinds of work: part-time work, full-time work and all-time work. Women's work was all-time work both in the home and outside of it.

The important point that I raise here is that activities which are carried out in the domestic domain or in the household are not valued in the sense that they are not given a monetary value, precisely because they are not within the market

domain. There are other types of activities which are also not valued. Domestic agricultural workers is another category of persons whose work is unremunerated, undervalued and unwaged. There are other categories such as retrenched workers whose skills or potential skills have been overtaken by technological development. They are also unwaged and their work is also unvalued. This includes many males as well as females. They are ex-workers. They may be our potential future workers who may never, very briefly, or temporarily, face the work environment.

In summary, a number of categories of persons experience undervaluing of their work. They are domestic household workers, domestic agricultural producers, retrenched workers and those persons categorized as unemployed, regardless of what they do and how they exist outside the formal market economy. Some of those are understood as informal workers, such as voluntary and community workers who experience undervaluing of their labour. Most of these persons are women. Men are also found in these categories and increasingly, children and young people are found in these categories of persons whose work is unremunerated.

Let us look at measuring unremunerated work. Why measure? In business and industry, it is very well known and accepted that one can only manage what can be measured. If something cannot be measured, it cannot be managed. The real significance of this Bill lies in its ability to measure work which is actually going on, and on that basis to manage it. Why measure? The first reason is that we need to know what is going on and manage all the labour and work of all our people.

Secondly, measurement is necessary to understand. For those workers in the household who are unremunerated and those who are remunerated in the household as domestic workers or maids, we need to understand whether their remuneration bears any relationship to the value of the work they perform. Valuation of work is synonymous with measurement of work. In this area, as well, we need to understand what it takes in terms of value and cost to prepare domestic workers—that is people who work in households as employees—for this kind of work that they carry out so that children can be well cared for.

Thirdly, the valuing of the work of the stay-at-home woman goes a long way to address the imbalances which can be a very fundamental cause of domestic violence in our country. We know at this very moment there is a problem with domestic violence. There are many queries on what causes this and why men typically abuse their wives physically and otherwise. I daresay that one of the

causes of this very complex problem is the fact that the work at home is not valued. There is an imbalance in the relationships in the home. This gives rise to various levels of insecurity on both sides of this male/female relationship. Valuing the work in the home of women who stay at home is one of the ways we can use to manage this problem of domestic violence. Valuing is also necessary for legal redress in case of compensation to be paid to persons who are in various situations.

2.50 p.m.

If a person is working outside of his home, and is in an accident and has to take time off from his work, part of the compensation computed relates to his loss from not being able to work. However, for the person who works at home there is no such compensation.

In cases of family breakdown, when decisions have to be made about compensation or distribution of the material resources of the family, valuing the work carried out in the household is one way of determining compensation. In very many ways measuring and valuing the work carried out in households—caring work—will influence what happens in other systems in our society, for example, the legal system and the health-care system.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, measurement and valuation are crucial to ensuring gender equity, which is one of the principles for which this Government affords full support. Again, I refer to Canada which has gone ahead to claim in actual court cases that women's labour be assessed on the basis of what it would have cost to hire a replacement in the market domain to carry out the work of that particular woman.

Why measure? We measure to assess the value which will impinge on what we do in other areas of the economy. We measure also to ensure gender equity in our relationships. How is measurement to take place? How can we measure this work which is largely unremunerated and which largely takes place in the domestic domain? We are told that if we measure all this non-market work it will reflect on our gross domestic product if we put a measure to all that goes on in the household we inflate the GDP and give false impressions as to our wealth. This is a very serious concern because it impinges on how we express ourselves economically to the international community. It is also believed that, if we measure all this work, which is currently unremunerated and quantify it in the GDP, we have an inflated GDP that is not a real reflection of our wealth and this then would interfere with our relations and our access to international funding.

The problem with this argument is that it assumes that there is only one way to measure. The value that is put on work is related to where it falls in the market domain and it is measured if wages and salaries are attributed to it. We need to revisit our definitions of work and labour and to differentiate them from our definitions of employment and unemployment. People can work even though they are not employed and we need to put value to the work that all people do.

In the past, there have been calls for wages for housework, but these calls have largely gone unattended. The measurement which this Bill proposes is the keeping of satellite accounts, that is accounts separate from the national accounting system under the GDP, through household surveys. In this way, the GDP will not be inflated and there would be no pricing ourselves outside of access to international funding agencies. So we are proposing in this Bill, firstly, that the work in households must be counted, measured and valued, but that a separate or satellite accounting system or a supplemental record of this work be put in place, through household surveys. These surveys would take a broad scope of what is going on in the households and in the community.

In this area, therefore, we are looking at work which is carried out in and around dwelling places, related to the care of children, the handicapped, the elderly and others. We are looking also at work which is domestic agricultural work, work associated with family businesses which is also unremunerated, and community work. So the household surveys would cover all the aspects of work in and outside the household and the community which have so far been unremunerated.

The data and information gained from these surveys will influence social and public policy. We will also note from the household surveys the relationship between gender and poverty. We will understand if there is, whether there is, and we suspect there is, a “feminization” of poverty and lately a “juvenilization” of poverty. That is, the poor are becoming increasingly the female and the young. So the household surveys will afford us the opportunity to measure work within the household and community which is unremunerated so far and which is related to our poverty and destitution.

Some have advocated the use of time-use surveys and this is also possible from our household surveys. We must remember, Mr. Speaker, in carrying out these surveys that we must be aware of biases in measurement, in the way questions are posed—biases in wording. There are male biases, there are western biases and there are some cultural biases as well.

3.00 p.m.

For example, there is an assumption; when we look at children who are abandoned, the question is asked: Why do women abandon their children? There are questions about the psychological and other make-up of women who abandon children. There are no questions about the men who have fathered these children and who have, indeed, also abandoned the women and the children. We must be careful about the way the questions are asked and, therefore, the way measurements take place.

In terms of western biases we must look at definitions of the family—the way the family is defined and conceived—which may not relate to our reality in Trinidad and Tobago. In the area of cultural biases there are certain cultural conceptions of the role of women and men which are based on our socialization and which are not necessarily issues of fact.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill purports to use household surveys in satellite accounts to measure the work that is so far unvalued, unmeasured and unremunerated. This Bill would stop a gap in our social development in which the work, largely of women, but of many other groups as well, has historically not been measured and not been rewarded.

The social consequences of not valuing this work are all around us and it is, indeed, time that we value this work, that we identify this work, so that we can contribute to gender equality and begin to remove the social decadence that is happening around us because of our historical undervaluing of work associated with women.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Dr. Rupert Griffith (*Arima*): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to make an intervention on this Bill, to require the Central Statistical Office and other public bodies to produce and maintain statistics relative to the counting of unremunerated work and to provide a mechanism for qualifying and recording the monetary value of such work. Before I proceed, permit me to recognize and congratulate an Independent Senator, Mrs. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt, for bringing this Bill to the Parliament and, indeed, the national community.

This Bill is of historic significance. The Bill not only seeks to deal with an issue that took a slant as a gender-type bill, dealing with feminism and female

contributions in the home, but it brings Trinidad and Tobago in line with other countries around the world, which will now take a very serious view of unremunerated work in the non-formal sector so that it can be accurately measured and quantified.

We, on this side, have absolutely no problem in supporting this Bill as we think it is necessary. What is this Bill purporting to do, Mr. Speaker? In my view this Bill is doing two things and I quote:

“2. The Director of the Central Statistical Office shall:

- (a) conduct periodic household surveys, at least once every three years...”

We have seen surveys with household populations and they are normally conducted once every five years and also in longer periods. However, this Bill is saying, and I continue to quote:

“...to assess household incomes and breakdown of expenditures;

- (b) conduct surveys of unremunerated work performed in Trinidad and Tobago including—
 - (i) work performed in and around dwelling places;
 - (ii) work related to the care of children, the handicapped, the elderly and other care services;
 - (iii) agricultural work and work related to food production;
 - (iv) family businesses; and
 - (v) volunteer and community work in both the formal and informal sectors of society.
- (c) calculate the monetary value of such unremunerated work separately for men and women; and
- (d) utilize the quantifications in paragraphs (b) and (c) for the purpose of compiling a supplemental record to the Gross National Product.”

That is what this Bill is purporting to do, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women’s Affairs, in her presentation, while indicating some of the varied significances of such a Bill—and we agree with some of them—there are certain matters with which I feel we want to take issue. We certainly want to take issue—when referring to the

situation of street children—that it is a direct result of the kind of parenting that is given in the home. The Minister indicated that street children in Trinidad and Tobago is a new phenomenon, and so it is, indeed. However, how could one say that not measuring and quantifying work in the home results in street children?

We, on this side, suggest that it is wider than that, and to a large extent, it has to do with poverty in the society. Having said that, I really want to compliment the acting Prime Minister on his statement today, indicating that his Government is going to put measures in place to address the issue of poverty in Trinidad and Tobago. He also indicated that he would bring various organizations into Trinidad and Tobago, to collaborate with those already existing within the national community, so that we could alleviate this very serious problem that we are now experiencing. I compliment him and his Government on this bold step.

3.10 p.m.

However, as I proceed, it will be seen that poverty is one of the main factors affecting the issues and ills about which the hon. Minister spoke. I feel that it would be a disservice to this Bill if we take the slant that it is only a gender issue. It certainly is not; it is wider than that and I would hope that in my contribution, I could make that clarification.

We on this side supported this Bill which was first presented in June 1995 by the hon. Senator who is present with us today. As you would recall, Mr. Speaker, the Bill went to the other place and was passed in June 1995. As a result of calling the general election, it lapsed in this honourable House. I compliment the hon. Minister for bringing it back so it can be passed because, indeed, it is a piece of legislation that Trinidad and Tobago needs. It was even endorsed by the then Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs speaking on behalf of the then government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Let me just read what she said at an international forum about what the last administration was doing as regards this matter. I want to make the point that it is a Bill which we fully endorse, and we see it as very timely for Trinidad and Tobago. The *Newsday* of Friday, September 15, 1995 states:

“Women's Affairs Minister Joan Yuille-Williams has told the UN Women's Conference in Beijing that the counting of women's unpaid work was a ‘strategy for equity’ and one of four women's development priorities.”

So we recognized that and the last administration saw that as a priority.

It goes on to say:

“The economic contribution women make in growing food and bringing up children—valued at US \$11 trillion—makes up two-thirds of all the work women do.”

So it is recognized that the work women do is a substantial input into the national economy and the GDP. Women’s age-old labour of love in the field and the home has traditionally never been seen as real work. CANA reported that development economists, and advocates argue that if this labour is recognized as just what it is—work—it would further improve the status of women in the home and in the work place and, that is a fact. We have no problem with that.

The former Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women’s Affairs went on to say that last June the Trinidad and Tobago Senate passed a bill to count women’s unpaid work. The bill was introduced by Independent Senator, Diana Mahabir-Wyatt. Poverty eradication, education and violence against women were three other areas for the government. So the last administration separated those issues including one of women’s issues as priorities. We have to be very careful not to lump many of the women’s issues—when we are talking about measuring work—within the domestic sector or in the home and to quantify it and take the slant that it is measured in work that women do in the home.

She further said the measurement and evaluation of unpaid work of women in particular, domestic or household work was recognized in principle two decades ago at the First World’s Conference of Women in Mexico. Again, this has been around for some time and it is timely that it is coming to Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the former administration was a signatory to legislation dealing with women’s affairs and their contribution in the home and, in 1989, the then administration developed a national policy on the status of women. So when one makes a big issue as though it is a new thing, this document was developed since 1989 and it deals with some fundamental principles and policy objectives. Let me just read three of them into the record for you, to make the point. I am quoting from a document *Trinidad and Tobago’s National Policy Statement on Women* on page 2 which states:

“A national policy for women must be placed within the framework of the country’s total national development policy, the constraints of the limited available resources and the following broad principles to which Government is committed:

- i. The concept of human dignity as an essential attribute of every single human being at every level of the society.
- ii. Social justice for all peoples and the elimination of any lingering discriminatory provisions against women in the country's legislation.
- iii. Recognition of the equal and complementary roles of women and men, their concomitant responsibilities and particular concern for the increasing number of female-headed households and single-parent families.
- iv. Promotion of self-awareness and self-worth of all people and the development of policies and programmes in support of these goals."

On page 3 in its policy objectives, the document says:

- viii. "Government recognises the need for more efficient compilation of data on women to inform adequate and meaningful programmes and projects if the position of women in the society is to be properly assessed. Accordingly, conducting of special surveys and investigations on issues relating to women will be encouraged."

This is what the government of the day indicated in this Policy Framework for Women.

While there is need to focus on women's issues, I caution the hon. Minister that while we agree that this Bill is of paramount importance to Trinidad and Tobago, it must not be slanted as a gender-oriented bill.

Mr. Speaker, what are the issues in this Bill? It is really to measure and quantify the types of unremunerated work. What are some of these types of work? We are talking about work that is necessary in the domestic environment: work that is being done around the dwelling place; work that is necessary for the sustenance of life and health; care of the elderly; care of the handicapped; child bearing and child rearing; and work in the domestic agricultural sector; work around the home, the little plots and gardens that both men and women do to enhance incomes, if there are any, in many cases.

When one views the whole aspect of this Bill as a gender issue, there are certain objections to it, however frivolous those objections may be. The fact is that the Bill must be placed in its proper perspective. One of the objections that emerged was the fear of change. Some people feel that if legislation is passed for

quantifying and measuring work in the home, men or women would be required to pay the person who is at home providing that work and there is that objection and fear. It shows what could happen when bills such as these take a certain slant.

Other objections emerging are that counting women's unwaged work might make them feel important. Some men have taken that position, but here again, it is a frivolous one and clearly it shows that once the Bill has taken a certain slant, certain kinds of objections could emerge.

There is also the question of child rearing. Many argue that such a function of love ought not to be measured and quantified and they object to it. They believe if such work is measured and quantified, it would create imbalances in the national community.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would put Trinidad and Tobago in line with many countries which have done similar surveys and have begun to quantify the unremunerated work in the domestic sector, in particular. I want to look at the *UNDP Human Development Programme Report* of 1995 and focus our attention on some of the reports and the type of measurement that is going on in the informal sector. I want to read from page 6 of that document where it says:

“Only nine countries...”

So Trinidad and Tobago will join those nine countries which measure unremunerated work. It says:

“Only nine countries have GEM values above 0.6, compared with 66 countries with a GDI value above 0.6. On the other hand, 39 countries have a GEM value above 0.3, compared with only 13 countries with a GDI value below 0.3. Since the GDI measures gender equality in basic human capabilities and the GEM measures gender equality in economic and political opportunities, this comparison makes it clear that many countries have a longer distance to travel in extending broad economic and political opportunities to women than they have already travelled in building basic female capabilities”.

That is the reason this Bill puts Trinidad and Tobago in line with those countries which have already begun to measure unremunerated work in the non-formal sector. It continues:

“But it is precisely the participation of women at the highest decision-making levels in political and economic life that can drive the change for greater equality between men and women.”

Therefore, one can see that measuring and quantifying unremunerated work for both men and women could, in a sense, seek to bridge this gender gap that is being referred to. The Report continues:

“The debate therefore must cover equality of rewards as well as equality of opportunity.”

Therefore, this Bill must also focus attention on the fact that if unremunerated work is measured and quantified, maybe a value could be placed to it.

“Data on time-use by women and men for a sample of 31 countries tell a dramatic story:

- Women work longer hours than men in nearly every country. Of the total burden of work, women carry on average 53 per cent in developing countries and 51 per cent in industrial countries.
- On average, about half of this total work time of both men and women is spent in economic activities in the market or in the subsistence sector. The other half is normally devoted to unpaid household or community activities.”

So, there is a substantial portion of the work that is done in unpaid household and community activities. It goes on:

- “Of men’s total work time in industrial countries, roughly two-thirds is spent in paid activities and one-third in unpaid activities. For women, the situation is the reverse. In developing countries, more than three-quarters of men’s work is in market activities. So, men receive the lion’s share of income and recognition for their economic contribution—while most of women’s work remains unpaid, unrecognized and undervalued.

With no economic value given to these activities, the contribution of women is seriously underestimated, and there is no adequate reward or recognition for the burden of work that women carry. In fact, the failure to value most of their work reduces women to virtual non-entities in most economic transactions—such as property ownership or offering collateral for bank loans.

Since status in contemporary society is so often equated with income-earning power, women suffer a major undervaluation of their economic status. But they carry a higher share of the total work burden...

If women's unpaid work were properly valued, it is quite possible that women would emerge in most societies as the major breadwinners—or at least equal breadwinners—since they put in longer hours of work than men.” [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, what we see emerging is that we should seek to measure unremunerated work of both men and women. Let us look at the situation of the labour force in Trinidad and Tobago today. I now want to show the relationship between poverty and how measuring unremunerated work can play a very significant role in not only having a separate register of such statistics, but also in determining things such as the types of social programmes needed for those persons who are unemployed and those persons who are doing unremunerated work at home. It could suggest to us the types of training needed to enable such persons to re-enter the labour force. It could be very informative and provide valuable inputs in terms of the kinds of social and national programmes we need to develop in the country.

As I look at the *Review of the Economy*, 1995 where it talks about “Population, Labour Force and Employment”, it says on page 12:

“Mid-year estimates of the population of Trinidad and Tobago project a growth rate of 1 per cent in 1995 with the size of the population increasing from 1,249,739 persons in 1994 to 1,261,897 persons in 1995. This is attributed to a fall in the death rate which tended to overshadow the decline in the birth rate.

The age structure of the population remained relatively unchanged with persons below 24 years accounting for approximately 48.1 per cent of the total population. The distribution of the population between the sexes reflects a ratio of 1.04:1 in favour of males.

The size of the Labour Force averaged 518,700 persons during the first half of 1995. This reflected an increase of 3 per cent over the comparable period for 1994. Some changes were observed in the Wholesale/Retail, Restaurant and Hotels, Community, Social and Personal Services, and Other Manufacturing Industries where the proportion of the Labour Force increased by 2, 8 and 0.1 percentage points respectively. On the other hand, decreases

were recorded in Agriculture (2.3%), Construction (1.2%), Electricity and Water (0.1%)”.

What this suggests, Mr. Speaker, is that we not only have 48.1 per cent of our population being under the age of 24, but we also have a substantially large unemployment level in the country at this time. We need to collect this type of data on unremunerated work to guide and assist us so that we could plan our economic policies and programmes.

The hon. Minister Extraordinaire and Acting Prime Minister spoke earlier about poverty. Mr. Speaker, it was found that in many of the households, as he indicated, 21 per cent of the population, or some 265,000 people—half of these individuals are classified as extremely poor. This information is taken from the October 1995 World Bank document to which the Minister referred, dealing with *Poverty and Unemployment in an Oil Based Economy*, meaning in Trinidad and Tobago. It says:—

“Nationally, 21 percent of the population, or roughly 265,000 people...”

Half of these individuals are classified as extremely poor. They are classified as those being unable to afford the cost of a minimum food basket. The sub-groups among these poor, include the unemployed, those with low levels of education and female-headed households.

3.30 p.m.

When we talk about conducting the survey—and we include its biases—the hon. Minister indicated that it should seek to avoid biases such as the gender-oriented type. I suggest that in our own situation and, as pointed out here by the World Bank document, the survey should be more of a representative one, with accurate sampling, so that the information would deal with the specifics of our society, which comprises these major sub-groups, and not necessarily relate to gender biases and male-oriented type questions. We must look specifically at how we sample, where we sample and the size of the sample we use, so that we could make inferences about the kinds of national, economic and political policies needed for elevating the poor.

What are some of the characteristics of the poor referred to in this document, Mr. Speaker? Some of the main characteristics are that poor households are of high unemployment status: in many of these households there is no-one working; educational achievements are very low; and the size of the family is usually large.

Again, these households are headed by females. Levels of poverty are higher than average in households where the head is either unemployed or has never worked, or where the head has less than secondary education, and households headed by females.

From this same World Bank document, I want to read into the record, Mr. Speaker, some information provided, which will make the point that we on this side would like to make regarding this Bill before us today. Page 13, paragraph 42, states:—

“The overall labor force participation rate in Trinidad and Tobago is now just above 60 percent,...”

This is an October 27, 1995 document—

“...similar to the average for middle income countries.”

So Trinidad and Tobago is no different from middle-income countries.

“Though the aggregate rate has been relatively consistent, it represents a decline for men from a peak rate of 83 percent in 1983 to 76 per cent in 1993,...”

Here we see more men are unemployed and in the homes—

“...it represents a decline for men from a peak rate of 83 percent in 1983 to 76 percent in 1993, and an increase for women from 38 to 45 percent. While the increase in female participation follows a global trend, the decrease for men is of concern. The decline can be attributed to several factors: (i) some of those who reported being non-participants actually did not earn income from non-formal jobs and thus do not perceive themselves as part of the labor force; (ii) male youths are staying in school longer or entering training programmes, and (iii) with the existence of high unemployment rates workers become discouraged as they cannot find jobs easily and hence choose to drop out of the labor force.”

But they, too, are providing unremunerated work in the non-formal or domestic sector. It goes on, Mr. Speaker.

“Lower female participation rates in Trinidad and Tobago can be attributed to household responsibilities, low levels of education, difficulties in finding employment in an economy that is not expanding, and socio-cultural factors. Many Indo-Trinidadian women, particularly in rural areas, have maintained traditional roles and do not work outside the home. The importance of these

and other factors on a woman's probability of participating in the labor force in Trinidad and Tobago was analyzed. Among the findings: women in rural areas...those with a greater number of young children in the household, women with low levels of education, and those whose spouse did not work were less likely to participate in the labor force."

Here we have some statistics emerging of those who were likely to stay home and not participate in the labour force. It shows the importance of this type of survey being conducted so we could capture that kind of information in our economic policy and plan. When we look at education levels, it says:

"Over 55 percent of the economically active population have not obtained secondary level educational qualifications. As participation rates generally tend to rise by levels of education, it is not surprising that both males and females in Trinidad and Tobago who have passed secondary school O-Levels (age 16) tend to participate at a higher rate. These individuals are most likely to work in 'middle' occupation categories for which there seems to be the most demand. Individuals with advanced A-Levels (age 18) and diplomas also tend to have high labor force participation rates. Higher participation rates at middle levels of education may also be related to the fact that rates of return to education seem to be the highest for students with O-Level passes.

A large number of households, approximately 12 percent, have no labor force participants. An even greater proportion of households, 22 percent, have no workers. Most households have one worker (57 percent), with 34 percent having at least two workers. In households with at least one informal sector worker, it is common to find a worker employed in the formal sector. This is a pattern common to many developing economies in households with multiple workers. These are significant advantages in that households can augment their incomes with informal sector work, while the informal sector workers have flexibility in hours of work and at the same time enjoy all the benefits (health, housing, *etc.*) because of their formal sector links."

So, the collection of that data must take into consideration those types of households where there may be one person in the sector and others who are doing unremunerated work outside the formal sector, then we could seek to quantify it. The report goes on, in the last paragraph which I will read, Mr. Speaker, at paragraph 46:

“Over 75 percent of all workers are employed in the formal sector with 42 percent of those individuals in the private formal sector and 33 percent in the public sector. The remainder of the labor force is employed in the informal sector, with a significant portion of these being own-account (self-employed) workers.”

In other words, self-employment.

“By industrial group, the largest proportion of the employed, 45 percent work in the service sector, followed by 16 percent in construction. The occupational breakdown shows that approximately one-third of the labor force is employed in elementary unskilled occupations, 16 percent craftspersons, and 13 percent as service workers.”

Mr. Speaker, this document gives a lot of information and guidelines which we believe that the CSO can use in the compilation of its data for unremunerated work.

3.40 p.m.

I would have thought that since this Bill was passed in the other place in June, 1995, and earlier this year, and now before us, the hon. Minister would have come to us and told us what are some of the plans and measures that the Government seeks to put in place, so that once this Bill is passed and enacted into law—and the CSO now has the wherewithal to conduct the survey—this Government will have clear policies in terms of what it intends to do with such data in its economic planning and even on its own political agenda.

We, on this side, feel that the Government should take cognizance of the need for strengthening laws where women are disadvantaged and discriminated against based on gender. We would have liked to hear the Minister come to this honourable House and tell us what are some of these types of laws. There are several existing pieces of legislation which concern women's affairs in the division of that ministry. To mention a few, there is the Domestic Violence Act of 1991; we have the Sexual Offences Act, 1986; the Attachment of Earnings (Maintenance) Act, 1991; the Matrimonial Property and Proceedings (Amdt.) Act, 1989 and the Succession Act, 1987. I do not believe the last one is, as yet, proclaimed. I am subject to be corrected by the hon. Minister of Legal Affairs.

But apart from the existing pieces of legislation, I know for a fact that the Women's Affairs Division should also be interested in having legislation put in place to address other pressing issues. The division should look at legislation with

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respect to sexual harassment. I thought the Minister would have come here to tell us what is being done about that; also bills dealing with equal pay for equal work which has to do with gender orientation and gender biases; and bills dealing with equal opportunity, and sex discrimination.

Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory to the 1985 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and in 1990 ratified the convention. According to the convention, the Government is committed to eliminating discriminatory practices against women. Some of the relevant pieces of legislation have already been enacted, but I am suggesting that the Minister should now focus her attention on working to have legislation in place to eliminate such biases referred to in her presentation.

Again, we, on this side, have no problem in supporting the Bill. We have gone on record as supporting it, as indicated earlier. I hope that the Minister would take cognizance of the points made with respect to bringing legislation to this honourable House regarding the remuneration of workers. I feel that we would continue to do an injustice to public commentary when we take a gender bias towards this Bill. We should portray the Bill for what it is; seek to have the legislation passed and to quantify the importance and effectiveness of the collection of that data to advise and address the national community.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs (Hon. Mervyn Assam): Mr. Speaker, thank you for permitting me to join in this debate and to make my contribution and support my colleague in a Bill to require the Central Statistical Office and other public bodies to produce and maintain statistics relative to the counting of unremunerated work and to provide a mechanism for quantifying and recording the monetary value of such work.

What is extremely important as a background to this Bill is the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly which states:

"Whereas in 1985 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which states that the unremunerated contributions of women to all aspects and sectors of development should be recognized, and appropriate efforts should be made to measure and reflect these contributions in national accounts and economic statistics and in the gross national product; and

Whereas it is public policy to develop the contribution of women to the social, political and economic life in the country;"

The Member for Arima, my distinguished colleague, made some very serious errors in his contribution, because he accused my colleague of only concentrating on the unremunerated work of women. That was an unfortunate position to take, because in no way did my colleague pursue that line of argumentation.

Moreover, he sought to give the impression, and I did not know whether it was in an effort to resurrect his former colleague—this does not seem to be the Easter season of the Resurrection—stating that his colleague in another place in June 1995 supported this Bill. This is not correct at all. The House must know that when Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt introduced this Bill in the Senate it was severely truncated and modified by that same person whom he seeks to resurrect. Indeed, the original Bill sought to put in place the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, and that party at the time which is now in Opposition, truncated the Bill and brought it to what it is today. When it was reintroduced, the modified version was the one that was reintroduced.

So we must put the record straight, that the party when it was in office, did not wish to recognize in the gross domestic product, the unremunerated work of women. They must understand that. They did not wish to recognize it, because they modified the Bill put forward by that Senator at the time. The record must be made straight and we must not go along with these erroneous assertions about what they did and did not do.

We must understand the genesis of all this, and get back into the historical background of unremunerated work. It is my view that it is not necessarily a bias against women that this has not been counted in the gross domestic product of the economies of most countries of the world. If you would remember, the father of political economy, Adam Smith, in his *magnum opus* of 1776, *The Wealth of Nations*, realized that economic thinking at that time did not recognize services as part of the production process. That was not recognized as part of the accounting. Indeed, public servants at that time were deemed not to be people involved in work because they were not producing anything that could be tangibly accounted for in the national accounts.

Indeed, some of the greatest philosophers of the world, the poets, the sculptors, like Botticelli, the painters like Michelangelo, the great people like Galileo, the great musicians, and so forth, all of them were victims of unremunerated

work. Indeed, I am a victim of unremunerated work. As a Member of Parliament I do not get paid. I, too, am a victim of unremunerated work. Even if I get paid as a Minister, it is so minuscule that you could even construe that to be unremunerated work.

In essence, the point I am trying to make is that it has not been a bias against women as a gender element in society.

3.50 p.m.

In fact, there was a raging debate in the economic literature of 16th, 17th and 18th Century Britain in terms of John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism and Ricardo with the labour theory of value. All of these thinkings and writings were distilled and have now come into the forefront today. All of these things are informing our thinking as to how we should, in fact, look at all types of work—whether it is work in or outside of the home—and those who have made some of the most important contributions to science, literature, music, art, sculpture, philosophy and, indeed, politics.

Mr. Speaker, what are the advantages of undertaking surveys in order to determine the contribution of people who, in fact, work but whose work is not recognized because they are not rewarded in a monetary sense? In my view, there are many reasons this should take place. In the first instance, every country, and indeed, Trinidad and Tobago, invests a large amount of its national income on primary, secondary, tertiary and technical education in whatever form. Therefore, it is important for us to understand that teachers are not criminals. *[Interruption]* Is the Member saying that teachers are criminals?

Mr. Bereaux: Your leader said so!

Mr. Valley: What is your view?

Hon. M. Assam: Mr. Speaker, if the Members want to engage in debate about teachers and other things, I am prepared to do so, but I wish to be relevant, and not be irrelevant as the Member for Arima. I want to speak on the Bill before the House. I do not want to be irrelevant and erroneous. Let us get on with the business of the House.

Mr. Speaker, having invested in various levels of education, it is my view that the country ought to know what kind of value it is getting for its investment—a sort of a cost benefit analysis. Therefore, if we spend money on primary, secondary,

tertiary education and so forth, we must know that people have a value and contribution to make to society and even though people are not paid we should be attaching some value to it. The labour theory of value, in other words.

There are female doctors, teachers, university graduates and so forth who have decided to make a professional sacrifice and stay at home in the interest of family life and bring up their children in the first 10 years of their lives. It seems to me that should be recognized in some form or fashion and the country ought to know what they are foregoing in terms of the contribution that they can make—and men do it too. It is one of the most sensible things that the Member for Arima said, that men do stay at home sometimes and let their wives go out to work. The society needs to know that. That is the first point I make in support of this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, we must understand that all forms of work should be given dignity and some kind of notional value should be attached to it. The question of notional value can be applied where one cannot quantify the contribution of a particular individual who does not have a profession that numbers can be put to in a real way. One can put numbers to a person who is a doctor, lawyer and so forth, but there should be some kind of notional value attached to someone who does not have a profession which will inform the population and the statistics as to what kinds of individuals we have in the society and producing at what level.

The third point does not relate to the home, housewife or to women exclusively. There are so many people in this society who are unremunerated such as actors, panmen—I am sure the hon. Member for Laventille West would understand that—and people who do social work. I remember the late Mrs. Tracey who was the manageress of the St. Mary's Home in Tacarigua. I do not think anybody could remunerate Mrs. Tracey for having dedicated 45 years of her life to children who did not have parents or homes. That kind of thing is important. People who are involved in all kinds of charitable work being involved in the Lions, NGOs, Soroptimists, Junior Chamber, Rotarians, and all those people who are involved in religious work in the various faiths such as Islam, Hindu, Christian and so forth.

I do not remember the text of the Old Testament, but the New Testament recommends that those who preach the gospel must live by the gospel. This is an indication that there must be some value attached to preaching the gospel. Hence, the introduction of tithes even from the Old Testament days when tithes were in

support of people who were involved in the work of God and in the service of mankind.

All these things are terribly important in looking at unremunerated work. Also, if one does not introduce this type of thinking and culture into the society, one may very well have people feeling that everything they do must be paid for. Whereas, if one recognizes it by saying, "Yes, you are doing something that is worthwhile" or "Yes, you are making a contribution, but although we cannot pay you for it, we still recognize it and have it on record as your contribution to the development of society"—whether it is the political, social, economic, religious or cultural development of the country—I think that in itself will be a testimony to a kind of civility and civilization that emerges if Trinidad and Tobago and, indeed, the world is to progress. We are going to have a kind of balanced equity as the hon. Minister Extraordinaire has said, in Trinidad and Tobago, and eradicate some of the problems that face us.

Mr. Speaker, the way we measure GDP in our country may be very misleading. I do not want to get into technical economic jargon and argumentation, but the way we measure GDP could be very misleading. It seems to me that we may very well be measuring GDP in a way which does not reflect the real wealth and true aggregate production of goods and services in any one year in our country.

4.00 p.m.

What this Bill attempts to do may very well give us some idea of the potentialities of our people and where, in fact, we can take the GDP. If we are able to indicate to people that they have a certain value, we may very well find emerging out of this particular survey, perhaps, people getting involved in cottage industries, home-care centres, nursery schools, or different things which one can operate from one's home, neighbourhood or community.

It is very important to understand that there are also the legal and illegal aspects of work, some of which are remunerated and some which are not. I have just returned from Europe and a woman was telling me that her son, who had just returned from university, had done a thesis in economics on a certain topic. I was quite surprised that even today people are beginning to inquire into the contributions of some of these "illicit activities" that hitherto, people did not seem to place a value on. Therefore, we must, in Trinidad and Tobago, understand that there are many areas which are "unremunerated" but which in fact, produce value and wealth for the country.

Also, there is the area of under-employment and to some extent that is unremunerated work. Because, if one is underemployed one is not really fulfilling one's potential and one is not being valued at the level at which one should be valued and that too, in my view, should be part of the survey. People who are under-employed and not receiving the emoluments, the wages and the rewards that they ought to be receiving for their level of skills, education and performance, should also form part of the survey, irrespective of whether they are male or female.

Even though there are certain well-defined areas of the Bill, as in clause 2 which states:

- “(i) work performed in and around dwelling places;
- (ii) work related to the care of children, the handicapped, the elderly and other care services;
- (iii) agricultural work and work related to food production;
- (iv) family businesses; and
- (v) volunteer and community work in both the formal and informal sectors of society.”

I do not believe that we should restrict ourselves to only these categories. I feel as we begin to implement this Bill when it becomes law, we should begin to look at the whole spectrum of activities involving all our people where, in fact, they perform but are not remunerated. We should not restrict it merely to the categories that are enumerated in the Bill. We should go far afield and discover and survey all the areas that will produce statistics which will be meaningful and valuable in the calculation of the national good.

The Member for Arima attempted some kind of elasticity in his contribution in trying to weave in all kinds of other matters extraneous to this Bill such as domestic violence, eradication of poverty, street children, and a host of other things which are not part of the Bill before us. Even though the Member was able to use his imagination furtively as he did, let me assure him that this Government has been addressing and will continue to address all these matters he has raised. We will not only address them, but we will be coming to this House from time to time, to introduce legislation and put programmes and policies in place which will come to grips with some of the social problems he has identified.

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Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is need to elaborate further on this particular measure. I think it is a very good and noble one and we should congratulate the original conceiver of this Bill, coming from the other place. If we were to adopt this piece of legislation, it would ensure that Trinidad and Tobago remains in the forefront of civilized international thinking and that would make us one of the very few countries of the world which has begun to recognize the value of the services, the contribution and the inputs of people, notwithstanding the fact that they are not paid in monetary terms.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr. Martin Joseph (*St. Ann's East*): Mr. Speaker, I too, join colleagues on both sides and compliment the presenter of this piece of legislation and also to support the Bill, "to require the Central Statistical Office and other public bodies to produce and maintain statistics relative to the counting of unremunerated work and to provide a mechanism for quantifying and recording the monetary value of such work."

I will make a brief intervention in this debate and take a completely different slant. The slant I wish to take is to focus more on how we are going to utilize the results of the surveys that are conducted. This is not the first time that we would be collecting data, whether it be economic or social data that give us an indication as to precisely what is happening in the economy and what is happening in the country.

As a "freshman" Member of Parliament, if I can borrow that term, I prefer to focus more on being a parliamentary representative attempting to determine how best I represent the people of St. Ann's East, and I run into the first problem—and I am sure I am not unique in that respect.

I, like all other parliamentary representatives, am aware of how many registered voters reside in our constituency. I know there are 22,400 odd registered voters but I do not know, with a degree of accuracy, how many people live in St. Ann's East and I am sure other parliamentary representatives cannot say with any degree of certainty how many people live in their constituencies. If one attempts to do that, as I attempted to do, one will run into problems with the Central Statistical Office because the CSO does not gather information with that in mind.

As we all are aware, Trinidad and Tobago is divided into eight enumeration zones. Information is collected on the basis of enumeration districts and counties. There is no easy way to link CSO's information into constituencies and it is relevant, because one is going to be collecting additional information on unremunerated work every three years. How would I know how many constituents in my constituency of St. Ann's East fall into this category and of what use is it going to be to me, as a parliamentary representative, to do anything with that statistic?

4.10 p.m.

As we collect additional information which would be used at the national level, it seems to me that we must make every effort to disaggregate that information at the constituency level. Why is that important? It is important because if we seek to take Trinidad and Tobago into the new century, and citizens of Trinidad and Tobago want to feel that they are part of the political process, it means that parliamentarians who represent them must know whom they represent. That is all I am requesting. I think it is something from which we would benefit.

I am sure most of us never thought about whom we represent. Is it 60,000? What is the age bracket? How many are educated and what is the level of education? What is the income level? It is there. If we decide to develop what I would refer to as a demographic profile of our constituency, there is no such information. I have absolutely no problems with what this Bill attempts to do in terms of gathering additional information. That is vital for our gross domestic product. How can we make that more relevant to us, at our levels so that we can start providing the kind of representation which would be demanded of us as we move into the 21st Century?

Let us face it! Information is here to stay. We are now living in an information age. Citizens of Trinidad and Tobago can make comparisons very easily with respect to what obtains and maintains in other societies. As they start making those kinds of demands on us as their representatives, we would not be in a position to respond to those demands. It is timely because another census is due in 2000. Censuses are conducted every 10 years.

Together with my colleagues on this side, I wholeheartedly support the attempt of this Bill. The question is: Would the information we are gathering be useful to us? I know it would be useful at a national level. We would be able to say how many persons there are. I suggest that we make efforts to look at the question of disaggregating it.

The Canadians ensure that statistics are gathered in a way which fits right into their various electoral districts. We do not. I am talking from experience. Since I have been elected in November 1995, I have been attempting to gather that kind of information to develop such a profile. I am having no end of trouble because it means that I have to do certain types of things in order to get the information to fit into the boundaries of the constituencies. That should not happen in today's age as we prepare to move into the year 2000. The information is being gathered at a domestic level. All that is required is that it be collated in a way which would allow constituents' representatives to have the information in the same way at the national level.

Thank you.

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak in favour of this Bill piloted by my colleague because I believe it is based on moral principles, and seeks to fulfil national and international obligations, as we strive for equality for all our citizens regardless of gender or race. I join with my colleagues and those on the other side to pay special tribute to Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt who is with us in the Chamber.

Whilst we have said that Trinidad and Tobago is joining other countries in terms of what we are doing here today, in my respectful view, that is not totally correct. Trinidad and Tobago is the only country in the world where legislation has been brought to the Parliament with respect to this matter. In the other countries they are looking at ways of doing it. As Members have indicated, that Bill had been passed previously in the Senate. I was in the Senate at that time when the Bill was piloted in 1995. It was brought back recently this year to the Senate. Not only is Trinidad and Tobago in the forefront, but it has also been the only country thus far to bring such legislation to Parliament.

This Bill seeks to implement sentiments which are expressed in our Constitution. It is our obligation as laid out in the Constitution because it reiterates our faith in fundamental rights and freedoms. It speaks of the dignity of the human person, the equal and inalienable rights with which members of the human family are endowed. In furtherance of these principle section 4 of the Constitution guarantees the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of person; enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof, except by due process of law; the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law.

It is my respectful view that in failing to value unpaid work it is a form of not treating citizens equally and is a way in which citizens are deprived of property by sleight of hand in that sense. In 1976 our Constitution guaranteed that equality. Before that, both in Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom, concerns were expressed about the discriminatory effects of not valuing unremunerated work in the gross national product.

I make special mention of a lady, Miss Clotil Walcott in Trinidad and Tobago because she was a tireless trade unionist and a women's rights' activist in a time when that was probably not such a popular cause. She started off many years ago. As I said, that would not have been a popular cause at that time, but jumping on the bandwagon of women's rights seems to be the order of the day now. Clotil Walcott, as a women's rights' activist had begun her campaign for the rights of domestic workers. Even though they were not unpaid, they were underpaid for their domestic work.

In 1974 about that same time, the wife of C. L. R. James, Mrs. Selma James—who in my respectful view was a great thinker and intellect—was then living in London. She founded the wages for housework campaign in London. The UN declaration which came thereafter in 1979 was anxious to ensure the universal declaration of human rights and passed the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This was referred to by other members.

The preamble to that convention noted that the state parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The international obligation arose from this convention. States committed to the implementation of the convention were further convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice would contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality for women, and that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace, require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, after this preamble, which I would say covers the collection of data concerning the value of unremunerated work, Article 3 of the convention imposes a duty on state parties, and that is the duty by which Trinidad and Tobago is bound. State parties shall take in all fields, in particular the political, social,

economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. All state parties who signed and ratified this convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women are bound by Article 3 to take action to at least explore the question of unremunerated work.

As indicated by the Member for Arima, the convention did not enter into force until 1981. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, it was the NAR Government in 1990 which took steps to ratify that convention. It has been around for the longest while. We are bound then by our Constitution and our obligations under the international conventions to do what the hon. Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt sought to do since 1995 by piloting that Bill in the Senate.

If we need further proof that it is appropriate to estimate the value of unpaid work to our gross national product, then the conclusions of the Fourth Conference of Caribbean Working Women, which was held in 1991, would provide more evidence.

The theme of that conference was "Caribbean Women Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond". It was attended by women from almost every Caribbean island, including Cuba, and one of their consensus positions was:

"(4) The invisibility of women's contribution to society and economy is to her further disadvantage. The cost of social upbringing of her children and her contribution in the home, for example, are not recognized as a direct contribution to national development."

So there we have it, international and regional consensus in the words of the 1995 Human Development Report discussing the value of goods and services not included in the annual gross domestic product. It stated:

"The undervaluation of women's work is reflected in the lack of recognition of their contribution."

And they posed the following question:

"Is there any reason that only work for the market place should be valued and that work must have an exchange value, not just a human value, to be recognized in economic terms?"

They went on to try to estimate the total value of the contribution to economies worldwide by way of unremunerated work and stated:

“On a global level, some rough estimates can be made to highlight the problem. If these unpaid activities were treated as market transactions at the prevailing wages, they would yield huge monetary valuations—a staggering \$16 trillion U.S., or about 70% more than the officially estimated \$23 trillion of global output. This estimate includes the value of the unpaid work performed by men and women as well as the value of the underpayment of women’s work in the market at prevailing wages.”

Mr. Speaker, when we are speaking of trillions of dollars in unremunerated work of both men and women, it is hard to conceptualize or visualize just how much money that is. All I feel confident of, is the fact that people who carry out unremunerated work are being grossly shortchanged around the globe in terms of measuring their contribution to society.

Shortly after the publication of that report by the UN, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing and, prompted largely by the efforts of the NGOs at the parallel conference that was taking place in Beijing, they included in their declaration, under the strategic objective to promote women’s economic rights and independence, a goal for state parties to:

“Seek to develop a more comprehensive knowledge of work and employment through, inter alia, efforts to measure and better understand the type, extent and distribution of unremunerated work, particularly work in caring for dependants and unremunerated work done for family farms or businesses, and encourage the sharing and dissemination of information on studies and experience in this field, including the development of methods for assessing its value in quantitative terms, for possible reflection in accounts that may be produced separately from, but consistent with, core national accounts.”

Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory to that declaration, so if we did not already find ourselves bound by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, then this declaration signed in the autumn of 1995 would bind us.

I would like to refer to an article in the June 1996 issue of the magazine *Womansword*, Volume I, Issue 6, published in the United States, where the Chair of the Philadelphia Women Count Working Group, Phoebe Schellenberg, in a comment on the Beijing Declaration wrote of the declaration’s reference to unremunerated work, as follows:

“This issue is important because for the first time there would be a true measure of what it takes for society to function. It would also give everyone, policy makers and men and women themselves, a measure of just how much inequality has to be eliminated. It would allow for realistic evaluations of how cut backs in the USA and other industrialised countries—and structural adjustment programmes in non-industrialised countries—are costing women and communities.”

On the subject of Beijing, our national delegation was able to inform the meetings that we were one of the first countries in the world to have proposed the legislation, the Bill having been piloted by Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt in the spring of 1995. That Bill was passed in the Senate but lapsed later that year. There are other countries now proposing legislation. They are simply taking administrative steps to implement the counting of unremunerated work.

I have been passed an article by Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt, dated August 3, 1996, which comes out of the English *Independent* newspaper, entitled, “Why Housework should be taken into the Accounts”. It was written by Diane Coyle. She was actually reviewing an article on this topic in *Economic Trends*, published by the government. The article describes how the Office for National Statistics is researching ways of creating household accounts which will measure the value of unpaid work carried out in the home and in the community. She makes a very interesting point in the *Independent* which is that:

“Until the Industrial Revolution in England took firm hold, when more and more people switched from home-based work to work in factories, censuses classified unpaid work by women as productive activity. It was not paid, but was still a job. By the end of the 19th century though housewives were classed as unproductive dependants.”

So we see the concept of valuing unpaid work in monetary terms is far from new.

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

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.02 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. Speaker, I said that the concept of valuing unpaid work in monetary terms is not a new concept. In that same article from the English *Independent* newspaper in the United Kingdom, Ms. Coyle continued

to explain the importance of the development of an economy and a society with full information about employment, whether unpaid or not, and the true role of women in the community.

I have always used the quotation that Mao Tse Tung has been noted for starting, which is, “Women hold up half the sky”. In some regard, Mr. Speaker, I think that he was wrong. Whilst women may hold up half the sky with one hand, one can guarantee that they would be cradling a baby in the other hand and they have their next child’s schoolbag on their shoulder as well. In my respectful view, therefore, the women are holding the global society together. [*Desk thumping*]

There is an important point with respect to the impact on the legal system, if we are to value unremunerated work. Before I close I would like to speak on that generally. We can begin by looking at the matrimonial laws in this country and we would see, from decided cases, that women tend to be shortchanged on the breakdown of marriage by the assumption that they are—when they are not in paid employment outside the home—considered to be dependent. Even though they have been married 20 or 30 years and have been responsible for bringing up the children, taking care of the home and ensuring that the husband is able to do his job outside of the home, the courts tend to hold that they have not contributed financially towards the home and the upbringing of the children and, therefore, they are only entitled to a certain percentage of the value of the matrimonial assets. Usually homes are acquired in the name of the husbands, where the husband is working outside the home. Therefore, the housewife—where her work is not valued—is at a disadvantage when one comes to quantifying and allocating matrimonial assets on the breakdown of marriage in applications for property settlements and so forth. In terms of the legal system, this legislation will impact tremendously and would place women in a more equitable position in terms of allocations of property on the breakdown of marriage.

We can also find examples in terms of the assessment of damages in court matters, where a woman might be injured and the law allows her compensation for that injury. She may have been a housewife and since the work in her home is not valued in monetary terms it is exceedingly difficult for a court to determine how much compensation should be given to her. Therefore, unremunerated work, in this way, is assessed—it applies not just to women who are injured and who would be seeking monetary compensation in the courts, but to any person who is not paid for whatever services are given—this measure will assist in assessing and quantifying the compensation for persons who are unremunerated for their work.

In closing, the Member for Arima mentioned that he thought that the Minister would have spoken about particular pieces of legislation that would have flowed from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Towards Women. Whilst I mean no disrespect to him, I wonder whether he has not been reading the newspapers or whether he has not been in this Parliament. Mr. Speaker, just today you pointed out—he made reference to equal opportunities—that the Motion to set up the Joint Select Committee on Equal Opportunities has been approved in the Senate and the House. Therefore, with the greatest respect to him, that is one area where the Government has been taking steps to ensure that there is some degree of equity in this country, and to provide a means of redress if one feels that one has been discriminated against. That equal opportunities legislation would come into place after the Joint Select Committee has gone through the process of taking the views of the public.

The Member also spoke about legislation dealing with sexual harassment and several other pieces of legislation—I am not sure what was the point he was making. He went through a list of legislation relating to women, to the family. He spoke about the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act, the Attachment of Earnings Act; all these are existing pieces of legislation and I am uncertain as to why he recited that list.

He further stated that he thought the Minister would talk about legislation that this Government would be putting into place. I would like to indicate that the Sex Discrimination Bill has been drafted by the Attorney General's Department and it is before the Legislative Review Committee. I would also like to indicate that the Bill has been sent out to NGOs, various individuals and groups for public comment.

The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives has informed me that his ministry is currently reviewing a number of pieces of legislation to promote women's economic self-reliance and to protect women in the work-place. His ministry has set up a tripartite committee to examine the question of maternity leave as a statutory right. He informs me that he intends to take a position paper to Cabinet shortly with respect to that. The Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives is also looking at that remnant of gender bias that is evident in the Employment of Women (Night Work) Act and they are also addressing that issue at the tripartite level.

5.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs, has taken a series of measures that she intends to put in place for a note

before the Cabinet and she has indicated that a committee will be set up to review the laws relating to domestic violence, and this has been publicized. I do not understand how the Member can say he did not see what legislation we were dealing with and how we were dealing with the legislation.

In terms of legislation, I assure Members that Government is seriously committed to the upliftment of women and to our international obligations under the UN declaration and we commend this Bill.

Thank you very much.

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs (Sen. Dr. The Hon Daphne Phillips): Mr. Speaker, I thank all Members who contributed to this debate for their positive support of the Bill. To the Members on the other side who made some queries about what we were doing and what can be done with this legislation when it comes into force, I must state that many of those queries have been answered by my colleagues on this side.

I would just like to point out one or two things. One is the query about what will be done with the data, which was raised by the Member for Arima and the Member for St. Ann's East. In addition to the range of legislation that has been looked at and which we continue to look at, the whole reason for getting the data is to influence social policy in a number of areas. For example, the acting Prime Minister this afternoon brought a statement on policies related to poverty: policies related to how we deal with this massive problem of poverty in the society; policies relating to domestic workers and their level of wages—and I am sure the Minister of Labour and Co-operatives is looking at that as well—what is the situation of persons who actually work in homes for income. We will look at whether what they get as wages is relevant to the value of the kind of work that they do. The surveys would measure the value of their work. We look at policies relating to minimum wages, compensation in courts of law and policies related to working conditions at the work place. All of these social policies which affect our lives will be influenced by the data which we collect from these surveys.

In dealing with the concern of the Member for St. Ann's East on the question of knowing his constituency, I suggest that because this particular kind of research will involve household surveys in all areas of Trinidad and Tobago, albeit by sample survey, there will be some indication of what exists in various parts of the country and, indeed, in various constituencies.

Counting Unremunerated Work Bill
[SEN. DR. THE HON D. PHILLIPS]

Wednesday, September 18, 1996

In general, Mr. Speaker, I take it that we all see the relevance and importance of this legislation and I thank all Members for their support in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, 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 and 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The preamble ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

House resumed.

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

5.20 p.m.

GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (INC'N) BILL

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I know that we are getting to the close of the day, but there is, indeed, on the Order Paper for today under "Bills Second Reading", a Bill entitled, "An Act for the Incorporation of the Girl Guides Association of Trinidad and Tobago and matters incidental thereto". There could be certain consequences of it not being taken at this early stage. Having regard to the fact that we were just dealing with matters that relate, in the main, to females, you may care to allow this matter to be dealt with before.

Order for second reading read.

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Morvant/Laventille*): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill entitled "An Act for the Incorporation of the Girl Guides Association of Trinidad and Tobago and for matters incidental thereto" be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, the Girl Guides Association, whose aims and objects are set out in clause 3 of the Bill before this House, has been in existence since 1914. On March 19, 1996 the members of the association petitioned Parliament, by way of the other place, for the introduction of a private bill for the incorporation of the association, so that its aims and objectives could be properly carried out.

The Bill before us thus originated in the Senate, where it was sent to a Select Committee after second reading. Mr. Speaker, the Senate Select Committee carefully examined this Bill, and in the course of its deliberations it scrutinized the constitution of the association, as well as the financial statements and minutes of previous meetings. The committee took all evidence from representatives of the association in order to ascertain whether the facts set out in the Bill were true and correct. At the end of its work, the committee felt entirely satisfied that the promoters of the Bill should be allowed to proceed, and on July 2, 1996, the committee presented its Report to the Senate, recommending acceptance of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill has come before this House for our concurrence, and I humbly request all Members to give their support to this Bill, so that the work of this worthy association could be enhanced and more effectively accomplished.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Mr. F. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, it appears as though all Members of this House are in total accord with the sentiments previously expressed. It is rather unusual that this happens. I beg to move.

Question put and agreed .

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Clauses 1 to 9 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The Preamble ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

House resumed.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Attorney General (Hon. R. L. Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of the House to Friday, September 20, 1996 at 1.30 p.m. May I

Adjournment
[HON. R. L. MAHARAJ]

Wednesday, September 18, 1996

announce that we intend to do the Customs Bill and the Motor Vehicles Insurance (Third Party Risks) Bill at that time.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.31 p.m.