

*Leave of Absence*

*Tuesday, November 12, 1996*

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Tuesday, November 12, 1996*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Attorney General, Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, and he has been granted leave of absence from November 12, which is today, until November 20, 1996. He is out of the country.

I have also received communication from the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, Mr. Gordon Draper, who has asked to be excused from sittings of this House from November 12—15, 1996. This leave is granted.

**PAPER LAID**

Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Committee of the San Fernando Carnegie Free Library for the year ended December 31, 1995 [*The Acting Attorney General and Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh)*]

*To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee*

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Presentation**

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Trevor Sudama):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to lay on the table the following report:

1. Third Report (1995-1996 Session) of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on proposals for the Expenditure from Public Revenue which were not included in the Annual Estimates, 1996.

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

Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 1996 [*The Minister of Planning and Development*]; read the first time.

*Motion made,* That the next stage of the Bill be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Hon. T. Sudama*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**The Acting Attorney General and Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Motion No. 1, and the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation)(1996) Bill be taken together.

*Agreed to.*

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
(THIRD)**

**The Minister of Planning and Development and Acting Minister of Finance (Hon. Trevor Sudama):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

RESOLVED:

That this House adopt the Third Report (1995-1996 Session) of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Proposals for the Expenditure from Public Revenue which were not included in the Annual Estimates, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, this is another in the whole question of adjusting the expenditures in annual budgets which we have been doing in this House from time immemorial. As you will recall, an estimate for expenditure and revenue is presented to this Parliament very early in the year, or late in the previous year, to get the approval of this House as to what the revenues and expenditures are likely to be in the ensuing year. This was done earlier this year and this was approved by the House.

The variations which we are placing before the House today relate primarily to the Public Sector Investment Programme of the budget. For the 1996 budget, the Public Sector Investment Programme comprised \$1,178 million of investments by Government to support economic and social infrastructure development as part of the effort to promote economic diversification and also to assist private sector investment in Trinidad and Tobago.

Of this overall amount, approximately \$778 million was to be spent on programmes and projects to be implemented directly by the central government. The remainder was allocated to investments in the state enterprises, namely, Petrotrin's refinery upgrade investment and the improvement of the capital assets to Caroni (1975) Ltd. So that when we add these proposed expenditures to the amount we have allocated for direct investment in projects and programmes by the central government, we, of course, come to the figure of \$1,178 million.

Some of the major investments in 1996 which were undertaken by the central government agencies include the Business Expansion And Industrial Restructuring Programme. This was a loan we secured and for which we made a provision of \$20 million for expenditure in 1996. Then we had the road rehabilitation of the Solomon Hochoy Highway of \$30 million. The Rural Access Roads And Bridges Programme, as you know, that was a loan accessed from the Inter-American Development Bank for the improvement of infrastructure, for the promotion of agriculture and we had included a sum in the budget for that.

**1.40 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, we had also signed a loan, the Fourth Basic Education Loan Programme, with the World Bank and in the 1996 budget we had included a provision of \$32.6 million to be expended this year. Of course, we spent a while reviewing the Health Sector Reform Programme which was submitted to the Inter-American Development Bank to see how best it fitted with the manifesto pledges of the UNC/NAR Government. Our aim then was to review that proposal in order to finalize the loan agreement. We felt that we should make a provision for it in the 1996 budget and we did so to the tune of \$44.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, all these items of expenditure are really estimates which were based on certain assumptions at the beginning of the year with respect to accessibility of this funding; the implementation capacity of the various ministries; the resources available to us, particularly the human resource for project implementation and the priority we place on some of these programmes. It has been a general practice that during the course of the year a review is undertaken to see how the various programmes and projects are being implemented—at what rate, what are some of the difficulties that have been encountered and what has been the performance of the respective ministries of government that have various responsibilities for implementation.

Therefore, on the basis of that review, certain adjustments are proposed on the various expenditure items. As a result of that, this review exercise is recommending the reallocation of financial resources among programmes and projects to allow those which performed well, and for which the implementation procedure was in place, to have access to additional resources and to transfer funds from those projects which were not likely to meet the targets which we had set for them early in the fiscal year.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this review exercise relates primarily to transferring funds from one head to another and does not at this point envisage any increase in

the total sums budgeted. This is one item that we have before this House for approval, but there is the other item, of course, of a supplementary appropriation which I would come to later.

As a result of this exercise, we have proposed a variation in expenditure of \$63.5 million where we are increasing the provisions under the following four heads: Tobago House of Assembly, where we are increasing that provision by \$9.47 million; Ministry of Finance, by \$13.6 million; Ministry of Housing and Settlements, by \$9 million and the Ministry of Works and Transport, with respect to the provision for the Rural Access Road Programme, by \$41.87 million. The report has identified those heads which are to be decreased in order to implement this variation.

Mr. Speaker, some of the projects, as we note, were well implemented and by the second quarter they had completely utilized their annual allocations. These include the Rural Access Road Programme which, in fact, was implemented at a level beyond our expectation at the beginning of the year. Additionally, with the line of credit to the private sector which was instituted under the Business Expansion and Industrial Restructuring Loan Programme, we found that more businesses in the private sector were willing to come forward to make application to gain access to this line of credit which had the overall objective of restructuring the elements in the private sector and indeed, in the economy generally. Also, the shelter construction component of the Settlement and Squatter Regularization Programme.

On the other hand, several of the programmes which were expected to advance in the first half of the year experienced some delay. Examples of these include the Agricultural Sector Programme, the National Highways Programme, the Fourth Basic Education Programme and the Health Sector Reform Programme. In almost all cases the reasons for the delay, which resulted in lower levels of expenditure than anticipated, have been addressed during the course of this year and the projects will be ready for implementation in 1997 at the rates we have envisaged.

Mr. Speaker, one of the difficulties we have experienced and which previous governments have experienced as well, and which is a general experience of developing countries of the world, is the capacity for implementation. What we have intended to do is to intensify our efforts to introduce a number of measures to improve implementation of programmes and projects during next year.

As one would well realize this is a new Government and we had to review what was in place and the legacy of those proposals which were left to us. We had to do that. We also had to look at the various inadequacies and weaknesses in the public sector implementation capacity. Therefore, we decided to concentrate on a number of areas which were left or did not receive the required focus under the previous regime. These measures include the dedication of human resources in project management units. Therefore, we identified those resources and we are trying to place an adequate level of those resources in the implementation of these projects.

Mr. Speaker, there is another area in which we have found a significant deficiency, that is, expediting the preparation of contracts and the improvement in project preparation and monitoring. In many instances the pace at which the projects are being implemented has depended on the kind of preparatory work that was done in order to put the programme on stream. We found—and this has been the legacy of the previous regime—that there was gross inadequacy in this area. Therefore we have set a programme in place where we have intensified the training programmes of public sector professionals who work in this area and for whose services there is a great demand. May I inform this House that since this is an expertise that is in demand in the private sector we have discovered that trained professionals—given the remuneration to which we are restricted in the public sector—leave the public sector to go for bigger benefits in the private sector. Therefore, we have had this ongoing decrease in the human resource expertise available to us in order to have expeditious implementation of our projects.

**1.50 p.m.**

I merely wished to introduce this Variation of Appropriation Bill which is before us to indicate where the additional sums are going to be spent and indeed, to indicate which votes and which heads are going to be decreased in order to facilitate the transfer of these resources. If I may, the Government has increased the allocation in the sum of \$9.47 million to the Tobago House of Assembly in order that these moneys should be spent on the following projects where we have identified certain priorities which are going apace.

The sum of \$3 million was provided in 1996 to meet the cost of Phase 1 of the Milford Road Esplanade Project in Scarborough. This phase entailed the laying of a foundation upon which a sea defence wall was constructed. Work progressed faster than anticipated with 60 per cent of foundation and 20 per cent of the wall being completed. By June 1996 the provision was fully utilized. Given that the

project involved steel works on the sea coast, completion of the wall is imperative so as to avoid any resulting erosion. Completion of the project will stem the chronic flooding of the Milford Road which poses a hazard to motorists, business and pedestrians, especially the school children. The additional sum of \$3 million will finance the installation of 318 piles and construction of the remaining 400 metres of the sea wall.

Mr. Speaker, this Government of national unity is paying due attention to Tobago as in fact ought to have been the case under previous regimes. The Government is increasing the provision to the Store Bay Beach facility by \$2.6 million. The sum of \$4 million was provided in 1996 for the completion of the Store Bay beach facility on which construction works commenced in 1995. You will understand that this is all in pursuit of creating the infrastructure for tourism development in Tobago. The cost of the facility has increased from the original estimate in 1994 of \$2.6 million to \$5 million. NIPDEC is providing design and project management services. The increase in cost is to provide additional facilities including vending booths and lifeguard facilities so that the beach will become a safer place. This project is on target for completion before the end of the year and the additional funds of \$2.6 million are required to pay NIPDEC and to fulfil obligations to contractors engaged in construction works on the project.

There is another critical project, the water supply project, the rural and leeward Tobago project, where the Government is increasing its provision to Tobago by \$1.63 million. The interim water supply project is part of Government's long-term water supply development programme for Tobago. Of course, there is also a programme to develop the infrastructure for improved delivery of water supply in Trinidad, but as I said, the Government has a responsibility to Trinidad and Tobago and, therefore, it is putting the particular emphasis that needs to be put on whatever has to be done in Tobago—both infrastructure and the quality of life in that island.

The major elements of the project are design and construction of a water supply system for the North Coast. Improvement works to the existing Craig Hall Water Supply System and Courland Water Supply System. The areas which will benefit from the project are Castara, the hometown of the distinguished Member for Tobago East which requires due attention; Parlatuvier, Roxborough, Bloody Bay, L'Anse Fourmi, Mason Hall, Moriah and Runnemedede.

**Mr. Imbert:** Have you been to Tobago?

**Hon. T. Sudama:** I have been to Tobago and I am a constant visitor to Tobago. I am fully aware of the needs of the people of Tobago, especially the needs in the rural areas, and this is what we are here for; not to exclude any area of Trinidad and Tobago, rural or urban, in our developmental perspective. Construction works commenced in 1995 and have progressed steadily with three of the five contracts awarded being completed. The remaining two contracts are scheduled for completion later in the year. The allocation of \$8 million in 1996 was insufficient to meet contractual obligations on the projects and therefore a further sum of \$1.6 million is required to complete the project in 1996 and to bring much needed relief to these residents in Tobago. The Government has not confined its attention only to the physical infrastructure but it has also looked at the social infrastructural needs in Tobago.

The Government has provided an additional sum of \$2.24 million for extension and improvement to the Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School. In 1996, the sum of \$1.4 million was allocated to continue construction of the technical/vocational wing at the Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School. The Government recognized the deficiency in terms of adequate technical training facilities in the island and it is trying to address that situation.

Construction works commenced and the project is progressing satisfactorily. It is anticipated that the project will be 80 per cent completed in 1996 and an additional sum of \$2.24 million will be required to satisfy contractual obligations.

Mr. Speaker, I have gone into some details on the additional provision which the Government is providing for the Tobago House of Assembly in order to meet the needs of the people in Tobago.

**2.00 p.m.**

As I said, our perspective, unlike the PNM, is the whole country. With respect to the increased allocation under the Ministry of Finance I merely wish to state that we are increasing that sum by \$3.16 million and \$1.6 million is to be utilized for the design and construction of a container stripping station at Port of Spain. You are aware of the importance of this container stripping station in order to enhance the revenues of the Government. While there is one stripping station at Point Lisas, it was necessary to put another station in place. The original allocation of \$0.43 million in the 1996 budget was found to be insufficient. We are increasing that by \$1.6 million. We are constructing jetties at Hart's Cut Bay to the tune of \$1.56 million which would assist in the infrastructure.

We come to a critical area in the promise made to the electorate over the years. That is to provide additional shelter to people who are in need of housing. Here we are providing an additional sum of \$9 million to the Ministry of Housing and Settlements whose programme has progressed satisfactorily over the year. The provision which we had made initially for the Ministry of Housing and Settlements in this area was \$12 million. As at the end of July there were 312 houses under construction at four sites, namely, Bonair West, Harmony Hall, Couva North Phase II and Malabar Phase IV. At the end of 1996 we anticipate that 105 houses would be completed and therefore, the additional sum of \$9 million is required to permit the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company to continue disbursement of mortgage loans to beneficiaries. To date, there have been 369 beneficiaries under this programme.

Finally, an area where we have recorded significant progress and a very advanced stage of implementation is the Rural Access Roads and Bridges Programme. As I indicated, this is a loan under the Inter American Development Bank and the programme involves the design and construction of 150 kilometres of agricultural access roads and 50 main road bridges. This is to be attempted in phases. Part of that programme is a plan to monitor the environmental aspects of the construction activities which are scheduled to have three phases over a period of four years, and in addition, the design, development and implementation of a rural road maintenance management system for the rural access road network.

May I say that the whole issue of maintenance is so critical in order to avoid the deterioration which has taken place under the previous regime, with respect to our physical infrastructure and particularly our road network. You will also note that this year we have signed a loan with the Inter American Development Bank for the rehabilitation of the major road ways in Trinidad and Tobago. It is quite an extensive programme which we are going to undertake, starting this year. We had made certain provisions but we found that because of the delay experienced in the signing of the loan and putting procedures in place, we were unable to disburse as much this year as we would have liked.

Maintenance of our infrastructure is a primary concern of this Government. Our perspective is not five years. The perspective of this Government is 25 years. We are planning and putting things in place so that the infrastructure would be there to serve the people of this country for a very long time. We do not have an electioneering perspective, but a national long-term developmental perspective for Trinidad and Tobago.



Part of this programme is to identify new techniques and material for road rehabilitation and maintenance. We have decided that we cannot go along with the old ways. We have to be creative and find new ways of dealing with our road rehabilitation and maintenance problems. In the 1996 budget the sum of \$19 million was provided for this programme. This allocation has proven to be grossly inadequate and was exhausted in the first quarter of the year. The additional fund of TT \$41.87 million is required to meet contractual obligation in respect of physical works already completed and for services provided by the advisory and supervisory consultant.

In order to meet these additional provisions we have had to reduce the allocation under some of the heads. It is not that we have abandoned any programme, but where the provision we made at the beginning of the year could not be fully extended because of a number of delays which we have experienced, we had to adjust the amount under those programmes and add to those programmes which are doing well. Those matters are adequately listed in the report which we have put before the Finance Committee. Detailed explanations have been given for the level of provision made at the beginning of the year and why they had to be reduced for us to utilize that funding in areas of need. If need be, later on in this debate, I would expound a little more on this. Suffice it to say that the explanation which we have provided in our quite elaborate documentation presented to the Finance Committee would suffice.

I also add that we are seeking approval for a supplementary provision in the sum of \$1.06 million to be allocated to the Ministry of Public Administration and Information in order to deal with the critical area of acquiring foreign and technical assistance in the institutional strengthening of the public sector.

### **2.10 p.m.**

As you know, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to press on with the development of Trinidad and Tobago, one of the key areas is to review the role, the resources and function of the public sector in this country. We want to make that a more effective institution of development in Trinidad and Tobago, an institution which is facilitative of the development thrust. To do that we must look at that sector and make adequate provision for it.

We have made supplementary provisions to the tune of \$14.2 million to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. As you know, that is a very key Ministry

headed by the dynamic Member for Tobago West. There we have had to provide additionally for on-going projects, particularly work on the National Stadium, the completion of the Woodbrook Youth Centre, and we have made a provision of \$4.5 million for the construction of an indoor sports hall in Tobago. Here we are targeting the youth of Tobago, so that we are not excluding any sector of the population. In Trinidad, we have the further development of the Tacarigua hockey facilities for \$4.2 million, in the light of the very successful conclusion of the hockey tournament which was held here a few weeks ago; the refurbishment of the Jean Pierre Complex and the athletic track at the National Stadium.

So, Mr. Speaker, without delaying any further, I make the point that we have reviewed our expenditure pattern under the Public Sector Investment Programme. We have looked at all the various situations and conditions which have affected the implementation of projects. We have made our judgment on these and on the basis of that judgment we have made variations in the appropriation and also asked for a supplementary appropriation with respect to two Ministries.

It is an on-going exercise of all Parliaments to look and review expenditure patterns, which are merely estimates at the beginning of the year. Having done so, we have now come to this House to seek approval of these variations and I know that I have the support of the whole House in seeking these adjustments.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin East*): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the hon. Member for Oropouche, I felt myself transported to another place and time. I could not believe that this was the hon. Trevor Sudama speaking—if you will forgive the use of the name.

I came to this House on many occasions over the last four years, leading up to 1995, and was subjected to a torrent of abuse from the Member for Oropouche whenever we debated a Variation of Appropriation Bill. His arguments at the time were not logical. He said that government should plan properly. Does the hon. Member for Oropouche remember that? “We should not be coming here to this House to vary anything. When you do your budget for the year, you should be very careful about what you are doing.” He was so caustic in the way he attacked us for varying even one dollar by an appropriation, now he comes as though butter will not melt in his mouth, speaking so eloquently. *[Interruption]* It is. It is. The man is a chameleon! I have seen such a transformation today. Butter will not melt in his mouth. He spoke so casually, Mr. Speaker, about variations of appropriations

which take place in all Parliaments and that have taken place in this House for years. I remember standing in that chair taking blows from the Member for Oropouche when I sought to change expenditure by \$1.00—and we had good reason.

What the hon. Member has not told this House is that this is really an admission of failure and incompetence. In the budget debate of 1996, I pointed out to the Member for Oropouche, the Minister of Finance and all those on the other side, that a number of allocations in this document were inadequate. It was met with sarcastic laughter, with the usual derision common place with Members on the other side, and they proceeded to pass their budget without changing a full stop or a comma.

Now, we come back, November 1996, one year later, to change a number of areas which we pointed out to them in the 1996 budget debate. How easy it would have been to make the changes then, rather than come now with all these lame excuses about delays, no staff, the weaknesses of the public service and some areas performing and others not performing. What arrant nonsense!

The hon. Member for Oropouche singled out the Rural Access Road and Bridges Programme as one that performed so well that it ate up all the money in the first three months and they had to come back with an additional allocation. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Works and Transport came to this Parliament a few months ago and spoke, in response to a private motion that I had brought before this honourable House, about the Government's construction programme. I listened to him carefully. I was a Minister of Works and Transport. I know how hard that job is, so I left the poor fellow alone. One of the points that he made was that Phase I of the Rural Access Roads Programme started in 1992 and that Phase II started in January 1996, which was a slip of the tongue, I presume.

The contracts for Phase II of the Rural Access Roads Programme were awarded in August, 1995. I remember approving a newspaper advertisement which was published in all the daily newspapers and the weeklies in September 1995—before the election—where we announced the award of the contract and the start of construction on \$95 million worth of work in the Rural Access Roads Programmes. I wish to correct the slip of the tongue of the hon. Minister of Works and Transport.

**2.20 p.m.**

The contracts were awarded in August 1995, construction started in October for \$95 million with an implementation period of 12 months. As I pointed out in the budget debate, and any little child will know that, 12 months equal one year and if contracts were awarded for \$95 million in October in one year, it is supposed to be finished in October in the next year. So that when the allocation is being done and contracts are for \$95 million, the \$95 million should be put in, but no, not this administration, Mr. Speaker. They are so full of themselves and so arrogant that when it was pointed out to them that the allocation was only \$19 million and it was short by over \$70 million there was derisive and sarcastic laughter on the other side.

They now come into this Parliament—and it is the choice of words that get me, Mr. Speaker, such as the programme performed so well. Those contracts were awarded before they came into power, it must perform well. What do they expect? *[Laughter]* The contracts which were not implemented before they came into power are in trouble and this is what I would deal with, Mr. Speaker.

It goes without saying that if everything is in place and contracts are awarded, then money will be spent and money will be required. It is gross incompetence to put \$19 million into a programme that needs \$95 million. I note that the increased allocation is only \$41 million so \$41 million and \$20 million is \$61 million. Where is the other \$30 million? Is it that some contractors have been asked to hold their hand and not to send in their bills so that invoicing is deferred until 1997 when they get some—are they not paying anyone until next year, or is it that the projected 12-month cycle of the programme is behind schedule? What is the problem? By now, \$95 million should have been paid out. How come the allocation is only going up by \$41 million taking it to \$61 million, what about the other \$30 million? I would like the Minister to answer that.

When one looks at some of the statements made—I really feel sorry for the Minister of Works and Transport because he has to contend with these other Ministers who gave him no money and cut his throat, go behind his back, do all kinds of wickedness. Poor fella, he cannot perform!

I now go to the Solomon Hochoy Highway extension and if one looks in the Public Sector Investment Programme what does it say? What did the Minister of Planning and Development put before this Parliament for the Public Sector Investment Programme in 1996 in the area of roads? He indicated that he was

reviewing the comprehensive highway rehabilitation programme, the IADB Programme and apparently he took a whole year to review that, but indicated that he would spend some money on the Solomon Hochoy Highway extension which, if one looks here on page 23, January 1996 it will be seen that they have put \$30 million for extension to the Solomon Hochoy Highway from Tarouba, the reconstruction of the Solomon Hochoy Highway between Couva and Tarouba. How much money have they spent? Have they spent one dollar, five dollars, ten dollars under this programme? I would like to know. I know that tenders were invited some time this year and I presume they are under evaluation and so forth, but the point is why should this process take us 12 months when everything was in place to implement that programme in 1996?

**Mr. Sudama:** What are you talking about?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** The Solomon Hochoy Highway extension. Why is there an allocation of \$30 million and you come to this Parliament and say there are delays so it is going to be rolled over to next year? Is it the reason which the Minister of Planning and Development has given, the lack of resources? This is *déjà vu*; human and other resources, weaknesses and inadequacies in the Public Sector Implementation Programme, the new Government had to review the proposals, they had to focus on strengthening. I could be saying this myself. This is the *pièce de résistance*, this is the icing on the cake, human resources in dedicated project management units.

Mr. Speaker, this administration has a habit of delaying projects and programmes, coming into this Parliament and pretending that what they are doing is their idea. Nothing could be further from the truth. When we demitted office, there was a programme implementation unit for major building projects, for highways development and one for dredging development, a dedicated project implementation unit and there has been attrition. People have left but not only for the reason given by the hon. Minister that salaries in the private sector are better, and higher, and therefore it is difficult to retain people in the public service because of the low level of salaries. Despite the fact when we raised these same arguments, the hon. Member dismissed them and said we were talking nonsense when we pointed out how difficult it was to attract staff into the public sector because of the low level of wages. He comes back like a parrot and repeats it a year later because he cannot remember that he dismissed that as nonsense.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that persons have left these units not just because salaries are better in the private sector, it is because they cannot handle the behaviour of the UNC/NAR administration and the things they have been asked to

do. [*Desk thumping*] The manner in which they have been asked to operate, some of them have decided to give up their pension, give up 20 years in the service and leave because they cannot bring themselves to do what they have been asked to do by the administration. That is the problem. That is why projects cannot be implemented, because people are leaving because they cannot handle what is going on inside there, and because of the improper things they are being asked to do.

**Hon. Member:** Discipline.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Discipline! Mr. Speaker, what are the projects that have suffered? The Fourth Basic Education Programme—\$32 million allocated, what is the expenditure in 1996? Why has that programme not been implemented? Why have they taken so long to sign the loan? Why was a school building programme delayed by one year and put back in almost its original form?

I hear the comments and asides from someone on that side. The PNM administration had negotiated a programme to construct 50 primary schools and four secondary schools. I would like them to tell me how they have changed that. The fact is, they have come right back to the same programme they had delayed for one year.

What have they changed in the comprehensive highways programme? Nothing, it was just delayed for one year.

What have they changed in the Health Sector Reform Programme? By their own admission, by the Member for Caroni Central, they changed nothing but it was delayed for one year. What have we seen over the last 12 months? That is why I say this is an admission of failure and incompetence. Twelve months have passed and major programmes like the Solomon Hochoy Highway extension, Fourth Basic Education Programme, Health Sector Reform Programme, out of the mouth of the Member for Oropouche, they cannot get these programmes going because they are just incompetent.

I have serious difficulty when I look at the facts and I listen to what the Members on the other side have to say.

**2.30 p.m.**

Let us look at some of the projects that got the axe; the Ministry of National Security, they had no choice but to increase the allocation for the access roads programme because the contracts were already awarded—not in January 1996—but in August, and they would have been faced with severe law suits if they had

not paid the contractor or stopped the projects. The projects had to be funded and the money had to come from somewhere, Mr. Speaker. From where did they take it? They took it from the Ministry of National Security. This Government talks about fighting crime, dealing with public order and safety.

With respect to Project No 176; construction of Fire Stations in San Fernando, \$1.5 million—gone; construction of Ste. Madeleine Police Station, \$600,000.00—gone; construction of Barataria/El Socorro Police Station—gone. Is that how they are dealing with crime? They are not building police stations nor fire stations.

**Hon. Member:** No, they are building jeeps.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** We will talk about jeeps in a while.

With respect to the Ministry of Legal Affairs; they are dealing with justice, but Project No. 18, construction of the Arima Magistrates' Court and the Supreme Court, \$6.4 million—gone; no court in Arima. It is terrible, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the Ministry of Education, Project No. 66, Improvement, Refurbishment, Extension to Primary Schools, \$1.2 million—gone; Early Childhood Care and Education, \$1.3 million—gone; Teacher Training Programme, \$1 million—gone; School-based Management Projects, \$1 million—gone; Construction of Tranquillity Government Secondary, \$1.3 million—gone. I heard the hon. Member for Tobago East banging the table, it is obvious that he did peruse this document closely. The construction of Mason Hall Government Secondary, \$1.65 million—gone. Did the Member for Tobago West know that they took out the Mason Hall School and delayed it by a whole year?

The Ministry of Health, Human Resource Support, \$340,000—gone; Management and Training, \$330,000—gone; Technical Support, \$580,000—gone; Physical Infrastructure in the health sector, \$6.1 million—gone; that is hospitals, clinics.

The Ministry of Public Utilities—no wonder the Member for Caroni East cannot perform—\$6.1 million from the Water Sector Rehabilitation Programme—gone.

The Ministry of Social Development: I heard the Member for Chaguanas get up in this House and talk about the fantastic work he is doing in the social sector, but what are the facts? The Modernization of the St. Michael's School for boys, \$1.3 million—gone; *[Interruption]* No they took out \$1.3 million. The establishment of a Probation Hostel, \$1.2 million—gone; Halfway House, \$200,000—gone;

Remand Home, \$600,000—gone; National Drug Abuse Reduction Programme, \$700,000—gone. All gone to fund the access roads programme which, I am told, had to be funded in the first place.

**Hon. Member:** To keep Ramayan.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** What is that, to keep Ramayan? Is that what they are doing with state funds now?

I remember the Member for Oropouche promising this Parliament months ago that contracts would be invited for the Carenage Primary School, after the Member for Diego Martin West lead a delegation to the hon. Member for Oropouche and the hon. Member for Couva North—by the way, where is the party animal, the hon. Member for Couva North?—with 2,000 signatures from residents in Carenage to get a school that was in the 1995 programme put back in the 1996 programme. It had been taken out by the Member for Oropouche. The hon. Member promised to build the primary school. He came in this Parliament and promised that tenders would be invited and that construction would start in June. This is November 12, 1996. Has construction of that school started? Not as far as I know. I am not seeing the Carenage Primary School in all these transfers and so forth, I am hearing about the Signal Hill School.

Mr. Speaker, let me correct the record on the Signal Hill School. *[Interruption]* They do not know the shaft they are getting behind their backs on the Mason Hall School. They took a whole school in Tobago and gone with it. We had to point out in the budget debate that the Development Programme for Tobago was inadequate. The Members for Tobago East and West did not even know that and because of the underhand manner in which they managed the budget debate, where they had us talking at 4.00 a.m.—the press was not around—Tobago was deprived of the information that its development programme had been cut by the UNC Government.

I now go to the Public Sector Investment Programme laid in this House by the hon. Minister of Planning and Development. What did he acknowledge had been done in the area of education by the PNM administration in 1995? This Public Sector Investment Programme document is in two parts; there is an acknowledgement of what was done in 1995 and a projection of what would be done in 1996. I will go to page 9.

“Expenditure during the year on implementation of...amounted to \$16.0 million. The following schools were included in the programme:-



Arima Boys Government Primary School  
 River Estate/Patna Government Primary School  
 Lakshmi Girls High School  
 Bishop's High School, Tobago  
 Gasparillo Government Primary School  
 Tranquillity Government Secondary School  
 Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School"

The PNM Government started the work on Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School and I heard *sotto voce* from the hon. Member for Tobago West, that the UNC is doing things in Tobago which the PNM did not do for 30 years. It is amazing, Mr. Speaker. We started the work on Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School not the UNC/NAR Government. Do not tell me anything about 30 years, hon. Member, you do not know what you are talking about.

**Mr. Manning:** The Member's constituents are not properly represented.  
*[Laughter]*

**Mr. C. Imbert:** This variation of appropriation is in the absence of a significant demand for additional funds. The hon. Member for Oropouche did not tell us—I gave him the answer but he was fumbling—that a further issue from the Consolidation Fund for the sum of \$15,206 million is hereby authorized. The fact is that apart from shifting around money they are asking this Parliament to approve an additional expenditure of \$15 million.

What has really been going on in the economy? Can we accommodate this? Here we have the *Quarterly Economic Bulletin of the Central Bank* for June 1996—I walked with my copy because the hon. Members on the other side have a habit of referring to documents which are about three years out of date and conveniently picking out statistics which are irrelevant. I am not relying on the information given by Members on the other side:

“Central Government Fiscal Operations

Compared with the first quarter, non petroleum revenues were lowered by \$283.1 million... . Decreases in individual income taxes impacted negatively on the revenues of non-oil direct taxation which declined by 11.6 per cent. ...receipts from personal income taxes declined by 30.3 per cent...

Indirect taxes also declined in the second quarter by 9.3 per cent. This was as a direct result of decreases in taxes on goods and services, primarily as revenues from the value added tax (VAT)...”

I remember that during the budget debate we pointed out that the Minister of Finance had fudged the figures; that his value added tax allocation did not make any sense, but in the usual *bravé danger* way, he got up, stamped his feet, banged the table, and I think he said a geologist is trying to tell a chartered accountant about money. I remember it, he told the hon. Member for San. Fernando East "stick to rocks because I am a chartered accountant".

**2.40 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, here we have VAT decline by 18.8 per cent to \$2.89 million. This decline reflected faster contraction in the level of VAT collections relative to the level of VAT refunds; the level of VAT collections contracted by almost 30 per cent. In the second quarter of 1995, non tax revenues fell from \$229 million to \$110 million and there was a reflection of reduced receipts from the national lotteries and lower dividends from state enterprises. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Speaker, did I hear the Member say second quarter of 1995?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, I repeat for the benefit of the hon. Member, I know he does not read this.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Speaker, he did say 1995, that is what I want to find out.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you did say 1995 but you may have meant 1996.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I know the hon. Member does not read this and, as the Minister of Planning and Development, he should read it. Let me clarify it for the benefit of the hon. Member and the House of Representatives. It says:

“Non tax revenue however fell to \$110.6 million from 229.7 million in the second quarter of 1995...”

Let me explain for the benefit of the hon. Member who, obviously, has not gone to school. This means that in the comparative quarter in 1995, which, if you do not know, is a three-month period; in 1995, in the second quarter, non tax revenue was \$229.7 million but 1996 in the same second quarter non tax revenue was \$110.6 million. If you take it away, \$229 million minus \$110.6 million, it means a reduction of \$119 million. I hope the Minister now understands what I

was saying. This \$119 million reduction in revenue was a reflection of reduced receipts from the national lotteries and lower dividends from the state enterprises. Why are collections from the national lotteries going down? The reason is, that people use their disposable income to buy lottery tickets, or to bet on Play Whe and Lotto.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the Members on the other side do not understand basic human needs such as food, shelter and so forth. At the first level there are needs such as social and self-fulfilment. When a person can only deal with his basic needs such as food and shelter; bread and butter, he does not have disposable income available to deal with social needs such as lotto tickets. That is the problem.

Clearly, there is less money in people's pockets because the cost of living has gone up because more and more people are on the poverty line and that is why lotto receipts are going down, there is no other reason. We are no different from any other country in the world. If one checks any country in the world, when people's income is on the rise, spending on lottery increases also; when people's income goes down they stop spending money on unnecessary expenditure such as lottery. So we had a decline in revenue.

With respect to oil, we have had an increase in world oil prices beyond the projected figure; the budgeted oil price was approximately \$17.50, the average oil price has been above that in the latter part of 1996. There was a 14.4 per cent reduction in revenues generated by the petroleum sector. Petroleum revenues have gone down by 14 per cent. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is saying that the figures are not true. This is the Central Bank's document. If the Minister looks on page 8 of the *Central Government Fiscal Operations* document—I know Members do not read these things—it says that revenues reduced in the petroleum sector by 14.4 per cent in the second quarter. Perhaps, in the third and fourth quarters they will recover some of this in time.

The impact of an 8 per cent increase in the price of oil was insufficient to offset the decline in oil production. Is oil production declining because the UNC administration is so good at managing the energy quarter? Petroleum revenues fell from \$826 million to \$707 million recorded in the previous quarter. I did not know that there was a season for oil, I know that there is a season for sugar-cane, rice, corn—

**Hon. Member:** Is there a season for cement?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Yes, there is a season for cement. In the dry season cement utilization far exceeds that used in the rainy season, but, oil has no season, it comes from under the ground. So that oil production is supposed to be steady and constant, whether it rains or sun shines. Once you are doing what you are supposed to do; once your heavy oil recovery programmes and your farmouts are functioning, your oil production is not supposed to reduce; but if you do not know what you are doing, of course it will reduce. So we had a reduction in oil production which negatively affected the net effect reduction in revenue.

Mr. Speaker, I hope for the sake of Trinidad and Tobago—not for the UNC administration—that the higher prices in the last half of 1996 would offset the reduction in production; if they do not, well we would be in serious trouble.

**2.50 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, what is happening here? Why are personal income tax collections going down? Why are VAT collections going down when taxes on international trade are not? This is important. It will give you some idea of why we had that pressure on the exchange rate. Mr. Speaker, they do not have a clue what they are doing. VAT down, personal income tax down, but taxes on international trade, constant. What does that tell us? What are taxes on international trade? Taxes on motor cars.

**Mr. Manning:** Foreign used?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Foreign used and new.

**Hon. Member:** Bamboo Benz.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** You see, Mr. Speaker, despite a reduction in import duty, removal of import duties on certain items, taxes on international trade were largely unaffected and revenues in fact increased by 10 per cent. Import duties up. What does this tell us? Collections. The value of the import duty went down, but the quantum went up. What does this tell us? We are importing more and more into Trinidad and Tobago, not so hon. Member for Diego Martin Central?

If the value of duties goes down but the quantum of collections goes up, it means the total amount of imports went up. That is why there was pressure on the exchange rate, Mr. Speaker, because of the way they are managing this economy. They cannot collect personal income tax, or VAT, but they could import motor cars; and those jeeps that we spoke about will have a significant effect on the revenues of the Government, as I suspect they are coming in duty free. Those

Cherokee jeeps are coming in duty free. So they are not collecting any taxes, but they have to put out \$20 million, \$30 million, or \$40 million for these jeeps.

**Hon. Member:** For their friends.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if this Government knows what it is doing. As a matter of fact, where is the Minister of Finance? I am not seeing him. [*Member for Caroni East points to Mr. Robinson*] No, no. Not that one, through you, Mr. Speaker. Where is the real Minister of Finance? He is not here? Is he out of the country?

**Mr. Valley:** He and Ramesh gone 'liming'.

**Mr. Narine:** Silent partner in Platinum.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, I hope this Government knows what it is doing, because it is increasing allocations, it is asking this Parliament for an increase of \$15 million to the Consolidated Fund. That has to come from somewhere. I would like the Minister to tell us where it is going to come from. It is not coming from VAT, or from personal income tax. It might come from oil, if prices remain high. So where else is it coming from? I notice that corporation taxes have increased, but not in any way to the extent that could offset the decline in collections from personal income tax and VAT.

We are going to have problems in 1997 as well. Look at this: "Ish firm seals NP car deal." But what got me was this story on page 3 of *the Independent* of Friday, November 8, 1996, and I read, Mr. Speaker. It is directly relevant to the Government's inability to collect taxes:

"Ish's tax ease.

Galbaransingh's easy \$130,000 on '96 Budget"

No wonder collection of taxes is down.

"The timing of the 1996 Budget delivered on January 10 this year saved businessman Ish Galbaransingh just over \$130,000 in taxes.

According to the former BMW franchise holder, had the budget been delivered any earlier Galbaransingh would have not been able to import two BMW motor cars from Germany under the returning immigrants concession..."

Ooh! Mr. Speaker, I remember in this Parliament I challenged the Minister of Finance when he got up in his *bravé danger* style, banged the table, carried on about why we should give returning nationals greater benefits than citizens. People

who have stayed here and worked all their lives do not get tax concessions, why should we give these unscrupulous returning nationals tax concessions?

**Mr. Singh:** That was started from the PNM.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Carried on, and announced he was going to plug the loopholes. What was my comment to him? I wonder how many of your friends and business associates have benefited from this concession a day or two before this budget speech?

**Mr. Hinds:** Quite true.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I am just saying that I know the character, you know. At the time I was prophesying, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Singh:** You were the campaign manager.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Listen to this. It is a sorry tale.

“Galbaransingh,...”

according to the agent,

“...ordered two BMWs at a cost of 106,000 German marks (TT\$429,000), one each for his son and daughter, who were supposed to be returning to Trinidad from their domicile in Canada.”

Are these people here? Do they live in Trinidad and Tobago?

“He paid for the vehicles with a Bank of Commerce cheque dated December 18, 1995.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am reading out this newspaper story to show why the Government cannot collect taxes in the manner which it predicted, because of these kinds of scenarios.

**Mr. Hinds:** What a shame!

**Mr. Bereaux:** Mervyn, how did you agree to that?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** The article goes on:

“Under the regulations introduced by then Finance Minister Wendell Mottley, a returning resident wishing to benefit from the concessions, had to declare that he intended to reside permanently in Trinidad and Tobago, and the motor vehicle for which the exemption was being requested was intended for his personal use and not for sale, transfer, rental or exchange.”

**Mr. Valley:** It is not like you. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order please!

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I continue:

“Finance Minister, Brian Kuei Tung, announced in the 1996 Budget that the government was ceasing the duty free concessions given to returning residents because of the serious abuse of the system.

“He however said...”

This is the agent:

“...that vehicles which would have been put on board...”

No, this is Kuei Tung:

“...on vessels to Trinidad up to January 10, (the day the Budget was delivered) would not be affected.”

When I asked the hon. Minister how many of his friends knew that he was going to do this in the budget, he said nothing. How could he talk?

“Galbaransingh’s vehicles were among a set of cars that sailed from Germany on January 9.”

Oh my goodness! The day before the budget. The personal friend and business associate of the Minister of Finance puts two BMWs on a ship sailing from Germany to catch the January 10, 1996 date. *[Interruption]*. I am just asking questions here.

“Had Galbaransingh’s vehicles sailed one day later...”

And this is the important part of this article to this debate:

“and not met the deadline, he would have had to pay motor vehicle taxes, customs duty and VAT on the vehicles amounting to approximately \$130,000.”

No wonder VAT collections are down. This is just the tip of the iceberg. This is one! How many people escaped paying millions of dollars in taxes because they had fore-knowledge of what was going to be in the budget? Insider information.

Mr. Speaker, I notice the Member for Chaguanas shaking his head. I hope he will shake his head after this paragraph:

“Investigations by *the Independent* revealed that at least one—”

*Finance Committee Report*  
[MR. IMBERT]

*Tuesday, November 12, 1996*

Now I mean, if this is not true, this is libel. *[Interruption]* I did not know anything about this. Mr. Speaker, I spoke in this Parliament on Friday about cars. If I had seen *the Independent* on that day, I would surely have been reading this out last week Friday. It is when I went home I saw this. He got away! *[Laughter]* But let me continue:

“Investigations by *the Independent* revealed that at least one of Galbaransingh’s BMW vehicles found its way as part of his Singh’s Auto Rental franchise for the rental of cars to the national airline, BWIA, for use by the airline’s Chief Executive Officer, Ed Wegel.

*Independent* investigations also disclose that there was such negative reaction inside BWIA to the expensive car particularly so shortly after the revelation of the disastrous performance of Chairman, ED Acker, that the BMW was quickly returned to Singh’s Auto Rentals.”

Now what is going on here? According to the law, the vehicles are for personal use: not for sale, transfer, rental or exchange. This is a *prima facie* case of fraud on the part of a UNC financier. Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the story is true. As I said, if it is not true, it is libellous, but I do not expect a newspaper to print such libellous statements.

**3.00 p.m.**

Now, listen to this:

"Efforts to contact Galbaransingh proved futile and *the Independent* was unable to determine the fate of the other imported vehicle."

*[Crosstalk]* You see what I mean, Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of how the state is being deprived of taxes. *[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Valley:** Investigate it.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** No. No. I continue. *[Crosstalk]* The state has been—

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*



**Mr. C. Imbert:** As I said, Mr. Speaker, how can we expect this Government to increase its revenue by taxes when people appear to be weakening it and avoiding paying taxes? How can we respect this Government when it appears that financiers of the UNC are committing fraud—bringing in cars under the returning national system and renting them to BWIA in contravention of the law? I do not know who is acting Attorney General but this is most certainly not going to go away. There needs to be an investigation to determine whether this individual has committed a crime.

Mr. Speaker, I have a difficulty. The Members on the other side do not know what is going on. I got a "cut eye" just now, or at least it looked like a "cut eye", from the Member for Siparia—

**Mr. Narine:** It is a "sweet eye", not a "cut eye".

**Mr. C. Imbert:** —and I could only have assumed it was because I am raising serious issues of national importance where senior members of the UNC, apparently on the face of it, are engaging in criminal action. This is why we have trouble in this country.

The Members of the other side who are honest have got to deal with people who discredit the Government. I have no doubt that there are honourable Members on the other side who have no desire to engage in corrupt acts, but there are people in the system who are using and manipulating the system to make sure that taxpayers' money is spent on things that the country is paying two and three times what it should for manufactured items—jeeps, for example—and that revenue is not coming into the country.

This is one of the problems that this UNC Government is going to be faced with over the next year. It is going to be faced with UNC people wheeling and dealing within the system—discrediting the Government. They have to deal with it now.

There are countries in this world—look at Pakistan where I think the president had to impeach the prime minister, or something like that. They moved the prime minister. [*Crosstalk*] Look at India—I was really surprised to see the former prime minister of India indicted for fraud, no bail. I am telling the Members of the UNC administration [*Crosstalk*] who are honest to deal with these people who are wheeling and dealing within the system.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Is the Member pointing fingers at his former prime minister? Is he indicting his former prime minister?

**Hon. Member:** The Member is making a joke of this. Serious matters and the Member is joking.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we owe it to the Member who is on his legs to hear him and allow him to make his points. It is very early in the debate and every single Member will have an opportunity of speaking. Please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that what I am talking about is a very serious matter and this is a serious suggestion I am making to the Government. This is not to score any political points. I am asking that the cancer that has been put in place by the UNC which is so evident within the system be cut out. Cut out the cancer. There are people wheeling and dealing. Look at this—"Ish firm seals NP car deal". This gentleman is in business with a young lady who is the sister of the chairman of NP. The web of intrigue. The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries is the former brother-in-law of the Minister of Finance. The chairman of NP is the chairman of the business partner of Galbaransingh who is the business partner of the Minister of Finance. It is a web. *[Crosstalk]* Let me go on to some of the statements made by—*[Crosstalk]* *[Mr. C. Imbert sits]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I draw to your notice once more the hon. Member for Diego Martin East is seeking the protection of the Chair. I ask you please to co-operate.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

The point is I could not shout over the din coming from the other side, but I have no wish to shout today. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, they have not broken my concentration as they normally do.

There were certain points made by the hon. Member for Oropouche which need to be dealt with. The hon. Member indicated that the UNC perspective is the whole country. He was talking about Tobago. Bold-faced man! A bold-faced person, Mr. Speaker. The allocation for Tobago was inadequate. The Signal Hill project was started by the PNM, so all these projects that the hon. Minister was reading out are PNM projects; nothing to do with the UNC.

The fact is when an inadequate allocation is put, knowing it to be inadequate, and coming to this Parliament for a supplementary variation, pretending that Tobago is loved so it is being increased by a million, but it was not sufficient in the first place, it is a scam, Mr. Speaker. It is just a device to pretend to the people of

Tobago that they care about Tobago. What is happening is that an insufficient allocation was given and it was known that they would have to come back to increase the allocation. They are not fooling anybody on this side. They took out a whole school. I hope the Member for Tobago West noticed that—Mason Hall gone.

### **3.10 p.m.**

But, not only is this suggestion about treating Tobago nice quite irrelevant, the concept of the whole country, I cannot agree with that. When I go through this Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill, what do I see? It states:

"Heads of Expenditure Reduced	Amount
Ministry of Planning and Development	10,870,000
Ministry of National Security	8,500,000
Ministry of Legal Affairs	6,440,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources	4,000,000
Ministry of Education	9,940,000
Ministry of Health	10,640,000
Ministry of Public Utilities	6,070,000
Ministry of Social Development	4,040,000"

And so forth. A grand total of \$63.5 million taken out of the Public Sector Investment Programme and put primarily into the Agricultural Access Roads Programme and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. Primarily, that is where that money has gone, between the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Works and Transport. So \$63 million has gone out of nine ministries. The Minister did not tell us what were the projects he zugged. I will tell this House the projects that got zugged: The San Fernando Fire Station, as I said before; Ste Madeleine Police Station; Barataria Police Station.

When one goes through, one sees that areas predominantly represented by the PNM have been targeted for cut. The Minister of Planning and Development says we have a one-track mind over here, but I would ask him to tell this House why has the Government not started construction of the Carenage school. What is he going to say? Rain fell? The hon. Minister came to this Parliament and promised—

the hon. Prime Minister promised—that the Carenage school would start in the middle of 1996.

**Hon. Member:** Rowley lost the elections, you know.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Notwithstanding whoever represents Diego Martin West, the children of Carenage are being short-changed; the five, six and seven-year olds. As far as I remember the statistics, there were 200 children in Carenage not going to school because there was not a primary school in that area, a PNM area. What does the Minister of Planning and Development do? He promises and promises and does not build a school. So for a whole 12 months, 200 children could not go to school because of the deliberate actions of the UNC Government and the Member for Oropouche, in particular—discrimination and victimization against the small children of Carenage.

I notice the Member for Oropouche laughing. The point is, the school was designed, tenders were invited, tenders were received. A contract could have been awarded in 1995, not in 1996. Before the end of 1995, a contract for the Carenage school could have been awarded, but there was absolutely nothing. Then 1996 comes, and nothing.

All of this talk about national unity is a hoax. They went through the budget and cut out everything in a PNM area—Arima Magistrate's court, Carenage school, the famous national library, delayed for at least one year. They just went through, chop, chop. The Performing Arts Centre, gone; National Security Building, gone. Harris Promenade, gone. That is what was done in January, 1996. If that is not enough, stick the knife into the PNM people and turn it now in the Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation Bill where they are taking out more. They already took out a number of projects in PNM areas in January, they come back to take out the same number in November, 1996, and talking about national unity, and having the brassfacedness to say that the UNC perspective is the whole country. Ha! If they had patched a pothole in Diego Martin in the last 12 months, they did much.

All they are doing is starving the Minister of Works and Transport for funds. I know what is going on. He cannot get money because of problems of expenditure and income. He cannot implement projects because they are playing games. The easiest way to roll a project over by 12 months is to delay the signing of the loan agreement. So there were loan agreements to sign in November, 1995, but they were rolled over to June, 1996—education, health and road loans. They were all ready to sign in 1995, but the Minister has said it again, they want a review. That is

a way to stop work from being done in the Ministry of Works and Transport—that word, "review". They know how to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I have said in this Parliament before, when I came into office, my Cabinet allowed me to continue with the implementation of projects started under the NAR. The Agricultural Access Roads Programme is a case in point. They told me, "there are a series of roads and bridges in Phase I of the Agricultural Access Roads Programme, do not change anything. Go in, implement it as quickly as possible. The Primary School Building Programme, the Fincor Programme negotiated by the NAR, a number of schools in Gasparillo, in D'abadie, in Sangre Grande do not change anything. Go in and implement the programme." That is PNM style. As a result, in our first year we were able to have a smooth transition and continue the implementation of a number of projects planned and organized by the previous NAR administration so there was no disruption in the system.

What do they do with the Minister of Works and Transport who comes in? The Minister of Planning and Development and Minister of Finance tell him: "Do you see that roads programme? Review that, boy." They tell the Minister of Education, "Do you see that education programme? Go in and review that." They go by the Minister of Health and they say, "Hold, we are going to review your programme." What does it do? It means that a whole year passes and no schools are built, no roads are fixed, no programmes are implemented. Then they crown it off by taking the major building implementation programme, the City Centre Programme, and just slicing it off at the knees, completely destroying it. They have a \$10 million swimming pool breeding mosquitoes there.

Mr. Speaker, there is pumpkin growing. Let me read from the front page of today's *Daily Express*:

"With construction pylons in the background, Rudolph Joseph holds up a pumpkin growing on the site of what was proposed to be the National Library Complex on Abercromby Street, Port of Spain, yesterday...

The site has since been referred to as the largest swimming pool in Trinidad and Tobago, but it is also proving to be a productive vegetable patch."

I do not recall reading that programme in the agricultural sector loan. *[Laughter]*. Pumpkin in the national library foundation?

**Hon. Member:** Shame, shame!

**Mr. C. Imbert:** It is a shame. Money was in place. We had negotiated funding; designs were underway. If the Minister of Works and Transport had been allowed to do his work, that library building would have been at least four or five storeys high now. It would have been developing and nurturing young minds, the children of this nation.

I hope 1997 is going to be better than 1996. I notice the Member for Oropouche nodding. No number of stories in the newspapers can change public opinion. As politicians you learn this, that the media cannot change public opinion; they can only confirm public opinion. If the public believes a government is corrupt, no number of pretty editorials would take that away. I noticed in a Sunday newspaper there was an opinion poll by "Market Facts and Opinions" where 55 per cent of the population considered that corruption was within the UNC administration. No number of newspaper editorials and pretty articles will take that away.

Mr. Speaker, when we demitted office, we had a construction programme and we were expecting major growth in the construction sector in 1996. It has not happened. The Highways Programme has not come on stream; the City Centre Programme has not come on stream; the School Building Programme has not come on stream; the Health Sector Programme, the upgrading of hospitals; I mean, it is disgraceful when you go into this document and you see what was supposed to be done. You do not get any reason from the Minister. All he says is, there are delays; they do not have staff.

### 3.20 p.m.

At page 27 of the *Public Sector Investment Programme* one sees the upgrading of the Port of Spain General Hospital; relocation of the Radiotherapy services to the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex; commencement of construction of a new health facility at Couva. They are discriminating against their own people. What about the hospital at Couva? Where is it?

**Mr. Sudama:** So, we have stopped discriminating against the PNM?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** It is 1:10; for every project they stop in their areas, they stop 10 in a PNM area.

Then one sees the upgrading of roads to the Sangre Grande Hospital and the building and refurbishing of various health centres. The health of the nation's children and elderly is being affected because of the cavalier and callous approach of the UNC Government.

We had a roads programme which did not come off—an \$80 million loan for a drainage programme for which we had started the initial stages of negotiations with the World Bank since 1983; we have been working on. It was supposed to be implemented in 1996, but nothing.

**Mr. Sudama:** You did not even sign since 1995.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Again, the incompetence of the administration demonstrated by the Member for Oropouche. He was in a previous Government. That hon. Member was in a previous government—he was even a junior Minister of Finance—so he should know the steps involved in fast-tracking a programme, from an international agency.

Mr. Speaker, if one does not keep pushing the programme is going to slip. The World Bank, for example, has so many programmes all over the world that one has to get a slot in to have the mission come down to Trinidad. We had programmed a slot in early 1996 to get the World Bank mission to come to Trinidad for the drainage programme, leading to preparation of documentation, which would have led to construction under that programme in 1996. The Minister of Planning and Development did absolutely nothing so no construction has been implemented in drainage for 1996. I hope that it will be done in 1997. Similarly, they deferred the Highways Programme. Again, we expected construction in 1996, but nothing was done under that IADB-financed programme. I hope they get it going in 1997.

Construction of the first phase of 50 primary schools and four secondary schools was planned for 1996 under the Fourth Basic Education Programme, but the pre-qualification only just went out. I do not have to ask the Minister because I am in the construction industry. I know what is going on. I know that documents were only submitted for pre-qualification for the Fourth Basic Education Programme two months ago—in August—when that should have gone out in February. How can the Government implement a programme when a call for pre-qualification goes out 10 months late? No wonder the Minister of Education cannot build a single school.

Mr. Speaker, how much more time do I have?

**Mr. Speaker:** I would make it six minutes.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you.

So, we had 50 primary schools and four secondary schools for which the initiation of construction was planned for 1996. The Ministers in Government are green so they do not understand that if they do not push they are going to have

people running rings around them. I remember raising this matter with the Minister of Education before and he told me, "Oh, no construction was planned for 1996", but I worked very closely with the previous Minister of Education and we got everything done in 1995. If the people in his ministry had been pushed in the proper direction all steps would have been taken in early 1996 to allow construction in 1996. The Minister of Education does not have a clue. He came into this Parliament and talked some foolishness about no work being planned for 1996. That is simply not correct. He simply misled the House as he has no information and is fooling nobody.

Mr. Speaker, a series of major construction programmes planned for 1996 were all aborted and shelved because of the incompetence and failure of the UNC Government. They have placed the Minister of Works and Transport in a box so he cannot perform. A number of projects planned for 1996 were all taken away.

It amazes me that a Minister, as the Member for Oropouche, who was on this side for so many years carrying on and quarrelling about implementation and asking why we were not implementing programmes and so forth, now he is in Government, in the Ministry of Planning and Development where he can do something, and for 12 months he does absolutely nothing. *[Interruption]* That is why the Minister of Housing and Settlements wants to take away the Ministry of Planning and Development from the Member for Oropouche. That is why they want to take Town and Country Planning into the Ministry of Housing and Settlements. Now they even want to take Highways Planning away from the Ministry of Works and Transport. Poor fellow, they would leave him cleaning canals and building sidewalks. That is what they want to reduce the Minister of Works and Transport to while the super Minister, the Member for St. Augustine, is going to take everything for himself and bring the Chinese here to build highways in Trinidad and Tobago and funded with "Trini" dollars.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side are not going to stand in the way of the Government. They have blundered the Public Sector Investment Programme. We told them so in January, 1996. We told them that they could not implement this programme because of their basic incompetence and lack of knowledge. They bungled and blundered it and are now making all kinds of excuses as to why they cannot implement it. All I am asking, for the sake of Trinidad and Tobago—not for my sake—is for the Minister of Planning and Development to allow the Minister of Works and Transport to implement that series of programmes which he found when he went into that Ministry.



The Government should allow the man to do his work so the country, at least, could progress, instead of the Minister of Planning and Development and the Minister of Finance, too concerned with their own—*[Interruption]*. Not the Minister of Planning and Development, he is an honest fellow. The Minister of Planning and Development is an honest fellow, but there are other people associated with certain persons in Government. *[Interruption]* This is what they are doing. They are sealing car deals with investors. The Government cannot perform because its focus is not on pushing the construction programme or on allowing the Minister of Works and Transport to do his work. The focus is on pay-back. That is what it is. Kick backs! That is what the focus is on.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for two things: that the Minister of Works and Transport be allowed to do his work—give him the money and staff—and that the Government cut out the cancer of corruption that is growing within the UNC administration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Sadiq Baksh):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) Bill. Before I do so, I would like to admit to the Member for Diego East that, yes, I am green, but I would defend all members of staff of the Ministry of Works and Transport for I have found none who have been trying to keep back any projects in that Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to share with the hon. Members of this House the experience of the Ministry of Works and Transport during—

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification. I did not accuse anybody in the Ministry of Works and Transport, it was the Ministry of Education. I was very specific.

**3.30 p.m.**

**Hon. S. Baksh:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to share with hon. Members of this House, the experience of the Ministry of Works and Transport during the fiscal year 1996. The allocation of the Ministry of Works and Transport under the 1996 PSIP was \$114 million and was increased by \$42 million to \$156 million, an increase of 28 per cent in 1996. This signalled a capacity to implement which outstripped our original projections. A review of the PSIP will show that though a majority of the ministry's projects remained relatively on course, the outstanding performance in Government's Access Roads and Bridges Programme accounted for the increase in allocation necessary to carry out works in 1996.

On this programme alone, a revised provision of \$82.35 million has been agreed to by Cabinet. This represented more than a 400 per cent increase on the original budgeted provision for 1996. What this speaks of is results, performance and implementation. Without a doubt, the Ministry of Works and Transport is in the implementation mode, as indeed all the ministries in the new Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the period, in my short tenure as Minister of Works and Transport, a number of projects in Phase II of this programme have been implemented throughout Trinidad and Tobago and are in various stages of completion ranging from 36 to 93 per cent.

In the north east under contract 1, four roads in Trinidad with a total length of 6.4 kilometres are substantially completed. Under contract 1B also in the north east, three roads in Trinidad with a total length of 6.37 kilometres are 57 per cent completed.

Under contract 2 of the north west, four roads in Trinidad with a total length of 11.6 kilometres are 78 per cent completed.

Under contract 3A in the south west, three roads in Trinidad at a total length of 7.035 kilometres are 62 per cent completed.

Under contract 3B, also in the south west, three roads in Trinidad with a total length of 6.58 kilometres are 93 per cent completed.

Under contract 4 in the south east, four roads in Trinidad with a length of 7.49 kilometres are 52 per cent completed

Under contract 6, three bridges in Trinidad: B1—1 Manahambre Road, have been completed; B3—La Fortune Pluck Road, completed; B1—22 Main Road Mosquito Creek, 73 per cent completed.

Under contract 7 Bridge B 1—31 on the Southern Main Road Marabella is 36 per cent completed.

Also contracts 9A and 9B in north west Trinidad comprise seven roads with a length of 13.68 kilometres are 66 per cent completed.

Under contract 8A three bridges in Tobago; B1—8 Windward Road; B3—Windward Road; B1—19 Windward Road are 68 per cent completed.

Under contract 8B in Tobago four roads with a total length of 7.436 kilometres are 75 per cent completed.

Under contract 10 four roads with a total length of 4.9 kilometres and box culvert bridge B1—5 on the north side road are substantially completed.

These specific objectives have been achieved and the intention of this programme is to rehabilitate agricultural access roads throughout Trinidad and Tobago, to assist in the reduction in the cost of transport for present and future users of our national road system by rebuilding bridges that are in advanced stages of deterioration in principal and secondary roads.

This project is partially funded by the Inter-American Development Bank. The intended beneficiaries are farmers engaged in agricultural activities throughout the nation and road users, both drivers and passengers, on the national road system.

Mr. Speaker, this demonstrates the dynamism of our implementation mode which we intend to step up in 1997 with some of our flagship projects, a number which was inquired about in terms of our National Highways Programme which would continue in 1997, our National Drainage Programme, the modernization of our licensing department, the construction of our national library and a number of other projects.

I noted with concern the Carenage Government School, and I would like to report that tenders have been invited and the Carenage Government School will begin construction before the end of 1996.

Mr. Speaker, within the Ministry of Works and Transport the Government has continued to implement its scheduled programme for 1996 and prudent management dictates that the Government continues to do so in the revision of its budgetary allocation for 1996 for which it is now seeking to vary funds from one area to another, to ensure that those projects which we could complete or get on stream in 1996 could be done expeditiously and continue its major projects in 1997 which would see Trinidad and Tobago's infrastructure reach a height never before attained in its history.

We have noted the continued decay of our infrastructure, in terms of not only the lack of will but the lack of resources from time to time. However, we find it perplexing to see areas in which representation and constituencies which, in fact, have always been represented by Ministers of government of the PNM in such a state of neglect; we find it almost impossible to believe that we now have to come to repair the damage to our infrastructure and to ensure that the development of Trinidad and Tobago continues on a path of the modernization of our society, of the modernization of our infrastructure so that our future generations would be

able to benefit from the hard work of our Government of national unity, this UNC/NAR Government.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

**Mr. Martin Joseph** (*St. Ann's East*): Mr. Speaker, in entering this debate I would focus on one small area with respect to the Variation of Appropriation Bill. But before I do that, it is necessary to clear up a misconception on the other side. The Member for Diego Martin East never made any reference with respect to the performance of any public official in the Ministry of Works and Transport. He was specific in saying that the Minister of Education had taken certain steps that at the end of the day it resulted in that ministry not being able to meet the performance requirements necessary.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I propose to focus on one small area in my contribution with respect to the deduction in allocation to the Ministry of Social Development. In doing that, it is necessary to put that in a particular context. It is not very difficult for me to find the context in which to place this current deduction.

Recently the Government has been talking a lot about its concern with respect to poverty in Trinidad and Tobago and indeed, this Government came into office as a result of election promises, criticizing the PNM Government for what it considered to be its response to the question of poverty in Trinidad and Tobago.

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

I am sure that we are aware that just recently, over the period October 28 to November 01, 1996, a Caribbean ministerial meeting was held on the eradication of poverty at which ministers from various countries in the Caribbean, representatives from the United Nations Development Programme, the International Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the World Bank and 19 other countries participated, in addition with national, regional and international organizations.

At that meeting our Minister of Social Development, in addressing the ministerial meeting, indicated among other things, that a foster care unit was seeking to implement a formal foster care system in Trinidad and Tobago; that since 1989 Trinidad and Tobago had continuously made strides in the area of social development; it was in 1989 that a ministry was formed which for the first time pulled together some of the main public service agencies, probation services, social welfare, legal aid and others under a single administrative head. He also went on to say that in the same year 1989, a family services division was first

introduced responding to the crisis which was recognized in the family system. One newspaper stated:

“Minister Ramsaran said he was informed the Ministry of Social Development ‘is the only ministry so designated in the Caribbean region’.

With the establishment of a National Social Development Council . . . he believes ‘the goal of social development requires consistent action over a long period to ensure that what is needed to accomplish and sustain it becomes institutionalised.’

He added that Minister Extraordinaire, Hon. A.N.R. Robinson is in charge of overseeing the Council and interfacing with the United Nations to oversee the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit.

A permanent secretariat in the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building will provide technical support for the Council.”

I say all this because the Minister is on record indicating the intention of his Government, by way of his ministry, in terms of activities to be taken to eradicate poverty. I would come to that in a while. When the PNM was in office its strategy was very simple. Firstly, it was to deal with the economy and ensure that it was on a solid footing and performing well, then it could have dealt with some of the social concerns and issues. When I made my contribution in the budget debate, I indicated that fact and those on the other side laughed.

This is interesting and I must give credit to the Member for Couva North, the hon. Prime Minister. It is a pity that he is not here. One newspaper states:

“Speaking at the annual awards ceremony of the South Trinidad Chamber of Industry and Commerce, at the Gulf City Auditorium, La Romain, Panday said the economy had performed well over the last two years when the PNM government was in power.

‘The local economy has responded positively to government’s policies registering real growth rates of 4.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent in 1994 and 1995 respectively,’ . . .

Panday said the performance of the local economy over the two-year period was particularly impressive when one considered that it was achieved although growth rates in areas like East Asia slowed considerably over the same period.”

We had made certain that the economy performed in a particular way, then we would have been in a position to deal with the social concerns of the society. It meant that when we demitted office we left a healthy economy. If we had remained in office, then we would have focussed on some of the social concerns, but we did not.

I am putting that now within the context of where we are. When one looks at the Ministry of Social Development in terms of the developmental programmes, one would see that they would be reduced by more than 56 per cent. It has moved from \$7.1 million to \$3.14 million. I would go into each one in detail. Here there are two Ministers whose combined efforts are designed to deal with poverty reduction. There are programmes in place to deal currently with poverty reduction in some way or another and the amount is reduced. There is an old saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If at present there are programmes and policies in place and the Government has decided to cut, how can I believe them when they start talking about new programmes which they would put in place, when the programmes that are there now, for some reason, have not been implemented? I was disappointed.

This is what the Member for Oropouche said as to why there are reductions in some areas: "Priority is placed on programmes and projects which are doing well". The Minister boasted over the last few days about the ministry's performance and it being the only one in the Caribbean. He said that in some cases it is a question of implementation.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

He also talked about the performance of the respective ministries. Are we saying then that the Ministry of Social Development, an area as I said before, which this Government used as a major platform in the election campaign about the reduction of poverty, did not perform well? He talked about those which performed well are getting moneys and those which did not perform well they are taking away. The Member for Oropouche said that we have detailed explanations as to why the reductions are being made.

Let me go through the detailed explanations. In terms of the modernization of St. Michael's School for Boys the original allocation was \$2.3 million. It has been reduced to \$1 million, a reduction of \$1.3 million. Hear the explanation! It says:

"In 1996, \$2.3 million was allocated to undertake phase II works. However changes were made and a new planning brief was completed in June 1996. This

phase involves construction of a multi-purpose hall, a hard court, administrative building and refurbishing of the trade blocks. It is expected that only the designs for these facilities will be completed in 1996.”

**3.50 p.m.**

St. Michael’s School for Boys is an important institution designed to assist young boys who find themselves in circumstances which require a certain degree of rehabilitation. It is an important institution in terms of poverty eradication coming out of the ministerial meeting which was held over the past few days. They kept saying that if they were going to make any serious inroads in the reduction of poverty, it had to be at the educational system level, otherwise they were wasting time, spinning top in mud and, at the end of the day, they would make no serious dent in the eradication of poverty. However, the allocation for St. Michael’s School for Boys, an important institution in assisting us in that regard, was reduced by \$1.3 million and all we can expect at the end of this year are designs. I think the hon. Member for Diego Martin East made the point that if this were important, if they were committed, they would make sure that efforts were made to have the project completed. That is just one.

The second one is the establishment of a probation hostel, which was originally \$1.35 million. They are decreasing it by \$1.2 million; only \$150,000 are now left for that. What is the explanation given in terms of this reduction? Again I quote:

“The sum of \$1.35Mn. was provided in 1996 for this project. The project involves the construction of facilities to house juvenile offenders. At the hostel counselling will be given to both offenders and parents in cases where the home is determined to be the contributory factor to anti-social development.

Implementation of this project has been delayed because of the failure to secure a site. Verbal agreement has only recently been received by the Ministry of Social Development concerning a site at Couva to construct a building.”

Listen to these explanations! While these sums may seem small, look at the purpose. The extent to which a probation hostel for juvenile delinquents can be put in place and the number of persons so positively impacted upon can reduce the level of poverty in the country. We are thinking about street children and putting mechanisms in place to deal with these children, and vagrants. Here is the opportunity and capital expenditure to put things in place and nothing happens.

The establishment of a Halfway House was originally \$.5 million. This was decreased by \$210,000. What is the explanation given, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

“The implementation of this project has been delayed because of the failure to secure a site.”

Again, this is a clear indication of how committed the Government is in dealing with the poverty situation confronting this country.

For the next project, the establishment of a remand home, the initial allocation was \$1.13 million. They are taking away \$630,000. I quote:

“A Total sum of \$1.13 Mn. was allocated for the construction of a Remand Home. Implementation was delayed by the unavailability of a suitable site. A site was identified late in the third quarter of 1996.”

The initial allocation for the National Drug Abuse Demand Reduction Programme, Phase II, was \$1.5 million. This was reduced by \$700,000.

“This programme involved the institutional strengthening of various non-governmental and governmental organizations. It is intended to improve the effectiveness in the delivery of drug demand reduction activities at the national level, through a Community Prevention Programme, a School Prevention Programme and a Treatment and Rehabilitation programme. The total funding for the project is US \$1,419,678 million.

The project commenced on October 1, 1996. As a consequence of the delay, a sum of TT \$800,000 will be expended in 1996 instead of the 1996 budgeted allocation of TT \$1.5Mn.”

What was the explanation? There is no explanation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be judged, not by what we say, but by what we do, and the reduction of 56 per cent in this particular area is an indication of what we are doing and not what we are saying. I have to take with bigger than a grain of salt, comments being made by the Government with respect to what it intends to do to reduce poverty. I am saying that this Government is in a position in which its social programmes can be instituted because of the healthy economy it inherited. I am not so sure that the economy is healthy any more, based on some of the activities that have been taking place over the 12 months this Government has been in office. The Government can say what it wants about the PNM being in office over 30 years. The country is now concerned with its performance over the last 12 months. This is their budget, not our budget. I do not accept their explanation about governments coming and going from time immemorial and making adjustments



to allocations and so forth, in the light of their actions in an important area of social development.

I thank you.

**The Minister of Social Development (Hon. Manohar Ramsaran):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had no intention of joining this debate, but because of what was alluded to by the Member for St. Ann's East about the eradication of poverty I feel compelled to. When you look at these, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are fixing something which has gone wrong. We are trying to prevent rather than cure.

When we look at the transfers here, from (2) one will realize that most of our funds, \$2.6 million, were vired to Store Bay Beach Facilities. *[Laughter]* We are going to create employment. *[Interruption]* So is Tobago not a part of Trinidad and Tobago? Are Opposition Members saying they really do not care about Tobago? *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Will the hon. Member for Chaguanas address the chair? Will the Members on the Opposition side kindly decrease the noise level so that we can hear the Member for Chaguanas.

**Mr. Imbert:** I wish you were here when I was speaking.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I was just about to say that. The Member for Diego Martin East sat down three times—four he says—during his contribution, asking for protection. I wonder if he would give the same respect to the other side.

**Hon. M. Ramsaran:** As I was saying, the money was vired for projects we could do right away. The Member for St. Ann's talked about fights. That is a fact, but this has been an ongoing quarrel I inherited between the former Minister of Works and Transport and the Minister of Social Development. These sites were applied for long ago and there was so much correspondence to and fro but nothing was done.

Only recently we were able to close the deal, thanks to the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources who intervened personally. Before, we had a site in Couva which was allowed to be destroyed because of fighting between ministers in one administration. That is why I did not want to enter this debate. I did not want to make excuses because we are now already past that stage. We want to develop this country. We are doing everything which was started on a phase-by-phase basis, so it is not abandoned.

**4.00 p.m.**

We would not abandon anything like this. These are very important to us, but one must also remember that it was tied up with the eradication of poverty and it has nothing to do with it. Eradication of poverty is about developing persons, getting them not to be dependent on being sent to a hostel. *[Interruption]*

Some times when people talk on that side, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, one wants to know if they have any idea of what is happening in this country. There is prevention and there is rehabilitation and it is so much cheaper to deal with prevention. What they have done in the past, is fancy rehabilitation projects—*[Interruption]* Exactly! That is it. Buy 100 jeeps so we will stop crime. Mr. Deputy Speaker, apparently they know the answers but when they were in office they could not implement them. *[Desk thumping]*

We are looking at the national drug abuse demand reduction programme, which for years was non-existent. There was no staff. There were one or two persons who were running that division of the ministry. It is only this year, under our Cabinet that we have allocated staff for that programme. *[Desk thumping]* This is the first time, so we are now establishing that division of the ministry so we just could not take the fund and let it lapse, but we will spend it where it is more important, where it could be used this year. This is what has happened to the Ministry of Social Development. We did not abandon any project, we wanted to use the money rather than have it returned to the fund and we wanted to ensure that projects which we felt could go on at this stage, go on. It is as simple as that and, as I mentioned elsewhere, there are Ministers in the Cabinet—the Minister of Planning and Development, and the Minister of Finance who have their work to do and we have ours. We cannot stand up here and say that we want the money and keep it without having any use for it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what is happening in my ministry. All our projects have now started, whether they are designs, or whether we are in Phase I, and in response to the Member for St. Ann's East, eradication of poverty could not be tied up with these projects. The Member for Tobago East is the Chairman of the National Social Development Council and that has nothing to do with these projects. That is to deal with the prevention and to develop policies where poverty could be eradicated. Poverty cannot be eradicated by a few Members just jumping up and asking whether we are serious, and can we do this or that?

When one reads this document, one will see that we have not abandoned any of them. The modernization of the St. Michael's School for Boys is a very elaborate

piece of construction and we are going to ensure that when these boys come here they will be leaving with something of which they can be proud. We are setting up mechanisms so that when one leaves these institutions, at the end of the day one can go back into society. We are looking at the preventative aspects.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker, I had no intention of joining this debate but the fact is that we want to use the funds where they could be more useful at this time. Our Cabinet has decided that these projects will continue next year at a pace at which we will all be proud. It is not fair for the Member for St. Ann's East to get up here and try to tie up these projects with the eradication of poverty. I think that was mischievous and it is trying to mislead this country. *[Note passed to the Minister]* This note is for me to give some details. *[Laughter]* This is my colleague who has asked me to give some details so I will do that. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker, I want to just summarize and say that in my ministry, we are trying to change course and we are not going to continue with just giving hand-outs and trying to give everyone a fish. We are trying to change the concept of the ministry to ensure that we teach persons to fish, and avoid the perpetual hand-outs. When I was consulted about this, the minister was not high-handed. We spoke and he said that the money could be used immediately to do other projects. I told him that he has the responsibility for disposing of our funds and he should go ahead and I was given the assurance that once we get on stream in 1997, all the moneys required for these projects would be returned to the ministry. *[Desk thumping]* This was all that it was. There was no intention of abandoning these projects.

**Mr. Imbert:** A whole year has passed.

**Hon. M. Ramsaran:** Thirty-four years have passed and you have done nothing.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, next year when we do all these projects, I hope that the Members opposite could get up and praise us. As the Member for Laventille East would say " they are only promises", but I do hope when we return one year from now, they could say that we did a job that was well done.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to answer a few of the queries and to say that nothing was abandoned, we have now started and we have a long way ahead of us.

**Mr. Hedwige Bureaux** (*Member for La Brea*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join the debate on the Third Report of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on proposals for expenditure and public revenue which were not included in the annual estimates for 1996, or in respect of the variation in expenditure, or however we wish to call it.

Before I get into the meat of my submission, I was extremely surprised to hear the explanation of the hon. Minister of Social Development, the Member for Chaguanas—I hail from that area. I was not only surprised, but disappointed at the comments which he made when he said that the establishment of a probation hostel, a halfway house, a remand centre, and a national drug abuse demand reduction programme all had nothing to do with the reduction or eradication of poverty.

**Hon. Member:** That is not what he said.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** Mr. Speaker, I recall some time ago the Minister Extraordinaire was put in charge of a Ministerial Task Force to deal with the eradication of poverty. I was a bit upset having regard to the fact that I felt that the Minister of Social Development had been trying, and I saw the imposition of the Minister Extraordinaire as sort of degrading him to that of a Minister without portfolio. I could well understand why the hon. Prime Minister sought to make that appointment seeing that the Member for Chaguanas, the Minister of Social Development, does not believe that these items of capital expenditure have anything to do with the eradication of poverty. I could also see why the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, Member for Princes Town, felt that he needed to give the Minister a correspondence course while he was speaking, to tell him that he should explain himself in more detail. Unfortunately, it was not done with very great success.

#### **4.10 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear, and we know that one of the reasons many persons in this country are labouring under situations of poverty has to do, to a large extent, with the drug situations in their families. We have those persons who, unfortunately, are addicted to dangerous drugs who steal and do a number of things and bring untold horror to members of their immediate families and to members of the wider community. They involve themselves in criminal activity. It is therefore strange and totally unacceptable to have a Minister who is responsible for that area, now come and say, he sees that such attempts to prevent drug abuse would not be involved in the eradication of poverty.

When Members just seek to—as we would normally say—pelt stones, they forget their job. For instance, the Member in his speech said that one of the reasons the Probation Hostel was not done was because there was a fight between the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Works and Transport. I know for a fact that no such thing happened, it was merely a figment of his imagination. A number of statements like these have come out of speeches by Members on the other side in their attempts at defending the indefensible.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, this is just a deviation from the main area of my speech. Every year when one comes to the question of variation of the original appropriations it is a very sobering time for the Parliament and the country. Various Ministers of Finance—none has been more guilty than the present Minister—have come here on budget days and given us long speeches and made many promises; some of them they knew they would not keep, some they are unable to keep because the revenues are down, and in other cases plain malice and spite would cause them not to carry out some of the promises they made, and the time of truth comes when we come to the variation and we look at what happened during the year.

Mr. Speaker, today we see the Minister of Planning and Development trying to explain, in a very glib and superficial manner, some of the inadequacies of his ministry, in particular, and the Government in general. I am pleased to say that when the PNM Government, in November, 1992, looked at the manner in which the Government should deal with the development of the country, it decided to make the Minister of Planning and Development the person responsible for carrying out the Public Sector Investment Programme.

When the Member for Oropouche sat on this side of the House he was a great adviser and he pontificated on what should and should not have been done. However, I knew that the minute the Member for Couva North and the hon. Prime Minister had made the colossal error of putting a non performer, like the Member for Oropouche, as the Minister of Planning and Development, the entire Public Sector Investment Programme would go haywire.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you would remember, in post colonial days some of the oil companies went around and looked for persons who had reasonably good academics and pulled them into the management of companies. Those were the “blue-eyed boys” although they were usually black or coloured in some way, and they treated them well. It was extremely difficult to get fired from one of those positions. However, the Member for Oropouche had the singular honour of being

one of those persons who was fired from Shell and that would tell as to his competence, Mr. Speaker. *[Interruption]* I do not know about that time I can only speak about Shell.

I quote from page 7:

“An integral part of this responsibility that the Ministry undertook, a midterm review of the performance of the total Public Sector Investment Programme based on the analysis of the performance of the PSIP, the Ministry of Planning and Development recommended reallocation of funds to a number of projects and programmes which require additional funding in 1996 and a reduction in the allocation to projects and programmes which have performed below expectation.”

The hon. Minister of Planning and Development went ahead to list those projects to which funds were transferred, and like the Minister of Social Development, he was quick to point out that one of those projects was the Store Bay Project. Mr. Speaker, I go to Store Bay a lot and I would like to see it developed. I like the place but I say to the Minister, do not try that.

What we have to look at and what I propose to do here, since he has not sought to do it, is to point out, to reiterate and to read into the records of this House the projects from which money was removed. I am saying that because the deliberations of the Finance Committee are private and just as they tried, by sleight of hand, in respect of the budget to say all the nice things and in the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order one sees all the harsh realities, so too, they come here today and tell us only about the transfers and allude to the non-performance of certain ministries and projects as the reasons for removing moneys from various projects, but nothing is further from the truth.

**4.20 p.m.**

They have identified the reasons they were unable to do some of these projects, and I want to read them. It says:

- “1. Delays in completing project preparation activities;
2. Inadequate planning for project implementation;”

Mr. Speaker, who is responsible for the delays—the minister or the ministries involved? So, in fact he is saying that he and his Government are incompetent—he cannot manage. Talk is one thing but now the taste of the pudding is in the eating. He is required to perform and he is unable to perform. Why does he not admit that and say he is sorry to Trinidad and Tobago? *[Desk thumping]*

I continue:

"Inadequate planning for project implementation".

Who is responsible for that?

Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Minister wants the Opposition to do his job for him. The Minister wanted to be there and now that he is there, apparently the seat is too hot. That is the Minister's responsibility and he fails to do it. I know he would not have been able to perform because he has a record of non-performance, as the Member for Tobago East would verify. I always have great respect for the Member for Tobago East and his judgment in hiring personnel. That is why the minister was removed from the Cabinet after only one meeting—weakness in institutional capability. The minister in the ministry is responsible. He has been there 12 months and had been in the Opposition for 10 years so he had many opportunities to see things that might not have been done properly and when he got there to do it, but the Minister did not. Confess!

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I think that the debate is degenerating a bit. I suggest that if the hon. Member speaks to me it would sound a little more as though he is not attacking a person directly and therefore drawing all sorts of things. Please do as the Standing Orders suggest and speak to me.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only reason I looked at you is because I did not want to deal directly with the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources because I have a lot of licks I could put on him. *[Laughter]*

As I was saying, those are the three elements which the hon. Member for Oropouche, the Minister of Planning and Development, suggested that prevented the proper implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme. I would like to add some other reasons and I have good and solid basis for adding them.

The first one is ministerial bias. The hon. Minister of Planning and Development, when the Member for Diego Martin East was speaking about a number of projects in the PNM areas that he had stopped and diverted funds, he said: "you all had 40 years to do the projects in your area and now we are doing ours." I am saying that it is a Government of Trinidad and Tobago and I am charging this Government with bias and vindictiveness. Mr. Speaker, I have evidence of that. I am sorry the hon. Minister of Works and Transport is not here, but every time he comes in this House and speaks, I will remind him that the Dalley Village Community Centre in Santa Flora has been left open to the elements and he met a project going and has

stopped the project. I have written to him about it and he did not even pay me the courtesy of an answer.

I will also speak of the Los Bajos Community Centre which also has been stopped. Those were ongoing projects when this Government came into office. There was also the Rancho Quemado Community Centre which was under repairs, and the Sobo Village Hard Court. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that those were some of the projects that were ongoing and they have not been completed, and no attempt is being made to complete them. So I am just using my constituency as an example of the victimizations and ministerial bias.

I cannot profess to have any relatives in Tobago or to be married to a Tobagonian, like my colleague does from time to time, but I can say that I like to go to Tobago. The other reason, as we very well know, is where some of these projects are going on has to do, I believe, with the upcoming Tobago House of Assembly elections. That is quite clear. Mr. Speaker, be that as it may, I begrudge the Members for Tobago East and West nothing, I believe that anything you could get, by all means, represent your people well, just do not sleep when they are going to change Easter Monday again—just represent them well and whatever the Members get, I say, good for them, they deserve it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the point I was making and to identify and read into the records the various areas from which they were removed. I do not want them to forget it and I want the country to know it. I want to read into the records what they did: "Implementation of the Self-Help Programme—\$3.6 million." They talk about eradication of poverty and yet the Self-Help Programme has been known to perform admirably; it brings communities together; they work together not only on economic matters, but also on infrastructural matters such as roads, water and electricity. It is a programme which is known to perform and yet they have taken money from that programme. It is totally improper. It just shows that they talk about people in one vein and then they practise something else. In the same way they talk about unity and they practise disunity; they practise racism. I charge this Government time and again and I would continue to do it because they are practising the most blatant form of racism in this country *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, why does the Minister speak when I speak about racism? It is because he has practised it in the Express in San Fernando; that is why he opens his mouth.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, it is in an attempt to prevent that type of conflagration that I suggest to you that we stick to the Standing Orders. We could change the Standing Orders if we want, but I suggest that if we stick to the



Standing Orders and you speak to the House, through me, there will be less scope for confusion.

The sitting will now be suspended for half of an hour.

**4.20 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended*

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

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** Mr. Speaker, when the adjournment was taken, I was dealing with the several headings under which sums of money were varied and at that time I was dealing with the Self-Help Programme from which \$3.63 million was removed. I was saying that the very nature of the Self-Help Programme has implications for community service, for the economy and definitely it assists Government and the community in upgrading the infrastructure. Therefore, I did not see how any Government which had the interest of people at heart could find it necessary to reduce the allocations for the Self-Help Programme. Above all, it was a programme noted to be run very well and unbiased. I have to pay tribute to the persons who have run that programme over the years; and I know for a fact—

**Mr. Singh:** It was NAR programme.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** I pay tribute to the programme and the manner in which it is run, regardless of which government did it. I am not in the business of determining which government did it. I am in the business of determining whether it is properly run. And I say here, today, in the national Parliament, that it was well run, and it is well run; and it is a programme that deserves proper funding. It is not a programme where the funds should have been removed to go elsewhere. I look, particularly, at the explanation given here. It says:

“Funds earmarked for use by the National Self-Help Commission to undertake social...”

and I emphasize it:

“...and physical infrastructure work have not been expended.”

I know for a fact, Mr. Speaker, that a number of groups from villages in my constituency have applied to the National Self-Help Commission for money, for assistance, and the Self-Help Commission to some extent is lean on staff, but they work very hard and the moneys have not been forthcoming and I say, if they had it they would utilize it. Conditions precedent to first disbursement of the programme financing are scheduled to be achieved in the fourth quarter of 1996. If the financing is the reason that the programme could not go on and the condition precedent will be achieved, how then are they going to be moving money from the

programme to go elsewhere? They do not have the financing, but yet they are going to move the money. How? Is it an illusory sum, or is there some kind of sleight of hand here, Mr. Speaker? The delay resulted from the late execution of the loan agreement which took place in March, 1996 and not the end of 1995. If the loan agreement was executed in March, 1996, eight months ago, we are now in November, Mr. Speaker, yet that is being used as an excuse.

The agreement provides for US \$28 million from the IDB and the counterpart contribution of US \$12 million by the Government.

I am saying that there was some delay in the execution of the IDB agreement, and I do not agree that the delay of three months from the end of 1995, to March 1996 is sufficient to warrant a reduction or non-expenditure of the funds. I believe it was wilful. Even so, why were they not using the US \$12 million to be contributed to the programme by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago?

Again, it shows the type of programme that the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, has been axing, and I mean axe like the woodcutting axe. Take for instance, construction of the San Fernando Fire Station, \$1.5 million. This is a Government that campaigned on social infrastructure. There was the construction of Cunupia Police Station, \$500,000. I understand this is likely to be done by the Unemployment Relief Programme and I am pretty sure why they want to do the construction of that police station through the Unemployment Relief Programme.

**Mr. Narine:** It has started already.

**Mr. H. Beraux:** Then it will be under the thumbs of the Member for Caroni East, now elevated to the Leader of Government Business, if that is the case. *[Interruption]* Then there is the Ste. Madeleine police station.

**Mr. Manning:** Look where Ste. Madeleine is.

**Mr. H. Beraux:** Now, notice, the Cunupia Police Station. They have moved the funds, yet they propose to deal with it under the Unemployment Relief Programme. So in fact the Cunupia Police Station will be constructed but the Ste. Madeleine Police Station, which happens to be in the constituency of the hon. Member for San Fernando East, has no such accommodation.

**Mr. Humphrey:** That was to be preserved as a historical site. That is where they had me locked up, so they are preserving that as a historical site.

**Mr. H. Beraux:** I would agree with that, but we could find another site, and they are looking for another site.

Mr. Speaker, most of the land in the Ste. Madeleine area is owned by Caroni (1975) Limited which is a state company; and this Government is trying to pull wool over the eyes of the population by saying they cannot find a site in Ste. Madeleine! “Himself to himself!” If the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources was doing his job, Mr. Speaker, or if he was communicating—I assume there is communication among Cabinet Members—he could very well have arranged to speak to the Chairman of Caroni (1975) Limited and something could have been done to get a site. This is no excuse. This is an excuse for the uninitiated [*Interruption*] and the establishment of police posts in Debe.

**Dr. Mohammed:** Poor excuse.

**Mr. H. Breaux:** I quite agree with you. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I would follow your direction. I quite agree with the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources that that is a poor excuse. Yes, saying that you could not commence the building of the police post because of inability to acquire a site in Ste. Madeleine, is a poor excuse. We have police posts in Debe, Pashley, Piparo and Moruga. Again, no police posts. Hear this one, Mr. Speaker. Construction of Barataria/El Socorro police station, \$1 million. What is the excuse? What is the reason? I wish the hon. Deputy Speaker and Member for Barataria/San Juan would take note. Construction was put on hold, as the Ministry of National Security sought to review the arrangements for financing and project management.

If I were not a charitable person, Mr. Speaker, I would tend to say it is because they wanted to do another Cherokee deal, but I would not say that, because I am a charitable person, and I have no evidence of such a thing.

**5.15 p.m.**

We go on. I really do not know. I need some real explanation in respect of this item. Radio telecommunications system for the Ministry of National Security.

**Mr. Manning:** Expect jeep behind that.

**Mr. H. Breaux:** Radio telecommunications system for the Ministry of National Security—\$3 million. Now, I do not know; at the last sitting of this honourable House, the hon. Minister of National Security indicated that there was some telecommunications system which the Motorola people indicated required a particular type of jeep. Mr. Speaker, here I see the sum of \$5 million was provided in 1996 for the installation of an integrated radio telecommunications system at the Ministry of National Security and it is now projected that an award of contract for

this phase of the project will be made early in 1997 and not in 1996 as was originally planned.

**Hon. Member:** The price of the jeep went up.

**Mr. H. BÉreau:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know about any of that. I am at a loss to determine whether this is the same contract which I understand was already awarded, or whether this is another contract involving another type of system and whether, in fact, on the next occasion we come here, we will not see some additional moneys which have to be expended put in here for, maybe planes. *[Laughter]* I do not know. I am just saying this because I am still lost and need some explanation from the hon. Minister who will be replying. I understand a promise was made that most of his reply would be centred upon me. Be that as it may, those are the hazards of the game, of this situation, of this profession.

What I really want to know is if this is the same contract which involved the Cherokee jeeps, where is the money coming from to fund that contract? Also, is it that we have only this because this was too cheap and not enough? I do not know. I want to know, but I believe that the telecommunications system for the Ministry of National Security, particularly having regard to the protestations of this Government when it was fighting election, and the continued protestations that it is a government interested in controlling, suppressing and even eradicating, not only poverty but crime, that this is not an item which should not have been moved, vired or anything, but which should have been carried through.

Mr. Speaker, reconstruction of the Arima Magistrates' Court. I hear the learned Attorney General—not his actor, the substantive holder of that position—normally speaks about the administration of justice. He was quoted in the paper today as saying—I am going to paraphrase his statement since I do not have the quotation here before me—the law is the bedrock of the society and if the law is not in place, not properly handled and justice not properly meted out, then one has a problem. I am saying that if that is the case, I am certain that they could have found time, and knowing the sagacity with which he professes to implement certain legal positions, I would have thought that he would have seen to this. I ask if there is some sinister motive to "dis" his programme as the young people would say, or should I say as computer persons would say, not to permit him to do what he has to do?

This Government and the Minister of Finance in the budget statement, spoke about agriculture and the manner in which they expected agriculture would

perform in the economy. I do not have the exact quotation here and I do not want to delay this honourable House, but this Government has always purported to be interested in agriculture and I have always said that their protestations of interest in agriculture really are only to keep those persons involved in agriculture and who support them from time to time, in continued subjugation, because they have not acted like that.

For instance, look at what has happened in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, agricultural sector, technical assistance programme. This is the programme to give assistance to small farmers so that they would be able to contribute to the economy by producing, if not only by producing, by selling; some to sell and some to eat. I come from an agricultural area although I now reside in an industrial oil-producing area. My family on one side were cane farmers, so I am aware and I empathize with any technical assistance given to agriculture. But what do I see?

The sum of \$6 million was allocated for this programme in 1996. This programme is implemented under a reimbursable technical cooperation agreement providing loan funds of US \$9 million from the IDB and \$2 million from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. But they have removed \$4 million from the amount and this was a programme to give assistance to the private sector agribusiness community; to give assistance to the management of Caroni (1975) Limited.

I now understand, Mr. Speaker, why this programme is being reduced. I recall that the secretary of the All Trinidad Sugar Estate and Factory Workers Trade Union, Mr. Sam Maharaj—

**Dr. Mohammed:** You have it wrong—All Sugar and General.

**Mr. H. Breaux:** It is Sugar and General. Mr. Speaker, through you, I thank the hon. Minister for his correction which I accept graciously. The secretary, Mr. Sam Maharaj, of the All Trinidad Sugar and General Workers Trade Union, was very critical in his remarks concerning the minister not consulting with the union and made it quite clear that any minister who did not do so would be taken to task. I tend to understand now why we are seeing this removal of sums which should go to Caroni (1975) Limited. This is the kind of thing.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to leave this one out although it is the third item—the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and the Town and Country Planning Division—in the land use policy and administration.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Dr. V. Lasse*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**5.25 p.m.**

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** I thank hon. Members for this extension of time which I hope I would not have to use.

As I was saying, we all know that land use in respect of agriculture—we have the Nariva Swamp which is a wetland and which is also, to some extent, good land for growing rice; and there has been some diffidence in respect of the manner in which the laws of the country would be implemented. When people are in the swamp doing agriculture, one has to be concerned. The Government has been pointing out to them, and correctly so, that they are in a wildlife reserve—I think Bush Bush is the name—and what do we have—

**Hon. Member:** It is not a wildlife reserve. You have got your facts wrong. Get it right and come back.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** Well, I stand to be corrected. But the facts which I have correct are that money to deal with planning and administration and land use policy, is being transferred elsewhere and we are facing serious problems in respect of the Nariva Swamp and its utilization; problems which could land this country into serious economic reprisals; because an environmentalist was physically abused and attacked—struck—in the presence, allegedly, of two Ministers of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Having regard to the powerful environmental lobbying in the world, this is a serious thing.

I will not be so unkind as to say, as some of the newspapers have said, that the Minister set up the environmentalist. I know the Minister. He is a gentleman. They are supposed to be gentlemen. I would not expect them to do any such thing, but the problem is that we have a blatant breach of the peace in the presence of Ministers of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and all that we hear of it now—

**Dr. Mohammed:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make certain things clear, please. Certain things are being said here which I think ought to be corrected. I made a statement to the effect that the environmentalist presented herself on her own on

that day, November 1, 1996. Nobody invited her there. The press reported otherwise and that is incorrect. Secondly, on Friday, I made a statement to this honourable House outlining Government's policy for the Nariva Swamp. Please, Sir, I would like the hon. Member for La Brea to get his facts correct before he spouts nonsense.

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** Mr. Speaker, I have heard the hon. Minister, but the point I was making is that having regard to the environmental lobby in the world—take for instance, every loan agreement has environmental conditionalities in it. We have seen Greenpeace, the environmentalist, bring the great Shell Oil Company to its knees and forced it to act in a certain way in the North Sea. All I am saying is that in the light of these situations, that if there is a problem, it is a Trinidad and Tobago problem and this Government did not create it; it just exacerbated it. It was there a long time and it was there out of a desire to allow people to earn a living and we have to respect that.

So I am saying, having regard to the sensitivity of it, that I did not expect to see an allocation for doing something like Land Use Policy and Administration to be cut. All the statements the Minister made, I heard them, but the problem is still there, that this allocation should not have been cut. But I understand the Minister's predicament. If the Minister of Finance does not give him any money, notwithstanding the fact that he is an elected Member of Parliament and the Minister of Finance comes from the other place, he cannot move. I believe that the hon. Minister's heart is in the right place, but unfortunately there is a divergence of social responsibility in that Cabinet and that is what is causing the problem in this country and that is why there is the problem.

Mr. Speaker, there is reduction in allocation in the sum of \$9.94 million in respect of the Ministry of Education. And this is from a sum of \$32.6 million. Listen to what it is for:

"Commencement of construction of eight primary schools and two secondary schools."

I want to take this opportunity to point out to the hon. Minister of Education, notwithstanding the work that was done on the Palo Seco Primary School, for which I thank him for his response, that the Palo Seco Secondary School is in dire need of being rebuilt.

**Hon. Member:** Why did you all not do it?

**Mr. H. Bereaux:** Mr. Speaker, the Member for Nariva keeps trying to annoy me, but I would not take him on this time. I will tell him why we did not do it. We

were being fair and we were building schools all over the country, unlike his Government which is building schools only in their areas.

I really sympathize with the Minister of Education because he had a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, a man who knew a lot about construction. I speak of no less a person—and I have great respect for him; that is why I speak of him—than Mr. Justin Paul. He knew the programme. But what happened? In a fit of victimization, they moved him from the Ministry and that is why they cannot get the programme going, and there is decentralization of the Ministry of Education.

Every day when I come to this Parliament I see the results of failure to decentralize. It is patently before me. I see a building which I was instrumental in getting for the Ministry of Education—I expedited it—just sitting there with nothing being done to it. It is being vandalized. I refer to the old Hilo Supermarket in Fyzabad. That was to be used to house the St. Patrick division of the Ministry of Education, or whatever the name was.

We see \$10.6 million taken away from the Health Sector Reform Programme.

**5.35 p.m.**

In the *Public Sector Investment Programme 1996* at page 27 it states:

"The assumption has been made that implementation of the HSRP..."

That is the Health Sector Reform Programme:

"...will commence on a modest basis in 1996, following completion of the review and loan negotiations. Expenditure amounting to...\$33.0 million has been projected to this place under the programme during the fiscal year. This includes upgrading of the Port of Spain General Hospital, relocation of radiotherapy services to the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, commencement of...a new health facility at Couva, upgrading works at Sangre Grande Hospital, and rebuilding and refurbishment of various health centres."

Mr. Speaker, the health of the nation.

The Minister of Health is a gentleman whom I refer to as being very patient. I have known him for some time now. He is a doctor and I believe that he would not normally want this to happen. They are taking away \$10 million from a \$33 million programme and they said in the *Public Sector Investment Programme* that it would start modestly. If \$33 million is modest or conservative, and one takes \$10



million from it, almost one-third of the programme, what is one telling us about health? What is the Government telling us about its regard for health? It is now leaving us to believe what we have been hearing from the junior doctors, supported by the senior doctors, that it cares nothing of the health programmes or the health of the nation.

Mr. Speaker, that is what the Government is doing here. In the *Public Sector Investment Programme 1996* it states that the sum of \$9 million was provided for in 1996. In this one it says \$33 million and in this one it says \$25 million. I do not know which is correct, but I would take any number the Government wants to give me because regardless of the number they have offered, it is a ridiculous thing to reduce the allocation in health by \$10 million. It was to do the Princes Town and Couva hospitals, but one would notice that in the *Public Sector Investment Programme* they have Sangre Grande Hospital and in this one they have Couva and Princes Town. Be that as it may, they do not like their own supporters.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking at this and every time there is a common thread that runs through this document and all these variations, it is a nice double thread; one is complete incompetence and the other one is total disregard for the welfare of the nation.

I cannot believe this thing. How is it we are only dealing with the things that come close to life like water? It says that public utilities, \$6.07 million. Under Water Sector Rehabilitation Programmes it says that:

"In 1996 the sum of \$10.0 million was provided for the Water Sector Rehabilitation Programme for the commencement of a Medium-Term Rehabilitation Programme..."

It is known in Trinidad and Tobago that there are a number of corroded lines and that they have to be replaced. Steps are being taken in this direction.

"Pending the signing of a loan agreement with the World Bank the programme was expected to commence in 1996. Work was expected to commence with a mains replacement component (100km distribution pipeline)...The designs and contract documents were prepared under the World Bank-funded Water Sector Institutional Strengthening Project. Delays were experienced, however, in the appraisal of the project which is now expected by year's end. World Bank Board approval for the new loan is therefore projected...No expenditure is therefore expected for this programme in 1996."

Mr. Speaker, let us look at what this really says. It sounds reasonable, but in the *Public Sector Investment Programme* it says that approximately \$25 million will be spent in 1996 and the loan is only supposed to be \$11.9 million. So, there is somewhere a Government contribution of \$13 million. They do not have the loan but they are removing \$10 million from the \$13 million, so in fact, they are removing ten-thirteenths of the sum, almost all. One does not have to be a mathematician of any note to see that. That is what they are doing and they are saying that they are interested in water. No, they are not interested in water for people, they are interested in contracts. More about that on another date.

I just want to go back now to one of the items to which funds were transferred—the Ministry of Housing and Settlements.

**Mr. Speaker:** It does appear to me that you have eight minutes more.

**Mr. H. Beraux:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, earlier, the hon. Minister was at pains to indicate the various items upon which the funds would be spent. One of the items which is significant, and I want to refer to it, is "Shelter Construction Financing Facility" for which it says that in 1996 the sum of \$12 million was provided for this project. This sum proved to be insufficient having regard to the implementation of the various housing projects: Bon Air, Harmony Hall, Couva North, Malabar and so forth which the previous Minister of Housing and Settlements was instrumental in getting off the ground.

Significantly, it says that:

"The additional sum of \$9m. is required to permit the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company to continue disbursement of Mortgage Loans to beneficiaries. To date there has been 369 beneficiaries."

Mr. Speaker, the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company was the company designated as the agent by the Government to disburse the loans under the IDB funds. I think the hon. Member for Tobago West was the Minister of Housing and Settlements when that happened, and at that time I happened to be the chairman of that company. That company, other than that, is in the habit of lending money to persons who are not in the higher echelons of the earning hierarchy, for low cost housing at rates of interest of 8, 8.5 or 9 per cent and they have been making money for a number of years. That company was able to do that because it was able to access funds which had certain tax benefits; persons bought bonds and took out debentures of that company and tax was not paid on interest earned.

**5.45 p.m.**

This Government, contrary to the good advice which many of us gave them in the last budget, took away the ability of the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company to borrow money and for the lender to receive certain tax benefits. As a result of that there has been a dearth of funds to the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company and now they have come to seek to transfer funds from elsewhere, which could have been utilized to improve our social infrastructure, to the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company. I agree that the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company is a company deserving of handling these funds and executing the various mortgages on behalf of the state.

If this Government did not interfere with the tax benefit given to investors who took out bonds in the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company, this \$9 million would have been a joke. In 1995 the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company borrowed under that facility \$25 million and over the years they have been borrowing and paying their debentures as they become due. This is the kind of bungling and incompetence one has come to expect from the Member who has just fled. There are two sayings: the taste of the pudding is in the eating and show me what you do and show me your friends, and I will tell them who you are. Therefore, do not come with the fancy words to me.

Mr. Speaker, it is a question of the deeds and as Milton would say, "deeds though mute, speak loud the doer."

Thank you.

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs (Hon. Meryvn Assam):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity of allowing me to speak in this debate on the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill. As you know, this Bill is a customary Bill which comes to the Parliament on an annual basis. All governments from the time of the Legislative Council, to our Parliament, Ministers of Finance have come and have indicated to the Legislative Council or the Parliament certain shifts in expenditure or a need to increase expenditure in certain areas over the course of a fiscal year. This Bill is no different.

I was rather surprised that after one year in office, and listening to the debates on the other side the Members opposite have not matured. They come with the same tired, repetitious statements, not only debate after debate but even during the same debate; each Member opposite says almost the identical thing, of course,

using different words because they have different levels of vocabulary. Some have very little and some have none at all. This is why it is so unfortunate that someone who has great affection for the Member for La Brea—and he disappoints me so often; he sinks into the abyss of bacchanal, character assassination and all kinds of innuendoes. I do not think that this is necessary in order to debate a Variation of Appropriation Bill.

The Members who spoke on the opposite side tended to give one some kind of micro-analysis of some of the items of expenditure that are being varied—\$600,000, \$500,000, \$1.1 million, \$1.3 million, \$4 million. Do you know what struck me, Mr. Speaker? It is that we are dealing with a budget of close to \$10 billion.

I have had great opportunity, before the people of St. Joseph reposed the confidence in and honour on me to represent them, to sit in the public gallery every Friday. I remember the Minister of Finance in the last administration came religiously every year for four years and asked for variations of appropriation to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars and one can verify that in the *Hansard* of this honourable House.

Today, this Government comes to vary in the first instance, \$63 million and an increase of another \$15 million; \$14 million for the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and \$1 million for the Ministry of Public Administration and Information, a new Ministry of Government which is now setting up and which requires additional staff and equipment, and one asks for a little over \$1 million for that ministry and \$14 million for the important Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in order to ensure that some of the social ills afflicting our young people could be channelled into this important avenue of sport, which I had the great opportunity to see last week in the Republic of Cuba, where they have developed sporting facilities to a fine art and where they have placed so much emphasis on sport. We have just had the honour of hosting an international hockey competition in the constituency of my distinguished colleague, the Member for Tunapuna—all praise to the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs—and they come here to quibble about an additional \$14 million for sport and \$1.1 for public administration out of a budget of \$10 billion.

It merely shows the size of their minds, their inability to think big—and they can only nibble at these small matters in order to accuse this Government, as the Member for Diego Martin East attempted to do, and called it an admission of failure and incompetence because this Government has increased the sporting

budget by \$14 million and established a new independent Ministry of Public Administration and Information. This is a sad reflection on the mentality of Members opposite, a very sad reflection in my view.

A variation of \$63 million in a budget of almost \$10 billion. When that administration was in office it used to vary \$200 million, \$300 million and \$400 million annually and it missed the target completely in one of its budgets when it said that oil price was going to be about \$20 or \$22 one year, and it fell to a disastrous figure. I am not gloating about it because I am a Trinidadian and I feel hurt and disappointed when we do not meet budgeted targets, whether I am a Member of Parliament or not. But that year the Finance Minister, Mr. Mottley, had to return to the Parliament and admit that he had over-budgeted for a price of a barrel of oil. I think he budgeted some \$20 or \$22 and he ended up with \$17 or \$18 which caused him to come to this honourable House, during the leadership of the Member for San Fernando East, to vary almost \$400 million; and they have the temerity to come today and accuse this Government of incompetence, failure and mismanagement. It is like "pot calling kettle black." It is \$63 million variation in a budget of \$10 billion; \$14 million more. They want to find out from where the \$14 million would come. I would deal with that. The Member for Diego Martin East is not here, but he asked about it.

**5.55 p.m.**

People must be honest. If they have bad memories they should refresh them from budget speeches and debates. The Member for San Fernando East, among all his colleagues, spoke about profligacy. Those were his words. It meant that this new UNC/NAR administration was engaging in unnecessary expenditure and it was going to spend too much money in 1996. He described that as profligacy. It is in the debate. I just read it. I had to take him to task because I told him that it was profligacy when he went to Haiti and Hong Kong and engaged in all kinds of grandiose expeditions. That was profligacy!

Today the Member for Diego Martin East said that he warned us that we were under-budgeting and under-spending. Do you see the contradiction and confusion which exist on that side? It is no wonder why at one time they did not know who their leader was. Although they say that he has been revalidated, I think he needs to be recalibrated. *[Laughter]*

The thrust of the 1996 debate in this honourable House was not on the expenditure side because it was only the Member for San Fernando East who spoke

about profligacy. The thrust was that this Government could not raise the revenue which it said it was going to raise. They attacked certain areas such as VAT, the national lottery and import duties because they said that business was slowing down and we could not get the revenue for which we were budgeting.

The Member for Diego Martin East gave us outdated statistics as he is wont to do. Why do not the Members of the Opposition come with the most updated statistics about the country's performance? He compared the second quarter of 1995 with the second quarter of 1996. It is true! Who can deny the report of the Central Bank with respect to the economic performance of the country for the second quarter? Nobody can deny it. Of course, we have had some reversals in the area of VAT, income tax and import duties. If they had done their homework, they would have realized that based on the same figures from the Central Bank there has been a dramatic upsurge in the increase of income tax, VAT and import duties. We are now in a position to tell the national community and the Opposition that in terms of its revenue, the budget is on target. Those are the figures of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago for the third quarter ending September, 1996.

**Mr. Manning:** Would the Member give way? Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for giving way. Is he suggesting that the targets for VAT, import duties and income taxes, the non-oil revenues, have been met up to the third quarter of 1996, or that they have been met under some other item of revenue?

**Hon. M. Assam:** I do not understand the question. To repeat, for the edification and illumination of the Member for San Fernando East, I said that the figures for the third quarter which were recently published by the Central Bank indicate that we are on target with respect to our 1996 budget, in the revenue areas which I have reiterated. He went on to say that at the end of the second quarter we were 14 per cent behind in oil revenue, but he did not say the third quarter. We have now exceeded, by far, our target with respect to oil revenues at the end of September, 1996. It is not only because of the increase in the price of oil where we budgeted US \$17.50 per barrel and there is an average of US \$23 for the year, but we have also held steady in terms of our volume and production. The hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries came to this House and said that on a daily basis, we would produce about 133,000 barrels of oil. To date, we have averaged 128,000 barrels of oil.

The Member for Diego Martin East said that public officers are leaving the public service because of the behaviour of the UNC/NAR Government and their inability to handle the political directorate. I am surprised that the Member for

Diego Martin East would make that statement. That is precisely what caused the split in the leadership of that party. They say they could not handle Manning's attitude and, therefore, Mottley, Ramrekersingh and Rowley resigned as deputy leaders. That is why Mr. Griffith, Mr. Boynes, Mr. Hart, Mr. Draper, Dr. Rowley and Mr. Imbert decided that they could not support him in the last leadership elections. I cannot say the Member for San Fernando West because I am not sure—he keeps his information so close to his chest, including his impending migration. *[Laughter]*

Be that as it may, I am really surprised at some of the statements made by Members opposite, that we are scaring away members of the public service. This morning, I was at a meeting with respect to industrial property issues, which was convened by the hon. Minister of Legal Affairs. I met a couple attorneys-at-law who told me that they were leaving private practice and going to join the ministry. That is the case. How does one substantiate an allegation that public servants are leaving because they cannot handle the political directorate? This is not only happening in the Ministry of Legal Affairs but also in other ministries where people are joining the public service from time to time in different professional capacities. That allegation is as wild as some of the allegations proffered this afternoon in order to assassinate the characters of ministers, and to impute malicious motives to people associated with the UNC/NAR Government.

**6.05 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, there was much emphasis placed on the transfer of expenditure from certain heads mainly to the Ministry of Works and Transport. It was felt that some of these areas, which included the Ministries of Health, Education and National Security, were being sacrificed. It seems to me that any sensible and prudent government, when it is doing its mid-term review either of its recurrent expenditure or of the Public Sector Investment Programme, must take into consideration what has been achieved at that point in time, and whether it is more prudent and sensible, after it has done its mid-term review, to re-allocate and redeploy resources to areas where they can be readily absorbed to improve the quality of life versus those areas where implementation is more delayed.

This is precisely what was done. There was an original allocation. Even in the private sector, Mr. Speaker, that boasts of financial and business analysts and accountants of all kinds, MBAs, they too engage in this kind of analysis and redeploy and re-allocate resources some time during the course of the year to ensure that maximum use is made of these resources; that the resources are used

where they are most likely to yield the best results at that point in time. If the Government has done a review of its limited resources and has established priorities and ranked them in terms of expenditure allocation, and has taken away \$500,000, \$600,000, or \$1.1 million from certain heads of expenditure to rural access roads, bridges and so forth, because of the heavy rainy season and because of the need to alleviate flooding, to bring relief from the mosquito infestation and to improve, albeit on a temporary basis, the quality of life of these people, I think that the Government should be congratulated for such a move, notwithstanding the fact that certain other areas had to give up certain small sums to meet that extra \$41 million required by the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the Member for Diego East was wondering aloud when he asked where we will get the additional \$14 or \$15 million that we have put into the Ministry of Public Administration and Information and into the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. However, let me tell this honourable House that this Government has performed creditably in one year. Inflation is down from 5.5 per cent to 3.2 per cent. Unemployment is down from almost 17 per cent to 15.1 per cent. The Retail Index of Prices is down, notwithstanding the fact that there may be some prices which have gone up.

He talks about pressure on the exchange rate due to increase in imports. He has such an unfortunate tendency to dabble in things about which he knows little. I was actually surprised this afternoon when he said he taught management. I had always thought he was only interested in concrete and steel as an engineer, but what a great revelation to this honourable House and the community at large that he taught management. He cannot even manage his own constituency, but he taught management. He could not manage the leadership convention in which he was supporting the Member for Diego Martin West, but he taught management. What can he manage? I do not know.

Let me tell the hon. Member, although he is absent, and all other hon. Members of this House that for 1996 we have had an increase in small business development. Four hundred and eighty-five small businesses were established in the last year. We have had an increase in free zone activity. *[Interruption]* It does not matter. I am telling you what happened in the country. I am not like the Member, always taking praise and self-glorification. I often wonder if his soul can take all of this self-praise that he heaps upon himself. I am not taking praise. I am saying that this is the objective reality of the country today. Whether he wants to attribute it to me, the Ministry, the Government, the Cabinet as a whole, or the



vision of the UNC/NAR administration, so be it. I am saying that the objective reality is that we have established, in one year, 485 small businesses in addition to those already established.

I delivered the feature address this morning at a symposium of the Free Zone Company. This is the first time in the history of the free zone that this has happened. We had a crowded ballroom this morning and there were many people interested in the prospects of investing in this country. We have in fact increased the number of free zones by 600 per cent in the last year and the prospect in the next two years is that there will be a further increase with an additional employment generation capacity of close to 10,000 new jobs.

**Mr. Valley:** Thank God for the PNM!

**Hon. M. Assam:** I have no difficulty in saying thank God for the PNM. The only thing is that the UNC/NAR god is probably different from the PNM god. We had an increase in investment in the energy sector. They can say it is the PNM. It does not matter to me. I am talking about benefit to the people; improving their quality of life; job generation, skills upgrading, technology transfer, generation of foreign exchange. They can take all the credit, but the objective reality is that two additional methanol plants are being built, another ammonia plant is being built, an iron carbide plant is being built, an LNG first train—and they are applying for a second train—and so forth. And the Member is asking where a mere TT \$15 million will come from. That is the paucity of imagination of these people. They have an anaemic imagination, Mr. Speaker, and they have combined it with a pregnant emptiness.

We, Mr. Speaker, are on the course of diversifying this economy in terms of developing tourism in Tobago and Trinidad, developing the services sector, the entertainment sector and the arts and crafts sector, which will bring enormous job-creation opportunities; increasing the skills of our people and generating foreign exchange. We are looking seriously at the open skies policy. Already Condor from Germany is going to Tobago—American Eagle, Caledonia—and we are looking at all the other possibilities so that we will have more aircraft into Tobago and Trinidad so that we will have our tourism industry and plant completely modernized and developed over time. And he is asking where a paltry TT \$14 million will come from. I really feel sorry.

You know, Mr. Speaker, about the allegations of corruption, I detest corruption! I denounce corruption! I am appalled by corruption! Do not come into this House

and use the privilege of Parliament to accuse people of being corrupt. I well remember when I was younger and when the Member for San Fernando East was even younger, sitting in the public gallery—he was in the administration of Prime Minister, Mr. Chambers—when he made a statement in this House about the McDonnell Douglas corruption scandal. He has forgotten that, you know. He distanced himself and his administration and denied vehemently that there was any Sam P. Wallace and McDonnell Douglas corruption. Eventually it was all uncovered by the NAR administration because of the forensic skills that they employed to deal with the administration which said it had clean hands. And he went on to say that unless one can prove by justiciable means the corruption of anybody, one cannot accuse anybody of corruption.

**6.15 p.m.**

But today, they come to the House and accuse people of corruption and allegations of corruption and their tenet at the time was unless it is justiciable and the courts rule on it one cannot say that somebody is corrupt. When we did it they still denied it. When our former Prime Minister, the Member for Tobago East, took the courage to do it, they wanted to kill him.

If one has information of a tangible, concrete, valid nature, expose it and tell us about it, but do not come with innuendoes and readings from newspapers. The newspapers in their time when they were in office, and at the time of the previous administration of the PNM, wrote profusely about alleged corruption. In fact, one of the classic cases during the PNM administration 1991—1995 was the award of contract PRIDE—everybody knows that—and a certain legal man, a former jurist was put in the hot seat and was compromised unfortunately, because he ended up with two reports. The distinguished jurist produced one report and the Prime Minister of the day, the Member for San Fernando East, told him he had to produce another report so we do not know which one was correct—and they are talking about corruption. I am absolutely sure that the archangels in heaven must be crying at the hypocrisy of the Members of the People's National Movement.

Mr. Speaker, I really do not understand what has gone wrong with the Member for La Brea. He says he is a lawyer by training and he worked in a state oil company for many years, and I knew him as a good boy when we were in the Catholic Youth Organization together, but he has suddenly become so ferocious in his language that I do not understand what kind of virus has infected him. His language is so intemperate, his allegations so wild, and his logic lacking in coherence. What has gone wrong with the Member for La Brea, I do not know.

He talks about the Los Bajos community centre and Rancho Quemado, Sobo Village and so forth, but we inherited the same thing. I can tell you about all the unfinished projects, and the incomplete community centres in the constituency of St. Joseph. In fact, do you know what was one of the problems of the Bushe Street community centre? They were building a community centre on private land. Trespassing! Violating the law! That is why it had to be stopped, and up to now Bushe Street cannot get a community centre, because they were building on people's land; they did not go through the process of acquiring it—and they want to talk about unfinished projects in Rancho Quemado and Los Bajos. I cannot understand.

He went on to talk—which is the most laughable and idiotic of all the statements—about the schools that the PNM built between 1991—1995. It was one of the most dismal failures. I think the PNM built either two or three schools between 1991—1995 compared to 28 schools which the NAR built between 1986—1991. [*Desk thumping*] From 1986—1991 the NAR built 28 schools in Trinidad and Tobago, from 1991—1995 the PNM built, I think, one junior secondary, one senior secondary and one primary school and they talk about a record of school building. The others were left dilapidated to the extent that the hon. Minister of Education in this administration has the unenviable record, during the last summer vacation, of repairing over 60 schools. He says it is more than 60, I am really not giving him his credit. I said 60, he said it is more than sixty, so I take his word for it. He had sent me the information, but I have forgotten it now. In the summer vacation he did that to the extent that the Member for La Brea had to thank him for repairing the Palo Seco school, at least his conscience worried him and he had to give credit where credit was due.

In what school building programme did they engage? Hospitals fell into disrepute, health centres fell into disrepute, the water system fell into disrepute, the roads collapsed; although the former Minister of Works and Transport talked about his accomplishments and achievements when he was Minister. What did he achieve? I think his achievement was that he bought more cement than was produced by TCL in any one year, which is quite an achievement for anyone to buy more cement than was produced in this country in one year. Let us be serious and be honest.

I find it quite tedious and so much against my nature to get up and always be placed in a position where I have to respond to all of these matters. Mr. Speaker, why does he have to abuse the Minister of Planning and Development saying that

he was fired from Shell, and he was a non-performer? If the Minister presents a bill to the House, let us discuss the merits or the demerits of the bill. Tell this honourable House, and by extension, the national community, where and why they differ in a rational, logical fashion. But to attack a person's character, to be using innuendoes against persons either in the administration or associated with the administration does not give them any credibility as an alternative Government. People are really laughing at them, I wonder if they know that. They are the subject of much ridicule. They should pull up their socks, get their acts together and be a good Opposition because that is where they are going to be for a long, long time. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, this Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill is merely an attempt on the part of this administration to tidy up some of the expenditure that was transferred from one Head to another, that is all it is. As I said earlier, a mere \$63 million out of a total budget of \$10 billion. An increase of a mere \$15 million: \$14 million for the Ministry of Sports and \$1 million for the Ministry of Public Administration and Information and I would have thought—Yes, the Minister of Education says that 94 primary schools were repaired during the summer vacation of 1996.

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no need for the Opposition to come here and try to reduce this, or enlarge it, however it is looked at, to the status of a mini budget. We debated the 1996 budget in January this year. Why not look forward to the 1997 budget? Why not hold the fire and gun powder for the 1997 budget? They will be saving themselves enough time and energy, and the national community will respect them more if they did their research because the 1996 budget, if I am to use part of the vernacular "caught them with their pants down". They did not have a suitable response to any of the ministerial statements which were made in this honourable House. Therefore, I ask them in the 1997 budget to regale us with some seriousness, some logic, some analysis and some alternative measures, proposals and plans. If they do this, the Members on this side, because we are committed to national unity, will certainly take on board—provided that they are serious, of course, we are not going to take them if they are not serious—their suggestions, even their criticisms if they are constructive. Together we can produce a budget of and for national unity. I suggest that they hold their fire power, let us go home and stop the filibustering, it is not necessary because it is taking us nowhere, in fact it is taking them down the road—that slogan which caused them to lose the 1995 election. It is taking them down the road.

**6.25 p.m.**

I urge all Members to support this Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill, and to hope that we would see the macro picture, to see that the variation is minuscule in terms of the actual \$10 billion budget. The increase in the expenditure of \$15 million is even more minuscule in terms of \$10 billion. The areas I have attempted to enunciate where there is increasing economic activity that would bring about financial gain to the Government coffers and to the country, as a whole, will more than compensate for the increase in the \$15 million we are asking this honourable House to approve in this Bill.

The figures that were presented by the Member for Diego Martin East are quite dated and, in future, the Opposition must come here with up-to-date figures if they are going to challenge the credibility, integrity, performance and management skills of the UNC/NAR administration.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Roger Boynes** (*Toco/Manzanilla*): I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I was not going to speak today but after listening to the Member for St. Joseph, I would like to ask him if he is the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs. I heard him say that he has been to Cuba and has witnessed sporting facilities there. I wonder if he is usurping the jurisdiction of the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the hon. Member mention the number of schools that were repaired during the summer vacation; I have heard him mention that there are a number of unfinished buildings, community centres but that they inherited same from the previous administration. I want to tell the Member for St. Joseph that when we come into this honourable House we come here to do the country's business, not to play games, not to say or speak with nice but vague and empty rhetoric, not to give speeches that are just sounding good but those that are good and sound. We come here so that we could get to the merits and the hard reality of things and, with that in mind, I would like to focus on the area of sport and the allocation that has been put in that direction.

I am seeing the replacement of Mundo Track and associated works—\$4 million and the Member for St. Joseph mentioned that: “moneys are being transferred in that direction because one understands that sport needs money and it is a way of dealing with and addressing the social ills of the society.”

In the Member for Tobago West's previous contribution in the budget, she mentioned that 95 per cent of the crimes committed is by the youths from 15—25

years old. I assume that this increase in the allocation for sport is directed to deal with this social ill. The Member for Tobago West has been the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs and that 95 per cent has not dropped by even one or even a quarter per cent. If one wants to focus on sport and youth affairs, one must come with a concrete policy for sport and a concrete policy for youth affairs. It is one year now and what is the policy, Mr. Speaker? Since this Government came into power our national football team has not won an Olympic game; the team is so blight under that administration, Mr. Speaker. *[Laughter]*

If there was a clear, precise, concise, cogent, compelling policy on sport we would have given the football team from United States of America at least five goals. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs must dictate a clear policy on sport. In the Minister's contribution in the last budget, she agreed with the Member for Toco/Manzanilla that the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should be taking a more proactive approach with respect to sport. There lies the problem with our Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs today.

I agree that the Mundo Track needs repairing. I agree. I sanction that, Mr. Speaker. What is the policy as it relates to athletics in this country? Do you know why Jamaica produces the type of athletes that it does, Mr. Speaker? It is because they have a clear policy with regard to sport and youth affairs. In the primary schools there are clinics, coaches, psychologists from that level right through to the secondary schools and to adulthood and they focus on sport, on the youths, on the athletes.

Mr. Speaker, one can do whatever to develop the infrastructure—which is necessary—but if that is not related and it does not work hand in hand with the actual policy: education, coaching and seminars, where will we end up? We will end up getting two: nil, as we did, from the United States of America. The policy on athletics is not to give Ato Boldon \$1,000 or thereabouts; it is not to give Neil De Silva \$1,000 or thereabouts—the reason they gave those athletes those sums of money is after this Member took his salary and put it towards one of the athletes for preparation of the Olympics. *[Desk thumping]*

Ato Boldon is a big name, Mr. Speaker, that is the only time this Government got up to use it as a political football rather than to see the potential. It is not today, yesterday or last year the Government knew that Ato Boldon, Neil De Silva and others were going to the Olympics. What has the Government done during this time to ensure that our athletes are adequately prepared to make a success of themselves in the Olympics? I thank Mr. Ato Boldon. He did it on his own. Let

that be a lesson to all and sundry here today, that a proper policy on sport and youth affairs needs to be implemented.

The sportsmen and sportswomen are ambassadors of our country. Mr. Speaker, could you remember November 19, 1990, when we saw in the stadium a sea of red and that was a reflection of national unity? They preach national unity and I am saying that sport can unite every creed and race in this blessed place.

I see that they run the Village Olympics and I have been to most of them and it is the most low-keyed thing that I have witnessed today. They should put more emphasis, planning and preparation for these Village Olympics in order for the programme to be a success.

**6.35 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I also noticed that there is construction of an indoor sports hall in Tobago which is \$4.5 million. I agree with this, but what I am simply suggesting is that while there is \$4.5 million in Tobago—and it is in fact an election year, mind you—what are they putting in Toco/Manzanilla? In Toco/Manzanilla there are no indoor sporting facilities; for the past year all the recreation grounds are in a state of dilapidation and we have some of the finest sportsmen and sportswomen in Trinidad and Tobago, for example, Ian Bishop is from Toco; Neil DeSilva; Kenneth Hazell; we have all the "Bishops" in Toco. This is what you all have to do.

They have to focus on parks such as Monte Cristo. After brilliant and creative opportunity, we have put that park on track, about 70 per cent of the track has been completed but because they decide to play politics with the park, it has come to an end. If they do not complete the park we would do it ourselves because I live at Toco/Manzanilla and I am sure that it is the sporting capital of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, in Tobago there is the Tobago House of Assembly and the manner in which this Government in its year in office has neglected sports in Toco/Manzanilla, I say that we have to put a Toco House of Assembly in place because that is the only way we can get this Government to take notice of us in Toco. I am saying before this Government came into office, several of the grounds were up to an acceptable standard, now that this Government has had one year in office, all the grounds are in a state of disrepair. *[Interruption]*

My record as chairman was to ensure that we put policy in place to let the villagers—and they have the contract to maintain the grounds, and that is working

right now, Mr. Speaker. I am saying that this Government is giving their friends and families contracts; that is not how it was supposed to be done.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the night is yet young, there are opportunities for everybody to have a say, please allow the hon. Member to have a say. There is no problem.

**Mr. R. Boynes:** I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Suffice it to say when I was the chairman of the San Fernando Regional Corporation, the Independence Day Parade did not reach \$41,000.00 [*Interruption*] In 1993, we held Independence Day Parade and the celebration cost \$7,162.30; in 1994, it cost \$7,000; in 1995, there was no celebration, and in 1996, the Independence Day celebration came up to \$41,000 which was spent on rum, scotch and food—every table in the regional corporation had a bottle of scotch. There was scotch like water in Sangre Grande that day and yet the secondary road to the hospital is in such a dilapidated state. That is what happened, Mr. Speaker. The chairman of the regional corporation gave his best friend the contract to do the catering—food normally costs \$12.00 but it then cost \$30.00 to \$35.00 a plate and he gave his partner the contract for rum and scotch.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I do not know whether you yourselves feel happy about the direction in which we are going. I suggest you think about it, and while you are at it I want to say to you that the *Hansard* reporter is having difficulty in recording all of these utterances coming from the different Members.

**Mr. R. Boynes:** I thank you, Mr. Speaker. All I have to say is that the youths looked on at what took place at the regional corporation because their grounds are in a state of disrepair but yet they could have actually seen people drinking scotch freely. It is appalling. Mr. Speaker, I am asking the hon. Members to be mindful of the fact that the young people of the nation are looking at them—this is something of which they have not been mindful. [*Interruption*] The Minister better watch that \$1.2 million because the other thing to happen is that he would be indicted.

The Member for Tobago West in her contribution mentioned that she will treat sports as an industry and to attract tourism. She said that she is going to develop a five-year programme. I have been to all the programmes that are on stream and I thought that it was something new that the Member for Tobago West was inventing but I recall that this programme has been in train many years ago.

I remember when Mr. Eddie Hart, the Member for Tunapuna, and Gally Cummings were games coach going from Toco/Manzanilla to Mayaro, so it is



nothing new that has been implemented—and my colleague being, at that time, a very highly qualified coach at that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to find out from the Minister what is the plan to treat sports as an industry and as a vehicle for tourism. There is absolutely no plan whatsoever. If the Minister was serious about putting a plan together, and if I may quote what she mentioned in the budget:

“Accordingly, we propose to develop, in collaboration with our social partners, a youth policy and a sport policy. The vision of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is a shared vision which allows for participation and commitment by all our stake-holders: youth, community, sporting fraternity, private sector, voluntary sector and other government agencies, all must come together to deal with this programme.”

I live in the constituency of Toco/Manzanilla and nobody in Toco/Manzanilla has been consulted. What private organization has been consulted, to date, to develop a plan for sport and youth affairs? None whatsoever. I am suggesting that we have to stop playing games with our young children. Ninety-five per cent of the crimes committed are by our young children. We have to take this very seriously, this is no joke. When the Minister wants to take things into consideration, I ask her to do what she says, consult with everybody and take a few of these things into consideration. We must ensure that our recreational grounds are being maintained at a certain standard so that people could play football and cricket. I invite the Member for Tobago West, rather than send the Member for St. Joseph to Cuba, let them take a trip to Cuba and the United States of America and see how these football teams are; when you compare them to Sangre Grande and Toco, when you look at the type of recreational facilities there and the type of talent we have in that particular jurisdiction, it is something that we have to be ashamed about. They have been in Government for one year. We gave it to them on a platter, but what have they done with it?

**6.45 p.m.**

As I mentioned, we should have coaches and psychologists at our primary school level and thereafter. We have to encourage the private persons, like the hon. Member for Tunapuna, who runs the Eddie Hart League. We have to encourage all private persons who run leagues throughout the length and breadth of this country to continue running them and to ensure that they are able to put professional coaches in these leagues.

Where football is being played in the various leagues, we have to ensure that coaches are there with the psychologists, who must understand the young people. They must be able to treat with them in such a way to inspire them. They must be able to allow them to adopt a "never say die" attitude, because when they go to play football and they arrive in front of the goal post, some of them do not know what to do; they feel intimidated. We have to let the footballers understand that they must have a killer instinct, so that when they go before that goal post, they have to score. Look at the way the Guatemalans played our team, as though their very lives depended on it. This is the "never say die" attitude that we must instil in our young people.

Let me give one example. I remember when the Strike Squad played the Americans in 1989 and I invited the majority of the team to play in Sangre Grande. I took players who were not in the Strike Squad. I was able to go around the country and pick a few players who I felt were very good—Angus Eve, Elcock, Pacheco, and others, who now have made the national team. I chose them and kept them in camp for two weeks. They ate and slept football and they played together as a team and they gave that Strike Squad four goals in Sangre Grande.

I feel very passionately about football. We cannot simply say we are giving the NGOs or the football company money. I am appealing to the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, that we must utilize a more proactive approach if we are to reach anywhere in sport. One should understand that the crimes that are committed by the young people are as a result of a breakdown in discipline. When a young man engages himself in sport, he feels a certain inner pride. When he is involved in sport, he feels part of the system. There is a national pride that engulfs him which would cause a reduction of crime in this country.

We have to be serious. We cannot have a budget where less than one per cent is focused on sport. As far as we are concerned, the Member for Tobago West should have objected to that. There is not enough money in sport. I am suggesting that we need to pay special emphasis on Sport and Youth Affairs in this country.

I want to ask the Minister to take one thing into consideration. The Member must understand the whole concept of continuity in sport. Every time they find the team not winning a game, they change everybody. Sometimes we see, for instance, after they have reached the under-23, they do not even make the national squad. There has to be an element of continuity with the technical squad and also with the sportsmen in this country. We need to focus on them if we are to reach anywhere and if we are to be a force to be reckoned with in the world. The Americans will

tell you that we have some of the most skilful players in the world. Many of our players are getting professional contracts throughout the world, but it says something, that we do not have a plan. I am suggesting that we must have a plan that incorporates football, cricket, every single sport. *[Interruption]*

I am not here to talk and to quibble about 34 years. That is not the country's business now. The country's business is what they, sitting in those seats, can do for the country today. That is the country's business.

I am also suggesting to the Minister that perhaps there could be a camp in which players could be put. Some of the players may not be in a position to work. I am saying that you must adopt a proactive approach and once a policy is put in place it would enhance the whole thing. One cannot have a hands-off attitude towards sport in this country.

While it is good to invest money in the Haseley Crawford Stadium, the Jean Pierre Complex and an indoor facility in Tobago, I am asking, what is the policy with respect to basketball? Are there any clinics in basketball? Where have we reached in basketball? The number of talented players in this country, where have they reached? The Lakers player, Kareem Abdul Jabar, is my cousin. His father was born in Matura. They migrated to the United States of America and he became one of the finest players in the world. His source is right here, from Toco/Manzanilla. *[Desk thumping]*

Kareem has indicated to me that he would, at any given time, come to Trinidad and Tobago to help in running a clinic. I am throwing out that branch to the Member for Tobago West. It is about time we focus on the young people. Do not see it as simply sport. See it as the opportunity to seriously address some of the problems of the young people.

**Dr. Mohammed:** How long ago you did that?

**Mr. R. Boynes:** I speak with him every week, Mr. Speaker, in case the hon. Minister wants to know.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at cricket, I am asking the Member for Tobago West to understand that in hard-ball cricket—now we produce some of the finest players on the Toco side: Kenneth Hazel, the Bishops, and many others, who are potentially capable of playing on the West Indies team and they are from my particular jurisdiction.

**6.55 p.m.**

One of the problems is that these fellows have come out of an area which is not as privileged as the rest, and when one notes the amount of money they have to pay for the cost of the equipment, one has to understand—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. Member:** Maybe they should plant marijuana.

**Mr. R. Boynes:** And the answer is not planting marijuana. I will tell my constituents that the Member for Caroni East gave them that suggestion, that they should plant marijuana. That is what I will tell them because that is not the answer. We are inside here playing games and I call upon the Member for Caroni East to apologize to the people of Toco for suggesting that they must plant marijuana in order to get the cricket equipment. I am asking the Member, through you, Mr. Speaker, to retract that statement and to apologize to the people. This is serious business taking place in this House; this is not a joke.

The cost of football gear, the boots, they are so expensive for some of the players. Probably, the Government could put something in place to regulate the cost of these sporting equipment. If we are looking at sports seriously, we have to bear these things in mind.

What about wind-ball cricket competition? We talked about hard-ball. The previous administration recognized the importance and the growing of wind-ball cricket competition in Trinidad and Tobago. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs at that time recognized it so it came under the umbrella of that Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. To date, nothing has come about with that particular sport in Trinidad and Tobago. There has not even been an island-wide cricket tournament for this year. Since this Government came into power, nothing on wind-ball cricket competition has occurred.

I am asking the Minister—she may laugh, Mr. Speaker—to ensure as the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, that her ministry takes a proactive approach to sport because the young people are crying out. I am sure the hon. Minister can hear them from here; they are crying out to the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here amongst all the ridicule from the other side, as a Member of Parliament for my country and as a Member of Parliament representing the constituency of Toco/Manzanilla. I verily believe and honestly feel that the entire aspect as it relates to sports in Trinidad and Tobago needs to be looked at very seriously if we are to look after our young people who may be future prime

ministers, presidents and Members of Parliament. I am saying that my commitment to sports is so great that while in Opposition, with or without the help of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, I am going to make Toco/Manzanilla the sporting capital of Trinidad and Tobago.

I will have the Minister know that as of Friday a small-goal football competition was launched out of my own pocket, in Toco, one in Sangre Grande; one will be in Matelot and another will be in Valencia. As of next year, we will have a hard-ball cricket competition launched along the whole of the north coast, Mr. Speaker, and that is coming out of my own pocket and out of the pockets of many private sector companies that are very mindful of the need for sports in our particular region. If it means building an indoor facility of my own in Toco/Manzanilla, I will do it. Not everything for Tobago or for the rest of the country, I want something for Toco/Manzanilla, too.

Mr. Speaker, who is there on the dance floor, let them dance to the beat. I also mentioned to my dear Friend that Tobago and Toco are inextricably linked. We are so close. The Member for Tobago East could be my uncle; the Member for Tobago West could be my aunt. Who knows?

**Miss Nicholson:** You might be my cousin.

**Mr. R. Boynes:** Mr. Speaker, the young people in my particular region and throughout Trinidad and Tobago are crying out; they want to know what is the plan. Whereas we may be discussing sport and youth affairs, we have to be mindful of the fact that when we deal with anything as it relates to the young people, we have to be careful in how we, as leaders, govern and represent, be we Government or Opposition, because the young people are looking on.

When, for instance, there is a situation where there is a minister calling all the Chief Administrative Officers and the Councillors in regional corporations corrupt, the young people are looking on. That is no plan for the young people. When there is a situation where a minister is telling the Chief Administrative Officers not to buy lumber or make sure lumber is bought at a particular lumber yard and his father has a lumber yard, the young people are looking on. One must be very, very mindful of that. When there is in local government many partners and friends being given contracts to work, when there are square pegs in round holes and they are dictating to the Public Service Commission, trying to frighten the Public Service Commission into dealing and standing up to the Chief Administrative Officers and the people in local government, the young people are looking on. One must be

mindful of that. When the Member for Nariva could stand up on a platform in Sangre Grande and say that \$500,000 passed in Monte Cristo and I got a kickback, the young people are looking on, because a writ is coming his way soon because he said it outside in the public domain. Remember that he will be held accountable for what he said.

Mr. Speaker, they have to be mindful of the fact that there are a number of drug lords working in Region 5 of the Unemployment Relief Programme in Sangre Grande. Everybody in town knows it. Drug lords who, for instance, are their partners and who have been riding with them during their campaign, are the ones who have been given the job of checker. The young people are looking on.

When they talk about having a plan for sport and youth affairs and for the young people, what is said and done impacts upon the young people of this nation. They have been in government for a year. I am appealing to the Government to get its house in order; clean up its act; because it is corrupt, corrupt, corrupt. I want to know why the Member for Tobago East, that statesman, is sitting there. We hear about Cherokee vehicles. Why is the Member for Tobago East sitting there?

**Mr. Sudama:** Do you want him to go to the PNM?

**Mr. R. Boynes:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member is not able to be with these people. He is not corrupt. I do not know the Member for Tobago East as any corrupt person. I am asking him to walk away and not stay there. The Member for Tobago West—she may be my family—why is she staying there?

**7.05 p.m.**

The plan for Sport and Youth Affairs in this country cannot be a plan to go to France; the plan cannot be a plan to go to on the road to Italy. That is not the plan. It cannot be to get Cherokee vehicles; that cannot be the plan. It cannot be to spend \$41,000.00 on rum and roti, on food in the corporation. That cannot be the plan. The plan must be one where we sit, have consultation with all and sundry and work on a plan in the best interest of re-development of sport and youth affairs in this country.

When, for instance, the Members on the other side are looking to put a highway to Toco and all their friends buy all the lands where the highway will be passing, the young people are looking on. When, for instance, you have the water distribution outlet in Tumpei, that is Cumana, where you have to change two pumps every month, the problem is not the pump; it is the sand that is affecting the

pump. They have been told that. The Ministry of Public Utilities has been told that time and time again, but yet they are wasting precious taxpayers' money. The young people are looking on. It is a wastage of money. From November 6, 1995 to date, they have probably changed about six pumps there.

**Hon. Member:** What was being done before?

**Mr. R. Boynes:** The problem was not there before. The people who have actually told me are the young people in Rampanalgas and Cumana. I am their representative and I am bringing it to the attention of this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, we do not understand how serious it is and how much care and concern we should focus on the young people, you know. When the young people are seeing the Member for Couva South having negotiations with a terrorist organization and being on tape, how do you think they feel? How does the Member for Tobago East feel? How do we feel, as Members? They have desecrated this honourable Chamber. How do we feel? Yet they are playing games. The Member on the other side is playing games. Oh, "it is not his tape; a tape could be doctored". Mr. Speaker, in order for the young people to go in the right direction, what we say must be what we do. We have to be exemplars, all of us in here, for the young children, and we have to stop playing games.

The Member for Tabaquite—you know, when you go to a graduation or to any function, if the word is "paradigms" you cannot say "paradigims", you know. This is something of which one has to be mindful. Instead of saying, for instance, "you must reap what you sow", you cannot go and tell the children, "you must sow what you reap." The children's minds are very important. One must understand that even a pregnant woman, while the baby is inside of her, one has to be mindful of what one says; what one thinks about. One does not understand why there is a certain sense of lawlessness in the country. It must start from all over. As Members of Parliament, we must focus on the young people in some tangible and concrete manner. That is all I am asking. *[Interruption]* The Member on that side would explain to the court about Monte Cristo when I am finished with him.

I ask the Member for Tobago West to look at the entire sport and youth affairs as a whole; try to focus on a proper policy for sport and for youth affairs. As I said, I have no difficulty in liaising with the Member for Tobago West to ensure that a proper policy is developed for the young people of our blessed nation. I stand here as a voice of the young people. We are crying out for support and for

help. Please, let the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs take that sport seriously and doctrines and policies for youth affairs seriously.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Hon. Pamela Nicholson):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to stand up here this evening just to make a few comments on the Motion:

*Be it resolved:*

That this House adopt the Third Report (1995—1996 Session) of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Proposals for the Expenditure from Public Revenue which were not included in the Annual Estimates, 1996.

I am very excited about the comments that I just heard from the Member for Toco/Manzanilla. I want to tell him that the whole country is very excited about this Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, because they believe that it is the first time that they have a serious Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago.

Most of what the Member said here this evening does not relate to the Minister. I want to tell the Member that the same interest I have in Tobago is the same interest I have for the whole of Trinidad and Tobago, including Toco/Manzanilla, of which he is a part.

#### PROCEDURAL MOTION

**The Acting Attorney General and Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That this House continue to sit until the conclusion of Motion No. 1 and Bill No. 1 on the Order Paper.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT (THIRD)

**Hon. P. Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to stress that the business of this Government as far as Sport and Youth Affairs are concerned is for the whole country. The Member said that I stated that 95 per cent of the crimes in the country is committed by youths who are 15—25 years old and I accept that. I accept that our approach is to use sport as a vehicle to prevent crime and to bring our young people on the straight road.



**7.15 p.m.**

It is against that background, Mr. Speaker, that one of the first things that was done by this Minister was to set up a task force within the ministry to look at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs; to investigate and analyze the ministry in order to come up with a proactive policy to run the Ministry. Included in the job that was given to the task force was for it to come up with a youth and sport policy. It was only today that the task force had a programme with the young people of Trinidad and Tobago at the Port of Spain City Hall, which I addressed early this morning, where all those young people came together to say how they feel, what their problems are and so forth, on the road to coming up with the youth policy.

Mr. Speaker, I must tell the hon. Member that he is not saying anything new. We are already focused and we are moving in the direction that we ought to move. We recognize in the ministry—the Minister and the Government—that the first thing we must do is to come up with this policy. That is why the task force was set up.

I also want to point out to the hon. Member for Toco/Manzanilla that we are not doing anything special for Tobago. As far as indoor sport halls are concerned, Tobago is special in the sense that it is separated from Trinidad by water, so that if we do not put an indoor sports hall in Tobago, the Tobago teams and groups would always have to spend money to come to Trinidad to take part in the programmes that we are now implementing. That is the point. *[Interruption]* The Member for Toco/Manzanilla raised that issue so I have to straighten out the Member on that matter. The PNM was in power for endless years and Tobago was unimportant. So, what the UNC/NAR Government is saying is that we must make Tobago an integral part of the development of sports.

**Mr. Boynes:** Would the hon. Minister give way?

**Hon. P. Nicholson:** No, I am not giving way, sit down! Sit right down! You had enough to say.

Mr. Speaker, before the year is ended at least three indoor sports halls would be completed in Trinidad: firstly, in Tunapuna—and the Member for Tunapuna was telling me up to this evening, how pleased he was when he saw the super floor that we are putting down in that indoor sports hall. He could not believe that could have happened in his constituency. He was telling me that this evening.

**Mr. Hart:** Who started it?

**Hon. P. Nicholson:** Secondly, the Point Fortin floor is here, and thirdly, the floor for San Fernando East is here. If this Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs was not here, those indoor sports halls would never have received those quality floors.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to go into the performance of the ministry. Tunapuna can demonstrate the performance of the ministry. What happened in Tunapuna about one month ago with the world hockey competition that took place there? Sports tourism took place there when we opened one of the most modern facilities for hockey for the whole of the Caribbean. [*Desk thumping*] The vision came from this Minister. When we opened it a number of clubs from all over the world came into Trinidad and Tobago.

*The Member for Laventille East/Morvant rose.*

Sit please, you will have your opportunity to chat.

Mr. Speaker, a number of teams came from all over the world and when they were questioned—Members saw it on television—they said it was one of the best they have seen anywhere in the world. It is the UNC/NAR Government that has to get the credit for producing that.

Mr. Speaker, we at the ministry believe that sport and youth development must be viewed as essential elements in the promotion of human progress and national development and as vehicles for preventing social problems. We also believe that sport and youth programmes must be projects that are preventative and that they must foster elements of our developmental approach to moving our young people from the path of self-destruction to be strong, healthy and to contribute to the national life in a positive way.

We also believe, and we have the vision in the ministry, that we must be proactive. I agree with that. That is why today the sum of \$14.2 million is now given to the ministry. Everyone in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is very excited because they say they never had a ministry so proactive as it is today. We have already spent \$4.2 of that \$14.2 million on the hockey facility that was recently opened.

**Mr. Hart:** Who turned the sod for that?

**Hon. P. Nicholson:** We have spent over \$1 million in cleaning up the Jean Pierre Sports Complex—I am telling you what we have done already from the

same \$14.2 million. The Mundo Track, totally run down; far more than 10 years old and we are saying give us \$5 million so that we can put down a new track for the advancement and development of the track and field that the Member was talking about.

We have developed a programme called the Super Five Community Sports Development Programme—the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago. The five areas of sport that we are dealing with are the most popular sports: basketball, cricket, football, netball and track and field. That programme has been implemented throughout the country from a pilot perspective. It is going beautifully.

**Mr. Hinds:** What are the sports?

**Hon. P. Nicholson:** Cricket, football, netball, track and field and basketball. Those are the areas.

**Mr. Valley:** Mr. Speaker, I have to speak after so, could the hon. Minister say how she arranged this programme on a pilot basis throughout the country?

**Hon. P. Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, we advised on television, radio and went everywhere and spoke about the programme. We talked with hundreds of young people and coaches throughout the country who were brought together representing all the areas of Trinidad and Tobago. The Association of Psychologists is working in this programme. We also have programmes to take young people back into the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is let us take these young people off the streets—those who are dropouts from schools; those who are liming on the blocks, and so far the programme is going very successfully and in 1997 it will be expanded throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

In some areas there may only be cricket, in some areas right now there may only be basketball; in some areas netball, in some areas track and field, but by 1997 the whole programme will be expanded where one constituency might have three sports, another might have five, but that is after we have assessed what is happening in the programme so far. We want to set up a structure to develop these sporting areas so that in five or six years' time Trinidad and Tobago will be at world standard and we would not have the dilemma that we have today in football.

One cannot assess the sports programme after one year. At the end of our term you would be able to assess and totally feel what is taking place through this

programme. The Commonwealth organization wrote us a letter just last week asking us for copies of the programme because they are enthused by the quality of programmes that we are implementing in Trinidad and Tobago. They would like to visit us to see what is taking place. That is the progress.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that one must spend money on sports. I am one who believe that millions and millions must be thrust into sports so that we could prevent crime in the country. It is better to spend money in that direction than to build jails, police stations and court houses. That is the direction in which we are steering the country today; a direction which we never had in Trinidad and Tobago, prevention and development. This is the course on which we are leading the young people in Trinidad and Tobago.

**7.25 p.m.**

When the Member for Toco/Manzanilla gets up in a very erratic fashion and makes some baseless statements about sport, I want to tell him that I am giving him an open invitation so that he can come to the Ministry to spend a day with me to have a proper analysis about the programmes. We will show him some videos; we will show him everything so that he will understand what is taking place in the Ministry. It is not only in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, it is taking place among the young people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Tomorrow the programme will be formally launched in Tobago for the sporting young people of Tobago. Tobago must be a part of what is taking place. The programme was begun in Trinidad over the past four months and we are now going to start in Tobago. *[Interruption]*

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are going to start a micro-enterprise programme for young people in the country, those who are interested in business, and for those young people who might be on the poverty line and are in need of financial assistance. This is the first time such a programme is being brought on line in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a programme which some people might have been thinking about for over 10 years, but it took the UNC/NAR Government to implement it in this country.

I do not think the Member said very much. Most of what he spoke about with respect to implementing programmes is the business of the national sporting organizations. We give them all the assistance that they need financially; we give

assistance through coaches; we give them the sporting facilities—and that is the big effort we are making in the country today. We are not only going to be putting down three indoor sport halls in the Port of Spain area. There was one which was started by the NAR government at Maloney and left unfinished. Thousands of dollars were spent on that. We are going to complete it. We are going down to Siparia next year. We will be in Tobago and we might even be in Toco/Manzanilla if the Ministry gets the funding.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have divided Trinidad and Tobago into 10 regions and we are making sure over the five-year period that those 10 regions have indoor sport halls of a national and international level. Therefore, Toco/Manzanilla will be getting its own. We cannot go everywhere in one day.

We have just started one in Chaguanas and it is the first time Chaguanas and those areas are seeing that kind of action. My hope is that when the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is given the funding, the whole of Trinidad and Tobago will get all the facilities that are needed for the young people of Trinidad and Tobago. There are programmes to take our young people off the streets, not only using sports but carrying them back into the classrooms to develop themselves, giving them skills so that at the end of day they will be getting a second chance and recognizing that the country cares for them. We will even be giving a third chance.

The idea that the Member was just talking about inviting international sporting people into the country, is already on the road. It might be the Member's cousin who will be coming for basketball. A programme is presently being worked out with the basketball league. It might be Michael Jordan we will be bringing down. We are now working out a programme with respect to Cuba for boxing and a number of other areas. The Member is not saying anything new.

This is a proactive Ministry, very dynamic. I congratulate the Government for taking this progressive direction in pumping more funding into the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and I am sure that in 1997 we will be getting even more funds which we might not even be able to spend. I assure the Member for Toco/Manzanilla that we are taking all those issues into that direction.

Cricket: There are a number of turf wickets that we want to put down next year, that is in the programme for the country. We will be doing that throughout the country. We will be going into Toco/Manzanilla. We are improving swimming pools. Presently we are building a swimming pool at La Horqueta, one of a national and international standard. We have asked for funding for two international

swimming pools, 50 metres in size, one for Tobago and one for Trinidad. We are looking at it against the background of sports tourism in that when countries like the United States of America, Canada and so forth are experiencing cold climate, their athletes could come to Trinidad and Tobago to benefit from those facilities. That is the direction in which we are going. We will be putting down that size of pool so that our young people can also develop their swimming to international standards soon. I only hope that I have opened the eyes of the Member for Toco/Manzanilla.

When I return here for the budget debate I will be coming properly prepared to clear the air on every area. What the Government has been doing is a very progressive way to function. If a ministry is dynamic and progressive and calling for the funds and another ministry cannot spend it, you vire the funds to the ministry that is ready to go. That is progressive. What is \$15.2 million with the argument that was just made by the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry when you used to come for \$300 million? This is a very progressive and dynamic Government. This is a very progressive and dynamic minister. The Member for Tunapuna was in a ministry that never functioned. Nobody knew anything about them. They never did anything progressive for the young people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I assure the Member that the Government is on a very progressive and developmental note.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Kenneth Valley** (*Diego Martin Central*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can say I was enlightened by the contribution of the last Member, and that even now if we were to do a little survey and ask the young people in Trinidad and Tobago who is the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, contrary to the belief of the Minister, a majority would not know. If one wants, one can test it.

The Minister outlined the programme and it makes me extremely happy that in fact something is happening. I know the programme which the Minister spoke about. It is just by chance I became aware of the fact that the netball component was taking place because in my constituency, they came to me seeking sponsorship for uniforms. I think the Government has a responsibility to ensure that such a programme, which I believe is needed in Trinidad and Tobago at this time, is known in all the communities.

**7.35 p.m.**

I think the point which my colleague, the Member for Toco/Manzanilla, was making is valid. The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs missed the whole argument here this afternoon. We are not complaining about the fact that the Government has come to vary or seek supplementary appropriation of \$15 million. As a fact, that is normal. If one listened to the argument of my colleague, the Member for St. Ann's East, one would have heard the argument is that it should have been for more, because we need to put the supplementary appropriation in a certain perspective. The perspective is that in Trinidad and Tobago for about 10 years the economy was in decline. Thank God for the PNM over the period 1991—

**Miss Nicholson:** NAR.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**Mr. K. Valley:** No problem. I would not argue about that. Started by the NAR continued by the PNM, we were able to put this economy on a firm footing. When the Government took office in 1995, the economy was no longer a problem. There would still be need for management to fine-tune here and there. The macro economic variables were in place; the trade policy was set and with respect to trade, the agenda was clear and the Minister simply had to follow that. Similarly, with the economy, that agenda was set. In a sense, the economy was in auto pilot. Therefore any government coming in and meeting that type of legacy knew that it had to focus on other problem areas; in other words, areas which were not emphasized during that period when we were attempting to get the economy back on track, those are the social areas.

At this time, the Government should be concentrating on crime prevention, poverty alleviation, street children, small business, squatter regularization, community facility, housing, schools and the public service. I want to deal with some of these. From where I sit, I find that this report and the Bill which is to come is woefully short of the requirements of our time. That is my personal feeling. That is what has come through from the arguments on this side. The Members for Toco/Manzanilla, St. Ann's East and Diego Martin East made the point. We are not concerned about the fact that \$63 million is being varied. However, we make the point that when we look at the Heads which are being decreased, we see that the delays were caused not by mere efluxion of time, but by policy decisions. Those delays were caused by ministerial actions in most cases. They wanted to review so that they

were late and they could not get important matters accomplished. Even that we can forgive.

I have a real difficulty with the fact that there was insufficient emphasis, given all that is happening with the key problem areas and the fact that our economy is now set to move. That is my concern. I say that because we have to take into consideration that we now have some windfall profits from oil. In 1990, there was a situation similar to what we have here in 1996. Oil prices increased, but there was no mechanism in place for the government to benefit adequately from that increase in oil prices. At that time, we argued that a system was needed such that as oil prices increased, the government's tax take would be improved and as oil prices declined, government's tax take would be reduced. The government at the time did not take us on.

When we got into office at the end of 1991, we put that system in place immediately in 1992. As oil prices increased in 1996, the Government benefited in accordance with that price. When they thought that the price would have been US \$17.50 giving them a take of \$2.1 billion in oil tax revenue at the average production level of 133,000 barrels per day, today they can estimate a \$1 billion surplus in oil revenue even though the average production is down by about 5,000 barrels per day.

As an aside, one would note that we were correct in the budget estimates because at that time, based on what we saw, we estimated that there would have been a shortfall of \$750 million in the budget. Recently, the Minister spoke about an estimated surplus of \$530 million for the year after taking into consideration the \$1 billion in excess oil revenue. It was estimated in the budget that there would have been a \$300 million surplus, so that other things being equal, one would have expected that the year would have ended with a surplus of \$1.3 billion, but he is telling us that he is expecting \$530 million. Clearly, were it not for the billion dollars—thank God for the oil magnates in Saudi Arabia—one would have seen that the budget would have had a hole of about \$750 million. As we say, God is a Trinidadian. Even when our Government does nonsense, something happens and we are saved. I thank God for that! *[Interruption]* I do not know why they have you here. We really do not need a court jester. I do not know why they have you here! You are an embarrassment to all of us! I do not think you understand that!

**Mr. Assam:** You are an embarrassment to yourself.



**7.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** I know the gentlemen on both sides enjoy saying kind things to each other, but I do believe both gentlemen ought to bear in mind that it is not the done thing under the Standing Orders to appear to be insulting each other.

**Mr. Valley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but you know it is very difficult to ignore the Member. I try my best, believe me! I wish I had the patience of the Member for Tobago East. *[Interruption]* The Member cannot ignore anybody.

**Mr. Speaker:** You should do as you were doing just now when you were speaking to them through me. I will not dilute anything you say. If you continue to speak to them through me, I think they would be better off.

**Mr. K. Valley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was making the point that the Minister of Finance estimated a surplus of \$530 million owing to the increase in oil price. I am saying also that the Minister originally estimated a surplus of \$300,000. Given, therefore, the problems of today, at least some part should be set aside for social problems such as crime prevention. I would have been extremely happy this afternoon if I had come to the Parliament and had received from the acting Minister of Finance a signal that some part of that surplus would have been set aside to take care of this problem.

The Minister made the point that government is continuity. Fine! Shakespeare said that all life is a stage and men and women play their part. We played our part. We dealt with the economy. Let it be said when you leave, as you would shortly, that you continued and put in place what was needed for the society at that time.

The Minister of Social Development spoke about poverty. Let us ensure that funds are set aside. The Minister talked about 1997, but we who have been in government know the actions of Ministers of Finance. Let us take the money away from him now and put it there for crime prevention, poverty alleviation or for dealing with the problem of squatters, which has been my Friend's hobby horse for years.

When the Parliament was dissolved last year, there was a Squatter Regularization Bill on the Order Paper. They had problems with it, fine, but the bill is languishing on the Order Paper and the squatters are still there not knowing what will happen to them. Let us be serious. As far as I am concerned, it does not matter who governs Trinidad and Tobago. What matters is that the country is governed in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

We know what the problems are. We talk about poverty alleviation and crime, but that will not solve the problem. There are six pieces of legislation dealing with crime, but not one dealing with crime prevention. How do we prevent crime? We have, first of all, to provide healthy alternatives in sports and culture for the young people, which is a point made by the hon. Member for Toco/Manzanilla.

The Minister of Sport and Culture spoke a while ago about taking the young people back into schools. We are doing that in Diego Martin Central. We did not wait on the Government. In Diego Martin Central, we said that perhaps children who were not successful at Common Entrance had talent somewhere. They may not be gifted academically, but they may be gifted with their voice or on the sports field. So we have our Cocorite Learning Centre, and it is only lately that we have started getting help from the Ministry of Education. That was an effort by the constituency with the help of the private sector. If I had my way, we would have that all over Trinidad and Tobago.

Let us face it, if we have to attack the problem of street children, we have to understand that these young people have talents. We are all born with talents. The sum of my talents is equal to the sum of your talents. We may not have the same talent, but our job as adults must be to set up a system to identify and help these young people develop their talents. [*Inaudible*].

I sat here waiting to hear someone say that part of that windfall would be set aside to take care of the problems of today. We have to understand the environment. If we have a windfall, should we not beef up the Unemployment Relief Programme? Should we not do that if we want to provide more work to alleviate poverty? We have to understand that calling conferences and seminars may be nice things to do, but we have to get down there and do the work required otherwise the problem would remain.

We do not have to argue about who set the economy right and who brought investments to the country. The country knows. Yes, the fine-tuning is required so we need somebody on watch. We need our hitters at this time in the social ministries to convince the Minister of Finance to set aside the amount over and above what he expected—the excess amount—to deal with these problems in society: crime prevention, poverty alleviation, street children, squatter regularization and small business. I notice that the sum of \$6 million was provided for on-lending and share component and, as at July 1996, only the on-lending component had commenced, with the share fund component scheduled for late in the year. These delays have affected the implementation and the total 1996 allocation will not be utilized. That

is a regret of significance because we know that in any society the small businesses are the ones which account for the majority of employment in the society—businesses which employ from two to 10 persons. Yes, we have tried to use a system to get the banks lending and the Small Business Development Company simply guaranteeing, but that has not worked. We know that we may need to have better management, but we need to get the Small Business Development Company back to lending, not doing it themselves, but perhaps providing the funds to the banks. Venture capital would help. It would provide equity to small business, but part of that excess revenue must also be earmarked for entrepreneurs who want to take risk and who fail. That is the way we develop a society. We have to develop that entrepreneurial class because we want employment.

**7.55 p.m.**

Housing is important and I would think that part of that fund also could be used for housing. In my own constituency in River Estate, the area was earmarked for housing and nothing has happened. Quite frankly, if the Government has a constraint, it should allow the private sector to get involved because housing is important. The two main issues individuals come to my constituency office about are in respect to housing and employment; some also come for help with groceries. Thank God in my constituency we have our welfare fund so that we are able to assist.

If one looks at the statistics—and I saw it today—the unemployment rate in Diego Martin is 9 per cent. In Diego Martin we work. [*Desk thumping*] We do not depend on URP and so forth we find work. There is poverty in Diego Martin, but the constituency has an active Member of Parliament. I can boast that every Thursday, as long as I am in this country, I am in my constituency office, ready, willing and able. [*Interruption*]

Before I leave that issue, I just want to make the point about John John. I want to counsel this Government to please tell the Minister of Housing and Settlements that he cannot build apartments for poor people and without giving them an opportunity to say they cannot afford it, turn around and by the sleight-of-hand give it to Jack Warner. One cannot do that and the people will not forgive him for doing that. One just cannot do that. We are talking about poverty alleviation, and crime prevention and that is not in the best interest of the national community. I just want to deal with a few other points raised in the debate concerning the level of supplementary appropriation in 1993 and 1994. I will also deal with 1992.

In 1992, the supplementary appropriation was \$15 million for the Ministry of Local Government and then there was a figure of \$240 million, to bring into account expenditure on the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery—the consensus of all was that the funds which were loaned would have gone directly to the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery. That was the concept. That loan was signed in 1991. However, after the budget was presented, it was found out that the loan was to the Government which on-lended the funds to Trintoc, and because of that, one had to make a book entry to show it and, of course, the Member for Oropouche could not understand the mechanics at that time and we spent some time trying to teach him. I do not know if he will remember that. I have it somewhere here.

**Mr. Sudama:** Deputy, you could not teach yourself.

**Mr. K. Valley:** In 1993, there was a supplementary appropriation of \$27.5 million and, in 1994, \$27.3 million. We know that nobody takes the Member for St. Joseph seriously.

**Mr. Assam:** Would you give way?

**Mr. K. Valley:** Yes, I would give way.

**Mr. Assam:** I think you are misquoting me. I did not say supplementary, I said the variation of appropriation.

**Mr. K. Valley:** That is what we are talking about.

**Mr. Assam:** No, you are talking about supplementary and there is a fundamental difference between a supplementary and a variation of appropriation. If you do not understand accounting, keep quiet. It is the variation of appropriation that I was talking about; not the supplementary.

**Mr. K. Valley:** Mr. Speaker, there is one piece of legislation which deals with variation of appropriation/supplementary appropriation. One sees that in the case of 1994, there was no supplementary appropriation for the purpose of under other Heads but merely a variation of appropriation. Look at it here. The Variation of Appropriation Bill:

"...seeks to supplement and vary the appropriation provided for by the Appropriation Act, 1996 and to authorize the utilization of any sums accruing from a reduction in expenditure under certain Heads of Expenditure for the purpose of meeting any liability incurred through the increase in expenditure under other Heads."

It is taking Heads of Expenditure increase \$27,524,811 million; Heads of Expenditure reduced, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Legal Affairs 27,524,811; that is the end of it. That is not important. If the Minister had come here today and told me that he is making a supplementary appropriation, I would say bravo, and at least this Government knows what is needed in this society. What is important is what it is for. There was no supplementary. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! Order please!

**Mr. K. Valley:** Mr. Speaker, through you, the Minister is speaking about 1992 which I just explained. In 1992, there was a supplementary appropriation of \$15 million for the Ministry of Local Government for which I fought. If you read the *Hansard* you will see it and there was a variation of \$240 million because of Pointe-a-Pierre bringing the matter into account.

I just want to touch quickly on other things because we have had some asides. I have always found it very interesting that the Minister of Labour and Co-operatives, an individual who for years posed as a journalist, never at any time indicated that he had political ambitions. Running up to Mr. Manning with his “Mr. Manning, so, so, so,” and only jamming in the *Daily Express* and he wants to come and sit here in Parliament. I have no respect for him whatsoever, I want you to know that. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, his credibility is zero.

**8.05 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I again feel it is now really necessary to ask you to come back on track and to conform with the Standing Orders.

**Mr. K. Valley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me repeat for the benefit of the Minister of Trade and Industry and Consumer Affairs, because he could never have dealt with that issue and he would never understand BWIA/LIAT. What I will tell him is that up to last week a businessman was saying how nice it is now to be able to leave Trinidad in the morning and return in the evening—one can go and do business in Antigua or Jamaica and return home to sleep in one's house at night. Tomorrow morning I am leaving for St. Vincent and I am returning tomorrow evening, and that is because of the BWIA/LIAT hook-up.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister talks about vision, all he could do is—Mr. Speaker, let me leave that alone, but it is very difficult to ignore him. He just does not understand. *[Interruption]* I will tell him again that the BWIA/LIAT hook-up was the best transaction in Trinidad and Tobago for some time. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Mr. K. Valley:** I will say it again and you could put whatever interpretation you want on it because of your mind. *[Interruption]*

With respect to education, over the period 1992—1995, I would not even go through all of it, but let me just mention some of the items—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! Order, please! *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Assam:** No ethics, no credibility—

**Mr. Speaker:** At least there was a time when hon. Members listened to Speakers of the House. Please!

**Mr. K. Valley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In spite of the fact that during the period 1991—1995, the emphasis was on the economy, one still found the allocation to do certain things and I would just read a few:

“Education

Computers have been provided to 150 Primary Schools.

Post primary centres have been established.

Repairs/refurbishment had been done to approximately 400 schools at a cost of over TT \$50 million.

Ten (10) Primary Schools have been constructed by the end of 1995, six more will be under construction.”

Not two, ten plus six equals 16. *[Interruption]* This is gospel.

**Mr. Assam:** You are making joke, you are reading your manifesto as gospel!

**Mr. K. Valley:** I continue, Mr. Speaker:

“The Lakshmi Girls’ Hindu College is being rebuilt and expanded.

Tranquility Government Secondary School is being rebuilt.

Corinth Teacher’s College has been re-established.”

And we have a number of other things under education, Mr. Speaker. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Assam:** *[Inaudible]* Tranquility Government Secondary School is the most dilapidated school in the country.

**Mr. K. Valley:** I do not know where they find you “nah”. Do like me, Mr. Speaker, ignore him, he will go away sooner than we expect. Mark my words, he will go away. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Assam:** I will never say that I did the best deal with BWIA though, that will haunt you forever.

**Mr. K. Valley:** Mr. Speaker, I continue:

“The Health Care System:

Refurbishment of the Port of Spain General Hospital.

Addition of a new wing at the San Fernando General Hospital.

Completion of district hospitals at Arima and Mayaro.

Major refurbishment of the St. Ann’s Hospital.

Construction of the new Outpatient Department at Sangre Grande.

Refurbishment of several smaller health facilities.”

Mr. Speaker, I now go to Social Development.

“Social Development:

Establishment of a Committee on Social Rehabilitation

Establishment of an Action-Oriented Committee on Social Displacement

Establishment of Day Care Centres

Training of Care Givers for the Day Care Centres

Social Assistance:

Old Age Pension: Some 60,000 elderly citizens benefit from this provision.

The SHARE programme was introduced to assist...

Public Assistance...

The formation of NADAP and the introduction of several demand-reduction measures....”

This is available, Mr. Speaker, I just do not want to take up your time. I have walked with my toothbrush and toothpaste. I hope you have also because we have another Bill to do.

We have outlined also what was achieved in sport and I am saying this even in a period when the national community knew that the Government met a very

difficult situation. Of course the Government knew that it had to take action which would have really shown the Government in a bad light.

I remember in 1993 when the National Union of Government and Federated Workers put about 15,000 persons around the Parliament when we were doing what we knew we had to do, to be able to put this economy on a sustainable growth-path. I am saying that if they are now on that sustainable growth-path, if the cake is now enlarged, then we must now be able to give those who suffered while we were doing that, we must now be able to call them to the table, including the public service.

The point was made that, yes, we knew that we had to develop the private sector and to rely more on the private sector to generate growth so that they could take some of the slack from the public sector in terms of employment, so that the unemployment levels in the public sector would be reduced and we would better be able to provide additional income to that lower level.

### **8.15 p.m.**

As a fact, we knew that we were competing with the private sector for skills required to carry out some of our programmes—the problem to which the Minister of Planning and Development alluded—but we had to put certain strategies in place so that we could get to a position where we could improve the perks or the compensation packages in the public sector. If we are moving into the 21st Century and if we want to do what we say we want to do, to be the business and financial centres of this part of the world, the efficiency of the public service must be paramount; we must be able to attract and keep top people; we must be able to pay our public servants well, including our Ministers. I will tell you, I have severe reservations about going back into any Government under the present terms and conditions. I make no bones about that. That is a fact. *[Interruption]* You see in your case you are earning more than the Prime Minister, so you are being taken care of.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tobago East, in a state of retirement, is enjoying an income higher than the Prime Minister—the only place that could happen is in Trinidad and Tobago—when I get big I want to be just like him. *[Laughter]* That is why all these things can be happening around him and he cannot say anything. There could be thousands of Galbaransinghs, Kuei Tungs and Fergusons and he can say nothing. That is how it is, but I cannot be like that. I like to get up on



mornings and go and work honestly for an income, and I do that all the time.  
*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Are you implying that the Minister is not working honestly?

**Mr. K. Valley:** I did not say that. Are you putting words in my mouth? I have always respected the Member for Tobago East—the *Hansard* record will show that—and if he is honest he will tell you that I have always paid him due regard. As a matter of fact—*[Interruption]* I did not say that.

**Mr. Assam:** So what did the hon. Member say, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. K. Valley:** For the avoidance of doubt, I am saying that when I see an individual for whom I have always had the greatest regard—I remember as a little child in 1971—*[Interruption]* I do things quickly, Mr. Speaker.

I was writing to the newspaper in support of the Member for Tobago East—I remember coming back from Canada and following the Member for Tobago East all over Trinidad, where he was speaking, I wanted to go because I wanted to hear him, and that is when I got fed up because he was talking about the same thing every time and I said that I could not take the one song every time, I just could not take it. I have always had that respect for the individual's integrity.

I am saying that at this time, however, when I know he is seized of information, that he knows what is happening and he sits there and does not say anything, then certain doubts start entering into my consciousness. Do you know Mr. Speaker, that I do not like having people on pedestals and then they let me down? So I am asking him this afternoon to just tell me where he stands on these matters. Tell me! I do not understand it. What is the Minister's plan? *[Interruption]* It is not I who want to know, it is the nation that wants to know.

Mr. Speaker, I have dealt with most of the items I want to deal with.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, your speaking time has expired.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. K. Valley:** Mr. Speaker, I am winding up, so I do not need 30 minutes. I simply want to come back to my basic point, that given everything, we need to set

aside part of that excess revenue to take care of the issues that are important in our society today such as crime prevention, alleviation of poverty, squatter regularization, public sector pay issue, small business, community facilities, housing. The Minister of Housing and Settlements may want to add a little for Jack Warner and his footballers. I am saying that in terms of crime prevention, we need to provide healthy alternatives for our youths, we need to find a system to assist street children—to get them off the streets because employment is important; we need possibly, to put some part of that funding into the Unemployment Relief Programme to assist those persons who are unemployed. I really think that we need to support that sports programme because I think that is one way of building communities; I think we build communities via sports, culture and so forth, and I want simply to ask the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs to advertise that programme and ensure that a fund is established for that programme.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**8.25 p.m.**

**The Minister Extraordinaire and Minister of Tobago Affairs (Hon. A.N.R. Robinson):** Mr. Speaker, last night we of the Cabinet had the great pleasure of dining with the Prime Minister of one of the newly industrialized countries in the Far East, Malaysia. It is a country I visited in the early 1960s when I happened to hold the portfolio of Minister of Finance—the first Minister of Finance of this country in independence. [*Desk thumping*] I can remember the exciting times that I had in my early 30s as I undertook that portfolio, and the extensive and difficult programme of reforms that I had to embark upon in circumstances where these measures were new not only to Trinidad and Tobago but to the Caribbean region. It was a matter of transforming the structures of a colonial society to meet the requirements of an independent country, particularly, in the financial and economic fields.

Mr. Speaker, it would have been so useful if we in Trinidad and Tobago, and particularly in this Parliament, had what I would call an “institutional memory”—the capacity to refer to the early origins of things, in order to inform us in our debates, as we proceed. Because I do not think there is anyone here who knows the origin of the particular process that we are discussing here tonight. In fact, this process of a variation of appropriation, transferring sums from one head to another, is something which started in the early years of independence. [*Interruption*]

This process that we have been discussing, transferring sums of money from heads of expenditure to other heads of expenditure without, in the first instance, increasing the sum total of the expenditures in the heads to which the sums have been transferred, is a process which was begun in the early years of independence. It did not exist during the colonial period and the particular year in which it was started was the year 1963. I happen to be the author of this process. [*Desk thumping*]

I quote from the record, Mr. Speaker:

“Since 1963...”

I quote from page 104 of *The Mechanics of Independence*, a book which I took the trouble to write, in order to record the experiences of those early years of independence. I mentioned the country of Malaysia because later on I will show the relevance of that comparison. I quote:

“Since 1963 supplementary appropriations have been made almost exclusively for the purpose of transferring funds to areas that have the technical and organizational capacity to disperse them.”

So that is the first point. You transfer surplus funding from areas where they exist to areas where the technical and organizational capacity exists.

The second point is that this resulted in a much more efficient process of budgeting and budgetary figures became much more meaningful, and I will give you an example of what I mean. The percentage of error in expenditure estimates is considerably reduced. In the years, for example, from 1953—1962, the percentage error in budgeting was over 10 per cent. It ranged from 10 per cent to 15 per cent over that 10-year period, 1953—1962. More than 10 years. But in 1963 when this process was introduced, the margin of error fell to 2 per cent. [*Desk thumping*]

**Miss Nicholson:** Solid!

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** That is the first point I wish to make, and you would notice that the margin of error in respect of these estimates is even less than 2 per cent.

Another point I want to make is the importance of what was described as financial discipline. There is a lot of discussion about discipline today; and this has been a matter which has been of considerable relevance for our entire economic history. In 1964 the budget laid great emphasis on financial discipline, and I quote from the *Hansard* of that year, the Budget Speech:

“Financial discipline means firstly a fiscal structure designed to raise adequate revenues to enable the Government to discharge its functions. It means, secondly, the collection of those revenues. Thirdly, it means the rigid control of expenditures. Fourthly, it means the proper appropriation of those expenditures. Fifthly, it means the relation of those expenditures to predetermined ends, based upon a rational order of priorities, in accordance with the economic objectives and social and political philosophy of the Government.

Lastly, financial discipline means financial planning, and the essence of financial planning is so to manage the nation’s finances that, on the one hand, the most effective use can be made of existing financial resources, and on the other, the maximum amount of additional resources can be attracted. This requires a balance between immediate and pressing needs and long-term requirements.”

So the elements of financial discipline were laid down in the second year of Independence of Trinidad and Tobago.

If one studies the history of the countries of the Far East, the newly industrializing countries, one would discover that one of the principal causes of their success has been financial discipline, financial discipline from which Trinidad and Tobago departed in the 1970s, and particularly in the years of the oil boom. Had there been an exercise of that financial discipline, the principles which were carefully enunciated and laid down in the second year of Independence, Trinidad and Tobago could have been on a path of growth similar to Malaysia, Singapore or Hong Kong.

**Miss Nicholson:** Solid!

**Mr. Sudama:** PNM profligacy!

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** Then the lessons were learnt in the early years, for example, the Development Plan. It is not within recent times that the difficulty in spending their appropriation has been discovered—the lack of the capacity of some ministries or departments to make effective use of the finances appropriated to them. I quote from page 105 of *The Mechanics of Independence*, after stating the evidence to support the conclusion:

“It is clear that the major problem in the Development Plan was the capacity of the various ministries to spend their allocations effectively. It was not lack of money. The major problem was not so much lack of money, it was the capacity

of the various ministries to spend their allocations effectively. The key to improvement was more a matter of organizing the departments than controlling the expenditure.”

And it remains the problem today. The Minister of Planning and Development will tell you, he came in and found the situation. The key is organizing departments properly, rather than merely controlling expenditure, so that the departments can spend the allocations effectively and produce the results that you desire should be produced. There is a lot that one can do—particularly the younger Members of Parliament. The older Members you cannot do much about. *[Laughter]* You cannot teach old dogs, like the Member for Diego Martin Central, new tricks. *[Laughter]*. So there is a lot that can be done from the whole programme of reforms. Tariff reform; income tax reform; setting up the Central Bank; reform of the insurance system; negotiation of the double taxation treaties. All of it is here, but we do not have an “institutional memory” and we are not interested in what others have done. We are not interested in achievements or difficulties in the past. So we have to learn. We have to confront the same problems over and over again, and re-invent the wheel over and over again.

**Hon. Member:** That is what Mr. Sudama is doing now. He is re-inventing the wheel.

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** I think it is a pity, Mr. Speaker, that there has been such a violent attack on the Minister of Social Development because I can say about the Minister of Social Development: his strong point may not be verbal or linguistic dexterity, but for sincerity of purpose he cannot be excelled. *[Desk thumping]* I have found it a great pleasure working with him and the Ministry of the Minister Extraordinaire is not for the purpose of supervising that Minister or any other Minister. Do not get it wrong. The purpose of the Ministry of the Minister Extraordinaire, particularly in relation to the Poverty Eradication Programme is to work with, and seek to secure collaboration among the principal ministries involved in the whole field of poverty alleviation, poverty reduction and poverty eradication. That is the purpose of the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and building equity.

**8.35 p.m.**

It is also the purpose of the Social Development Council, not to substitute for any other ministry, or any other organization, or any other mechanism of government or the private sector; it is not to substitute, it is to work with, to seek to bring

together, so that there can be greater collaboration among all the bodies, organizations and entities operating in the field, so that there can be a greater focus on the issue of poverty and also an attraction of internal resources internationally so that we can have a much more effective approach. It is a very comprehensive way of approaching things.

I say, too, that quite contrary to the kind of approach or strategy which has been enunciated by the Member for St. Ann's East and the Member for Diego Martin Central who suggested that we should first seek to put on par and then seek to achieve social development and equity as the case may be, that they cannot be done in isolation, or without each other. The lessons have clearly demonstrated that they have got to be done simultaneously to have a comprehensive approach. *[Desk thumping]* We have to put people first at the centre of the picture and all the resources must be had in order to achieve both growth and equity at the same time.

So, deal with the social problems otherwise one finds that the growth process will be proceeding, will be rolling along and poverty will be increasing. The lessons of history, of global experience, particularly in the last decade, are very clear that they are dealt with at the same time. Consequently, the purpose of the Ministry of Social Development and in particular the change in the management of poverty evaluation and social development, would be to achieve a focus by all agencies involved on the issue of poverty at the same time that you are dealing with matters of development and growth.

We get together; we discuss; we plan and we seek to have an execution of those plans by all the agencies. Firstly, the Change Management Unit will collect as much information as possible on what is poverty. Secondly, where is the poverty located? Thirdly, what are the causes of this poverty? Fourthly, what are the means by which one can approach the eradication of that poverty? It means bringing the entire national community into the process because it does not involve one group of people staying at the centre and taking decisions. The poor people themselves must be talking. They must say what has brought this about, their ideas about how they can move out of the situation and the whole objective of the process is not merely to alleviate, or to apply palliatives but to seek to have people move out of poverty into areas where basic needs and requirements can be adequately satisfied.

I want it to be clearly understood; what we are about is not identifying some people and saying they are poor and giving them handouts, providing alleviating measures of one kind or another. We are about moving the whole society in a

direction where those who are able, assist in pulling others out and in the process those who are in the depths of poverty, are assisted to pull themselves out. Those who cannot, of course, because of illness or some kind of disability which makes it impossible for them to take care of themselves, the society seeks to take care of.

It is a new process, it is a comprehensive process, which requires all of us. All of us are involved in the process. Almost all ministries are involved—the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs, all these ministries which deal with the well-being of the human being. All of them are involved in the process. It is not a process that is going to produce the dramatic results necessarily overnight.

The United Nations has designated the years 1997—2005 as Poverty Eradication Decade and the entire global community will be expected to work together in order to achieve a result of a significant reduction and, in some cases, complete eradication of poverty in that area. The United Nations' agencies involved in Trinidad and Tobago have committed themselves fully to assist in the process. I will say more about this, Mr. Speaker, in much more specific terms in the course of the budget debate, but I want to introduce correctly this idea of dealing with the economy first and then with the social development aspect after. Both have to be dealt with together.

Finally, before I close, I want to come to the personal matter raised by the Member for Diego Martin Central which, in the normal circumstances, I would treat with contempt. After all, the Member for Diego Martin Central is talking to somebody who has been in this process when he was in diapers.

**Mr. Valley:** Thank you.

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** I should say intellectual diapers. He is seeking to lecture to me when he would not even read what I wrote.

**Mr. Valley:** Give me your book.

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** No. You will have to buy it and it is out of print now. But the point I make, Mr. Speaker, is that this year completes 40 years that I have been in public life. During that time I have served in almost every public capacity in this country. I was responsible for the appointment of a president and also for the appointment of a prime minister—

**Mr. Imbert:** I will vote for you as president.

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** —and also for the dismissal of a president. And I can understand—

**Mr. Valley:** If the hon. Member would—

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** No. Please sit. You have been disrespectful enough. You must learn to be respectful on occasion. *[Laughter]*

**Mr. Valley:** I am big enough to be rude.

**Hon. A.N.R. Robinson:** Yes. You can be the rude boy of politics if you want, if that is your aspiration.

#### **8.45 p.m.**

As I was saying, my experience and service are beyond anything the Member for Diego Martin Central can hope to even emulate, let alone achieve. I have been, not only a Chairman of the Tobago House of Assembly; I have never asked for any retiring benefits for being Chairman of the House of Assembly. I have been Minister of Finance, Minister of External Affairs; I have been Prime Minister; I have acted in several capacities; I am now Minister Extraordinaire. Why not try to emulate rather than be jealous or envious? Do not be so petty.

Let me deal with figures now, Mr. Speaker. He talks about earning money. Let me say this. I can stay at home and practise my profession. I draw a pension which is a Prime Minister's pension and I can practise my profession in addition to that. I come here and what do I get? I get \$5,000—that is what he is talking about—for working and spending a lot of money having to cloth myself and travel, and so forth.

I think the country must know this. If I travel to Tobago and stay in a hotel for two nights, it is over \$1,000; If I stay in my own home, it does not cost the Government. These days I go to Tobago for at least two nights a week; that is eight nights in the month. It would cost the Government some \$4,000 if the Government were paying for my staying in a hotel. I do not stay in a hotel.

I think these facts need to be known so that when this scurrilous abuse starts on the other side—it is a pity that I should have to descend to these particulars. But having regard to the nature of the characters that I have to deal with, it has been necessary. I apologize to the House for having to descend to the level of having to disclose this kind of personal information. I am sure it would be more necessary as time goes on, as this election in Tobago takes place and polluters enter into the arena. Not all citizens are polluters; some citizens are polluters.



I hope I have put to rest some of these matters which have been so ill-advisedly raised by Members on the other side and I hope that in the future we would hear none of them, and if we do, that Members opposite would understand that they can be adequately dealt with. As far as my public record is concerned, I do not have to speak about it; it is known and appreciated, not only nationally, but internationally.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the House shall now suspend for half an hour.

**8.50 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**9.15 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**The Minister of Planning and Development and Ag. Minister of Finance (Hon. Trevor Sudama):** Mr. Speaker, there is much I had to say in winding up this debate, but given the lateness of the hour and the pleas from my colleagues, I would just touch on a few points as we bring this debate to a close.

First of all, when I listened to the Members on the other side, it appeared to me that they were really debating the 1997 budget. This is the 1996 variation of appropriation accounts and much has been said about our plans and policies. When I heard the Member for Diego Martin Central, in particular, I said this must be a lament from the valley. *[Laughter]* We heard all what the PNM government should have done and could have done and the fact that there is so much need to place emphasis on the social infrastructure, the issues of crime prevention, the social areas of poverty alleviation, squatter regularization and the development of small business and one wonders what they were doing between 1991 and 1995.

Mr. Speaker, I was also amazed that the Member could stand and say that we should have made greater provisions in these various areas. They were very concerned that we were reducing expenditure on some Heads and increasing the expenditure on others, but they were particularly concerned about the reduction under expenditure, but this debate really, is a debate about the capital programme of the Government, and the problems which we face today did not start here. They started with the emasculation of the capital programme budget under the previous PNM administration. Funds spent on capital projects—and they do not understand the significance of this—are really the replenishment of the capital stock of the country. Without that replenishment there can neither be economic development, growth nor social development.

They concentrated primarily on the years in which they were in office; on book-keeping; getting a surplus and not minding what kind of expenditure was involved in creating the proper balance between economic and social infrastructural development. There was no need for that and when the crunch came what they really did was reduce the capital programme of the Government willy-nilly.

**9.25 p.m.**

I want to give some examples of the legacy which we were left with respect to the disintegration and dilapidation of the infrastructure of Trinidad and Tobago. Even in the difficult days of 1987 under the NAR Government the actual capital expenditure in that year amounted to \$1.319 billion, which was 20.7 per cent of the total budget expenditure. In 1988 things were a bit difficult but that was reduced to \$725 million or 12 per cent of the total expenditure. There was some reduction in 1989 but at the end of the year when they took office, out of a budget of \$6.847 billion, presented by the previous NAR regime, \$810 million was spent on the capital programme, 11.8 per cent of the budget. Directly the regime in which my good Friend was a senior Member took control of the finance of this country, the figure was slashed and in 1992 the actual capital expenditure was only \$511 million whereas with gross expenditure being \$6.877 billion.

In 1992 gross expenditure was even slightly greater, \$6.877 billion and yet the capital budget was slashed to \$511 million. The percentage was reduced to 7.4 per cent. In 1993 gross expenditure was \$6.876 billion, more or less the same as in 1992, the capital expenditure reduced to \$487 million, a total of 6.7 per cent. It has taken a UNC/NAR Government in its first year of office to raise that figure and in 1996 we budgeted for \$810 million as our capital expenditure. To say more should have been appropriated when their record with the capital budget, both for economic and social infrastructure was calamitous, is to say the least.

I make another point. I heard a lot said about incompetence and inefficiency. The Member for La Brea is not here, and I had dedicated 10 minutes of the day to him, because I am tired of the same tirade, that everyone else is discriminatory, racist, corrupt and incompetent except the Member for La Brea. He impugns the integrity of everyone in this House, particularly the Members on this side and your good self, Mr. Speaker. I must say you are a very forbearing Speaker because, were I sitting on that chair, the Member for La Brea would not have lasted very long—impudence and disrespect to this House, using these words glibly: racism,

racist, corruption and incompetence and that I was fired from Shell Trinidad Limited. Yet, if he was not hiding under the skirt of a PNM Government and a PNM party he would find no employment. He could have never even fought a dog case in his whole life, so incompetent he is.

When we came into office we were going to institute certain investigations. Do you know the fellow took VSEP because one of the areas of corruption in Tesoro was the Lands and Legal Division. And talk about racism! He used to publish an underground leaflet called "Street Legal" in which he fomented all kinds of racial antagonism while he was legal officer at Tesoro. The Member is a total and absolute disgrace to this Parliament. As I said, like a coward he slinked away when he realized that I was going to deal with him here today. I am not going to say all I have to say. I will wait until he returns to this House.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall in this House the Member called me a petty thief and I told him if he went outside that door and said it, he would be minus a few teeth. He is using the cover of parliamentary privilege to impugn and malign Members in this House. If I took a photograph of the Member for La Brea and stuck it on my gate I would have no need for a canine presence in my home, but as I said, I will deal a little more comprehensively with him.

We have heard a lot about incompetence and how this Government is inefficient and so forth. I want to tell this House what their record was in 1995.

By 1995 the PNM Government was in office for three and a half years. From January to June 1995 its implementation rate on projects was 29 per cent, after being in office for three and a half years. Do you know, in the first year in office of the UNC/NAR Government its implementation rate for the first six months, January to June, was 35 per cent and that implementation rate has shot up in the third quarter? It has improved dramatically. They were not thinking about Government; they were thinking about trips to Hong Kong and elsewhere and making deals.

I am amazed—and this would not be tolerated in any other practising democracy. The Member for Diego Martin Central, as the Minister of Trade and Industry and also Minister in the Ministry of Finance, had intimate dealings and some measure of control regarding LIAT, because, the Government, as one knows, has a certain amount of shareholding in LIAT. Therefore, he was there in a relationship with LIAT, which is a kind of confidential relationship, where he had access to all sorts of confidential information. Immediately he gets out of government he becomes a consultant to LIAT. One questions the ethics of that kind

of behaviour, ethics which in other democracies would have been put under the spotlight of scrutiny.

So that he does not have a leg to stand on when it comes to questioning the integrity of anybody on this side. I put that on the records because there ought to be a code of parliamentary and ministerial behaviour which we should be instituting in this Parliament, where the Parliament as a whole takes account of the actions and activities of its Members and institute internal discipline on its Members on the basis of some sort of code.

Mr. Speaker, there were a number of issues raised but I will merely talk about a few of these issues to highlight the fact that much which was said on the other side was absolutely without substance. They talked about allocating too much money on the Rural Access Roads Programme. The Member for Diego Martin East was boastful to say that when one comes into Government one should not change anything, but should carry on with the programme which was inherited without any amendment or change.

If that is the case, why does he think people elected a new government? If a government should carry on with all the programmes and policies it found, then why the need to change a government? The people put us in office to review and implement the policies which were approved on the platform. We found that we had to go forward with some programmes, amend others and we felt we could not proceed with some. That is the mandate we have.

**9.35 p.m.**

They said we are putting too much money on the Rural Access Roads Programme. We had to review it because they were building rural access roads where nobody lived and no agriculture was taking place. They talked about the Solomon Hochoy extension. They should know better than anybody about the procedure of the European Bank. When we put out the bid for the Solomon Hochoy extension, it was responded to by only one bidder. The European community said that was not acceptable. The reason for the delay is that we had to re-tender, and not because we wanted, but that was the requirement imposed on us by the bank. We had to review and re-tender the specification. As a result of that, we are now in a position to proceed with that project. There is a time life. When we thought we could have proceeded earlier in the year we could not and we had to reduce the provision.

They are concerned with some of the setbacks in relation to the basic education programme. A lot of song and dance was made about the Carenage Government Primary School. That school was excluded initially because the designs were not approved and ready to go to tender by the Ministry of Works and Transport. It is not that we held it back for any reason of spite or victimization. Given the fact that we had to reduce the overall ceiling in the Public Sector Investment Programme, we had to cut out certain schools and go with some. It is not that we eliminated it, we merely deferred it. Representations were made by the Member for Diego Martin West. It amazes me to see that Diego Martin West in which Carenage falls was represented by a government minister and deputy political leader of the ruling party for four years, and in the 30 preceding years they could not build a primary school in Carenage. Now it is a UNC/NAR Government that would build a primary school in Carenage.

They talk about discrimination and victimization because we have gone through the procedures and to tender to build that school. I know why. The Member for Diego Martin West could not get past the Member for San Fernando East. In those days the Member for Diego Martin East was the eyes and ears for the Member for San Fernando East. Something happened in between. The discrimination against Diego Martin West and Carenage did not come from this side. It came from the Member for San Fernando East. I want them to take that in their pipes and smoke it. I want it to go on record that the school will be built by a UNC/NAR Government. That is something the PNM could not have done in its 34 years of control in government. *[Interruption]* They will see it built and then they would have to answer the question why it was not built during those 34 years.

The other point was that they cannot understand where we are putting our priorities and why we are making these cutbacks. The Member for Tobago East and I made the point that when one reviews, one looks at those ministries which are capable of effecting expenditure within the limited period for the rest of the year. Those that for one reason or other could not get their programmes going expeditiously, the expenditure is reduced. Do not dismantle any programmes. If something is not done this year, it could be done next year or the following year.

When we came into office we decided to review the health sector reform proposal for a loan because we were not happy with the initial proposals made by the PNM which included the closing down of the Caura Hospital. My colleague can attest to that. We wanted to build another polyclinic in St. James, not in a UNC/NAR constituency. There were a few matters which we had to renegotiate

with respect to the Regional Health Authorities. We were not satisfied with the amount of money which we were getting, as a loan could have been expended together with our counterpart funding and extended within the five-year time frame of the loan. We were trying to access US \$134 million from the Inter-American Development Bank and US \$58 million from our counterpart funding, making a total of US \$192 million. We had to negotiate for the loan to be extended over a longer period of time because all those expenditures could not be compressed within the time frame. The renegotiating; the expanding of the time limit for the disbursement of the loan and trying to renegotiate the position with Caura Hospital took time.

Now the Project Execution Unit is in place and while we made a provision on the assumption that we would have been able to put things in place for the loan at an earlier point in time, because of these delays, we were unable to do so. We reduced the provision from \$44 million to \$33 million so that we bring that provision within a reasonable expectation of implementation.

What is not done this year will be accomplished over six years or more of the loan period. Having done that, we have a big attack from the other side claiming that we are not paying attention to social infrastructure. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, I hear mutterings from this imp from Diego Martin East.

**9.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** I would say that it is not really the kindest thing to refer to the Member as an imp, but it is not really fair for a Member who has had his say, with extended time, when another Member is speaking, to have a continuous flow of words. This could in fact provoke one to refer to another as an imp, which is not good language. Perhaps we can take it easy.

**Hon. T. Sudama:** Mr. Speaker, I did not really say imp, I said "imb" which is an abbreviation of—

I am just trying to explain because they made all sorts of criticisms on the nature of the problem and how we are addressing it. There is no question of our cutting back on expenditure on social infrastructure. In fact, we will be here for a long time, so what is the hurry. It is as if everything must be done in 1996. That the world will come to an end at the end of 1996 may be their view, but it is not ours because we will be here for a very long time to accomplish our programme whether in the area of economics or social infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to detail in every area the groundless criticisms which were made, but the Member proceeded to assume the function of the Shadow Minister of Finance and to talk about revenues, provisions made and so forth. I want to make two points. There is no shortfall in income from oil. When we look at the figures, we had budgeted \$537 million in royalty from oil. When we did a revision of that projection, we came up with \$400 million, and the actual amount received between January and September is \$434 million. So, from the oil companies, from taxes on income and profits, we had budgeted \$1,437 million and when we revised the projection we came to \$1,142 million, but the actual amount collected between January and September was \$1,402 million. I think it is sheer mischief to go about propagating that revenues from oil whether in the form of income tax, income on profits or royalties have significantly been reduced.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin Central wanted to know what we were going to do with the windfall. This is really a matter for the 1997 budget. All I can tell him is that we have had increased revenues from oil and this whole question of oil production falling has been a trend which has been going on for years. The falling of oil production both on land and in marine areas is a trend. It is not something which has come into being as a result of the accession to office of the UNC/NAR Government.

The increased revenue as a result of the hike in oil prices has been balanced by shortfalls in other areas so that this windfall the Member speaks about is not the kind we could expect. We do not have final figures on it, so that the overall position is not too different from what we had forecasted at the beginning of the year.

Heavy weather was made about corruption. I think that the Member for Diego Martin East spent most of his contribution talking about corruption in the Government and with those associated with the Government, flouting the regulations of the Central Tenders Board and so forth. Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister asked the Leader of the Opposition to bring the evidence of corruption so that we can deal with it in a transparent manner, and he went to see the Prime Minister, he spent one second and said that it was an entrapment. He fled. He talked about corruption. When asked to provide the evidence, because he had no credibility, he talked about entrapment. However, in Parliament, using the cover of parliamentary privilege, is the only place the Member can talk about corruption. Let him go outside and talk about corruption.

They talk about how efficient they were in government and about how the drainage loan which they said they had put in train was not at this time negotiated, as a result of which we could not get into the drainage programme. I want this House to consider this. They started negotiations for a drainage and flood control loan in 1993. When they demitted office in November, 1995 there was no drainage and flood control loan at all. We were not even halfway there in the negotiations of what the programme ought to consist, but they were a very efficient government. They were so efficient that in two and one-half years, they could make no headway in negotiating one loan dealing with drainage and flood control.

**9.55 p.m**

Mr. Speaker, a regular criticism during the course of the contribution on the other side was that we were experiencing delays on two counts; slippage in terms of implementation, and that we did not have the resources to put that procedure in train. That is a fact, and it is the legacy of the PNM. What they left us is what we had to work with and we are now working in order to refurbish those resources and we are proceeding on that course.

The Member for St. Ann's North/Port of Spain West spent the entire four years in that regime talking about public sector reform, and when we went in there, there was not a single programme in place to effect public sector reform in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Not a single thing was done to make the Government more efficient and effective, yet for four years there was much propaganda out there about what they were going to do about having a lean and effective government. It was therefore left up to us to get that public sector reform programme in place in order to deliver on our promises in the election campaign and to get our programmes and projects implemented. These are the tasks that we face.

What is worse is that they said they could not understand why we spent so much time looking for sites. In many cases, sites were not readily available and we had to go throughout the country to look for sites, get the required approvals and go through the acquisition process. Mr. Speaker, we make no apologies for that. Even if it incurs a certain delay, we make no apologies because this is a different kind of Government. It is one which observes laws, procedures and regulations. We are not the lawless regime of illegality like those on the other side. They used to go and take over the land of Caroni (1975) Limited for housing development without any negotiation or permission from Caroni (1975) Limited, and having



done that, they go ahead and put in the infrastructure without any approval whatsoever from the Town and Country Planning Division. While the Government is the majority shareholder of Caroni (1975) Limited, it is a commercial entity with an independent legal personality, but they were not concerned with that.

I know of many areas in Couva on which the National Housing Authority projects were established on lands of Caroni (1975) Limited and Caroni (1975) Limited was none the wiser as to the acquisition of those lands. Whether it is in Couva, Debe, or Harmony Hall, wherever it is, that is the manner in which the PNM government operated.

They went down to the famous La Brea development and up to today, the La Brea industrial estate development does not have the Town and Country Planning approval which is a requirement under the law. And that is how they want us to operate. Just go there and in an autocratic manner seize and take control of land, occupy land without any regard for the rules and regulations which apply in this country. We are saying that even if it involves a measure of delay, this Government does not operate in that fashion.

Mr. Speaker, all that has been said on the other side was so much—I would not say rubbish—irrelevance, there is very little to which to respond. Our performance in the 11 months that we have been in office as a new Government trying to effect change in Trinidad and Tobago, has been exemplary and when we go around the country, we are complimented on our performance in the Government. Even when the newspaper takes a poll, the majority of persons in this country are satisfied with our performance and they say we have done well after the 11 months in office. It is not for us to bother too much with what the other side says. They are a rejected, beaten team who do not even know who their leader is and are fighting like crabs in a barrel in order to determine who is the leader of their party. They have no credibility in this country. The people are satisfied with our performance and they will continue to be satisfied as the years go by. I can see a very long time in the political wilderness for many of them and I know that in the case of the Member for Diego Martin East, he is not returning to government because the Member for San Fernando East does not forget so easily.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Report adopted.*

**FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTATION AND VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION)  
(1996) BILL**

**The Minister of Planning and Development and Ag. Minister of Finance (Hon. Trevor Sudama):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill entitled, The Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill" be now read a second time.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Colm Imbert (Diego Martin East):** Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the House seeks to vary expenditure increasing Heads of Expenditure by approximately \$78 million and reducing expenditure by \$63 million and, in so doing, it seeks to gain the Parliament's approval for a number of transfers from various programmes and ministries to other ministries. It also seeks a supplemental provision of some \$15.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Planning and Development, in my opinion, is a most bold-faced individual and I really believe it is necessary to place on the record once again, and I will place it time and time again, the facts relating to the Carenage Primary School, because the Minister is a stranger to the truth.

**10.05 p.m.**

I can say, categorically and without fear of contradiction, that the design drawings for the Carenage Primary School were completed in 1995, I saw them myself. Tenders were invited, received and a recommendation was made for an award of the contract for the Carenage Primary School. Having been the Minister with the responsibility for that portfolio, having investigated and seen the documentation relating to that matter, I am amazed that the Member for Oropouche continuously misleads this Parliament. For 12 months the Government has been misleading the country.

In January, 1996, he said that the plans were not completed. When we challenged that, however, he confessed that they were, in fact, completed but tenders were not invited. We then challenged that but he confessed that the tenders were invited but they were not evaluated. He then promised that work on the school would have started in June, 1996. However, he comes back in November, 1996, with the same old, tired, inaccurate story: no plans, no tenders and so forth. That is simply untrue.

The fact of the matter is that there was an allocation that should have been put in the 1996 budget for the Carenage Primary School. The reason the school has not been constructed has nothing to do with plans, tenders, or anything of that sort; it has to do with the fact that the Minister of Planning and Development deliberately deleted the allocation for the Carenage Primary School in 1996 and has refused to put it back, even in the half-year review. The reason the school cannot be built is because there is no money allocated for it in the budget. The Minister has taken out the money and put it elsewhere. Every time the Minister comes into the Parliament and gives an inaccurate version of events; that there were no plans, no tenders and so forth, I will correct him and let the country know that he is simply not speaking the truth.

I will now deal with the drainage system. When we started discussions in late 1993 which led to an approval, in principle, by the World Bank of a global sum of US \$80 million, we received a disbursement. Mr. Speaker, that is to tell you how the Member for Oropouche is such a stranger to the truth.

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. No disbursements were received on any World Bank loan.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, if you are standing on a point of order, could you please indicate the relevant Standing Order that you are claiming is being infringed? Would the hon. Member please proceed?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, on a previous occasion I had to correct the Member for Oropouche where he claimed that when he came into office he found that there was no Integrated Water Management Programme in the Government, so he, the great Member for Oropouche, had to bring together all the components of water collection, water distribution, water purification and drainage irrigation. The truth is, however, that all this was done in 1995 by the PNM administration and an Integrated Water Sector Management Programme was approved by the World Bank. This is why the Member for Caroni East is now in the position to implement certain aspects of this pipeline programme because, as I said before, the World Bank approved an Integrated Water Management Programme in 1995 and disbursements started in 1995 to WASA and also to the Ministry of Works and Transport for the design phase of the programme.

If, as the Minister is claiming, there were no disbursements, how were consultants working in 1995? Was it for free? Rubbish! This Minister of Planning and Development is content to come into this House and talk nonsense. The fact

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is, however, that we negotiated a team comprising representatives of WASA, the Ministry of Public Utilities and Ministry of Works and Transport went to Washington with the then Minister of Planning and Development and negotiated the Integrated Water Sector Management loan which resulted in disbursements in 1995.

The next phase of the programme was the implementation of the construction phase of the drainage programme, all of which has now been put in abeyance because of the incompetence of the Member for Oropouche, but he now comes here and misleads this Parliament over and over again.

What is the excuse given with respect to the social programme? They cannot find a site. The Member for Couva North has been representing the people of Couva since 1976—20 years—but they could not use that 20 years' experience to find one site in Couva in 12 months. The Minister now comes to this Parliament and gives the excuse that he had to walk around Couva because he could not find a site. The reasons given are unacceptable. It is sheer incompetence that a whole government could not find one site in Couva, an area represented by the Member for Couva North and his other colleagues for the last 20 years. I wonder what the story will be in 1997.

**Mr. Sudama:** You might not be here. If Manning has his way, you will be gone.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Will the Member for Oropouche come and say, “we could not find a site for this or that project so we could not do anything in 1997”? Will this also be the story in 1998: “we could not implement this programme, because we did not have the staff”?

Really, Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. I have had to listen to the Member for Oropouche while he was in Opposition, I have now had to listen to him for 12 months while he is in Government and it is the same approach, a complete departure from the truth.

I understand the Member for St. Joseph spoke about cement, they love this cement issue. I remember statements coming from the Member for Oropouche and now I hear them coming from the Member for St. Joseph, that we bought more cement than the total production of the Trinidad Cement Limited. What utter rubbish, Mr. Speaker! If one goes into the records, one would see that the annual production of the Trinidad Cement Limited is about \$500 million and the annual

purchases by the Ministry of Works and Transport is \$20 million. Five hundred million dollars cannot go into \$20 million, it is a fraction. These are the tired old stories they keep bringing into this House.

I have said before that the reason we cannot implement programmes in this country under this UNC Government is because of the corrupt tendencies of some of their associates. That is why we are having problems meeting our revenue targets.

I read from the *Quarterly Economic Bulletin of the Central Bank* for June 1996—*[Interruption]* He is now challenging the Central Bank's statistics, Mr. Speaker, where it indicated a shortfall in VAT and income tax. I bring the official Central Bank's bulletin to this House and the Member for Oropouche conveniently pretends that it does not exist.

**10.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I have made the point and I would make it again, that because the business associates of the Member for Oropouche and the Minister of Finance are being allowed to manipulate the system, the Government is being deprived of revenues. Taxpayers are being made to pay more than they should for public items, such as jeeps, for example. When there is a sole selective tender for jeeps there is no competition, so if the smart businessman says, "this jeep is \$300,000," one cannot tell him anything because one did not compete. The Government did not go out for tenders where they would get one jeep at \$100,000, one at \$150,000 and another for \$200,000 and be able to pick the lowest one. Sole selective tendering is not competitive and results in the taxpayers having to pay more than they should. There would then be revenue shortfalls, and that is why the social programmes of the Minister of Social Development cannot be implemented.

Members on the other side could laugh at these allegations, but the fact of the matter is that there are serious problems; there is manipulation of the tendering system and all sorts of irregularities are coming to light. Certain companies are being favoured and they are mysteriously getting all the contracts; everything is going their way but the Member for Oropouche says that there is no evidence.

Mr. Speaker, I read a published newspaper report today which is already outside this House—I did not have to read it inside, I could read it outside—where a supporter of the United National Congress is accused of importing a motor

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[MR. IMBERT]

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vehicle and using it for purposes that he should not, thereby depriving the Treasury Department of over \$130,000.00. That is why there is a shortfall in income tax and other duties, because their friends and associates are taking it away. That is why we are going to have problems in this country.

When poor people realize that the UNC Government does not care, and it is going to allow its friends to steal everything, that is going to cause social instability in this country. When the poor, unemployed man sees these things taking place and a Government condoning them—people just stealing money and taking taxpayers' money—there is going to be social instability in this country. When one makes everything a joke, it will lead to social instability and that is what the Minister is causing with his cavalier and lackadaisical approach to these very serious matters.

I hope that when the Member gets up to reply, he will not continue in his usual vein of inaccuracies, untruths and complete distortions of reality. I hope that he will stick to the facts so that we could get on with our business and leave this House shortly.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kenneth Valley** (*Diego Martin Central*): Mr. Speaker, you will recall that when the Leader of Government Business moved the adjournment of the House on the last day he stated quite clearly—and we took him at his word—that from Tuesday we shall be sitting every day, at least until November 26 or 27, or until we complete these matters. I thought I should mention this so that Members would be fully prepared. He said that Members should also be prepared to walk with their toothbrushes and toothpaste. [*Interruption*] He did not say toothpaste? Check the *Hansard*. Mr. Speaker, I really expected to see the Leader of Government Business here. I took him rather seriously and I have my toothbrush and toothpaste in my bag. I hope that the Members opposite did likewise.

Earlier on, in conversation with the acting Leader of Government Business, we had decided, as is normal, to treat the adoption of the report and the Bill as one debate and given that we had debated the report there would have been no debate on the Bill. Mr. Speaker, in winding-up the Motion on the report the Minister said certain things that I think we need to deal with—if only for the record—because I think the *Hansard* record, for austerity, must indicate both sides.

Let me deal, first of all, with what I consider to be a personal attack on my integrity. Mr. Speaker, I feel like I am Shakespeare: “who steals my purse steals trash but my good name that is all I believe I have”. I do not think I need to

have the Member for Oropouche tell me about integrity, I have learnt that as a little child in Couva.

Mr. Speaker, for the records, as Minister with responsibility for investment, I was in charge, for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, of the privatization of LIAT and also BWIA. After the elections of November 06, 1995, coming out of the Heads of Government Meeting in July, having dealt with all the governments on that privatization, we were very close to the completion of the transaction. However, there was one problem with respect to certain governments who up to July did not want the privatization to go through, and who had to be put in a certain position where they could not say no to the privatization because they were all shareholders of Carib Express.

After the elections, first of all, the chairman called and afterwards the secretary wrote informing me of the decision of the board of LIAT, asking me whether I would deal with that issue because they felt it needed to be dealt with at that level, with someone who was interacting with those Heads of Government and who could have completed the privatization.

**10.25 p.m.**

After some reluctance I took on the assignment which we completed in a three-month period, and that was the sum total of my involvement with LIAT. For years in this Parliament I have wondered why it is the Member for Oropouche—*[Interruption]* That is right. They could not find you, you got fired too often.

**Mr. Sudama:** I do not make deals.

**Mr. Imbert:** Unemployable.

**Mr. K. Valley:** While the Member was in Opposition, I always wondered why it is he did not look for some type of employment.

**Mr. Imbert:** Unemployable.

**Mr. K. Valley:** One could not understand. Here is an individual who we understood had post-graduate training, but was satisfied to come to the Parliament one half-day per week, perhaps spent half day in his constituency office; from time to time, perhaps, attend the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, and did nothing else!

**Mr. Sudama:** I spent the whole week.

**Mr. K. Valley:** He spent the whole week in his constituency.

**Miss Nicholson:** He is like Mahatma Gandhi, serving the people.

**Mr. K. Valley:** And even got fired from the post of General Secretary of his party. So that, one understands his jealousy of those who have certain skills.

**Mr. Sudama:** Really? Boy, the day I could be jealous of you—

**Mr. K. Valley:** But I will tell you, Sir, that assignment was extremely short-term and since then a number of persons have sought my advice. I thank God for that. *[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Sudama:** Were you advising Mr. Manning?

**Mr. K. Valley:** One does not have to depend—

**Mr. Assam:** You still have not explained the ethics of the situation.

**Mr. K. Valley:** What ethics? *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Mr. K. Valley:** I will say something further, Mr. Speaker. The Integrity in Public Life Green Paper, which was laid in this House early this year, talks about post-employment, and he should read it because it talks about ministers or senior officers working for private companies where they can lobby the Government from which they gain.

**Mr. Sudama:** Really?

**Mr. K. Valley:** Read it! I am a member of this Committee and I can tell you whatever the Committee decides with respect to post-employment, I am going to be bound by it. I do not need you to teach me about integrity, all right. I learnt that on the sandhills before I was seven.

We go on, Mr. Speaker, because—*[Interruption]* the sandbox. Mr. Speaker, when Members come here and misrepresent the facts, then one knows what they would do in other situations. The Minister got up and spoke about the capital expenditure programme of the PNM as a percentage of total expenditure. I got from the library, Mr. Speaker, the *Public Sector Investment Programmes* for the years 1992—1996. It is all here. It took me a while. I had no intention of speaking. In 1992, Mr. Speaker, the total budget was \$7.9 billion. The Public Sector Investment Programme for 1992 was \$1,440.9 billion. And he knows, as he says, that is what it is, the Public Sector Investment Programme, representing 18 per cent.



**Hon. Member:** No way.

**Mr. Sudama:** This is not what I said. I am talking about expenditure, actual expenditure. I am not talking about provisions. I am talking about actual out-turns.

**Mr. Assam:** They do not listen, you know. They never listen.

**Miss Nicholson:** The document he has is not actual.

**Mr. K. Valley:** Mr. Speaker, this is the *Public Sector Investment Programme*. The figure he is quoting is simply the Central Government Capital Expenditure Programme; and as the Minister of Planning and Development he knows that very well. *[Interruption]* He knows very well that what one looks at is *the Public Sector Investment Programme*. In 1993, Mr. Speaker, \$956.4 million; 11 per cent. In 1994 it was \$1,567.4 million. The budget, \$9.9 billion representing 16 per cent. The 1995 figure was \$1,461.4 million.

**Mr. Sudama:** He is quoting provisions.

**Mr. K. Valley:** He knows I am quoting the actual. The budget, Mr. Speaker, \$10, 109 billion; 14 per cent. On the same basis, 1996 PSIP, \$1,150.7 million. The budget, \$11,203.2 billion, representing 10 per cent. So that one sees the credibility. *[Mr. Sudama rises]*

**Mr. K. Valley:** You will have your time. You will speak. You will wind up the debate!

**Mr. Sudama:** Mr. Speaker, I said time and time again I was quoting Central Government Capital Expenditure.

**Mr. Speaker:** Gentlemen, if the Member for Oropouche is asking the Member for Diego Martin Central to give way, he could do that. If the Member does not want to give way, so be it. If one wants to rise on a point of order directing my attention to some particular Standing Order that one is claiming is being infringed, that is a different matter. But, surely, both of you cannot be standing and addressing me at the same time.

**Mr. K. Valley:** The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that this is the Public Sector Investment Programme. This is the responsibility of his Ministry. He knows that, and he knows that when he is talking about Capital Expenditure Programme, this is what he looks at. But, you see, he comes trying to do all types of things with figures; trying to fool the House. *[Interruption]*

*Finance (1996) Bill*  
[MR. VALLEY]

*Tuesday, November 12, 1996*

I just want to touch on that Carenage Government Primary School, Mr. Speaker, because you see, the point he made about a UNC Government building this school: if you listen to that Minister, in particular, he believes—well, first of all, I nearly said that Government was elected. But then, nobody elected the UNC Government. Let the records show that the UNC got 17 seats; they got fewer votes than the PNM; the PNM got 17 seats. The PNM say that anytime the UNC could tie with us, take it! Take it! Because there was no way we were going with them. *[Interruption]* No problem. We are happy; we are glad for them, because we believe that the country should have the experience of seeing them operate in government. We are extremely pleased because we feel certain that when the people re-elect the PNM government this time, it is not going to be for 25 or 30 years, it is going to be for a lifetime. *[Desk thumping]* After the experience of the NAR and the UNC, the people will never take another chance.

**Mr. Assam:** The Member believes in Aesop's fables.

**Mr. K. Valley:** I am willing to take any bet.

**Miss Nicholson:** Tabanca!

**Mr. K. Valley:** Tabanca? I do not have tabanca. Let me tell you, I will take any bet that you would never see government again in Trinidad and Tobago. *[Desk thumping]* That is the reality of the situation. I do not know if you know it.

**Mr. Assam:** That is a “nancy story” boy.

**Mr. K. Valley:** Have they looked at the *Trinidad Guardian* where the majority of the people are already saying that they are corrupt? In one year. In 12 months!

**Miss Nicholson:** You are not coming back over here. I am going to make sure of that. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the wish of the House that we should suspend for a while?

**Mr. K. Valley:** I do not know, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please continue.

**Mr. K. Valley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let us just have that clear, that they did not win an election. They were given the government. There was no way we were getting together with the rump of the NAR. There was no way, all right. There was no way. We win alone; we lose alone. That is the fact situation.

**Hon. Member:** Why did Draper give them up; and why did Draper come to beg pardon?

**Mr. K. Valley:** And I tell you, when we get back in government, then the people—right now people are praying and wishing they call an election. *[Interruption]* But the Carenage Government Primary School, Mr. Speaker.

**10.35 p.m.**

I mentioned a while ago that in the period 1991 to 1995, the PNM government built 10 primary schools and there were six under construction all over the island. Mr. Speaker, the PNM government, as you would know, has always been a national government. We never looked at where the PNM controlled or whatever. We were a national government and we expect that any government would also be a national government. As I said, we were in government; we did our thing and at any point in time, there would be things to do.

The state continues and the Government should understand, or rather, it ought to walk the walk. It cannot only talk the talk. It cannot be talking about being a national government and be forever wrong and, at all times, thinking only of its backyard. That is not how a country is run, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the Minister apologizes for making that statement and he should act post-haste in building that school in Carenage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be now read a third time.*

*Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Utilities and acting Attorney General (Hon. Ganga Singh):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Thursday, November 14, 1996 at 1.30 p.m. to deal with Motion No. 3 under "Government Business" on the Order Paper.

If we do not complete that matter on Thursday, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that we will convene on Friday at 10.30 a.m.

**Mr. Valley:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the acting Leader at what time he expects the House to adjourn on Thursday?

*Adjournment*

*Tuesday, November 12, 1996*

**Hon. G. Singh:** That will depend on the quality of the contributions.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 10.41 p.m.*