

Leave of Absence

Friday, August 14, 1998

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 14, 1998

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to advise that a few Members of this hon. House sought and obtained leave of absence from today's sitting. They are the hon. Prime Minister, the Member for Couva North, the Member for St. Joseph, the Member for St. Ann's East and the Member for Oropouche. They have all been granted leave of absence.

Member for Oropouche enters. [Desk thumping]

If I am to correct myself, the Member for Oropouche, up to a minute before he came in.

**OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT
(Twentieth)**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received from the office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the 20th Annual Report of the Ombudsman. In accordance with section 96(5) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, this Report is now presented to you and would be laid on the Table of the House.

PETITION

**Chief State Solicitor
(Request for Hansard)**

Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the Chief State Solicitor.

I now ask that the Clerk be permitted to read the petition and that leave be granted.

Petition read.

Question put and agreed to, That the petition be granted.

*Paper Laid**Friday, August 14, 1998***PAPER LAID**

Audited Accounts of Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended March 31, 1998. [*The Attorney General (Hon. R. L. Maharaj)*]

To be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**Jeep Cherokee**

98. Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister indicate:

- (i) How many Jeep Cherokee vehicles are in use under the lease/maintenance agreement between Platinum Motors Ltd. and the National Insurance Property Development Company (NIDPEC)?
- (ii) What sum has been paid or is payable at June 30, 1998 to Platinum Motors Ltd. under the Jeep Cherokee lease/maintenance agreement, and what amount represents the maintenance aspect of the agreement?
- (iii) What is the average cost of a routine or regular service on these vehicles?

The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore): Mr. Speaker, 100 Jeep Cherokee vehicles are on E999 Rapid Response Emergency duties throughout all districts in Trinidad and Tobago. The allocation of these vehicles is as follows:

North Eastern Division (including Port of Spain and Western Division)	33
Northern Division	15
Central Division	12
Southern Division	21
South Western Division	5
Eastern Division	4
Tobago	10

The cost of purchasing the jeeps was \$17,668,241. As of June 30, 1998 the sum of \$595,163.65 was spent on the maintenance and repairs of the Jeep

Cherokee vehicles. The average cost of a regular or routine service is \$625.00 which includes labour, NIPDEC's management fee, maintenance materials and consumables such as filters, oil and plugs.

The introduction of the E999 Rapid Response System has been very successful in providing citizens with a sense of safety and comfort both in terms of the dial-in arrangement and the response capability of the police to emergency calls. The average response time is 10 minutes. During the period January 1—June 30, 1998 the E999 Unit instituted 12,846 patrols: 6,466 by day and 6,380 by night. As a consequence of these patrols, 267 offences were detected, 206 persons were arrested and 301 traffic tickets were issued.

Under the new dial-in arrangement the police responded to 21,572 serious calls during the period January—June, 1998: 11,250 during daytime and 10,322 during the night. Other calls received were: requests for information, 24,629 and requests for community services, 13,459. These latter calls received prompt attention from the Community Policing Unit operating in the respective areas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hinds: Could the hon. Minister indicate how many of those 100 vehicles are out of service as a result of accidents and that sort of long-term situation?

Sen. Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore: Mr. Speaker, I am unable to say at this time.

Technical/Vocational Teacher

99. Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Would the Minister provide a list of persons who applied between the period January 01, 1993 and December 31, 1996 for the position of Technical/Vocational Teacher and could he indicate the persons on that list who have been successful at interviews and have since been appointed to positions in the Teaching Service?

The Minister of Education (Dr. The Hon. Adesh Nanan): Mr. Speaker, I have submitted the answer to the Clerk of the House for transmittal to the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant and other hon. Members of the House.

See Appendix for answer.

POSTAL SERVICES OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh): Mr. Speaker, on the authority of Cabinet, I wish to apprise this honourable House and the national

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community on the status of the private sector participation in the Postal Services of Trinidad and Tobago.

Cabinet at its meeting yesterday, considered and accepted the recommendation of the evaluation team that New Zealand Post International Limited be designated the preferred bidder for a contract to manage the Postal Services of Trinidad and Tobago. The evaluation team comprised the following:

Mr. Ash Singh	Chief Executive Officer First Citizens Merchant Bank Limited (Chairman)
Mr. Harjinder S. Atwal	Director, Economic Research and Planning Ministry of Public Utilities
Mr. Osborne Ashby	Human Resource Adviser Personnel Department Ministry of Public Administration
Mr. Mark Chang	Financial Comptroller TATIL
Ms. Gillian MacIntyre	Senior Research Officer Ministry of Public Administration
Mr. John Mulligan	Consultant Booz-Allen & Hamilton
Mr. Richardson Franklyn	Consultant Booz-Allen & Hamilton

Also participating in the discussions were:

Mr. Everald Samuel	Trinidad and Tobago Postal Workers' Union
Mr. Bernard Cropper	Public Services Association

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House continue to maintain that policy determination with respect to a sector as important as the Postal Services, or any other sector for that matter, necessitates adherence to principles of openness, adequate public information and discussions before commitments with far-reaching implications for the country and its people are made.

Mr. Speaker, the postal sector all over the world has remained virtually unchanged for many decades. Given the rapid technological changes and competition from the private courier industry and telecommunication-based services, governments everywhere are being forced to reform the sector. Indeed, the technological revolution has added an international dimension to the postal business beyond boundaries.

The rapid technological changes represent a critical challenge for postal services. In addition, as the global market liberalization process pulls down trade barriers, it will leave postal services more vulnerable to competition. If nothing is done, the postal sector will continue to erode in the face of competition. Consequently, the classic postal administrations are giving way to postal corporations of different colours. The benefits of a carefully planned reform programme have had significant results in many countries. Argentina's reform in 1993 involved complete commercialization, complete liberalization of the market and private sector participation in the management. Within two years the mail volume grew by 40 per cent, 98 per cent of the mail is delivered on time and the average price of delivery fell by below 65 per cent.

Local Setting: A comprehensive diagnostic study was done by the Ministry of Public Utilities and identified major sector issues and constraints. The study results led to the formulation of a reform strategy for the postal sector. The main issues underlying the need for reform were the following:

Heavy operating losses. The losses represent over 35 per cent of the total revenue. This has been a major factor in hindering sectoral development and network rehabilitation.

Poor quality of service has led to low public confidence and loss in mail volumes. Mail volumes in certain areas have declined by 37 per cent over the last five to six years.

Inefficient operation partly due to inefficient logistics and overstaffing has led to low productivity. The local post's productivity is 5 to 12 times less than the leading postal administrations.

Under-investment in and neglect of the postal network has hindered sectoral development. For example, about 12 per cent of the postal vehicles were judged to be beyond repair and 80 per cent are in need of substantial repair. The Post Office has one functioning computer. Institutional capacity is weak and there is a serious lack of managerial capabilities. Postal Savings Bank is ineffective as a channel for savings mobilization and funds transfer.

Reform strategy: Mr. Speaker, the Government's reform strategy aims to make rapid improvements in market, financial and operating performance and has identified the following specific objectives for the Postal Sector Reform:

1. Create a financially self-sufficient and sustainable postal service with the capacity to finance its growth, investment and new product developmental needs.
2. To ensure the continuation of universal postal service, a delivery network that reaches all parts of the country and a counter network that provides reasonable and convenient access to postal services for all residents.
3. Assure the achievement of high quality standards while maintaining reasonable and efficient prices.
4. Stimulate real growth in the postal service with an enhanced portfolio of services and products.
5. Modernize the postal infrastructure and strengthen management capacity to maximize the future value of the enterprise, its assets and its workforce.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Government's immediate strategy is:

1. To transfer the Post Office to a state-owned corporation, with full operating autonomy and commercial freedom.
2. Commercialization. Operational improvements will be undertaken in the retail network and in sorting and logistics. Post Offices will be transferred into modern, attractive retail outlets.
3. Technological Reform. New products and services such as e-mail, fax and hybrid messaging systems will be introduced. The Post Office will be fully computerised and track-and-trace will be introduced.

[*Interruption*] Track-and-trace system is when you send the mail, you can then find out who picked it up, what time and what day. I will teach you a thing or two.

Stakeholder participation. I wish to emphasize that transparency and openness has been the hallmark of the entire reform process and we will continue to involve all stakeholders in this process to ensure smooth finalization of this project. The unions and employees have participated at every stage of the process. A two-day workshop was held in July 1996 to gauge the interest of postal administrations, and unions were part of the organizing committee. Unions also officially aired their views during the workshop on the reform process.

1.50 p.m.

The unions met separately with postal administrations of Canada, Britain, Germany and Holland.

One of the unions was part of the official Government delegation at a Universal Postal Union meeting in Berne, Switzerland where Trinidad and Tobago's Postal Reform Model was presented.

The unions commented on four sets of draft postal bills. Three workers' forums have been held to explain the reform strategy and the new postal bill. A forum was held with all postal agents in Trinidad and Tobago.

The unions met separately with all the foreign postal administrations at a bidders conference in February, 1998. One of the union members and a Government delegate attended a postal-related workshop in Washington in April, 1998. Both unions participated in the technical and financial evaluation.

Selection and Evaluation Process: Mr. Speaker, based on the strict pre-qualification criteria which were designed to limit the bidding to firms with strong technical and financial capabilities, and to ensure that only experienced operators could participate, on September 8, 1997, a committee comprising of the Ministries of Public Utilities, Finance, and Public Administration, post office and the consulting firm of Booz-Allen & Hamilton, shortlisted the following firms:

- New Zealand Post
- Deutsche Post Consult International/Serco Services/Amalgamated Security Services (two local firms).
- Canada Post Systems Management Limited/Neopostal/SNC-Lavalin/Bracknell Corporation.
- British Post/Swiss Post.

The Spanish Post failed to qualify.

The request for proposals was issued on March 20, 1998 and the closing date for proposals was June 5, 1998. The technical proposals were opened on June 29, 1998 and the evaluation was finalized on July 13, 1998. The financial proposals were opened on July 30, 1998 and finalized on July 31, 1998. The proposals were judged against set technical and financial criteria.

Technical Criteria:

Specific experience of bidders in their own operations	6 points
Adequacy of the business plan for TT Post, including targets to be achieved	40 points
Qualification and experience of key staff	15 points
Change management strategy	5 points
Detailed human resource plan, training plan, compensation plan and manpower plan	14 points
Proposed organizational structure	5 points
Management Information Systems	5 points
Capital investment plan	10 points.

Financial Criteria

Financial projections for five years linked with business plan	Absolute requirement
Achievement of financial viability within three years	Absolute requirement
Management fees, including percentage of fees being risked against the achievement of targets	70 points
Percentage of profits being shared with TT Post	15 points
Operating shortfall for the first two years	15 points

The ranking of the proposers was based on the combined technical and financial scores using equal weights.

Mr. Speaker, some of the highlights of the New Zealand Post proposal are as follows:

Management fees for five years	\$28 million
Working capital shortfall for the first year	\$6.4 million
Government's share of profits from the third year	70 per cent
Net cash flow	First year negative of \$6.4 million but positive from year two and reaching \$21 million in year 4

Revenue projections	From present \$43 million to \$90 million in the fifth year
Income before taxes	\$2 million in the 3rd year and going up to \$17.2 million in the fifth year
Guaranteed delivery of letters	Within 24 hours principal centres and within 48 hours rest of the country
Real revenue growth	30 per cent over five years
Tariff increase proposed	20 per cent (1st year); 14 (2nd year)
Capital expenditure	About \$70 million over 3 years
Computers	\$794,000.00 (1st year)
Motorbikes for postmen	\$3.5 million over 5 years
Post offices and buildings	\$36.3 million
Improve mail security	\$2.6 million (2nd year)
New vehicles	\$3.4 million (1st 2 years)
Training	\$648,270.00 (1st year).

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has approved the appointment of a special team to negotiate mutually acceptable terms and conditions of a management contract with New Zealand Post comprising:

Mr. Ash Saigal	Chief Executive Officer First Citizens Merchant Bank Ltd. (Leader)
Mr. Harjinder S. Atwal	Director Economic Research and Planning Ministry of Public Utilities
Mr. Osborne Ashby	Human Resource Adviser Personnel Department Ministry of Public Administration
Mr. Raymond Philip	Postmaster General

A representative from the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Attorney General.

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Mr. John Mulligan	Postal expert Booz-Allen & Hamilton
Mr. Mark Belcher	Attorney-at-law Booz-Allen & Hamilton
Mr. Richardson Franklin	Financial Analyst Booz- Allen & Hamilton
Ms. Carol Balkaran	Planning Officer Ministry of Public Utilities (Secretary)

Mr. Speaker, it is expected that formal contract negotiations will begin by the end of this month and should be finalized by the end of September, 1998.

The Government is convinced that the experience, management and operational systems that New Zealand Post brings, will enable us to achieve our goal of making local postal services an organization of which we can all be proud. We, on this side, recognize that appropriate measures must be introduced to address fundamental problems and steps be taken to improve the postal services.

However, we want to assure the population that matters of national importance that require policy determination would be fully articulated before the national community, prior to commitments being made. We will soon be debating the Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation Bill which has already gone through the public comment stage.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your attention.

ABUNDANT LIFE MINISTRIES (INC'N) BILL

Question put and agreed to, That a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Abundant Life Ministries and for matters incidental thereto, be now read the first time.

Bill accordingly read the first time.

UNITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BILL

Question put and agreed to, That a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Unity of Trinidad and Tobago and for matters incidental thereto, be now read the first time.

Bill accordingly read the first time.

NATIONAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SYSTEM BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Information, Communications, Training and Distance Learning (Dr. The Hon. Rupert Griffith): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to present this Bill. I beg to move,

That a Bill to establish the National Library and Information System to provide for the development and co-ordination of all library and information services in Trinidad and Tobago and related matters be now read a second time.

The National Library and Information System Bill seeks to establish the National Library and Information System (NALIS) as a statutory authority with the mandate to provide for the development and co-ordination of all libraries and information services in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Bill provides for the transformation of libraries and what they do. It provides for the rationalization of library staff so that they could continue to fulfil their valued role as intermediary, guide, interpreter and referral point, but to do this in some more structured environment which would result in improved services, especially as we look to the future and the development of an information society.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the NALIS will have enormous potential to deliver resources for information and learning for citizens across the entire country, through developing and maintaining a system of libraries adequately stocked and staffed, accessible to all and using information and communication networks to enable people of all ages to retrieve and utilize information for the enhancement and enrichment of their lives.

Priority will be given to enhancing education and life-long learning opportunities, including distance learning for adults and for children, supporting training, employment and business to maintain economic growth, maintaining social cohesion through the fostering of a politically and culturally informed society, providing interactive services for citizens to access government information and services, acquiring and preserving knowledge and community history, collecting and providing access to our national literature, music and cultural patrimony in a heritage collection, providing access to specialized library services for the physically disadvantaged and the institutionalized, and the training of librarians to create a cadre of human resource which will benefit all sectors of the community by providing support to navigate the information super highway.

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Mr. Speaker, libraries are changing. They are changing in keeping with the demands of the societies in which they are operated; changing because of the new ways in which information is presented and used; changing because of the varied and innovative formats in which information is being made available. The impact of the information revolution and the development of the global information infrastructure is increasing day-to-day. Every known concept related to politics, economy, finance, law and society must be reinvented for a new global community in which there are no barriers between countries.

The information revolution is changing almost every aspect of our lives. The way we communicate, advertise, develop marketing strategies, enjoy leisure activities and, most significantly, the way we do business. Commercial transactions are rapidly moving from the real world to the electronic market place because of the great potential of electronic commerce to dramatically reduce cost, facilitate new types of transactions and enable companies, regardless of size, to access the global market place. The use of electronic commerce is growing at such a rate that it is estimated that electronic transactions will total billions of dollars in the next several years. The Internet—which is the primary medium for the development of this new global community—is empowering citizens and creating new forms of democracies throughout the world. The establishment of this new global community allows consumers throughout the world to compare products and serve with just a click of a mouse.

Mr. Speaker, information and communication technologies have become essential tools for institutional development and social reform in an increasing and complex world. The NALIS Bill seeks to bring together under the umbrella of a single statutory authority, the three public library entities which offer services to the public and, also, to manage the national human resource and library information service personnel in the public service. In addition, NALIS will provide a national library and information service which will be easily accessible to members of the public in order to facilitate cultural, economic, educational, political and social development. It will also maintain, develop and make easily accessible to members of the public a comprehensive collection of materials and information, with particular emphasis on those that are produced within and about the country and the Caribbean region.

NALIS will advise the appropriate Minister on all matters pertaining to a national library and information service. It will also act as a central co-ordinating agency for library and information services generally, by facilitating library and

information services to the public, schools, Government ministries, agencies and by providing consultancy and management services to the public and private sectors in respect of matters for, and in relation to, the establishment and conduct of the library. NALIS will also assume responsibility as a designated legal depository for the purposes of the publications—the Legal Deposit Act, 1985—creating the national bibliographic record, and provide a national referral service for information and library material in libraries, public and private.

Mr. Speaker, this organization will also be required to act as a national depository and resource for material published by the Government, and provide the focus for an international document supply service. It will promote literacy skills, the fostering of reading habits, building awareness in the use of library material and information services within the community and, in particular, to provide a national information service for the benefit of the physically disadvantaged and those in institutions.

NALIS will also be the central co-ordinating point for research in library and information science, and will be responsible for the preservation, promotion and exploiting of national heritage information. Mr. Speaker, today's debate on the National Library and Information System Bill is the culmination of efforts dating as far back as 1980 to rationalize library services in Trinidad and Tobago. In 1993, the former administration appointed a committee to advise on the integration of the library services of Trinidad and Tobago. The committee reported in 1993 and activities toward integration of the libraries were implemented through the Cabinet decision. However, as so many other decisions, no action was taken at parliamentary level.

Very early into this new administration, Cabinet appointed an interministerial committee which studied the previous draft Bill, made some minor amendments, and recommended that it be made available for public comment before being presented to Parliament. The Bill was put out for public comments, comments were received, and where considered valid, were incorporated into the new draft Bill. The Bill was debated in the other place on March 31, 1998 and passed with amendments on May 18, 1998.

The NALIS Bill seeks to provide for the development and co-ordination of library and information service in Trinidad and Tobago. It is divided into five sections. Mr. Speaker, I will now briefly go through some of the major elements of the Bill. Part I provides the short title and the interpretation of various terms used in the Bill. In part II, clause 3 seeks to establish the statutory authority. Clause 4

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describes the function of NALIS, which I have already addressed in general terms earlier. However, I wish to explain in greater detail the function of NALIS which mandates it to manage the human resource of library and information personnel in the public sector. This means that NALIS will be responsible for the management of appointments, training, evaluation and human resource development issues for the personnel in library and information services throughout the public sector bodies.

NALIS will not be involved in the day-to-day operation of the libraries within Government ministries, but will enter into memoranda of understanding with the Permanent Secretary or chief executive officers, as the case may be, of those institutions. NALIS will, however, be directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the public libraries and will set guidelines and standards for the operations of all of the nation's public sector libraries. This will allow for the most effective and efficient use of this scarce manpower resource in developing and co-ordinating the library and information services.

Mr. Speaker, clause 5 outlines the powers of this statutory authority to operate services, to contract, purchase, lend, lease and borrow library material, to accept gifts, to deal with real property, to dispose of or lend library materials, and to make investments in technology—in particular, information technology for the performance of its functions. However, it will need the approval of the appropriate Minister to raise money from and for its services.

Clause 6 defines the relationship which NALIS will form with Ministries, and provision is made for memoranda of understanding for the management of libraries to be agreed to between NALIS and the Permanent Secretaries, heads of departments, heads of statutory authorities, or the appropriate secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly. This clause also provides for NALIS to develop and maintain co-operative relationships with the national archives for the exchange, deposit and accessing of records and library materials.

Clause 7 deals with the management of the official seal of NALIS, and clause 8 deals with the collection, acquisition and maintenance of material and information within NALIS.

Clause 9 addresses the governance of NALIS by an eight-member board to be appointed by the President, with the executive director of NALIS being an ex-officio member of the board. Mr. Speaker, the composition of the board is clearly outlined in the schedule of the Bill and comprises persons with a satisfactory combination of expertise to control, direct and formulate policies for the operation of the National Library and Information System. Members of the board will have

expertise in library services, and these persons will be nominated by the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago. Persons will also have expertise in information technology, education, law, science and technology, corporate business, financial management, human resource management, culture and public administration, or any other endeavour which the President considers will advance the interest of NALIS.

The board will exercise its powers in accordance with directives given to it in writing by the Minister who has overall responsibility for the operations of this institution. In Part III, and clause 12 deals with the appointment of the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director of NALIS and provides for the prescribing of these posts under the aegis of the Salaries Review Commission. It also outlines the options which existing staff will have under the new legislation within six months of the Act coming into effect of seeking appointment or transfer to NALIS, or seeking to be seconded to NALIS, or to take up employment in the public service in an office and at a salary commensurate with what they were holding prior to the commencement of the Act.

2.15 p.m.

Provisions for pensions are also addressed, both for new pension arrangements and for the continuation of the existing pension arrangements for those employees who may wish to transfer or to be seconded to the National Library and Information System (NALIS).

Mr. Speaker, Part IV of the Bill deals with an essential element of the Bill—the establishment of a fund which will give NALIS the flexibility to operate a statutory authority. The composition of the fund is clearly spelt out in clause 23 which states that those sums which are to the credit of the three existing library authorities at the commencement of the Act will form the fund. It will also include any sums appropriated by Parliament for the purpose of NALIS, as well as such amounts which may be provided by foreign governments, international organizations, multilateral agencies or by persons who wish to make grants, requests or donations to NALIS. This clause also authorizes NALIS to borrow moneys for the purpose of meeting its obligations and discharging its functions. The fund will be used to defray the expenditures incurred in the operations of NALIS and the balance of the revenue of NALIS in a financial year, would be applied to the creation of reserve funds to finance the future expanse and provision of services by the authority.

Mr. Speaker, in clauses 28 through 31, the board of NALIS will make rules and design procedures for the tendering of goods and services and for a proper system

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of accounting and financial management, including internal auditing. The accounts of NALIS would be audited on an annual basis by the Auditor General. NALIS would provide an annual report of its operations and activities, complete with financial statements to be made in Parliament by the appropriate Minister.

Clause 31 makes provision for continuity in the bargaining body for employees who are currently employed in the library services. The Bill will provide for new employees to make a choice as to representation, either by the union previously representing the library staff, or by choosing some other body to represent them. However, the rights to representation are retained.

Clauses 34 to 38 deal with the powers of the Minister to make regulations under the Act; matters such as vesting of property, transactional and saving issues; the repeal of the existing Library Acts, Chap. 40:01, 40:02 and 40:03; and outlines the consequential amendments which need to be made in related Acts.

Mr. Speaker, this is a necessary and long awaited piece of legislation which had the support of the previous administrations going back as far as 20 years. This administration takes great pleasure in bringing this legislation to Parliament, especially at this crucial time as we seek to transform our society into an information seeking, knowledge based, learning society. This legislation, which will provide for the rationalization of library and information services, provides—by Government and the public sector—and creates an important organization which will underpin our efforts to reverse the decline in literacy and bring our nation truly into the information age.

Library service and new information technologies impact societies in a number of ways. Education and training systems have the responsibility to prepare individuals for the new information society. The new requirements brought about by both the new information era and the new information technologies include equipping individuals with the information, knowledge and skills to understand, effectively operate, solve problems and productively contribute to society.

This Government is committed to levelling the playing field in providing library and information services, not to some, but all citizens, now, and indeed, as we approach the 21st Century. I give the assurance that all measures will be put in place to ensure that no citizen—and I repeat, no citizen—is deprived of state-of-the-art, real-time library and information services wherever he or she is in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis (*Arouca South*): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to participate in this debate. A pleasure because it is clearly the culmination of what, in 1993, was an embryo, which, along with the librarians of Trinidad and Tobago, the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago, the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government then in office—the People's National Movement—working together to create what is now before the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, unlike what was said by the Member for Arima, the authority for the proposed legislation—and I would just like to make the point that, at the time that the draft legislation was put together, I had the honour of serving as the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for libraries. [*Desk thumping*] It was during that period that libraries in Trinidad and Tobago, because of the vision and foresight of the People's National Movement, came to such prominence that, as had been said by the then Sen. Ainsley Mark, the libraries were the best kept secret in Trinidad and Tobago.

Unlike this administration, we of the People's National Movement recognized the importance of libraries. We have consistently placed importance on what libraries can achieve and thus, Cabinet in Minute No. 1898, dated July 22, 1993 agreed in principle to the creation of a new authority to be called the National Library and Information System. The objective of this authority was to repeal the existing legislation pertaining to library service, that is, the Central Library of Trinidad and Tobago Act, the Public Library Act and the Carnegie Free Library Act. In fact, the decision arose out of consideration of a report of a Cabinet-appointed committee, dated April, 1993, on Integration of the Public Library Services of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, immediately upon taking office, the People's National Movement Government was approached by the librarians of Trinidad and Tobago and a request was made in an effort to highlight the activities of the libraries and, indeed, to put libraries in the focus and on the type of footing that libraries worldwide had moved to. The request was made by the librarians that libraries be moved from the Ministry of Education to the Office of the Prime Minister. It was felt, as they indicated, that because the Ministry of Education also had the school libraries to oversee, the other libraries in the country were not being given their fair due. If, in fact, libraries were moved to the Office of the Prime Minister, they would indeed get the kind of status that belongs, and quite rightly so, to libraries in Trinidad and Tobago.

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As we sought to effect the type of prominence that libraries deserved and as we moved to ensure that the proper legislation was put in place—I stress proper legislation, because we hear talk from the other side about “no action, no action”, but we are about taking proper action. We are not about taking action and then waiting on reaction from the public and then trying to rectify the situation. We of the PNM are of the view that if something is to be done, it is to be done properly and not in the hodge-podge manner that those on the other side have sought to deal with Government and governance in Trinidad and Tobago today.

Mr. Speaker, apart from the agreement in principle, the general feeling or the impetus that operated behind ensuring that proper legislation was put in place to achieve the ends of the librarians and the library services of Trinidad and Tobago, the underlying philosophy which was used in the legislation came from the UNESCO Manifesto on the Role of Public Libraries Worldwide.

I quote:

“Peace and freedom profit from independent, well informed men and women who can contribute to the aims of the community of which they are a part. Their participation requires adequate education and free and full access to information and to sources of their own culture and that of other people..... The primary duties of the public library which influence its services are to information and to culture.”.

2.30 p.m.

Indeed, based on this desire to effect the UNESCO manifesto and effect what, in fact, would be the objective of all libraries in Trinidad and Tobago, Cabinet agreed, in principle, to NALIS and to give effect to NALIS to the drafting of legislation.

While the present Government may want to take credit for bringing the Bill here, it is amazing that they take credit for all the initiatives of the People's National Movement in the last government. What is even more amazing is the fact that in 1993 the draft legislation was prepared. In 1994 the actual draft document became available and was put out for public comment. Up to 1995 the librarians and the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago were still commenting on the legislation. We must remember that this is a complete change from what the libraries and the governing body of the libraries had been accustomed to.

From 1993 to 1995 comments were being received and the draft was being studied. From 1995 it took three years for this Government to bring what was an almost completed piece of legislation to the Parliament. We heard the Member for

Arima say that when they got into office they made a few alterations and now they have brought it to Parliament. If I am not mistaken they got into office in 1995. I do not know how long it takes to make a few adjustments but three years later they are bringing the Bill to Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, we are of the view that even though they have grudgingly given us credit, they are along the usual line of vindictiveness and wickedness. I say vindictiveness and wickedness because immediately upon taking office one of their first acts in January 1996 was to stop the library project. The same library project that they are now trumpeting as being so important to the development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago and to the development of the information super highway.

On Friday December 13, 1996 the *Newsday* reported the Minister of Planning and Development, the Member for Oropouche—and I join with my colleagues in welcoming him back to Parliament [*Desk thumping*] and I trust that he will continue to recuperate and grow from strength to strength. He is in the pink of form. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of—at the time he was Minister of Planning and Development. I suspect that he is probably now just Minister of Development seeing that Planning has gone to another Minister. He said on December 13, 1996 and it is reported in the *Newsday*:

“Sudama: Stop the growth of POS”

Even though the Member for Arima has said today that libraries are of such significant importance to our development—

Mr. Hinds: What did you say?

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: “Stop the growth of Port of Spain.”

It is really of no concern to them that a national library safeguards the national heritage. It is, indeed, the true guardian and symbol of a nation's identity; the custodian of our culture which could be lost because of an inability to store and retrieve books, newspapers, magazines and the like. They decided to treat the building of a national library in the same off-hand way in which they treat the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I do not say this lightly because if we look at the situation that occurred in Blanchisseuse where six people had to die before crash barriers were set up—and crash barriers were set up within three hours. Mr. Deputy Speaker, look at the

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traffic lights situation in San Fernando where three people had to die despite protest and concerns made by the residents of the area and it was restored in less than one hour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, look at the situation in Arima where because a law abiding citizen protested against the Member of Parliament for the area his brother was fired.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will read the title of the Bill again:

“An Act to establish the National Library and Information System to provide for the development and co-ordination of all library and information services in Trinidad and Tobago and related matters.”

Could the Member for Arouca South stick to the content of the Bill please?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am on the section “related matters.” [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we look at libraries and the development of libraries, it is clear that the bringing of this Bill is not, in fact, an initiative or any kind of true follow-up of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, this is clear from the manner in which the Bill was presented, without any true desire to get the rationale, vision or the feeling of the librarians and the members of the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago into the reasoning behind the Bill which is now before us. It is clear without a shadow of a doubt that all this Government has done is just lay what to them is—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members for La Brea and Arima I would like to hear the lady speak.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis:—just a collection of words.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like at this stage to direct you to clause 4 (a) and (b) of the Bill:

“The functions of NALIS are to—

- (a) provide a national library and information service, easily accessible to members of the public, in order to facilitate cultural, economic, educational, political and social development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago;
- (b) maintain, develop and make easily accessible to members of the public, a comprehensive collection of material and information, with

particular emphasis on that produced within and about Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region;”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I refer you specifically to this clause because we on this side want to ensure that these words as stated in this Bill do not end up being hollow; as hollow as the empty space that was left when this Government decided not to proceed with the national library building. We on this side want to ensure that the functions of NALIS are, in fact, made a reality.

As I speak about a reality I must make the point that in the People's National Movement Elections Manifesto of 1995 at page 15 we indicated under the heading “Library and Library Services” that:

“At present separate Acts govern libraries. Drafting of one Act to integrate library services is almost complete. This will provide for a new authority, the National Library Information System (NALIS), which will manage library services.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the vision was very clear that libraries and the effect of access to information would be that all the people of Trinidad and Tobago would be able at the shortest moment's notice, to access information anywhere in any of the libraries in Trinidad and Tobago. One of the objectives of having a library centre in Trinidad and Tobago in the capital city was to link the outlying libraries with the main library so that even though the main library was, in fact, the structure in Port of Spain, the other libraries would serve as satellites and persons who access the other libraries would, in fact, through computer technology and Internet access, be able to access the information which was stored in the National Library and Information Service which came from other parts of the Caribbean region and internationally.

2.45 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was very clear that not only was it necessary to co-ordinate the efforts of the libraries within Trinidad and Tobago but, indeed, it was necessary to co-ordinate the activities of the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, the National Archives are referred to in this piece of legislation and, for quite some time and, unfortunately, it is happening again, the Archives have been neglected.

During the period 1991 to 1995, the National Archives were upgraded in several ways and the Manifesto of the People's National Movement of 1995 at

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page 23 outlines all the improvements—they are at least nine in number—that were made to the National Archives which, unfortunately, had been neglected.

I crave your indulgence to allow me to outline just some of the areas as they relate to the National Archives:

A conservation laboratory was established;

A search room was created for the public, to accommodate approximately 75 persons;

A computerized database to facilitate public access and also provide an efficient retrieval system;

Archival techniques were strengthened through specialized training programmes in microfilming, conservation, restoration and in audio visual archiving;

The population's awareness as to the holdings of the Archives was heightened;

The Archives collaborated with Government departments and the private sector in providing a service that caters for the preservation and restoration of the records in cases where national heritage material is threatened.

So, there was clearly a vision which came to fruition through the piece of legislation which is now before the Parliament.

As I said before, and I repeat for emphasis, clearly the Members on the opposite side do not understand the importance of libraries, or the importance of librarians and, consequently, that is why one of their first acts was to stop the construction of the library.

It is clear that they do not see the development of libraries or the development of a thinking population as one of the areas that can be used as a political gimmick. It is not one of the areas where a ribbon can be cut, or one of the areas where a highway can be opened. It is one of those imperceptible areas that cannot be used politically and, consequently, it was not one of the areas where they felt emphasis should be placed.

But, in the normal mode and manner of the People's National Movement, we see development as a holistic movement, not only development of plant or of physical attributes, but development of people as of extreme importance, consequently, that was the vision with which the librarians and the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago moved toward achieving.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask you to look at clause 9 of the Bill before us, which says:

- “(1) There is established by this section a Board by the name of the ‘Board of hereafter referred to as ‘the Board’/
- (2) The Board shall be constituted in accordance with the Schedule and shall conduct its business in accordance with the procedure specified in the Schedule.
- (3) The principal duty of the Board is to ensure the proper and efficient performance of the functions of NALIS.”

Clause 10 says:

“The Board shall perform its functions and exercise its powers in accordance with such directions as may be given to it in writing by the Minister.”

We on this side have some concerns with regard to both those clauses.

If NALIS is to operate—and it says so in the legislation—in the same manner as a statutory authority, the question must be asked whether this board is any different from a usual board of directors. We understand that the board must operate within the ambit of the legislation. We also understand that the board is not to deal with the actual day-to-day functions of NALIS, but, as clauses 9 and 10 indicate, the board appears to have conflicting responsibilities, because it is set up to operate in accordance with the Schedule as stated in the Bill, and the board is also to operate in accordance with written directions of the Minister to whom libraries are assigned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are concerned that in the normal everyday running of boards in state enterprises or statutory authorities, the Minister’s function as it relates to the board is, as the Constitution says, “to give general and/or specific directions to the board in relation to Government policy”. We on this side are concerned that clause 10 moves us away from this normal relationship between a board and a Minister because this clause seeks to give the Minister the authority to actually tell the board how it should run its operations. We are concerned that this is moving away from the normal relationship that should exist between a board and a Minister.

We had been told by Members of this Government, by the Member for Couva North and the Minister of Finance that the Government is not in the habit of telling boards what to do. They can hire and fire; they can do what they want, once it is

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within the ambit of Government policy or, in some cases, it would seem even it is outside the ambit of Government policy once they feel comfortable with it. We are of the view that this is not the normal relationship that should exist between a Minister and a board.

We on this side are therefore requesting that some examination be made of clauses 9 and 10, in particular, to ensure that a conflict situation does not develop and, also to ensure that the Minister's relationship with the board is not put into the legislation in such a way as to result in what is not the normal constitutional relationship that exists between Ministers and boards—statutory boards and state enterprises—and with Ministers and the public service. We are requesting that an examination be made so that this apparently disturbing relationship will not find its way into the final Act that comes out of the Parliament.

Dr. Griffith: Read 7(7) of the Schedule.

Mrs. C. Robinson-Regis: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am being disturbed by the presenter of this Bill to read clause 7(7) of the Schedule and I am assuming that that is supposed to give me some clarity in relation to the question I am asking. If I may be allowed to quote, clause 7(7) of the Schedule says:

“All questions arising at a meeting of the Board shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting, including the member presiding.”

I do not know if this is supposed to clarify the question that I asked. If this is supposed to clarify the question as to the relationship between the Minister and the board which we on this side are saying is not the usual relationship between a Minister and a board, this tells me absolutely nothing as, indeed, the Member for Arima as the Minister of Information, Communications, Training and Distance Learning, continuously tells the public of Trinidad and Tobago absolutely nothing. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this talks about a normal procedure of a board.

“All questions arising at a meeting of the Board shall be decided...”

It is clear he has not read the Bill.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like to point to Part IV—“Finance”, where under clause 23(2)(d), it says:

“(d) sums arising from grants, covenants, donations and other receipts from persons including national and international bodies;

- (e) such sums or fees as are received by or owed to, NALIS in respect of its operations or service provided by it;"

Mr. Deputy Speaker, clause 23(1) seeks to establish a fund in the name of NALIS and 23(2) seeks to indicate what shall comprise the assets of the NALIS fund. These two subclauses that I have just read are of particular importance to the library community of Trinidad and Tobago. Information material or access to information has to some extent over the years become very costly. Consequently, whereas the public library system of Trinidad and Tobago operated as a statutory authority, was able to access funds from international and national organizations and was able to work in such a way apart from access to Government funding, because the other libraries did not have this system of a board, they were not able to access this type of funding in this way.

Consequently, this section which relates to funding and financing is of extreme importance to the library fraternity of Trinidad and Tobago. What it means is that the libraries do not have to depend solely on Government funding. The libraries can move swiftly to access funding through agencies like United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), IFLA and other international agencies which, it is clear, have set aside funding to assist libraries, not only in developing countries but in countries around the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this particular clause is of extreme importance. Indeed, in 1996 when the decision was taken to stop the building of the national library, the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago had indicated that they would try to raise the funds because the reasoning given for stopping the building was that there were no funds available. The Library Association had made a pledge to the Prime Minister that they would work at raising funds. Indeed, one donation that came in was US \$5,000 to assist with that fund. Under this legislation that kind of access to funds for the development of libraries in Trinidad and Tobago would mean that the libraries can, in fact, move to do certain things which the restricted Government funding would not have allowed them to do. Finance is of extreme importance as it relates to libraries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the clear desire and objective of Part IV under the heading, "Finance", rest not only in the ability to access funds but to ensure that the libraries are properly funded.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker, as clause 24 of the legislation clearly points out, the fund—

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. Patrick Manning*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mrs. C. Robinson-Regis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank Members for giving me this extra time.

Mr. Speaker, as I was indicating, Part IV of the legislation which refers to the issue of financing is of extreme importance. I refer to clause 24 of the legislation where it says:

“(1) The money in the fund shall be applied in defraying the following expenditure..”

It is significant that the first issue dealt with under this clause is:

“(a) acquisition of material or other property, real and personal, in accordance with its functions;

Mr. Speaker, this is of extreme importance if, in fact, NALIS is to be of any significance in Trinidad and Tobago. It is imperative that as clause 24(1)(f) says:

“the making and maintenance of investments...”

And as 24(1)(a) says:

“acquisition of material or other property...”

It is imperative if NALIS is to function effectively and, indeed, to achieve the objective of not only harnessing the skills that reside throughout the library services of Trinidad and Tobago but, indeed, to be able to access skills that reside outside of Trinidad and Tobago, that the financing arrangements for NALIS are preserved in this legislation in such a way as to enable no constraints as to Government financing to prevent the proper running and functioning of NALIS. What has been a clear concern of the library fraternity is the lack of sufficient funding to carry out all the projects and programmes which the libraries seek to achieve which, in fact, is their mandate. Part IV on finance is of extreme importance and it is imperative that this section works and works well.

Mr. Speaker, it is also imperative that clause 27 which deals with NALIS as a body be exempt from all taxes, duties, fees, charges, assessments, levies and

imports on assets which it acquires for its own use, where goods are imported for or on behalf of NALIS and for the commercial supply of goods and services to NALIS, that those goods should not, as stated in the legislation, attract VAT or such duties, taxes, levies, *et cetera*. NALIS will operate in a manner that would ensure that all the skills and knowledge that reside in Trinidad and Tobago as they relate to the development and future movement of libraries in Trinidad and Tobago will, in fact, be brought to bear on all the libraries of Trinidad and Tobago. Not only the public libraries but the libraries that are part of the central library system and indeed, the special libraries that exist in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to speak very briefly about the special library services as they exist in Trinidad and Tobago because, in fact, some of the best special libraries in this region exist right here in Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, a number of the best trained, special librarians reside right here in Trinidad and Tobago and have, in fact, moved the entire special library system forward to such an extent that several ministries, several entities like state enterprises, the medical fraternity—the hospitals of Trinidad and Tobago—have benefited from having some of the best libraries in Trinidad and Tobago and in the region. So much so that all the latest technological advancement have been put into several of those special libraries and they can, in fact, be used as a showcase for the development of libraries into the 21st Century in Trinidad and Tobago and in the Caribbean region.

I take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the special libraries of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It is clear that the Government has not seen development in a holistic manner. I say this because of what I had indicated before, despite the Minister of Planning and Development, in December 1996 indicating that the growth of Port of Spain should be stopped, the Minister of Housing and Settlements at the time, the Member for St. Augustine said, and I quote:

“...the country was wealthy enough to fund development and appropriate resources were currently being consolidated.”

This appears to me to be a clear contradiction because on the one hand we saw the argument being made that there was not enough funding to fund the development of a national library; that growth in Port of Spain should be stopped. On the other hand we heard the Minister of Housing and Settlements saying quite clearly that the country is wealthy and funding for development would not, in fact, be a problem.

Mr. Speaker, it was clear and still remains very clear, that the objective was not to put any resources even if it meant stopping a project which was for the

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development of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago—indeed for the development of the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, to the detriment of the development of the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, to the detriment of the people of Trinidad and Tobago—that would be the process that would be used. It is interesting that the Government failed to see the concept of development of the capital of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, with your leave, permit me to quote from *The Guardian* of January 19, 1996, where under the heading, “City centre project looks dead now,

“With the cancellation of the library, as it now stands, what really appears to be the case is not just the library, bad as that is, but it looks as though the entire city centre project has been cancelled in the minds of the Government,” the Opposition Leader said.

Manning said the proposed National Library was one of a number of building projects designed to create a new city centre by September 1999.

The former Prime Minister rejected Government arguments that there was insufficient funding for the library project and that there was an undesirable imbalance in development spending in favour of Port of Spain as against other parts of the country.”

Mr. Speaker, what is interesting about that whole concept of not developing Port of Spain any further, is the fact that when the PNM is in government, Trinidad and Tobago is seen as a holistic country for development and governance.

3.20 p.m.

I say this without fear of contradiction because the first decision that was taken by this administration was that Port of Spain’s development—the capital city of Trinidad and Tobago—must be halted.

Mr. Speaker, we heard nothing said when the PNM, in government, decided that the Point Lisas Industrial Estate would be sited in what is, in fact, termed as Opposition territory. It is clear that the decision was taken purely because they on that side did not see Port of Spain as an area of political benefit to them. Consequently, they decided that it served no interest to them to develop Port of Spain despite the fact that it is the capital city of Trinidad and Tobago, the country which they now govern.

It is clear that they did not, do not and will never have a vision for Trinidad and Tobago. They lack vision and those projects which they have proceeded with are the ones that were left by the People's National Movement government; projects that were and still are for all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We are of the view that all the people of Trinidad and Tobago are entitled to growth and development. It is unfortunate that since this Government has come into office that is no longer the way it operates. All are entitled to development.

Mr. Speaker, again, I crave your indulgence as I continue to make the point that as libraries develop they are for all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. As we develop the city of Port of Spain which they have decided not to do, it is for all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Whereas it was said that certain developments were not suited to certain people in the society, Mr. Speaker, we are clearly of the view that development is the entitlement of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to quote from the *Newsday* of Saturday, July 27, 1996 which clearly outlines the kind of warp thinking of the Members on that side. The headline reads "Humphrey: TTFA 'heaven-sent' for John John Towers". I now see the reason why the Member for St. Augustine is willing to go on bended knees to Jack Warner because the TTFA is heaven-sent and I knew that it was only for issues relating to heaven that we should go on bended knees or prostrate ourselves.

"Minister of Housing John Humphrey yesterday said that the offer of the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association (TTFA) to buy the John John Towers was 'heaven-sent'.

He told the House of Representatives that 'the John John Towers were never built for fire victims' by the People's National Movement (PNM).

He said that the fire victims 'who had lost their little shanty homes in the fire' were too poor to afford the cost of \$272,000 for each housing unit...

At this the Opposition erupted into shouting.

Earlier Dr. Vincent Lasse PNM MP for Point Fortin and a former Minister of Housing had criticised the Government's position on the issue.

He asked whether it was fair to sell the towers at half their cost price to the TTFA whilst not giving the same half-price subsidy to people in John John who wanted to buy them for homes."

[Desk Thumping] He continued:

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“‘It is logical to think that he thinks it is bad to give away to the poor but good to give away to the rich’, argued Dr. Lasse.

He then claimed that the Minister of Housing was not interested in housing and ‘that is why so many housing projects have been suspended, terminated or

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Arima was presenting this Bill, he mentioned that one of the objectives of NALIS was to effect a metamorphosis in the library services of Trinidad and Tobago. What we are clearly seeing, even before NALIS has become a reality, are metamorphose occurring on that side of the House. [*Desk thumping*] Because on each and every occasion that we hear them speak, even those who had the honour at one time to sit with the People’s National Movement have metamorphosed in such a way that they have become unrecognizable and they have clearly developed the ability—an ability which resides with those who were the former DLP/ULF/Club 88/UNC—to change circumstances in such a way and to change their mechanism of speaking and indeed, to speak with forked tongues in such a way as to be unrecognizable by those who a few days before saw them in a particular manner. [*Desk thumping*] It is amazing that a metamorphosis could occur in such a short space of time.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if that is the kind of metamorphosis that we are to anticipate with the Minister who will be responsible for libraries, we are requesting that that Minister not be allowed to give written directions as stated in clause 10 to the board of NALIS. We would never know what kind of directions would be given especially in light of the fact that NALIS is allowed to raise its own finance. I give that warning because we have seen so much occur in areas where Ministers do not have that direct link with the board, and so much has been unfolding in Trinidad and Tobago which has left us wondering if this kind of relationship is allowed to develop, what would happen to NALIS which the librarians have wanted for such a long time.

As I said in opening my contribution, we support this Bill. We want to ensure that the Bill is implemented in the way that the vision for the Bill states that it should be implemented. Save for the request for a re-examination of the relationship between the board and the Minister as outlined in clauses 9 and 10, this legislation, which as we said previously, is our legislation, is supported by us on this side.

Mr. Speaker, we want to make assurance doubly sure that when the clauses of this Bill are to be implemented, they are implemented in such a way as to bring the perceived benefits to the libraries, the librarians, and the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago. This Bill is the culmination of what has been a usual process that is developed by the People's National Movement. I say a usual process because the PNM has a history of harmonizing bodies and institutions in such a way as to ensure that they benefit all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. And that is why the PNM transformed the energy sector moving from Texaco to Trintoc, Trintopec and eventually to Petrotrin so that all the expertise would be harmonized and be available to all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. That is why there was the harmonization of the tourism industry by joining institutions like IDC, the Tourist Board and eventually developing TIDCO, so that the tourism industry would develop to its fullest potential; that is why we harmonized TTT/NBS to move to ICN—not to develop into a propaganda machinery but to benefit all the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is in that context we saw the necessity to harmonize the libraries of Trinidad and Tobago to ensure all the expertise and all the benefits that have come from libraries and the National Archives redound to the benefit of all in Trinidad and Tobago, including government departments and other national and international agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have participated in this debate. I request some indication as to the relationship between the board and the Minister. I thank you.

The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Trevor Sudama): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me express my thanks to Members on both sides of the House who have welcomed my return, and for their best wishes, including the Member for Arouca South who wished that I move from strength to strength, and given her perseverance this afternoon, she probably has some extra strength which probably I could do with.

I just want to make a few comments on this Bill before us and indeed, on some of the comments made by the Member for Arouca South. As I listened to her, it was difficult for me to decipher what areas of her contribution concerned this Bill before us and what areas concerned other things in a wide-ranging discourse this afternoon.

I must also compliment the Member for Arima for his very comprehensive statement in introducing this Bill to the House this afternoon. I do not know how

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much it is realized but, what we are discussing today is a critical element in the development of Trinidad and Tobago, and that has to do with the acquisition, storage and indeed, access to information. We are continuously being told that information and access to it will be the driving force of the next century in the development of countries and nations. Therefore, through the expansion and the rationalization of the library services, we are attempting to provide a larger volume of information which will be available to a large public.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

In doing this, we will be proceeding on that path to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago and its peoples are focussed in the right direction. Perhaps, some may say that it has come too late, but it is better late than never. This Government has only come into power in the last two and a half years, and when one looks at its performance in those two and a half years, one will see that it has done extraordinarily well in comparison to the previous regime. Even the Member for Arouca South indicated that the embryo for this Bill was long in gestation and that is understandable, because, it is a PNM embryo. It is for a UNC Government to bring that embryo into full life and into fruition.

Therefore, I think that if it were left to the PNM government this Bill would have still been an embryo.

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Singh: Yes, yes. That is a good point.

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am amazed that the Member for Arouca South could have got up in this House and talked about the development of libraries under the PNM and the importance it attached to libraries, and I look for the evidence. How many libraries have been built? What was the access of the population to greater library services during the period of their administration? I see no evidence of that and, therefore, the Member for Arouca South's claim that the PNM attached great importance to the development of libraries is rather an invalid one.

She said there was a special move to take libraries from the Ministry of Education into the Prime Minister's office where they would have greater status and authority. Of course, that depends on the Prime Minister to whose office the library system was moved. If it is the Member for San Fernando East, I am not sure there is an improvement in status and authority by that move.

We have also been told that when the PNM brings a piece of legislation to this House it is proper and they do not need to consult anyone, or to amend anything;

they bring something here which is really God's gift to Trinidad and Tobago. It represents an attitude of mind that once the PNM presents something, regardless of the views of the population, it has to go through and become law and, therefore, if this Government feels that it has presented something and needs further consultation, then it would go back and consult. This Government is responsive to the sentiments expressed by the population. Nothing for us is cast in stone and, therefore, we are adhering to the very basic philosophy of democracy and the democratic process. That is the philosophy to which we ascribe, but it is the philosophy on the other side that once I say so, "not a dog bark." That was the slogan of a previous Prime Minister and, unfortunately, the Prime Minister from 1991—1995 sought to follow that philosophy that "when I speak, not a dog bark." Unfortunately, the result of that is for all to see because he speaks and every dog in the PNM is barking. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Maharaj: Led by Dr. Rowley.

Hon. T. Sudama: Every dog, Rottweiler and otherwise. I made that point merely to identify a difference in philosophy between the other side and its autocratic nature, and this side which adheres to the democratic principles in the conduct of its public business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make a certain point which is not only with respect to this piece of legislation, but to all the matters which we inherited when we came into office at the end of 1995. It is the right and the prerogative and responsibility of a new government to review and revisit that which has been passed on from a previous administration. Were it not for that, we would be slavishly following all that the previous regime had put in place, and that would be against the mandate of the people who voted us into office, because they have indicated that our position here is to look at everything and bring changes where they are required. Therefore, when we came into office, there were a number of things which we had to revisit and one among those was this piece of legislation. We consulted with persons in the library facility: I myself went through this Bill clause by clause together with the technicians. We consulted the Library Association and made certain amendments to this Bill and while it could have come to us earlier and be debated and passed—of course this has to come within the scope of the parliamentary agenda—we are here today and the delay has been one that has been occasioned before 1995. Apparently the Member for Arouca South is not against the Bill, but she is just against the Government, so we make no apologies for revisiting legislation or programmes which were in the pipeline.

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I now come to this vexed question of what I purported to have said in 1996 about the new library and the question of growth in Port of Spain. I want to make it abundantly clear today that this Government came with a mandate to institute balanced development in Trinidad and Tobago. A cross sector, cross region balanced development creating infrastructure all over Trinidad and Tobago and addressing the imbalances which it inherited from the previous regime. I never said we had to stop the growth of Port of Spain, because development comes not only from public sector expenditure, but from facilitating private sector expenditure, so if we facilitated private sector expenditure in Port of Spain, that would have created development. I must also make the point that Government's revenues and funding are limited like any other resources and if one spends more in one area one is obliged to spend less in another area. We have seen the imbalances and lived with the imbalances of expenditure by the PNM regime.

Over the years, they have boasted about holistic development. All I can say is that this vision of holistic development is development with a hole and through that hole, substantial portions of the revenues of Trinidad and Tobago went under that regime. That was the holistic development as far as they were concerned. The "hole". If I were the Member for San Fernando East I would hold my head because apparently he is having many difficulties that are creating a lot of headaches on the other side.

I return to the holistic vision which the PNM regime had for development and when they left office in 1995, this vision meant that 70 per cent of the population of this country could not get an adequate water supply. That is the holistic vision for development. Its holistic vision for development was that the vast majority of the road infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago was in a state of utmost dilapidation. Holes in the road. That was their vision of development. It was a pattern of expenditure where the health services and the education services were starved of adequate funding and today we have the consequences of that in what this Government has to grapple with—the social and physical infrastructure of this country—and that for them is holistic development. Holistic development when one considers that the agricultural and other sectors of the economy were in a rapid state of decline under the PNM regime. That for them is holistic development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the philosophy of this Government to create balanced, economic and social development in Trinidad and Tobago and if one is going to do that, one has to reorient the expenditure pattern in a way in which all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are served. This is not to exclude Port of

Spain or the urban areas, but to give them their due share in the allocation of resources and as I said, this Government makes no apology for that policy.

It is well-known, when one looks at the electoral pattern, all the urban and most of the suburban areas are represented by the PNM and this has been something which has been occurring over the years. And, therefore, their expenditure pattern, whether it is in the capital of Port of Spain or the East/West Corridor reflected their desire to control and consolidate electoral support in certain parts of the country. Where they perceived they had no electoral support, then, in the words of the former Prime Minister, "Crapaud smoke their pipe". That has been the experience of their holistic vision for the whole of Trinidad and Tobago. Tobago also suffered by the hands of the PNM in the way in which its expenditure pattern was developed. I make that point extremely clear.

Reference was made to Point Lisas. The decision to develop Point Lisas and put an industrial estate there was not because the PNM government loved the people in the surrounding areas, but because there was access to a port, and free lands obtained, and up to this day Caroni (1975) Limited has not been paid for the lands on which the Point Lisas development is. There was relatively good access through the infrastructure, but the development of Point Lisas—and I want to make it very clear today—marginally benefited the people of Couva and the surrounding areas.

3.55 p.m.

They could not even get jobs on the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. If the employment pattern is looked at, it will be seen that the people of Couva and the environments gained very little as a result of the siting of that Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to put paid to that argument that because the PNM was committed to development all over the country, that was why it went to Point Lisas to bring greater access and opportunities to the people of Couva and the surrounding areas. Little could be further from the truth. When they built houses in and around Point Lisas, they gave 99 per cent of the houses to their own supporters way down in Point Lisas. That is what they did. So, let me put to rest this talk about going to Point Lisas because they loved the people of Point Lisas.

The new library—Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we came into office, we looked at all the projects which were ongoing; those in advanced stages of implementation; those which were in the primary stages of implementation; and, as

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usual, with resources which are not unlimited, certain choices had to be made as to what to go with right away, that is, what should be continued; what should be deferred and, in fact, if that was the case, those which were just in the conceptual stages and which we felt should not fly, those which had to be eliminated.

It was never the intention of this Government not to proceed with the construction of the library in Port of Spain. The intention was to suspend work until we reviewed the project.

Mr. Williams: You said so.

Hon. T. Sudama: No. No. If you rely on those newspaper reports and so forth, then you would always be misinformed. If that is your source, you will always be misinformed.

Mr. Bereaux: The *Hansard* has it. You said it.

Hon. T. Sudama: Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we reviewed the concept for the national library which the PNM administration had passed on to us. One of the first concerns was that if we were going to use prime property in the centre of Port of Spain, then we had, as far as possible, to maximize the use of that prime property. That was one of the things which motivated us to look again at this issue of the national library. If we are going to use prime property, why not maximize the benefits to be derived from that?

Therefore, we decided that the square footage of the library, the gross floor area, should be increased from 180,000 square feet to 240,000 square feet. Here we had prime land in the centre of the city which we wanted to put to the largest possible benefit.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, indeed, we had to increase the number of floors from ground and five upper floors to ground and seven upper floors in order to increase the floor area. Also, the idea was if you were going to do that, then you should make some provision for that library building as such, to acquire some revenue to pay for both its maintenance and for the moneys which we borrowed to partially service that debt. Simply because this Government is committed to efficiency, it is business-oriented and it would like to maximize the expenditures of Government revenue to the fullest extent possible.

Therefore, whereas under their proposal, all that would have happened is the Government would have been saddled with rising and rising levels of expenditure to service the debt and, indeed, to maintain the library, we have now come up with

a proposal where a portion of the library will be rented to suitable tenants and that rental then would be applied in the defraying of maintenance cost and in partial servicing of the debt which is to be incurred.

The third point I wish to make is that there were no moneys available from government revenues to pursue this project. [*Interruption*] Therefore, we had to explore the whole question of whether Fincor would be willing to look at the additional expenditure involved and willing to foot that additional expenditure and, therefore, we could have a new financial package developed. Yes, we had to go outside, therefore, as I said, the money was not available for spending from government revenue. We had to go outside and under the agreement, make lease payments over a period of time.

What we have decided upon is that we will proceed with the project under a build/own/lease transfer arrangement—what is called BOLT—and that Fincor, through its subsidiary London Street project company, would be the implementing agency to arrange the financing and attend to all the legal, administrative and other matters related to this project.

On that basis, a contract for the construction of the project in the sum of \$98,826,000 was awarded to RK Plummer and Associates Limited. The contract was signed on July 17, 1998 with the commencement of contract works on site being July 20, 1998. It is anticipated that the date for the completion of the project is May 19, 2000. In other words, that we will have a construction period of 22 months and this country, in the next millennium, would have its national library. Needless to say, that project will come to fruition before the next general election.

At present, the enabling works are being carried out. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would recall I said that we propose to provide additional floor space and go up with two more stories on the building. Therefore, the whole question of whether the original foundation could have accommodated two additional floors had to be looked at. This is where we are. We were told that is so and that the enabling works are now in train to see that that is assured prior to the commencement of the super structure work. The 22 months I spoke of would be inclusive of the period that it takes to have these enabling works executed.

So, let me once and for all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, lay to rest this whole question of the misinformation, misinterpretation and mischief on the other side associated with the deferral of the construction of the national library building.

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The Member for Arouca South made a number of other comments, that there is a neglect of the Archives of Trinidad and Tobago. I want to find out: When did that neglect start? Did it start in November, 1995?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Thank you, Member for Oropouche. Mr. Deputy Speaker, just on a point of correction, I did not say that there is a neglect of the Archives. I said there was a neglect of the Archives and then I went on to quote from the People's National Movement Manifesto indicating what had happened with the Archives. I would prefer if the Member does not misrepresent what I said. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. T. Sudama: Let me not misrepresent what the Member said. There was a neglect of the Archives. Did you not say that? When did that neglect take place? From 1956? Or, did it start in 1986? When did this neglect take place?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: It started in 1986.

Hon. T. Sudama: Well, you did not say so. You should have been a bit more specific in your dates of neglect but, before 1986, we had a fabulously functioning archive system in Trinidad and Tobago. I want to indicate to the House these rather irresponsible statements made by Members on the other side as to neglect and so forth.

Let me deal with the question of clauses 9 to 10. What is the board authorized and constituted to do and what is the role and function of the Minister? Let me preface what I am going to say, that in any system final responsibility has to lie somewhere. In our system of democracy, responsibility lies with the Executive which is then responsible to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The Minister is the representative of the Executive. Therefore, when things are going on, somebody has to take responsibility but you cannot only take responsibility, you also have to have the authority to influence and give directions in certain areas where it is felt that the policy of the Government is not being properly or fully implemented. That is the role of the Minister and, therefore, he must have that power to give general and specific directions.

Let us look at clause 9(3).

“The principal duty of the board is to ensure the proper and efficient performance of the functions of NALIS.”

Let us assume for a moment that under a certain board, the functions of NALIS as prescribed in clause 4 are not being properly and efficiently performed. Are we

going to leave autonomy to the board without giving the board any directions as to its responsibility for efficient performance of its functions? Auditors do not deal with policy questions. Auditors deal with financial audit.

Mr. Hinds: We know that.

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I fail to see the point that was made by the Member for Arouca South. If a Minister acts in a way which is not in accordance with the wishes of the public, or if a government acts in such a way then, of course, the public would pass judgment on the performance of a government and the performance of a Minister, as the case may be. But a Member cannot stand in this Parliament and say that the Minister must have no responsibility for monitoring the work and performance of the various boards and for what they are responsible.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Who said that?

Hon. T. Sudama: That is what was implied in the Member's statement that she had a particular concern with clause 10. Was it the concern that the Minister should have no authority? What exactly was the Member trying to say?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: That is a legitimate concern. You would not understand.

Hon. T. Sudama: Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the Minister's responsibility; it is the Executive's responsibility to see that the functions outlined in clause 4, to provide a national library and information service easily accessible to members of the public in order to facilitate cultural, economic, educational, political and social development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, are efficiently and satisfactorily performed. In the final analysis, it is the Minister's responsibility to see that that is done.

As far as I am concerned, I am not sure if the Member for Arouca South sought to make a point, or whether she was just talking for talk sake. I am not sure.

Let me proceed to clause 23 with which she had some concern. I do not think she had a concern with clause 23, I think she wanted to emphasize the importance of funding to NALIS and so forth, and that is why we have included this and strengthened the provision in the Bill as to sources of funding that would be available to NALIS.

Therefore, that provides the flexibility for NALIS not to be solely dependant on the Government revenues in managing its affairs, that it will have recourse to other kinds of funding; donations from both national and international sources and,

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therefore, it would be in a position to carry out its functions in a more efficient and effective manner.

4.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, again, I come to this whole question of the authority of the Minister. A minister cannot direct the board to apply funds other than as stated in clause 24. He cannot do that and, therefore, he is constrained by the provisions of the law.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: You mean if it was under the PNM government. You all do whatever you all want.

Hon. T. Sudama: No Minister could direct the board to utilize money other than as stated in clause 24.

Over and above this, Mr. Speaker, we have included provisions for internal and external auditing to ensure that the moneys are properly spent for the purposes for which they were approved. This is very clear in the legislation. In order to improve the operations of the board there is also the question of the board not being subject to the provisions and procedures under the Central Tenders Board Ordinance.

While we have done that, one would see that there is an obligation on the part of the board, as is with other statutory enterprises and state companies, to design rules and procedures for the purpose of tendering for goods and services which shall be subject to the approval of the Minister. Again, we are trying to give the board a greater degree of flexibility in its operation in terms of purchasing materials for the use of the library services. Mr. Speaker, I was amazed when the Member for Arouca South said that there was access to other funding and because we sought to review the construction of the national library that it was denied the princely—

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Mr. Speaker, I would really appreciate if the Member for Oropouche would refrain from misinterpreting and, indeed, saying things that I never said. We are in the House of Representatives to represent the people effectively and honestly and I would really appreciate if the Member for Oropouche would desist from making inaccurate statements about what I said in my contribution.

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. Speaker, we have a problem in the sense that we do not have instantaneous reports of the *Hansard*. If those reports were produced here—I am sure that what I am saying is accurate. I have it in my notes here: “that the

library was denied \$5,000 because we delayed with the construction of the library.” That sort of spurious argument coming from Members on the other side is what we have to put up with day after day in this House. Rather than seek the welfare of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, we hear spurious arguments from the Member for Arouca South.

Mr. Speaker, let me go back to where I started: the importance of this Bill and its significance. The question of access to information; the question of the utilization of information has, in the final analysis, to deal with reading capacity and ability. Not only should there be access to the materials where information is stored, one must also have the capacity to read, comprehend and to analyze.

What has happened over the period of PNM’s stewardship in the educational—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member’s speaking time has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. T. Sudama: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, if we are to put this country in a situation where it could compete—

Mr. Hinds: UNC must go!

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant knows what is his fate for the next election, I do not have to tell him. He should not talk about the UNC he should mind his own state for the next election. [*Interruption*] The Member for San Fernando East has a very long memory, so the Member should not worry about the UNC, he should worry about his fate for the next election. His support for Dr. Rowley has not gone unnoticed. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: Order! Order!

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. Speaker, this is a national problem which we are confronting and we are trying to do it in only one aspect, that is through this Bill; that is the very significant decline in the educational standards, generally, in Trinidad and Tobago.

Every year we have increasing numbers of the functionally illiterate being produced by the educational system in Trinidad and Tobago and that started under

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the PNM administration. Today, we have a very difficult task on our hands. If we are going to get this country on a growth and development path, it means that we have to correct that. We have to get persons functionally literate so that they would be able to access information, whether it is from books or other sources, and to be able to utilize that information for the benefit of themselves, their communities and, indeed, their country.

Mr. Speaker, what do we see, even at the tertiary level? I had the misfortune, if I could say, to look at essays written for entry into the foreign service by persons who had degrees. Mr. Speaker, you would be amazed—persons could not express their thoughts in writing; lack of analysis; lack of comprehension; do not talk about spelling at all. That is merely a reflection of what is happening at the primary and secondary levels of our education system. If that is happening at the tertiary level, and we want to expand tertiary education—because the percentage of our population which has had a tertiary education is very limited when compared to other developing countries, and indeed the developed countries—

4.25 p.m.

If we want to expand that, we have to focus on two things: the quality of education and access to education by all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The quality of education and access to education have to be addressed urgently, as indeed, we are addressing at this moment the functioning of this Government. The Member for Arouca South jumped up and said I was misinterpreting her, but since she has so much energy—

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: I hope you have energy to do the same. [*Laughter*]

Hon. T. Sudama: She said that her Government was not only concerned with building physical plants, but concerned with a holistic development. Yet, all this Government could claim over the period it was in office is that it built certain numbers of schools, particularly the junior secondary and senior secondary schools. It built plants, but it had no concern about what went on in those plants.

One must take a look at what the junior secondary and senior secondary schools are producing in the main. I am not talking about the minority of students. I am talking about the levels of attainment of the majority of students in these plants which she glorified. Yes, we need good school facilities, but if at the same time we do not pay attention to what goes on within those facilities, we will have today the level of crime we have experienced over the past number of years.

This is not the fault of the student. The student is a product of the home where he should be given the full facilities to read as many books as possible and to have access to libraries. He is a product of his school and the community and, what has happened over three and a half decades of PNM rule is that there has been disintegration in the home, malfunctioning of the schools, and disintegration of the communities in Trinidad and Tobago. Under three and a half decades of PNM rule, now destiny has put that as our responsibility to address and to redress, Mr. Speaker. This is the context in which I want to put this Bill.

One has library services, basically access to books and other material, and one wants people to make use of them, to be motivated, to make use of these facilities throughout Trinidad and Tobago because we want development for everybody in all areas of the country. If a certain sector of the population develops and the rest of the population does not, then that is not holistic development, as mentioned by the Member for Arouca South.

When one looks at what is happening, and one notices the general degradation in our educational standards over the last three decades or so, one will understand that not only do we have to be providing national library and information system and enlarged library services, make more books available and so forth, but we have to target the consciousness of our population to access the benefits of education, and to enjoy and present ourselves in a light where we can face the challenges of the 21st Century.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is the Hon. Member finished, or was he sitting because I rose?

Hon. T. Sudama: I timed my contribution to the tea time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the sitting is suspended for half an hour.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. Patrick Manning (*San Fernando East*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on this National Library and Information System Bill. Perhaps, it was an act of God that the hon. Member for Oropouche was able to speak before me, giving me an opportunity to deal as comprehensively as I can with much of the misinformation and misrepresentation that characterized the contribution of that hon. Member.

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But before doing so, I would like to congratulate him on what appears to me to have been a very speedy recovery. He will understand that I would appreciate the fact that open heart surgery is not easy and that I truly wish him well and welcome him back to this honourable House. [*Desk thumping*] Open heart surgery seems to affect different people in different ways. Some say that I have become a much more circumspect man. I do not know, some say that. But the contribution of the hon. Member for Oropouche today seems to suggest that in his case it is more of the same, his cup runneth over.

Mr. Speaker, it was the distinguished Member for Oropouche who made the point that any new Government has a right to review any policy position that it meets, the policy of the Government that it has replaced; fair enough, quite in order. But when the review of a policy position, as was the case in the national library, has taken two and a half years, then one begins to wonder if all that was involved in the so-called review is what the hon. Member for Oropouche would have us believe.

So they have decided to extend the library by two floors. I am sure that they have also increased what is called the floor area ratio. Into what philosophy, and what is the concept and vision into which this library that is being constructed now being placed? But I will come to that a little later on.

It was the distinguished Member for Oropouche who indicated that their Government replaced the PNM administration, which did not see the need for consultation in a democracy.

I had the honour, as a Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, to preside over a national consultation on education which came about following the establishment of a technical committee in early 1992 to draft a new education 10-year plan for Trinidad and Tobago. The committee which was entrusted with that major responsibility comprised some distinguished persons in education in Trinidad and Tobago, a large committee, contrary to the conventional wisdom that these things do not work, and following a 10-month exercise the document was placed for public comment, being circulated far and wide to anybody who had an interest in education and who was prepared to take the time to study the document and to comment critically on that document, recognizing the significance of education to the national development.

Mr. Speaker, when that exercise was complete, I, as Prime Minister, presided over this consultation at the Chaguaramas Development Centre, where the widest possible cross-section of the national community involved in education: teachers,

students, parents, principals, anybody who had a point of view to express, was invited to do so at Chaguaramas, and the government, having the Prime Minister chair it to make it clear to the national community and those present the significance that we placed on that consultative exercise, accepted many of the recommendations that were advanced, arising out of that very memorable and significant discourse. We arrived at a 10-year development plan from 1994—2003 on the basis of the widest possible consultation, as is consistent with our own concept of democracy and how democracy is expected to operate.

It is also a matter of record that a similar approach was taken in respect of small business. I do not wish to go into details, but I make the point and I select only two examples because there are many others in that four-year period of 1991—1995 in which consultation with the public was mandatory. Indeed, we took the position that whenever legislation has to be brought to this Parliament that requires a special majority, that legislation must be the subject of public comment. It was a policy position, a commitment, if ever there was one, to the principle and concept of consultation in the conduct of a democratic system of government.

Contrast our approach with the approach of this Government, which, in seeking to change the name of Diamond Boulevard to Wendy Fitzwilliam Drive, a very laudable objective of trying to honour someone who has distinguished herself internationally on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago, did it without consulting one person in Diamond Vale, but worse than that, did it in a fashion where the authority for naming and renaming streets in Diamond Vale, rests with the Diego Martin Regional Corporation and not with the Central Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Not only did they subvert the democracy by non-consultation on the issue, but they also sought to subvert by breaking the law. In other words, by seeking to do what, as a government, they were not authorized to do. [*Desk thumping*]

It would have been bad enough if that were an isolated case. Regrettably, recent developments in Trinidad and Tobago tell us that the case is by no means isolated. It is the hon. Prime Minister himself, somebody who stood up in this Parliament, Mr. Speaker, in your presence, and pledged to uphold the Constitution and the law, who got up and made the announcement that King George V Park was to be made into an emancipation memorial, without one shred of consultation with anybody who lives in St. Clair. More than that, since the Prime Minister himself is a lawyer, who I am sure knows better, would understand that there is a restrictive covenant on the properties in St. Clair and, therefore, it is not really as easy to make a decision on that matter as would have been the case otherwise.

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More than that, King George V Park comes under the purview of the Port of Spain City Corporation and, once again, as was the case in Diamond Boulevard, when the Prime Minister and the Government that he heads sought to take a course of action that in law was not theirs to take, they compounded the felony and did it again in respect of King George V Park, where they sought unilaterally and without consultation to change the name to Emancipation Park, contrary to the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. They are not authorized to do so.

I can give more examples of it. Therefore, one will understand the difficulty that I experienced here this afternoon to sit and listen to the hon. Member for Oropouche making the kinds of comments that he made. The truth is that if there is any group in this Parliament on whose head the cap of antidemocratic and non-consultation fits, it is those who, for the time being and very temporarily, occupy the position of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, that is only one side. The contribution of the hon. Member for Oropouche was riddled with inconsistencies and falsehoods which now appear to be his norm. I had to sit here and endure the indignity, as my colleagues on this side had to, of being told that we went to Point Lisas to establish an industrial estate because a port and lands were available. The reality is that no port was available, even if undeveloped lands were. No port was available! The records will show that the largest item of expenditure that had to be incurred in the development of an industrial estate at Point Lisas was the development of a port and the turning basin that forms an integral part of any port's development.

5.15 p.m.

Once again the hon. Member for Oropouche is guilty—as they will put it in the British Parliament—of terminological inexactitudes. He just did not speak the truth.

Mr. Speaker, the argument falls down even further because if it is we were seeking to put an industrial estate in some part of the country where a port was available and lands were available, the first place of call would have been La Brea which has a natural harbour; the best in Trinidad and Tobago at this time. It is deep water and it is a natural harbour and that only—

Mr. Sudama: You went there and spent \$130 million and tried to build an industrial estate on asphalt.

Mr. P. Manning: Do you want to talk twice?

Mr. Sudama: No, no. I want to correct you.

Mr. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, it is only necessary to maintain that harbour to take into account some of the siltation that will take place as a result of the currents that exist in the Gulf of Paria basin having regard to the existence of the Orinoco River on the other side.

If we were looking for a port and for the availability of lands for development, La Brea, Brighton would have taken priority over Point Lisas. The fact that it did not happen that way—*[Interruption]* You can say what you want. You are from Nariva, what do you know about down there? The fact that the priority was established in a different way, that is to say that Point Lisas, notwithstanding the fact that the natural harbour did not exist there and notwithstanding the fact that a considerable amount of land reclamation would have been necessary, the fact that the development took place in the other direction, that Point Lisas was identified before La Brea/Brighton is an indication that the Government of the day, a People's National Movement government, was a government that was level headed and balanced and saw Trinidad and Tobago as one entity rather than seeking to develop on the basis of any sectional interest. *[Desk thumping]* It is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for someone like me—and I am sure it will be a pleasure for you because you were part of that decision at the time—to watch what is happening at Point Lisas and to know that because of that unbiased decision taken by a government of which you and I were a part that today we can say that Trinidad and Tobago is the second largest exporter of ammonia in the world. *[Desk thumping]* In fact, with the commissioning of two world scale ammonia plants just one week ago Trinidad and Tobago most likely has moved ahead to the position where we are the largest exporter. Even while we were doing that there is under construction at Point Lisas a methanol plant with a second one to come. When those two plants are commissioned Trinidad and Tobago is going to be the largest exporter of ammonia in the world.

I have only had to come to this place in this debate when we were debating libraries to make the comments because of the misconceptions and deliberate falsehoods that the hon. Member for Oropouche was seeking to perpetrate, not only on the Parliament, but, through us, on the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to hear the hon. Member for Oropouche speak about balanced development even if his concept of balanced development and the PNM's concept of balanced development may not necessarily be one and the same but I am very pleased to hear him talk about that because, in fact, that is a *Hansard* report that I will keep very close to me because a time will come in this

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Parliament again when we will have to talk about balanced development and we will have to talk about the PNM's approach to it as opposed to the approach of those who, for the time being, form the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, in this Parliament Members are expected to come here and to participate in debates, to move Motions, to move Bills, to vote and to otherwise ensure that the conduct of the legislative affairs of the people of Trinidad and Tobago are carried out in an acceptable fashion. There is one other responsibility that devolves on Members of Parliament that clearly some Members do not seem to understand. I take the opportunity of raising it because just recently I attended a seminar in London that was sponsored by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Commonwealth Secretariat where we were talking about the role of the Opposition. I was very much taken aback where some of the more senior politicians in some other territories in the Commonwealth did not have a proper understanding and concept of the system under which we operate and, therefore, inadvertently they do things that tend to subvert the system.

What is our responsibility? When we came into this Parliament we met a system that was in tact. We came into this Parliament not too long after independence and, therefore, one of the things that would have been fresh in our minds would have been the discussions that would have taken place on this parliamentary system at Marlborough House. Incidentally, the seminar was conducted at Marlborough House. It was at that time that we were very concerned about what would emerge in the developing territories like Trinidad and Tobago after the colonial powers pulled out. The concern was not only restricted to us. It was a concern expressed in respect of the African countries, Pacific countries and so forth. Therefore, we were very careful in those days to be sure that we conducted the affairs of the Parliament in a way that preserved the system because we understood very clearly that you only need to get a crack in that door and the Parliament and the country's democracy could be subverted. When we come to Parliament and make our contributions we have to do it in such a way that is consistent with the system of government under which we operate.

Mr. Speaker, it is not by accident that the Standing Orders of the House at Standing Order 33 subsection 6 on page 36 reads as follows:

“Except with the leave of the Speaker, a Member shall not read his speech; but he may read extracts from written or printed papers or books in support of his argument, and may refresh his memory by reference to his notes.”

Mr. Speaker, you understand clearly why that is in here. The Parliament was never expected to be a place in which people read a speech. It is understandable that there are certain circumstances in which that will be necessary when major statements of policy are being made. Whenever the Appropriation Bill is being debated in this Parliament, the speech of the Minister of Finance is read and the speech of the Leader of the Opposition is also read with the leave of the Speaker because of the wide range of policy positions that are being articulated in those documents and because of the need for accuracy. What normally would be expected in the normal cut-and-thrust of Parliament and the conduct of parliamentary business is that Members of Parliament would study Bills carefully, internalize the Bill and come to Parliament and make a presentation. That is why this Standing Order is there.

Therefore, whenever a Minister comes to this Parliament as, indeed, the Member for Arima has done—*[Interruption]* Therefore, when the Member for Arima comes to this Parliament, as he did this afternoon and pulled up a series of pages and read the document, it could easily have been the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information making the presentation; it could easily have been a clerk from the Ministry of Information making the presentation; it could easily have been my 14 year-old teenage nephew making that presentation who perhaps would have done a considerably better job than the Member for Arima. When it is done in that way, Mr. Speaker, what in fact happens is that the Member concerned in this instant case, the Member for Arima, acted in a manner to subvert the system of parliamentary democracy under which the Parliament is operated. That is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders themselves—because he needs a lesson. He has been here long enough and he should know better but, regrettably, he does not know any better. The Standing Orders, in fact, make provision for reference to notes. Let me read that relevant section for you again”

“...but he may read extracts from written or printed papers or books in support of his argument, and may refresh his memory by reference to his notes.”

In other words, if a Minister is not properly prepared to make a presentation in the Parliament and comes with a prepared document there is a way that he can refer to that document that brings his presentation within the ambit of the system under which the Parliament is expected to operate. But that calls for skill and to expect skill from the Member for Arima is perhaps asking too much.

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Mr. Speaker, I listened and so I would like to characterize the Minister's contribution this afternoon as inadequate in the extreme because there is a second consideration that when a Minister comes to the Parliament and makes a presentation on a Bill, what is expected of that Minister is that the Minister would make as balanced a presentation to the Parliament as he is capable of making so that Members on both sides will understand exactly what is involved in the particular piece of legislation under consideration by the Parliament and that the Members on both sides are in a much better position to engage in the cut-and-thrust of the debate as is the basic principle on which a Parliament is founded; it is debate. The Minister did not do that.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister came here and quite rightly he talked about a system of library services. The concept of libraries is not an esoteric concept. It is not that library services are provided in the air or that library services are provided in a vacuum. While we recognize that in Trinidad and Tobago we do, in fact, have a system of mobile libraries, the system of dispensation of library services in Trinidad and Tobago takes into account the existence of buildings. The Member for Arima was curiously silent on that. More than that it is not just buildings but the minute you talk about buildings you talk about the architecture of your country and you talk about the atmosphere in which the citizens of your country are expected to live, operate and subsist. The way you do it writes the history of the country and it says something about your particular period in which you live for the future generation who, no doubt, will look back and come to some kind of conclusion as to the society that existed at the time when particular buildings were built.

The Member for Arima was curiously silent on all of that. He was inadequate to put it mildly. Mr. Speaker, if he had gone to San Fernando and seen the library he would have understood what I was talking about. He did not do that.

5.30 p.m.

He stood in the Parliament and talked about clicking the mouse to access information. Then, of course, it occurred to me that might be the reason why he decided to go to the market in Arima to look for a rat. I suppose in his mind if you click the rat, you get more information than if you click the mouse. That is the impression he gave us in the way he made his contribution, completely unaware. In fact, right now in Arima, I understand they call him "Dr. Rat", but then that is a *Laughter*] Completely unaware and completely oblivious to the implications of architecture and the ambience that is created in any particular society.

Mr. Speaker, his contribution was so bad because it violated and undermined the system and it was defective in that it ignored a very important aspect of library development, that I was reminded—and the hon. Member for La Brea, I am sure would bear me out—of a Roman emperor whose name was Caligula. Caligula, the story says, was so unimpressed at the level of debate in the Roman Senate that he thought his horse could do no less and so, Caligula made his horse a Roman Senator. When I listened to the contribution of the Member for Arima this afternoon, I sympathized with Caligula.

I have one more regret, which is that the hon. Member for Couva North and Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, notwithstanding the fact that a recent popularity survey gave him 3 per cent while it gave the Member for Couva South 11 per cent—he is four times the man the Prime Minister is—was not here to listen to what a “doubles” and a “lil boy” could lead to in terms of parliamentary contributions.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Couva—Arouca South—

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: No, not Couva.

Mr. P. Manning: I apologize very sincerely if I suggested anything other than that—dealt very adequately with the Bill.

When I listened to her this afternoon, I thought that this Parliament would have been done justice had she been the mover of the Bill, rather than the Member for Arima, recognizing as she did that there was a building into which the library would be placed and that the building itself, whatever hon. Members opposite may feel, think, or believe, presents the national community and the society with an opportunity to make a statement, just as the national community made a statement when the Hall of Justice was built. As it is passed today—a substantial building—not only does it indicate to the world at large that we believe in justice and in the rule of law [*Interruption*] the building itself indicates that. [*Interruption*]

Why does the hon. Member not get up and talk? Get up and talk! We are debating!

Mr. Sudama: Such fallacious, illogical arguments.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. Order please.

Mr. P. Manning: The building in which our national library is to be housed presents us with an opportunity to say to the world at large the kind of society that we want to create for those who are coming after us. That is the vision. Is there a vision by which buildings are built in this country? Is there a vision? Or is it that

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the Government of the day feels that it is merely a question of putting up one building here and one there; if it is felt that a building is too small, the height is just increased; if one is too large, it is reduced; completely oblivious to the need for proper planning. I am sure that the Town and Country Planning Division did not agree with the increase in the size.

Mr. Speaker, when the building was designed several factors were taken into account, not the least of which was that a city centre had to be developed, centred around the Red House and that your architecture be established in such a way that the substantial Red House around which that city centre was to be established, did not undermine the architectural integrity in any way, purely on the basis, as the hon. Member for Oropouche said, of the need to raise a dollar here, a dollar there and \$3.00 there. A \$40 million increase in the cost of the building and he wants us to believe that two floors justifies a \$40 million increase. I do not want to go into that. There are others on this side who will speak.

I just want to put it on notice that we do not accept the argument that the two additional floors that their review turned up and that they have added to the building will be justifiable on any economic consideration. That is the point we want to make. We do not accept that.

What was the vision? We were not just building a library; we were building a library, yes, but we were developing the centre of a capital city. That is what we were doing. We were killing several birds with one stone. We were understanding that as you do something here in the pursuit of a particular objective in respect of your national aspirations and objectives, it impinges on some of your other priorities and, therefore, all things must be in harmony with all other things.

It was our vision, because that library had to be located in the environment in which it was constructed. It was our vision that a city centre should be created, bounded by Frederick Street, Queen Street, Edward Street and Duke Street. That was our vision, that in the middle of the area would be the Red House.

Mr. Sudama: What was your vision for the rest of the country? Did you have a vision for that?

Mr. P. Manning: It has always been the seat of Government; it was built as the seat of Government and, therefore, we were trying to establish a use for the Red House that established a historical antecedence that put the Red House there in the first place. That is what a government with vision does. What is the vision by which two additional floors were put? To fool somebody and to be made—

Incidentally, two and a half years later that Government was brought to the construction of the library kicking and screaming. It is public objection that led this Government to eventually succumb and build that library.

So, we get back to the city centre. What we saw was the Red House in the centre of it; we recognized the existence of the Hall of Justice; that when the new library is built, the existing library would be vacated by the library system and that would be incorporated by the City Hall which would be upgraded; that Woodford Square would be upgraded; that the library, because of the nature of its use, would have been an integral part of a city centre that was going to be traffic free; that on the western side the burnt out police headquarters would have been upgraded and converted to an art gallery and that there was the opportunity in the centre of that quadrangle to have some kind of arrangement for an open-house theatre or it could have been covered; it was for the architects to decide all that, but the concept was there; that the old fire station that exists now, would have been upgraded to a restaurant consistent with the needs of a city centre—that was the concept—and that the site on which the Ministry of National Security now stands, most of the buildings would have been demolished and a new building constructed on that site with architecture consistent with the vision that we held for a city centre in Port of Spain.

Mr. Sudama: Would the people of Laventille have been included in that restaurant?

Mr. P. Manning: The Member could say what he wants. The Member is bucolic. He will never understand it, Mr. Speaker. Also, we would build a building on that site to house the Ministry of National Security and other government departments that impinge and interface with the Hall of Justice. All of this formed a plan which was approved by the Cabinet of 1992 for which a time-frame was already set that the entire city centre would have been put in place by September 1999.

In other words, that Trinidad and Tobago would have gone into the new millenium with an upgraded new city centre, and that Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, would have been one of the premier capitals in the Caribbean and, as the hon. Member for Naparima would tell you, in the wider Association of Caribbean States. That was the vision. The Member supported it then.

Mr. Hinds: And still supports it!

Mr. P. Manning: And I am sure that in different circumstances, he would support it, again. He does not have to answer. [*Crosstalk*]

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Mr. Speaker, I also say that our vision for that city centre in which the library was an integral part, [*Crosstalk*] was that the city centre should be traffic free and that an upgraded Woodford Square would have been the subject of piped music, steelband music and local music for the large part. [*Crosstalk*] As we saw it, a part of the tourism development.

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order please!

Mr. Sudama: What about the pipe in the fountain?

Mr. P. Manning: If the Speaker were not here, I would tell you where the pipe came from.

Mr. Sudama: I know the operation has had some effect.

Mr. P. Manning: I hope that your operation had a much more beneficial effect over the entire range of your—

Mr. Sudama: It did.

Mr. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, that is what we saw. We also saw an updated city centre for Port of Spain as contributing to a tourism thrust. We talk about how one decision impinges on another, but the tourism of which we speak was not a tourism for foreigners, it was upgraded facilities for citizens of Trinidad and Tobago that we share with visitors to the national shores. That is vision.

Mr. Speaker, do you think that the Member for Arima understood any of this? His contribution this afternoon suggested none of that. He knew nothing about it. What is worse is that his attitude now is suggesting that he did not know and did not care. There are none so blind as those who will not see and, in fact, I sat here when he was talking and I watched the Government Back Bench Members applauding and what struck me was that in blind man country, one-eye man is king.

Mr. Speaker, that is what they stopped. Go to the library in San Fernando because it is the library building in San Fernando that is the historical site. Anybody who is familiar with San Fernando would tell you that the Library Corner is the centre of activity down there. Anybody would tell you that.

Again, using the very same principle that the library building is critical to the general ambience of San Fernando. A city centre was being designed for San Fernando that involved that library building of which it was an integral part. A part of that city centre— [*Interruption*]

5.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to take them on. I remember when we were going to build the Brian Lara Promenade, it is fellows like those across there— *[Interruption]* Where were you? You were still in political short pants *[Off the record]* while we were doing that.

Mr. Speaker: Please expunge that from the record.

Mr. P. Manning: I take it back, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw it. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, I hear a voice crying in the wilderness.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to San Fernando, in the same way as we had a concept of a city centre in the capital city, so too we had a concept of a city centre in San Fernando, Arima, Chaguanas, Point Fortin and Scarborough, Tobago. We had a concept of it; a government with a vision recognizing that it is not just a question of providing facilities. Their lack of vision has led to a situation in San Fernando now where they have built only a part of the thing, ignoring the need for a comprehensive consideration of the developmental pattern and that when that promenade is finished there would be one major confusion down there because the Government of the day has not done its part.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. P. Manning: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. Members.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I ask you please to allow the Member to make his contribution, because insofar as he is derailed, he could legitimately claim injury time.

Mr. P. Manning: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I will only do so if I am injured and those fellows do not possess the ability to injure me. *[Desk thumping]* However, I am grateful to you and hon. Members for the extension of time and I assure you that I would be just about one minute or so more.

Mr. Speaker, whenever a society is considering its development, it has to do so in a comprehensive way. Whatever you do in one part of the country affects what

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happens in another part. So when we talked about the development of library services it was a signalled omission in the contribution of the hon. Member for Arima that he did not understand that it was not just the building of a library; it was not just provision of services for information, but it also provided the society with an opportunity for making a statement on architecture and for determining the general ambiance under which the business of Trinidad and Tobago will be conducted. *[Interruption]* Miss who? Are you mad? Mr. Speaker, I take that back. I am sorry, it was an immediate reaction. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with Dr. Rat?

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this afternoon to be able to speak on this Bill because when portfolios were being allocated I felt that the portfolio of libraries and library services should come under the ambit of the Office of the Prime Minister indicating the importance that my administration attached to libraries and library development; indicating the importance that my administration attached to information and the availability of information to the national and international community; and indicating the importance that my administration attached to the general ambiance under which we conduct the affairs of Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Tobago Affairs (Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job): Mr. Speaker, the Bill presented this afternoon is to establish the National Library and Information System to provide for the development and co-ordination of all library and information services in Trinidad and Tobago and related matters. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition squandered his time talking about Caligula's horse, rats in Arima, architecture and every imaginable thing that has nothing to do with the library.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, let us just deal with the architecture point. I have before me the *Daily Express* of Friday, August 14, 1998. The Leader of the Opposition did, indeed, make a considerable effort to persuade this House—and I believe the rest of the country—that this Bill is substantially about architecture.

Someone called Bukka Rennie, I do not know the man myself, wrote on page 12—and given the fact that the Member for Arouca South did spend a lot of time talking about matters concerning housing—I quote:

“Those who designed and built the \$6-million John John Towers were influenced by a sense of commodity and spectacle rather than a sense of community. These penis-like towers, just like all the other gadgetry of modern

affluence, tend to cheapen our existence spiritually and to attack our basic social nature. These towers by the very essence of their structure can only divide rather than unite John John.”

He is talking about architecture.

Mr. Speaker, there is a word here that tickled my imagination. When I read the part of the “penis-like towers” I remembered one gentleman saying that his wife is very comfortable now because he had an operation. “The boy is working well”, he said. You know who that gentleman is.

So, Mr. Speaker, this question of architecture, what does it have to do with this Bill? In my notes here I am trying to understand exactly what this thing is about. This question of a city centre and “a fantastic vision”. What was “our vision”? “We are building our capital centre and we are going to bring tourists

Mr. Manning: I did not say that.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: You said that this vision was having to do with tourism. You were not talking about foreign tourism here, you were talking about domestic tourism. Did you not say that?

Mr. Speaker: I suggest that the Member speak to me.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Mr. Speaker, this debate this afternoon touched on the question of balanced development and the Member for San Fernando East was at pains to say that the vision of the PNM in putting Point Lisas where it is was a question of balance, of egalitarianism and in contrast to statements that had been made by the Member for Oropouche.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to listen to me very carefully. I have travelled, driven and walked all over this country. How many people here ever heard of a place called Rampanalgas?

Hon. Members: Everybody.

5.55 p.m.

Does balanced development have anything to do with Rampanalgas, San Souci, Tamana, Poole, Biche, Zion Hill, Roxborough and Castara or Tabaquite? Do you understand? There are many places that are absolutely forgotten in this country and you are focussing on balanced development by developing a city centre when you are thereby over developing—and I say it without apology.

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Because, one of the problems of excessive urbanization in a country like Trinidad and Tobago, is that you create circumstances that allow people rationally to believe that the probability of starving is greater if you stayed in Rampanalgas. The probability of getting a “10-days” or getting some of the benefits of coming to an urban community are so much greater that you rationally decide to migrate, so that rural/urban migration is a necessary, ineluctable function of the way government investment is showered on the urban areas. This is a problem throughout the Third World. I used to spend hours teaching people about that at the university in M.Sc. and Ph.D. courses, while we are gloating here as if this fantastic vision was necessary, without its costs, without its subversive elements, without its disadvantages to the national community and to all those people who have been badly prepared to function in an urban community.

We are talking about buildings, and this issue about a library is about architecture. I have often said that the most important architecture that one can imagine any human being to be concerned with is the architecture of the mind. That architecture which allows parents and institutions like schools to mould a kind of attitude in a character and a culture that will benefit that beneficiary for the rest of their lives and for their generation and generations to come.

When we talk about the former Prime Minister gloating here about some conference that he chaired, [*Interruption*] the former Prime Minister said he chaired a conference in Chaguaramas; call it conference, consultation, it is all the same. The Member chaired this consultation on education and came up with this fantastic plan. Three and a half years after and the plan was not ever implemented.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of this debate where the Member for San Fernando East spent all his time listing; he talked about the library, Arima, rats and so forth and then spent a lot of time telling us about a consultation on education that he had, and forgetting that Aristotle—I do not know how many people have read Aristophanes, *The Frogs*, for example. This man was writing these fantastic pages in the 4th Century BC, and I do not know whether he had a library like the one Mr. Manning was planning to build. I do not know that Socrates ever had the benefit of a library like the one Mr. Manning was planning to build or Plato, or Valmiki, or Shakespeare. Many foundations of western civilization did not have the benefit of \$125 million of taxpayers' dollars to build any fantastic architecture. What are you telling me? Whoever wrote the great books of the Bible; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deutoronomy, did they have the benefit of these fantastic structures this man was trying to build? At a time when the architecture of the

mind has been so decrepit, dilapidated, so bereft, when we know as a matter of fact that the legacy of the PNM is a degree of decadence and moribundity that defies imagination. You are spending \$125 million to build this fantastic library and half the children in this country cannot read. You bring them in a maxi-taxi to gawk; they are walking and gawking at these fantastic libraries and all these buildings in the centre of Port of Spain. That is what it is all about, an instrument of adulation which reminds me of Adolf Hitler. That is what Hitler did. Hitler built a set of fantastic buildings, a set of symbols—grandiloquent, magnificent symbols of something to do with the mind, delusions of grandeur, that kind of autocratic sickness of the mind that allows you to take taxpayers' money and manipulate people with no purpose except to demonstrate the power that you have to control. That was the whole thing.

The point I am making about this library and the way the Members on the other side have developed their arguments, is that they are missing a set of fundamental points. We need to talk about these points. They talked about what is the philosophy of this library. The Minister in articulating under the Bill itself said so. There is clause 4 which talks about the functions of NALIS [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Member for Tobago East is seeking protection. He is entitled to protection. If it is one Member of this House who is conspicuous by not interfering with other Members when they are speaking, it is the Member for Tobago East. It is only fair, particularly if the other side feels that he is not scoring points, to remain quiet and deal with it afterwards.

I ask you please, of all the people that you need to heckle, to bear in mind that the Member for Tobago East at all times does not appear to be interfering with Members on the other side when they are speaking. Please allow him to make his contribution.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They spoke about philosophy without understanding that they were treading in troubled waters, because the shallowness of this last presentation and the ones that preceded it troubles the mind. A library is, indeed, part of those institutional arrangements that every society from ancient times made in order to ensure that between generations the legacies of the past lived on and guided the mind of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I have a problem which I want to articulate again in this Parliament. The Members on the opposite side are gloating and getting on as if their vision of what a library should be like is so benign and so without any scent of disturbance for us.

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Mr. Speaker, the last time I spoke in the Parliament I heard the Member for San Fernando East criticize me for saying that Albert Gomes should get a Trinity Cross. He stood here and tried to heckle me. He is talking about a national library. When one looks at the history of this country—one can go to the University of the West Indies Library, where there is a section I used to use called the West Indian Reference Section; voluminous amount of works on Albert Gomes and all that he had done for this country.

Mr. Speaker, for example, it was not anybody on the PNM's side who encouraged the governor in May 1951 or 1952. The PNM did not exist when Albert Gomes, Norman Tang, Stephen Maharaj, the Sinanan brothers, and Butler gathered in this very place to encourage the governor to pass a bill in this Parliament to give the Baptists the right to preach up and down in this country. That is a matter of history. Mr. Manning got up and said Gomes did nothing for this country. Albert Gomes is the one. One can get it in the West Indian Reference Section. Fido Blake wrote a book of which I have a copy. Blake spent a lot of time talking about all the things that Albert Gomes did for panmen.

If you allow the peculiar and particular prejudices of the Member for San Fernando East to inform this national vision, what you are going to get is a fascist dispensation where the history of this country will be nothing but a manufactured past to glorify the *magnum est PNM, et prevalebit*. That is what you are going to get.

6.05 p.m.

So when they are talking about vision and nationalism in the context of clause 4(a) which says:

"provide a national library and information service, easily accessible to members of the public, in order to facilitate cultural, economic, educational, political and social development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago;"

One has to look at the context of the history of the PNM in this regard where many of the children of this country do not know who is Albert Gomes and they do not know who is C L R James.

J. J. Thomas in 1870 was writing a book called *Freudacity*. I want to touch on this because I have the copy on what the Member for Arouca South is talking about the People's National Movement coming into such prominence and the culture of library.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for San Fernando East is talking about how the Prime Minister tried to impose lawlessness by getting involved with this

imbroglio with the King George V Park, I do not want to comment too much on the substance of these allegations—

Mr. Manning: Why?

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: That is my privilege. I say what I want to say here, and outside too, and also in Cabinet. Yes, ask them.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important they should mention this because I want to enlighten this Parliament.

Mr. Valley: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the speaker would give way? Since he shared that important piece of information with us that he says whatever he says in Cabinet, I wonder whether he wants to share with us what counsel he gave to his colleague, the Member for St. Augustine, on the last fiasco with the John John Towers?

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Mr. Speaker, am I having the time which he took added to my time?

Mr. Speaker: When you give way, you do not get any injury time. You had the option of not giving way.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: I want to make a divarication on this King George V issue which the Member for Diego Martin Central raised.

Mr. Valley: The John John Towers.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Give me a chance. I was talking about J. J. Thomas and the fact that—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: I would suggest that the hon. Member talks to me and he would save himself much trouble.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: May I ask the Member for San Fernando East to allow me to develop the points which I have. In the context of King George V Park, this gentleman J. J. Thomas—it is very important that they should raise it Mr. Speaker, because we are dealing with library, culture, and information, and much of what I am hearing is consistent with the cacophonous noises I am hearing which are just a matter of spreading lies and propaganda as history.

J. J. Thomas wrote in his book, *Freudacity* that in the Caribbean area, at least half the people who received their portion of the £20 million which Parliament voted in 1833 for compensation to slave owners went to the black slave owners. I

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read in the newspapers yesterday where Father De Verteuil said that in his own researches on Trinidad and Tobago more than half of the slave owners were in fact, black. Why is that important? It is important because what I am saying is news to most people in this country, as indeed, they do not know that in 1783 when the cedula of Population was given that invited people from all over the Caribbean to come to Trinidad, there were about 4,000 persons living in Trinidad at the time. Ten or 14 years after, by 1797 when Sir Ralph Abercromby took over, there were about 15,000 persons by that time. There were 10,000 slaves; 2,000 whites and almost 5,000 free black people. Go back to the cedula which showed clearly—and there is a Trinidadian writer who has a book developing this point—where the people who were white got 32 acres of land for each of them, and half of that for each slave they brought with them. Those who were black or mulatto got half, which is 16 acres and eight acres for each one who came with them.

Mr. Speaker, if these people would listen to learn they would benefit. What I am saying is when one talks about a national library in the context of the Leader of the Opposition, and the history of this country where he wants to spend \$125 million to build a library for illiterate people to gawk at, we are talking about the culture of this country which is totally preliterate. They do not understand that much and what they hear is a manufactured history promoting prejudices.

I did not come here to talk this evening. I had in my bag an essay—*[Interruption]* We are talking about slavery and about people who are buried and Michael Anthony and other people say there is nobody buried there, but all that goes down as history, and we need to understand that anytime a government has a vision in the way the Member for San Fernando East has, more often than not, it ends up converting that vision into an instrument of partisan and particular propaganda. It happened in Germany, Russia, Argentina and Italy. It happened all over. I am just saying these things to warn the public that this kind of attitude with which the Member comes in here seems to suggest that all we needed to do was leave them to spend \$125 million to build a library and that would have been the end of our problem in Trinidad and Tobago. That is not so.

Mr. Speaker, may I also add that one can go on the Internet—and I do not know when they had this great vision they had factored all that into it—and read the Library of Congress; get into the Cambridge University Library; and also read the library in Moscow. The way they are raising the issue of a library as a physical building is very antedeluvian. Libraries these days are about floppy discs and computers, they are not about a building for \$125 million. I think we have to

understand these things so even if you might need a place to house your building, and I am saying this because they are focussing on this architecture and this building as if the be all, the end all, the leitmotiv, and the rationale of this grandiose experiment in vision is this building which is going to refurbish the architecture of this part of Port of Spain, and not understanding that libraries are not about buildings. Even the book trade would change and it is already changing as a consequence of modern technology. To come to this Parliament to deceive ignorant people to believe that a library is a big building of architecture, is to make a grievous mistake and I am not here to allow this mistake to go without dealing with it.

They want to bring hungry people from Rampanalgas and Tamana to come and gawk. They do not have any roads or water, no jobs, but they are put in a bus and brought to gawk at the great things the PNM has done for them. That vision is a flawed vision. It is a deviously Mephistophelian and mischievous vision which should never have seen the light of day and should never have been articulated in this Parliament. It is a destructive vision which has a purely political purpose which has nothing to do with balanced development and growth of the people of this country. It is antiquarian, it is lacking in a technological understanding of how the world is working, and it is purely selfish, narrow-minded, egocentric megalomania.

It is indeed true if one has a rudimentary understanding of architecture—Mr. Humphrey is an architect so he could explicate more on that—when one looks at the capital over there—and you know what I mean by the capital—it says something about the people who built this building. They wanted to create a certain kind of ambience so the external structure and the way it greets the eye tells us something of the use of this building and how it must be treated. So the Member is quite right when he says when one builds a building it ought to send a message.

It is quite clear when one looks at a church to know what it is about. If one is in the Western culture system and sees a church, one knows what a church is; whether it is a Roman Catholic, a Methodist or a Presbyterian church, it looks a certain way and it greets one with a certain kind of reverential way. It creates a certain kind of mood, just the way the structure is fitted into space, the way the columns go up to heaven, it focuses the mind on these transcendental things and causes one to go into the church with humility.

Therefore, they are quite right when they say that architecture has something to do with the culture of a country and the messages it wants to send. But the

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message must be appropriate to the particular kind of audience. It must be relevant to the means that are being used and to the kind of dynamism that is going on in the society. One does not just come into Parliament and talk about architecture to people who want food. It was Mahatma Gandhi who said that you do not talk to a hungry man about things of the spirit and soul, you talk to him about food otherwise he would kill to get that food. A hungry man can only be spoken to about bread and yet one has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to build those grandiose buildings and did not go to see what was going on in the primary schools in this country, or to find out how you were spending \$1.2 billion a year for the past 20 years to turn out illiterate people who end up in the jail as bandits and you had this great consultation and did not busy yourself to bring these things to bear.

As a matter of fact, when I used to be on the radio talking about illiteracy, my programme was closed down because the Member for San Fernando East was coming here every budget day to say that we are 97 per cent literate. He came to this Parliament every year he was the Prime Minister, and even before that, to boast about our 97 per cent literacy. We are the greatest gift of God to man—the PNM which gave them free education. Imagine that! Without shame, and then he comes here to talk about architecture, and this great library. The problem was pretty architecture so he could bring people from all over the country to gawk at it. Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept that, I do not want to accept that, and I refuse to accept it as a matter of fact.

Let us talk about a similar approach to small business which I have in my note. I am not boasting about this because even God cannot undo the history of what happened yesterday. I often taught people in logic to be mindful of the things which they say. To make generalized statements one instance can refute them, can be brought, and this refutes all the argument. When the Member for San Fernando East is raising this point, I am saying he is the last person to talk about that because when Mr. Robinson had me helping him build the Small Business Development Company they went all over the country saying that Robinson want everybody to sell, who is going to buy. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Manning were telling people that, and he comes here today to talk about Small Business Development Company which they denounced. That is a particular version of that dangerous stupidity which we hear of, that some people are born to be doctors and some carpenters and masons.

We have to change a lot of ideas and we do not need to focus the mind of this country on this vision of rebuilding a city centre in order to deal with the

architecture of the mind. That is the point I am making. They have missed the point. They think what has to be done is to spend a lot of money. Money is the problem, if it is going to make you forget the things which matter to people such as training, good manners, understanding, obedience to the law. One does not have to build any city centre to do that. What this country needed from the PNM was to put a massive focus on parenting values and bringing the country together on culture and understanding what it means. Not this grandiloquent obscene focus on \$125 million for a library and God alone knows how many hundreds of millions for all these other parts he was talking about to canalize the nation's resources to put it in the middle of Port of Spain so he could have a set of maxi-taxis every day—one of the other devious things which was invented in this country—bringing people to gawk at these buildings. That is madness, craziness, Mr. Speaker.

6.20 p.m.

He talks about Caligula. Maybe the Member is dreaming about Caligula. Maybe he wants to be like Caligula: an imperial purple man. Maybe he should buy a purple robe so he could feel like the emperor. *[Laughter]*

When you talk about consultation—in the context of a bill where we are talking about library, education, culture and consultation—he brought in consultation as if—I want to warn you again, Member for San Fernando East, as often as you or Members on your side say “those people on this side” and include me in it, I will have to defend myself. So when you start with “these people on this

Mr. Speaker: The Member is not taking my advice.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Sorry, Sir.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, for as often as he deals with that, I would have to get up here and make my presence felt because I am not going to allow them to hurl that kind of silliness on my side and attach it to me: that mud slinging, that kind of nonsense. So when he is talking about consultation, I want to ask a simple question: Was Mr. Ralph Maraj consulted when he was fired by fax? *[Laughter]* Sorry, fired on television? A next gentleman in Hong Kong was fired by fax. Where was the consultation? This is in my notes here, consultation. The Member wants to be the epitome of consultation. Did you consult anybody when you fired the man? He then told the nation that he fired the man to give him a bigger work. *[Laughter]* He said he fired him to promote him.

Mr. Speaker, the PNM's world is such grand comedy—it is amazing that these people want to be a government, you know, and all they are about is comedy, they

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are jokey too bad. He spoke about consultation and he locked up Occah Seapaul to get rid of her. You lock up a whole nation! I could not leave my house, I was in the estate up there and I could not come out. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Speaker: The Member is not taking my advice.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Sorry, Sir. He locked me up and he did not consult me at all, Sir. I was never consulted and he is talking about consultation. He closed down my programme! Did not consult me! *[Laughter]* No consultation! Every Monday morning, Ken Gordon calling, “Dr. Job, but I talk to you last week so and so—Ragbir from the Prime Minister’s office called again.” Every Monday morning, no consultation. But he comes in the Parliament and talks a lot of rubbish about consultation. *[Interruption]*

The Member for Arouca South, again, made this divarication into an area which I find very disturbing to deal with. She spoke about balance and how this Government never segregated against the rural areas. She spoke about the warped thinking of the Members on this side and that development in Trinidad was development for all over Trinidad and Tobago, libraries are for all people, since the UNC came into office, the Government is only for one set of areas.

Mr. Speaker, I am in this Cabinet for a year and some months now—I do not think I have missed any Cabinet meetings, maybe I might have missed one—I do not know if it was at the meeting that I missed, if I did miss a meeting, but none of the meetings in which I sat was there any occasion or circumstance where I had to do what I would normally do, get up and say: “I cannot tolerate this because you people are being sectoral and partisan” and only want to develop this country for particular Indian areas and not for everybody. I have never sat in the Cabinet when anything like that happened. So when Members on that side make those accusations I have to deal with them, Mr. Speaker, and I have to deal with them in the context of the discussion about this library as being a particular vindictive act when the programme was procrastinated.

There is no duty, as far as I know, that when a government comes into power it must necessarily carry on all projects that the previous government started. The logic is quite clear, Mr. Speaker. If it were so, that a government when it comes into power, must necessarily carry on all the projects, why then do we need a change of government? What is the point of changing the government if all that is to be done is to meekly carry on what went on? No! It cannot be like that. A new government must have the option to debate in terms of its mandate, what it wants to carry on and what it wants to stop. That is clear to me. What one does not need—

and this is one of the things I am going to try to help this country to understand—is to always be going, stop, go; stop, go, just for the mere business of malice.

The Member for Oropouche was quite clear when he said that he never promised anybody to stop the project. As a matter of fact, I do not know that the Member for Oropouche was the Cabinet. He is the Member for Oropouche! He is the Minister of Planning and Development. I have no knowledge that there was a Cabinet decision to stop the library project. Even if he expressed an opinion, people who have been in Cabinet—Prime Minister, Chairman, you must know that. Cabinet has to make a decision to stop the library project. I do not know that there was any such decision. Therefore to say that stopping the library project was some part of a grand design to unbalanced development in the country is not true.

Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make is this. We are living in this country, and I have warned these people that every time one comes into this Parliament and sets up these kinds of arguments that would lead a certain constituency to begin to think in a certain way. I will have to respond because it makes me feel very uneasy and uncomfortable knowing the history of this Parliament. I have lived in Africa, South America, and in many plural societies and I have studied them for almost 25 to 40 years. I understand the importance of using language to lead and guide people, not to mislead them. So I want to make a few comments to say quite clearly that the prevalence of those kinds of ideas has nothing to do with building a library which is to educate people.

Mr. Sat Maharaj invited me to this Indian Arrival Day celebration and I sat there with him and I said, “Indian Arrival Day would always be about mischief in Trinidad and Tobago as long as one is going to have a band of Indians marching from El Dorado to Tunapuna glorifying India.” I told him so there, and I mean that! I also said, “The Arawaks and Caribs were here, they arrived! The Spaniards came after them, they arrived! The French and Africans came, they arrived, too! These Indians came long after, they arrived! How come the Indians alone have an arrival day”. I said that, and I said it for a particular purpose. So that it is not just these people on the opposite side I am dealing with, anybody who says or does anything that makes me suspect that they are drifting into that area—could you please have a seat, Sir? *[Laughter]*—I would have to deal with them. I warn that there was no necessity in terms of what the Minister of Information said for the Member for Arouca to be drifting into those areas and making those kinds of statements. We do not need that!

I went to the Maha Sabha headquarters last week where they had an International Conference on the Ramayan and I am going to quote an excerpt to

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explain my position on this matter. I said: "Language is a mirror of the mind, a museum of culture, which contains the information and programmes animating behaviour; coping, feeling, expecting, judging, thinking and acting, as when Hamlet said:

"To be, or not to be: that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?"

6.30 p.m.

I went on to say language is the most powerful human invention. It is not difficult to grasp why according to the Upanishads, the sound "ohm" represents the divine power of Brahma and is the symbol for the ultimate reality. Our identity is defined in our language and the shared meanings within a community of speakers. It is not identified by our skin or our hair. Where our ancestors came from tells us of the ancestry of a set of meanings we use to define identity. That our morphological features have a high correlation with the location of some of our ancestors' villages cannot justify the racist sorting of humans using skin colour and the texture of their hair.

Much of the semantic resources of the daily intercourse in Trinidad is in debt to the meanings, ideas and concepts which came with the Ramayan. That is what I am talking about, Mr. Speaker, because in Trinidad and Tobago it is often written in the newspaper that the politicians in this country are only talking about race. Everything is about race—we and them. I do not want that.

I do not see why we are talking about a library Bill and we have to drag in this thing about them and we. If there was evidence to suggest that there was a discriminatory procedure segregating and sorting out Indians, anywhere one goes in this country, there are Africans and Indians living together. It is not like long ago when the Indians came here as indentured servants bonded to an estate. There is no part of this country where there is apartheid in the sense that there are people living by themselves. There is "dougularization". I am not saying "dougularization" in the vulgar sense. When I say in the vulgar sense, I mean the sense that is propounded by some very narrow minded and perverted people. As a matter of fact, I believe what Sat Maharaj said. Parents should tell their children who to marry. That is their right. They could meet a girl in a fete and lean up in a corner and "grind". Next thing they gone and get married. That is barbarism! That is stupidity!

Mr. Speaker: I honestly do think that, by any stretch of the imagination, we are moving too far away from the National Library and Information System Bill.

Dr. The Hon M. Job: Mr. Speaker, I do concede to your wise judgment, but I think on the matter of the ideas that these people brought up over there where they were subtly bringing in that kind of thing about the Government managing this country and putting Port of Spain against the rural areas, and when the PNM was in government, it was a government for all and now that the UNC is in Government they are not governing for all—language is a very symbolic thing.

I crave your indulgence. Words are the most powerful inventions of any human being. They tell you what to do and what not to do. How to behave. A lot of the trouble we have in this country is because people think they are so wise, they can use language to manipulate the emotions and anxieties of ignorant people. We are talking about the library project. Why do we have to bring in the question of the PNM being a government for all but the UNC Government is not a Government for all.

So what about Tobago? I come from Tobago East: one of the most backward parts of Trinidad and Tobago in terms of rural infrastructure and education and most of the parameters by which one would judge a country. What am I supposed to say? Should I come and talk about discrimination against Tobago East? I cannot say that, because the reason why my predecessor broke away from the PNM had to do with that kind of neglect among other things. The moral decadence that so encompassed the PNM like a cangue on the neck of the nation. I do not talk about it because I think I have another good reason to be here. I am only saying this, Mr. Speaker, not to burden you with what you think is an irrelevance, but to make comment on aspects of development that I thought had nothing to do with the library.

They talk about libraries as the way to develop people. I do not understand it. I think I need to go back to this. When we talk about information stored in a library, carefully I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. When one looks at the world, the people who are differentiated in terms of what we call success within multi-ethnic communities or as national groups, there is an explanation for it that has to do with information, but not the information in libraries. It had to do with that set of information I am referring to that is stored within the culture and language, handed down from generation to generation.

They are focusing their minds on libraries and forgetting what explains Jews from ancient times, from Babylonian times, Jews from the Egyptian exile. You see them from those days until now in any community that they are making progress while everybody is not making the same progress. They were kicked out of Spain

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and they went into the Turkish empire and did well there. These are Jews that came out of that Diaspora and went through Holland. I am making a point that these people do not understand: information is not only information stored in libraries, and the most important information is not that stored in libraries. It is the information within communities, within culture systems, that helps to prepare the people who are born in that culture system and who evolve in that system to compete. This is pertinent to the problems we have in Trinidad today.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members the speaking time of the Member for the Tobago East has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Information! They are quite right to focus on the information purpose of a library, but I am saying that in the context of this nation and in the context of understanding the world, to think that the information in libraries is the most important type of information for this Government or the PNM government, is to make a grievous mistake. We have to understand that information allows groups to develop their particular efficiencies. If one looks at Steinway pianos, the Germans are associated with building pianos. Italians are architects and engineers in Argentina; Germans wine makers; Jews in haberdashery; Brazilians in football. Every team in Europe, America, anywhere you go, there are many Brazilians. They are experts in that. And I can go on.

There are these ethnic specializations, because within a particular community, they have developed over generations an information set which programmes succeeding generations to have a certain kind of outlook and attitude. In Trinidad and Tobago, because we do not understand that, because the PNM did not understand that, they went around thinking the easiest thing to do to turn people into businessmen was to build three banks, and they looted the three banks and left some people worse off than they were before. Just like they are saying now, "We will build a library, spend \$125 million, and that will solve *ipso facto* the problem of education, culture and national heritage in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, this country is more prosperous now than at any time in its history, and there is more daily national distress on account of ethnic anxiety now than at any other time in the history of this country. The information in the library cannot solve that problem, especially, as I alluded to before, the kind of warped,

skewed and biased information one is going to end up putting inside there. There are racist calypsonians who sing against certain people. They sang against the NAR government. NAR wanted to privatise the state enterprise. Calypsonian after calypsonian sang against them.

Brother Marvin sang one song about national unity. Every year after that they are against him. That is the information they are going to be putting in the national archives—bias, perverse, fascist, racist information, and we have to understand that. What we needed to do was to focus on the information set that goes from grandparent to parent to child that changes behaviour. This country is in need of a focus on that kind of information. Not for people to come in here and try to derail this country and think what we need to do is to spend \$125 million. Why not spend \$250 million and do better? If the question is to build a big library, why not build a bigger library and do better. That is logical to me.

It was not about the size of the library or the architecture. The question was the vision, the lack of understanding of the role of information, and what the library and the national archives was supposed to do in the context of an evolving society and evolving technology. I am not losing myself. I am just focussing on what they said about libraries having something to do with national heritage and national culture. By doing so, by focussing on that in their development, they are misleading themselves and focussing the country away from the matter of substance which is how we use all information, including the recorded information, for the benefit of succeeding generations. In the context of a society that has suffered from the PNM disease of illiteracy, that library would have been redundant and useless to their existence. That is the point I am making.

When you consider this carnival thing, everything in Trinidad and Tobago is culture. When they came into power in 1956, they set up a Ministry of Culture which was a Ministry of mas, dance and bacchanal. Culture comes from the Latin word *cultus*, the same root that has the idea of nurturing and training, from which we get agriculture and apiculture. Culture is not just mas and dance. It is not just the performing arts. They are still making this mistake to relate culture to storing Carnival and steelband artifacts. Culture is about all the things human beings do that make them what they are, not merely animals, but animals that can reflect on their own thinking and recreate the world, and can challenge nature in a promethean sense.

This is what explains the kind of anxiety that is pervading communities in this country, that allows people to come into this Parliament moaning and braying

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about who fired who, and black people not getting work. Culture, in the broader sense, is the key to understanding the kind of ethnic differences. When one understands it the way I am articulating, one will understand that it has nothing to do with skin colour, hair and country of origin.

When we look at this building, there is no building like this created in Nigeria. In Tobago, I had to ask the little children what foolishness they were getting into, that Tobago heritage festival is about Africans and dancing with a top hat and a scissors tail coat. Where in Nigeria did they invent the top hat and scissors tail coat? Culture is more than that. Culture is all our ideas, all our languages, all our beliefs, and a library building cannot necessarily store all of that. If one is focussing on that, one is making a great mistake.

If one has an objective that is broad and nationalistic in the sense that one should really use the word, and not nationalistic in the sense of a grandiose self-serving purpose, one will understand what one has to do. Culture, as they spoke about it in their contributions, is totally defective. I could not sit here before I dealt with that aspect of the problem. That narrow-minded, chauvinistic, defective, neo-fascist conception of culture, the way Adolf Hitler understood it, the way Mussolini understood it, the way Stalin understood it. Culture, as an instrument of totalitarian control; as a means to manipulate people and keep yourself in power, to institutionalize a certain kind of ignorance. When you tell illiterate people about *magnum est PNM et prevalebit*, they do not know any Latin. I know Latin, so I will know what that means.

6.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that in this country all of us have to live here and when we are going to talk about and build a library, we have to talk about culture in the context of a library with an understanding of all that. Why is Tobago different from Trinidad? It cannot be because the people over there look different from the people in Trinidad. Because I am from there and if you did not know, I look just like Mr. Manning and he is from Trinidad. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Manning: No, no!

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: All right, I look like Valley then. Perhaps what you are really saying is that I am a more handsome man than you. *[Laughter]* I cannot blame you for admitting.

The point I am making is that when we are talking about culture, we need to understand that there is not a cultural homogeneity among the Indian people in

Trinidad or among those who are calling themselves Africans. There are Presbyterian Indians and there are Muslim Indians, there are people who came from South India, those Telegus and Tamils who look just like black people. All over Trinidad we have them. They are talking about pure race. There is no pure race here! Tobagonians are different from those people in Trinidad. There are probably more Ibos and Ashanti people in Tobago than in Trinidad. In some parts of Trinidad, I look at the people, I lived in Africa, I see them, they are Yoruba, I know that, they descended from that.

So we have these cultural differences and we have to understand that culture is about all that. When we use the word, we cannot afford, in the context of our times, to make these kinds of elementary mistakes, to be using culture as a general term, so flippantly, so inadequately; we cannot afford to do that.

So that, generally, in the context of all they are saying here, I do not know that they have dealt with the presentation of the Minister of Information, I do not know that the focus of the Government that I serve has not been honest, has not been noble, has not been adequate to the task of seeking after the country's benefit. I do not know that procrastinating the library building has done this country grievous harm. I do not know that the concept of refocusing the development of this country to attend to the rural areas and to Tobago because, indeed, Tobago is a rural area—

We just had this problem with St. Kitts and Nevis and this is the time to talk about all that in the context of a library. How much information do people in this country have about the issue of multiethnic states? I listen to the radio and read the newspapers; the editors do not understand it. The problem with Tobago is a particular case of a pandemic.

All over the world there are problems. The Soviet empire has broken up. There is Chechenya and all types of people who want independence. We look at Yugoslavia, where it was once one country, but now there are Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, and now Kosovo wants to break away, they say Albanians live there. It was one country about 20 years ago.

Nigeria is a good example. This morning I saw on the news that in Congo, Kabila is on the run. He left Kinshasa, we know he is not coming back. That is the end of him and every tribe in Congo wants to be in charge. If one goes to Rwanda and Burundi it is the same thing. I talked about Nigeria. The only reason Nigeria is still one country is on account of the fact that during the 1960s when the Civil War took place, the British and the Americans, in terms of their geopolitical necessity,

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saw a reason to support the Federal Government. Therefore, they supported the Federal Government moving against the Ibos. The next time those black people decide to fight and kill each other, it is going to be four countries there, at least.

So the question of culture in a multiethnic society is a general problem. We need to look at that in terms of the Nevis situation and Tobago. Tobago is not like Trinidad. Tobagonians are a peculiar ethnic group. In terms of the library and the archives, I understand, and I am asking Mr. Charles: what have you done with the Tobago's Archives? Do you still have them in Trinidad? Mr. Hochoy Charles is still trying to get these Archives to be copied and sent back to Tobago, because one bright fellow took all of them and brought them to Trinidad. I understand that one of the reasons they took them is because they said that they were not being properly cared for and they might have rotted. Maybe that is so, but the Tobagonians need their Archives back. They want them back in Scarborough, Tobago, not in Trinidad, because Tobagonians are not like Trinidadians. That is a reality.

We live in a state that is Trinidad and Tobago, but the reason the PNM opposed the THA Act and much of the sensible reforms is that they have this hegemonic impulse, this unitarian impulse. This question of the state. They do not understand that in the 19th Century European State, the idea of the state that came out of the 17th and 18th Centuries is culturally inappropriate for the 21st Century. This is why we have many problems and this is why we should take the Nevis situation very seriously and do not say, "Because 61 per cent of the people vote, we do not have a problem in Trinidad and Tobago".

I am talking about the Bill! I am talking about the word "culture" that they used, and the way they used it. So that in the context of this library, all these issues come up. They are the ones who raised it and did so inappropriately, defectively, without a sufficient concern for the meaning of the words they used, without a sufficient understanding and so, therefore, they were mischievous and misleading ignorant people, and that is why I have to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I support the Bill and I hope that in my comments I have sufficiently established the fact that what went on on the other side was just a way to pass the time, a way to spend the time. I was sitting here hoping to get some light, some intellectual sustenance, some substantial benefit that I could leave elevated, invigorated, something to tickle my mind, to understand. I thought I would have heard something about libraries, about the burning of the library in Alexandria, something about the importance of that to the

world and all these things. Instead of that, all I am hearing about is this grandiose vision to refurbish the centre of Port of Spain and "bus" people in to come and clap at what Mr. Manning did. We are talking about a Bill. It is in the *Hansard*. That is all they are talking about. This grandiose vision; they are going to make the Red House the centre of this thing, that kind of intellectual "doing it yourself with
[Laughter] That kind of going on that would lead some people astray. When one thinks they are normal and healthy, they have gone off saying, "I had an operation and the boy start to work well". That is good politics. I did not come here for this kind of thing.

I want to say that I support the Bill and I hope that I have left this Parliament wiser than I met it, just because I got up here this evening.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin East*): Mr. Speaker, it is always my unfortunate pleasure to speak after the Member for Tobago East. We are treated with such fallacious absurdities and childish diatribe from that Member and it goes on and on and on. I pity the poor public servants who have to listen to this nonsense, 70 minutes of it. I have always had the opinion that the Member for Tobago East is functionally illiterate and is in need of visitation of a library. He needs a course in remedial English and learning. Let me educate him. It is *magnum est PNM*, great is PNM; not *magnum et proevalebit*. Okay. You know what that means? Magnum is prevails. Mr. Speaker, over and over with this nonsense in this Parliament. Anyway, let me deal with some of the rubbish that we were treated to this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, in seeking to reform the library system in Trinidad and Tobago, the former PNM administration had put a broad-based approach into place. Not only was it reforming the information system, but was also providing the necessary infrastructure. Because, one cannot reform the information system without appropriate facilities, because people are the ones who have to operate this system, they are not operated by robots. So one has to provide a proper working environment for librarians and for the persons who will access the information. That is why we were building a national library complex in the capital city, Port of Spain, providing the nerve centre for the operations of the national information system. What are we going to do? Are we going to access it via television at our homes, Mr. Speaker?

We are being treated to hours and hours of nonsense from the Members for Oropouche and Tobago East. I will not comment on the contribution of that

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political nonentity from Arima. I will not comment. It is a shame! I pity the public servants in that ministry.

Anyway, let me deal with some of the mischief that the Member for Oropouche put into the *Hansard* today. Now that the UNC is in Government, they wish to rewrite history, they wish to put into the library systems of Trinidad and Tobago a false record of what has taken place over the last several years in Trinidad and Tobago. As an example, when I showed the Member for Oropouche this newspaper report of Friday, December 13, "Sudama: stop the growth of PoS". What was his reaction? "You believe that? That in the newspapers! You cannot believe anything them people say!" We had the Member for St. Augustine likening the media to drug dealers over the weekend. Saying that there is nothing worse than drug dealers in Trinidad and Tobago than the media and journalists. You see, one Member says, "Do not believe anything you read"; the other ones say that the media are drug dealers.

Let me go to the *Hansard*, 1996 Budget debate, the Hon. Trevor Sudama, January 16, 1996 with regard to what he said when he was challenged by we on this side about the discriminatory practices of the UNC and the fact that they were denying the children of Trinidad and Tobago the opportunity to access modern information systems in Trinidad and Tobago within the time-frame that we had identified for that. If the UNC had continued with the construction of the National Library, on target, because the foundations were already underway; as we sit here today, school children—because that is who we were building it for, the future of this nation—would have been accessing the Internet and all the other electronic information systems available throughout the world in the new National Library building. [*Desk thumping*] The children of this nation, because of the spite, hate, vindictiveness and the blindness of the UNC, have been denied that National Library now for three years.

Let me read the evidence. This is what the hon. Member for Oropouche said:

"I now come to my friend from Diego Martin East...Again, he accuses me of discriminations against PNM constituencies and how I have personally intervened to exclude the National Library Complex from the PSIP of 1996 and how I am against urban development, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just outline what the last government proposed in the PSIP with respect to urban development in Port of Spain. I would call out the projects and indicate the level of funding which was required to complete

these projects: The National Library building, a total estimated cost of \$91 million...

Red House restoration, \$21 million;"

Have we had that Red House restoration, Mr. Speaker? You see, they are even discriminating against the Parliament! Let us move on.

"...Ministry of Works and Transport's headquarters, \$50 million; National Security and Legal Complex in Port of Spain, \$81 million; old police Headquarters, \$30 million; National Performing Arts Centre, \$18 million;"

And he went on and on and on, pooh-poohing and dismissing important, critical projects such as a National Performing Arts Centre, restoration of the police Headquarters, *et cetera*.

7.00 p.m.

He says this made a total of \$411 million just for the city of Port of Spain in a situation of stringent funding. Listen to this:

"One sees the notorious imbalance of which this Government is guilty; depriving other areas of Trinidad and Tobago from getting any kind of funding..."

We have not even added to this figure the Brian Lara Promenade to show the gross and inequitable imbalance perpetrated by this PNM...Our duty..."

He is talking about the UNC now—

"...is to attempt to correct that imbalance and to have equity with respect to urban as well as regional development...we make no apologies for correcting that gross and inequitable imbalance which had been the legacy of the PNM Government.

No UNC/NAR Government could look at such enormous levels of funding...and feel that is the way we ought to go. We cannot go that way..."

What he was saying is they are not going to build the national library building because there are too many projects in Port of Spain.

Mr. Sudama: That is not what I was saying.

Mr. C. Imbert: I am just repeating. He cannot even understand. Too many projects and too much expenditure in Port of Spain. As he said, "Stop the growth in Port of Spain", so we shall not build a library and the children of this nation have for three years been denied a national library building not to mention the librarians

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and all the other professionals who work tirelessly to educate our children and provide them with the tools necessary to become better citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. That is the legacy of the UNC Administration; spite and vindictiveness.

I will show you the illogic, Mr. Speaker. He comes back in 1998, three years later, after he condemns an expenditure of \$90 million in January 1996 on the library saying that it is gross over-spending and it is not required, and is spending \$130 million on the same building; \$40 million more. If \$90 million was too much in 1996 how come \$130 million is okay in 1998? It is just a demonstration of spite and vindictiveness. It is a typical pattern of manipulation of the Public Sector Investment Programme. You see it right across the board. They take the library at \$90 million in 1996, condemn it and bring it back in 1998 at \$130 million; 50 per cent increase. They take the airport at \$350 million in 1995, condemn it, bring it back in 1998 at \$900 million; 300 per cent increase. The same airport they condemned as being too large and extravagant in 1995 they tripled the size in 1998.

Mr. Speaker, I had the unfortunate privilege to read the 181st report, I believe, of the Caribbean Development Bank meeting of the board where they spoke about the southern highway project. The project where the PNM administration had arranged financing for the dualling of the San Fernando bypass, the extension of the Solomon Hochoy Highway with a link to the South Trunk Road at a cost of US \$20 million in 1995. That 181st report was lamenting the fact that two years later the project has been bogged down with all sorts of bureaucratic impediments and the cost has now doubled. That is in the CDB report. A project now gone from \$20 million to \$50 million. *[Interruption]* They can say what they want. I will bring the record into this Parliament. I do not believe anything the Member for Oropouche says. He is a stranger to the truth. I will put that CDB report into this record and you will see the cost has gone up because of the bungling of the UNC Administration. The PNM is not saying that, an international financing agency is saying that. Incompetence, bungling and mismanagement of the UNC Administration.

[WORDS EXPUNGED]

Mr. Speaker: Whatever one may call oneself in any setting, it is not right in this House to use such remarks. That is not language which is acceptable. That will be expunged.

Mr. C. Imbert: I will be guided, Mr. Speaker. I was simply repeating what he called himself in this Parliament but I am guided.

Mr. Speaker, that hon. Member for Tobago East who, as my friend at my right indicated, went from a salary of zero last year to a salary of \$20,000 and thus

knows where his bread is buttered, sings for his supper every time he comes to this Parliament and is not even aware of the fact that there are four purpose built libraries in Trinidad and Tobago. All of the other library structures and complexes have suffered from *ad hoc* development but there are four purpose built libraries in Trinidad and Tobago. Three of those purpose built libraries are in Tobago but you see the Member for Tobago East is functionally illiterate.

Mr. Speaker, the Roxborough library built in 1979, purpose built in Tobago East, that alleged neglected constituency; the Scarborough library built in 1983—I might add both built by the PNM—and the Charlottville library built by the PNM in 1994. Three purpose built libraries in Tobago out of four for the whole country. With the functional illiteracy of the Member for Tobago East who does not often go into libraries he is just blissfully ignorant of these facts. Fifty per cent of the purpose built libraries in the entire country are in his constituency.

Mr. Speaker, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. He looks at some structure in the back there and parrots on about Corinthian columns and so forth. What he and the Member for Oropouche do not understand is that the design of the national library complex just to the south of us was finalized after serious consultation with all of the stakeholders. We did not have any commercial outlets in that building for a particular reason. Mr. Speaker, it was the view of the information professionals, as it is all over the world, that places of learning and study such as libraries, museums and art galleries should have their own space and should not be interfered with or distracted by extraneous activities such as the location of retail outlets and commercial outlets such as this UNC Administration, who has no concept of functionality—that is what I mean by a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

There are two aspects of architecture. There is form and there is function and one of the most important issues that the PNM addressed was the fact that the library would be purpose built, designed specifically for information activities and that the persons who go there would be focussed on information. There would not be people running up and down to buy cloth, ladies hangers or chicken and chips or other activities which is what we are now going to see in this centre of learning if this UNC Administration is allowed to get away with its plan.

Royal Castle under the national library. That is what we are going to see, Mr. Speaker. Chicken and chips in a centre of learning. That is the vision of the UNC Administration. It is not done anywhere in the world. If you go to all of the great museums in London and New York you do not see any chicken and chips outlets

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inside. You do not see a man selling gabardine and crimplene upstairs—which is what is the vision of this UNC Administration—or bodi and pumpkin which is what will happen if we allow this UNC Administration to get away with its rape of the culture of Trinidad and Tobago.

I hope now the Member for Tobago East understands that that library should be restricted purely for activities related to or complementary to information and learning such as theatre, art and history, that they will abandon this idea of putting retail outlets and vendors under the national library. I hope they will abandon their foolish ideas which they are trying to justify by saying that the income from these commercial spaces will pay for the maintenance. What arrant nonsense! What about the capital repayment for the extra \$40 million? Who is paying for that? Why spend \$40 million to attempt to recover it from some paltry income from commercial rentals? It will take about 2000 years to pay that \$40 million extra for those two floors in that library building. It is an example of their barrenness of thought and the vacuous inanity that takes place on that side.

We have to hear the diatribe from the Member for Tobago East about the PNM wanting to create monuments and so forth and UNC is not about that. If the Member for Tobago East would take two minutes to take a look at what is going on around him and what is happening within his immediate environment, he would think about the answer to the question: which Member of which Government is building a \$62 million monument to himself just 100 feet away from where I stand? The Member for Couva South. This same UNC Administration. The Members for Oropouche and Tobago East carrying on about building huge buildings in Port of Spain but just down the road the Member for Couva South is building a 10-storey monument costing \$62 million to house his office. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

He is probably putting a statue of himself outside and bringing the people from Couva to gawk at it. *[Interruption]* That is what he is going to do, according to the theory, in maxi taxis; to gawk at the hangman.

7.15 p.m.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I really wish when I have to speak after the hon. Member for Tobago East that I would have something worthwhile to comment on. I mean, such an ignorance of reality. I do not know what to say, Mr. Speaker. He is now lionizing Albert Gomes. You see, he suffers from an identity crisis; a massive inferiority complex. That is why he has to idolize people like Albert

Gomes. Why does he not lionize that fellow over there? [*Points to bust of Count Louis de Verteuil*] Count Louis de Verteuil? Why does the Member not lionize him? Why not Cipriani? Why Albert Gomes? He is suffering from self-hate, Mr. Speaker.

Let me go into another piece of mischief perpetrated by the Member for Tobago East. This thing about an emancipation park. I have noticed that some members of the media have been very kind and charitable to the hon. Prime Minister saying that he was misled by certain members of the community when he declared that he would rename George V Park, Emancipation Park. They forgave him for his indiscretion, but I will not be so charitable. It was pure mischief on the part of the Member for Couva North. Just like that John John mischief perpetrated by the UNC.

The Member for Tobago East referred to some of the statements made by historians like Father de Verteuil, Michael Anthony, Brereton and so forth, that the St. Clair Estate was not a large estate, that the area now called George V Park was a wooded and forested area, and they came to the conclusion that the great house was some distance away. The great house was where TTT is now located. That was the great house for that estate. They have come to the conclusion, therefore, that the number of slaves that could possibly have been buried in the location of George V Park was small. It is quite a logical conclusion, that the great house was quite a distance away; it was not a large estate; it was not a centre for sugar cane activity, *et cetera*.

But, where was the largest sugar-cane activity in the pre-emancipation era? In which part of the country?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Caroni.

Mr. C. Imbert: Caroni. If there is one place in Trinidad and Tobago where thousands of slaves were buried, it is in Caroni, at Brechin Castle. Why did the Member for Couva North not get up and say in order to honour African ancestors and the memories of those who were bonded into servitude, "I declare that Brechin Castle will be Emancipation Park." Why did he not do that? [*Desk thumping from Opposition Benches*] Because that is where most slaves were buried, in Brechin Castle. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because that is his back yard. "He ain't going dey at all." He knows if he does that, they will eat him raw.

He cannot go into Caroni, but he comes into PNM territory, the constituency of my colleague, Port of Spain North, and perpetuates mischief. If he really cared for

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our African brothers and if he really wanted to commemorate emancipation, let him rename Brechin Castle, Emancipation Park tomorrow. [*Desk thumping from Opposition Benches*] He would not do that because he is just mischievous.

The Member for Tobago East talked about education and the impact of the library system. While I am on that, let me pay tribute to all those persons who worked with the Member for Arouca South to put in place the provisions that we now see before Parliament today. Because the Bill before us does not differ in any fundamental respect from the draft bill produced by the deliberations of the Member for Arouca South together with the stakeholders of the consultation, all the librarians and others. There is no significant difference. It is, in fact, the PNM's bill that we are debating today and that is why we support it. But let me get back.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tobago East introduced so much mischief in this Parliament today; he talked about illiterate people in this country and the fact that the education system produced illiteracy, but he would not admit that it was his Prime Minister, at a public meeting in St. Augustine, who introduced the dangerous concept that there was a group of people in Trinidad and Tobago who are unemployable, untrainable, cannot be educated, cannot be helped, cannot rise from their present situation and, therefore, the unemployment rate cannot fall below a certain level. The first politician in Trinidad and Tobago who said that was the Member for Couva North, the Prime Minister.

Mr. Narine: That is why he is a 3 per cent Prime Minister.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. C. Imbert: But the Member would come here and say people are not born carpenters and masons. That is what he said. Also, anybody who propagates the theory that people are born to be carpenters, masons and so forth is a dangerous person. But, it is his Prime Minister propagating that piece of dangerous mischief, that the people of the East/West Corridor are unemployable, untrainable and cannot be educated to rise above their circumstances. His Prime Minister spread that piece of mischief in this country and introduced that into the public debate, and I reject that.

That is why we in the PNM were building a national library complex as an integral part of the national information system to educate everyone in Trinidad and Tobago, to give them access as part of the education system; as part of our tertiary system, the University of the West Indies and the other technical colleges, the other private tertiary institutions; the secondary education system; the primary education system; all dovetail in with the national library system.

That is why we in the PNM have been committed to education. That is why Dr. Eric Williams introduced free secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago. The PNM has always been committed to education and the development of education. They could say what they want. That same Member for Tobago East benefited from the free education system of the People's National Movement. As a matter of fact, he got a loan and he did not repay it. But let us move on.

This Member had to come in this House to tell us that he has been in a Cabinet for "X" months and he never heard or witnessed any debate or any attempt on any part of the UNC to be sectarian. What utter nonsense! It is that hon. Member for Tobago East who went to Tobago and chastised his own Government over the squatter regularization legislation, causing the Prime Minister to reign him in and threaten him. That is when the puppy dog thing came out, when he broke ranks with the rest of his colleagues and chastised them over the Squatter Regularization Bill. One must be honest. If it is one thing we have in this Parliament, it is good memory; we could remember; there is *Hansard*, but we also remember.

Who created Indian Arrival Day problems? The PNM declared a holiday and called it Arrival Day. One of the first acts of the Member for Couva North, when he came into office, was to add the word "Indian". It is Prime Minister Panday who added the word "Indian" to Arrival Day. When the Member for Tobago East gets up and condemns the actions of any individual who added the word "Indian" to the holiday "Arrival Day", he is condemning Prime Minister Basdeo Panday. [*Desk thumping from Opposition Benches*] He knows what he is doing.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

7.30 p.m.

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand the Member for Tobago East. He said he can say what he wants, when he wants, how he wants, where he wants and to whom he wants and nobody can do him anything. Of course he is only jesting. Now he is only a puppy dog. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, let me deal with some other inaccuracies and downright untruths that the Member for Oropouche brought into this debate. I am really sorry that in a debate on information we have to bring in these issues, but it has been expanded and it is all in the quest for proper information.

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What did the Member for Oropouche say? What untruths did he utter? He said that the development of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate did not benefit the people of Couva. What utter rubbish! Also that very little employment was created and that it was not because the PNM loved the people of Central Trinidad that a port was available. Utter nonsense!

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1984 I did a hydrographic survey in Point Lisas. I personally did it and the purpose of that hydrographic survey was to establish the siltation in the artificial harbour. Let me say it again because they are illiterate. The artificial harbour that was created off Monkey Point in Point Lisas, there was only mangrove and mud there before the PNM developed that area. We dredged the area and created an artificial harbour, a turning basin, and used the landfill from the dredging for land reclamation to reclaim the area on which the bulk of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate now stands. The PNM created that estate and created the harbour. There was no harbour there. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. Sudama: For whose benefit?

Mr. C. Imbert: This kind of information is available in libraries but they cannot read. They got an “F” in English so let me deal with it here.

One plant alone—the steel plant—employs in excess of 1,000 workers. That is a matter of public records, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One plant alone employs in excess of 1,000 workers and the vast majority of those workers come from Point Lisas and its environs.

Mr. Sudama: Not at all.

Mr. C. Imbert: I will bring the employment records for you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One thousand workers alone in the steel plant, most of them from the Couva area.

Mr. Sudama: Not at all.

Mr. C. Imbert: Nonsense. They are all from there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one company alone—the TTMF; it has a new name now

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Caribbean Metal.

Mr. C. Imbert: —injects \$225 million every year into the local economy in the purchase of goods and services and a significant portion of that goes to the Couva area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, who feeds the people in Point Lisas Industrial Estate? Do they bring sandwiches from home? They live in Mayaro and Charlotteville and bring packed lunches from home? What utter rubbish, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Couva is now almost a bustling city, bustling metropolis. Look at the rates for rental in the Couva area. They have gone sky high. The voters in those areas have benefited from PNM development. They are renting their homes to workers in the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. That is what we, the PNM, did in the Couva area, a tradition Opposition area. *[Desk thumping]* There are over 5,000 persons working in the Point Lisas Industrial Estate and at least 4,000 of them are from Couva area and over \$1 billion in the purchasing of goods and services goes into the general Central Trinidad area because of activities in Point Lisas. So I would like to debunk the felicitous arguments and the downright untruths perpetrated by the Member for Oropouche; billions of dollars injected into the economy and into the general Couva area because of the foresight and vision of the People's National Movement. *[Desk thumping]* They can say what they want.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, right now with oil prices having dropped to under \$12 where do you think the economy of Trinidad and Tobago is getting its revenue? What is propping up the Government and the country of Trinidad and Tobago? What is propping us up? The income from gas and petrochemicals at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. *[Desk thumping]* What is responsible for the diversification of our economy? Why has our dependency on oil in 1998 dwindled to 25 per cent where it was over 50 per cent? Why? Because of the vision and the development put in place by the People's National Movement. *[Desk thumping]* Income from petrochemicals, natural gas, taxes on corporations and individuals coming from the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. So that the Member for Oropouche could whistle in the wind for all I care. It is not true. It is just not true. Point Lisas is the saviour of Trinidad and Tobago. *[Desk thumping]*

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this nonsense coming from the Member for Tobago East about the PNM administration had no interest in rural development. It is the PNM that implemented a \$250 million rural—hear the word “rural” because they are illiterate; “rural” means country; the bush, not the town, that is urban—access roads and bridges programme. It is PNM that did that! *[Desk thumping]* It put systems in place to build access roads and bridges throughout Trinidad and Tobago, including that in the constituency of the Member for Oropouche. Let me use the words of the Member for Oropouche—before I am accused of being unparliamentary—on February 16, 1996 referring to the Member for Point Fortin:

“Finally, I heard the very foolish comment from the Minister for Point Fortin who complained about how the development programme for the Ministry of Housing and Settlements has been drastically reduced for 1996.”

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This is the operative paragraph—

“The performance of that Ministry under this Minister—I call him the former somnolent Minister of Housing and Settlements because he has always been asleep in this Parliament and does not seem to be aware and does not care what goes on in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.”

That is the Member for Oropouche talking about the Member for Point Fortin.

Mr. Sudama: That is when he was on the PNM side. Now he is fully awake.

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why I have to re-enforce the fact that it is the PNM that implemented that \$250 million rural access roads programme, including those four bridges in Icacos opened by that somnolent, sleeping Member, Rip Van Winkle from Point Fortin. It is the PNM that put in that system of rural development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also initiated a programme of road development; a \$700 million highways development programme including the Solomon Hochoy Highway, San Fernando Bye Pass and numerous main roads and bridges especially in the rural parts of Trinidad and Tobago. Seven hundred million dollars in rural Trinidad and Tobago under the PNM. That is what we did. I can go on and I will.

It is we that put the programme in place for construction of regional administrative centres where all the public sector organizations and service organizations such as the warden’s office, the magistrate’s court, regional libraries and so forth would be brought together under one roof. You saw it at the Tunapuna Administrative Complex. It is the PNM that put in place a programme of rural development to create such centres in Arima, Princes Town, Point Fortin and all parts of Trinidad and Tobago. It is we who did that.

Additionally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is this PNM administration that planned and implemented divisional police headquarters in rural Trinidad and Tobago—Sangre Grande. A \$12-million divisional police headquarters for the police in Sangre Grande. That is what we did. That was our vision for rural development; for holistic development. One cannot build an urban facility in a rural area. That would not be functional. Urban areas have their characteristics and rural areas have their characteristics. Rural areas are predominantly agriculture and also from time to time there is industrial activity close to rural areas. Therefore, in recognition of the form and definition of a rural area one provides the facilities required in these areas. One provides roads, other infrastructure and the service facilities required in rural areas because we must have a balance of development in Trinidad and Tobago.

7.40 p.m.

This is what the PNM administration has been doing in Trinidad and Tobago for the last 40 years. That is what we did. It is not like this Government that took \$120 million collected in 1997 under the Road Improvement Fund and spent \$115 million in UNC constituencies and \$5 million in PNM's constituencies. The record speaks for itself. Ninety-five per cent of the Road Improvement Fund is being spent in UNC areas and the majority of the tax is collected in the PNM areas. That is where all the cars are! I have to inform them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the M2 road was built through the canefields, costing \$15 million and it is only killing people. Fifteen million dollars out of my road improvement fund to kill people in South Trinidad instead of repairing important arterial roads.

I really take objection to the pattern of development taking place in Trinidad and Tobago. They are talking about the Beetham Highway. I could not have put it better than a letter a person wrote to the newspapers recently. He said that the Beetham Highway was paved just three years ago but the roads of Diego Martin, of Laventille, of San Fernando have not been repaired for three years; all of the East/West Corridor—nothing was done for the last three years but they decided to take our money and repave a road which was paved three years ago just like that. That is development UNC style. Absolutely no logic, no planning, no coherent vision at all. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I could speak without the inanity of the cross-talk that is coming from that side—the decibel level is rising. I just cannot come into this Parliament to hear rubbish like what I have heard from the Member for Tobago East.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, just stay closer to the points. Let us hear about libraries, books, information systems. I will be glad if the Member can put me back in that frame of mind.

Mr. C. Imbert: The point that the Member made was that ideas, are what are important and a dissemination of ideas and the way one disseminates concepts could either be very beneficial or very dangerous, and it is the ideas that have been put forward in this Parliament today, the mischief that will go into the books in the libraries that I have to deal with. I have to debunk this arrant nonsense because, *Hansard* goes into the library. I have to debunk the rubbish that I heard coming from the Members on the other side.

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I remember the Member for Oropouche saying that there should be no national library and that there should be 10 satellite libraries around Trinidad and Tobago. A classic demonstration of the ignorance of how systems and organizations function.

Take the human body for example. It has many parts and many functions: hands for lifting, legs for walking and so forth. But all controlled by the central nervous system and by the brain. The body is a good example of the national library system where the regional libraries and the satellite libraries are all controlled by the nerve centre which is the national library complex. There is no successful organization in the world that does not have a central processing unit. Even a computer has a central processing unit. When I hear these foolish ideas being put forward in the Parliament and children are listening, to use the words of the Member for Tobago East, and they will believe that the rubbish that we are hearing from the Member for Oropouche and Tobago East is sensible and that they should emulate them, I must correct this mischief.

It is very interesting that having spent three years wasting people's time running up bills, running down organizations and institutions in this country, that the UNC Administration is crawling back with its tail between its legs to implement the projects of the People's National Movement. [*Desk thumping*] Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. And, you see them crawling back to do the national library complex with their tails between their legs with all sorts of foolish excuses as: we had to review it and that was our right and so forth. They come back to do what the PNM had put in place in 1995 at \$40 million more and that is only now. Knowing them and the way they behave that library may cost \$250 million, just like the airport. Knowing them and the way they behave, a \$300 million project sold for \$900 million and they talk about urbanization.

The Member for St. Augustine wants to build tenements in Picton. What is this all about? They are anti-urbanization. This UNC Administration has campaigned on a platform of anti-urbanization, anti-city, anti-town, pro-country, pro-rural; that is the philosophy of the United National Congress. They are coming to build tenements on the hills of Laventille. Little concrete sweat boxes to put the citizens of the East/West Corridor in. Bind them in servitude in little sweat boxes on the hills of Laventille. That is the vision of this UNC Administration, this anti-urban, anti-city administration.

I looked at the artist impression and I was appalled. They have no vision. They will buy chains and chain the people in the little concrete sweat boxes on the hills

of Picton and tell them stay there; that they cannot move from there. I ask that the national library administration be given more than lip-service. This UNC Administration has a tendency to engage in lip-service. The National library building was not the be-all and end-all of our national information trust. It was part of a process and I ask this UNC “vaps” Administration not to give lip-service to the concept of an integrated system. Building the library is just one part of the PNM’s vision and I ask this UNC to be faithful to the PNM’s vision and equip the librarians and the information practitioners with the tools.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Maharaj): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am indebted to the hon. Member for giving way so that I can move a procedural motion. I beg to move that the House continue to sit until the completion of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

7.50 p.m.

Mr. C. Imbert: I would ask the UNC to equip the librarians and the information practitioners with the tools which they require to manage and develop the information system effectively. Give them the electronic equipment which they require, the fibre optic cables; international telecommunications access; and the proper funding they require to manage this new, bright future into which they are going with the construction at last of the nerve-centre of the new National Library Information System. Just do not give lip-service. I would also ask that the Minister of Public Administration be kept far, far away from the library practitioners.

Hon. Member: Who is that?

Mr. C. Imbert: Senator Mark. I would ask that he be kept far, far, away from the national library practitioners because he is more concerned with fixing up himself—moving into some expensive house in Federation Park, I understand, and employing his family in state corporations; and I can justify all this, I am not making idle statements. He is much more interested in that, than in reforming the public sector and he is an example of the worst excesses of this regime.

They say one thing before they come into government, criticize the former Prime Minister for spending just \$30,000 to upgrade the kitchen at the Prime Minister's residence and he comes into office and spends \$2 million ripping out tiles and putting in persian carpet and marble flooring. That is the approach and attitude of this UNC Administration. Driving a Ford Escort when he was in the

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Opposition, and Mercedes Benz in Government; drinking Old Oak Rum in Opposition, and Johnny Walker Blue in Government; smoking Anchor in Opposition, and Cigar in Government. *[Laughter]* The worst excesses of this UNC Administration—chastising the parasitic oligarchy in Opposition, but playing golf at St. Andrews Golf Club every Sunday while in Government and that is why they cannot get anything done. They are too interested in extra curricular affairs.

I am happy that a contract has been awarded for that building, although it is three years late, construction is underway and two or three years hence, we would see in the year 2000 or 2001 or whenever, the new National Library Centre. I hope by that time the practitioners would also have the training, equipment and the support which they require to make the national library building a success.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives (Hon. Harry Partap): Mr. Speaker, I add my support this afternoon to the National Library and Information System Bill which was ably argued and put before this House by the Minister of Information, Communication, Training and Distance Learning.

The Bill simply seeks to establish a statutory authority to facilitate the development and integration of the Library and Information Services in Trinidad and Tobago. It has a simple motive, and as I listened to the debate coming from the other side, if I were hoping to get any substance from the Members opposite so I could have left here with a little more information about the library or its services, or what this Bill implied, I would have had to look elsewhere. The Members were completely off-course and they brought all kinds of things into the debate that had nothing to do with the Bill which is before us. That was a little disappointing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened to the Member for Diego Martin East and one sees it is the same speech he is making over and over with a little alteration here and there. There was nothing else.

I listened to the Member for Arouca South and the Member for San Fernando East and they spoke nothing at all about the Bill and I am wondering if this is the same Bill which was before this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems as though the Members opposite are missing something. They are missing being in Government. They are suffering from political tabanca. They wish they were on this side, but I want to tell them this afternoon that they failed in Government and they are failing in Opposition. They are running up and down this country holding on to straws trying to see if they

could undermine this Government, but they cannot, because this Government is performing. This is what is having an adverse effect on the Members opposite. It is making them feel as if they are losing out, and they are losing out.

If I had spent 35 years in office and had not put into place what we on this side are doing, I would have come here Friday after Friday and not said a word if I were on that side. I would have been silent. They have no moral authority at all to speak on this Bill and they could not really answer anything on it because for 20 years it was languishing on their laps and they did nothing to put this NALIS into operation.

One of the good things which the Member for San Fernando East did as the Prime Minister was to bring the library services under his ministry, but the mistake he made was to put the Member for Arouca South in charge of it because she did nothing. She sat for four years and did nothing, and they are trying to claim credit for us taking the Bill into its stages and to make it an Act. They are trying to claim it, but they cannot do that because this Bill had been with them and they did absolutely nothing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member was also at the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and she tried to claim a piece of legislation which we put into operation. She always does that, always claiming things which she did not do.

Hon. Member: Be careful she does not claim you.

Hon. H. Partap: I take objection to the Member for Diego Martin East for praising the Member for Arouca South for bringing this Bill to the stage where it could be brought to Parliament and I find that very disgusting. I find it disgusting because the PNM never had the courage to tell people when they were wrong. They used to reward non-performance and that is bad for this country. This had its backlash in Trinidad and Tobago and it is seen all over in terms of lack of infrastructure, and no will to do anything. This is why I say they failed in Government and they are failing in Opposition and they would continue to fail.
[Desk thumping]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are worried to death that we are doing so many things in this country which they should have done in their 35 years and in the short period of two and a half years we are doing those things. The Member for Diego Martin East talked about rural development, that is obviously not in Trinidad. I am sure that the Member for Toco/Manzanilla is going to agree with me that there had been no rural development there. Any time the UNC does

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something in the area—because we are working for the entire country, we are holistic—he steps in with us and identifies with the project, and that is good.

Hon. Member: He is a UNC.

Hon. H. Partap: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that bridge in Valencia which had been taking lives is now being replaced. It is almost completed and I am sure the Member is happy about that. We are also doing some development in the Toco/Manzanilla area. Every constituency in Trinidad and Tobago is receiving its share from this Government. If one takes a ride to the east coast, one would see all those wooden bridges which had been there for years have now been replaced with the same money which the PNM had and could not spend it. We are doing it now.

The Member for Diego Martin East who had the opportunity as the minister in charge to have the infrastructure developed in this country, did not do it. I do not know if he was prevented by the then Prime Minister, but in every area of this country one would see development taking place. The Member made some sad remarks about the M2 road and he said it is killing people. The road is good. It is one of the best roads in South.

Hon. Member: Where in South?

Hon. H. Partap: It does not matter where in South Trinidad.

8.05 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said the PNM had always been rewarding non-performance and they had continued to do this to the detriment of this nation. Today, I think the country is breathing a sigh of relief that now there is a Government that is spending taxpayers' money in a balanced and equitable way.

I think that one of the problems for which they are suffering is, they feel that we are doing what they used to do in office and so for them everything is corruption. There is a corruption ghost behind every post. *[Laughter]* Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot help it; we are going to continue to work for the development of this country because we understand what it is to balance and equitably distribute the nation's wealth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin East mentioned that the PNM administration did something like 200 roads and bridges in their time, in the rural areas. I do not know where the evidence is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I remember when I worked with the newspapers that the Member for Diego East brought a report on how the 5 per cent road tax was being distributed and he mentioned two

roads in Princes Town; St. Croix Road and Railway Road, and they were recorded as if they were paved. Not a single thing was done on those roads. I wonder what he did with the money for those roads? However, it is not for me to decide what he did with it. The then Prime Minister might have been able to say.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that the Member for Diego Martin East was praising the Member for Arouca South for putting everything in place to bring this Bill before this House. In fact, he said that we simply brought it in without any change. Of course that is not true at all. I now refer to a note that I have. As early as 1980, Cabinet had established a new library authority to co-ordinate all library and information services in Trinidad and Tobago. I think it was called the National Library, Information and Archives Service. There was a plan for a new library complex, for a library development unit and for the staffing arrangements about which the Member for Diego Martin spoke. All those plans were finalized in 1980.

Mr. Speaker, three years later, on October 13, 1983, the Ministry of Information issued this statement. I quote:

“The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has embarked upon a development programme for the National Library Services. The first priority in this development programme is the construction of a National Library Complex on part of the old Princes Building site. Mr. Overand Padmore, Minister of Education will meet with the board on Thursday, October 20 to discuss the project further and appropriate legislation for the establishment of the National Library, Information and Archives Service (NALIAS), as a statutory body.”

Mr. Speaker, 15 years later, nothing was done. However, there was a Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister who sat warming the chair and did absolutely nothing. If I were you I would not have even spoken on this, I would have allowed it to go.

Hon. Member: Talk through the Speaker.

Hon. H. Partap: Yes. Mr. Speaker, they are saying that they are so concerned about library services, but let me remind them about the reference library of Trinidad and Tobago. That library was designated the Central Library and it was located at Queen’s Park East. It housed the widest collection of reference works and it was used extensively by students, businessmen and those who needed to access information rather than fiction. The roof of that building fell through. It

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went into disrepair and when rain fell the books were soaked with water and eventually that collection was destroyed by fire. *[Interruption]* Yes, a substantial number of books were destroyed. Mr. Speaker, they are now saying that they are concerned about library services. On the opposite side, Mr. Speaker, there were the archives. It was not destroyed by fire, but inaction by those opposite. They did nothing for library services. When one talks about lip service, Mr. Speaker, that is lip-service from Members on that side.

This is evidence to show that these people really had no interest in library services. What they wanted was a big structure, as the Member for Tobago East said, where they could bring in persons by the bus load—like when they have their public meetings—and walk them through and let them applaud a plain, huge building with nothing inside.

This Bill seeks to bring a certain degree or rationalization in terms of legislation governing library services. Mr. Speaker, as you and other hon. Members are aware, there were three sets of legislation which dealt with library services: the Central Library of Trinidad and Tobago Act, Chap. 40:01; the Public Library Act, Chap. 40:02; and the Carnegie Free Library Act, Chap. 40:03. This Bill that is now before us, the National Library and Information System (NALIS) Bill, seeks to consolidate those three Bills under one umbrella which would be for the benefit of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I see that the Member for Diego Martin East is back. He did, in fact, mention and referred to someone on this side constructing a building 100 ft. away from where he stood. I want to tell this House about that building. The PNM had refused to erect a building for the Ministry of the Attorney General during their time. They refused, even though the Ministry of the Attorney General had under its wings major institutions such as the Solicitor General's Department, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Law Commission and the Chief State Solicitor's office—major institutions.

8.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the lawyers who worked in these four divisions, and even those who appear for the state or those who appear for the prosecution, work under very strenuous conditions. In fact they were treated like animals by our friends opposite. They had no interest in ensuring the free flow of justice. They did not want the wheels of justice to turn in such a manner that justice would serve this country. That was not in their interest. And so, they obstructed the officers of the

law by not providing the facilities and, as the Member said, this was spite and vindictiveness.

Mr. Speaker, at the present time, the Law Commission is in one building, the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is in another building, the Chief State Solicitor's Department is in a separate building, and the Solicitor General's Department is in yet another building. So, what we are doing now is trying to bring all under one roof. What is so bad about that? Why is the Member for Diego Martin East annoyed about that? Why is he taking objection to that? We are seeking to provide the ambience. We are seeking to provide such that these officers of the law will work in humane conditions. What is wrong with that? I do not know, but we are doing it. I am sure that at the moment they are a little worried about that. We cannot stop jealousy. We cannot legislate to prevent jealousy.

I intervened in this matter because I wanted to deal specifically with clauses 8 to 22 of Part III of the Bill. These clauses address directly the employees of the three existing library services, who will have the option to be absorbed under the newly created National Library and Information System Authority under the provisions of this Bill. It is interesting that under NALIS, the workers will have an option that will be protected, and they will be protected. In fact, NALIS will be able to recruit employees. It will be able to fix entry qualifications. It will be able to establish terms and conditions of service, as long as the salary does not exceed \$96,000 per annum. Anything above that will be subject to ministerial approval. The employees will be covered. They will not lose anything. They will come in on such terms and conditions as were applicable to them, immediately prior to their coming into NALIS or to the effect of this Act.

There are three ways in which they can come. They can come on board by transfer to NALIS, they can be seconded to NALIS, or they can be transferred out of the library services. Anywhere they go, they will receive the terms and conditions they enjoyed before, and their benefits will be protected under the law. I think this is a good move where this Bill is concerned, because one will remember the problem that those opposite had when the Regional Health Authorities (RHA) were brought into operation. There was the sort of system where they could have stayed as public servants or also come in as members of the RHA, and even today there is this problem with that system.

This Bill defines the terms, protects the workers and they are given an opportunity to come on board. What we are saying is that they are coming at no less favourable treatment than if they were not so transferred or did not come on

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board. Mr. Speaker, this is the part I wanted to bring to the attention of this House, and to tell you that this Bill protects the workers who will be coming to NALIS.

The Member for Diego Martin East had also indicated that the Government at the time was putting into effect the information systems in this country, and it was going to be second to none in Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, he said that if we had gone along with the plans we had to review, today the students would have been able to access the Internet. I take that with a grain of salt, because in the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives itself, we have had the experience where under that administration, from 1992 they were supposed to put on board a national human resource information system. All arrangements were put in place with the IDB, but they dragged their feet in such an obscene way that even now we are in the process of putting that into operation. If we had that system in place, today we could have planned better. We would have had a better system of planning so that we would have been able to reach out to those unemployed, and even reduce further the unemployment figure in this country.

I am happy to tell you this evening that we have put things in place, and I hope by the beginning of September, that system will be put together so that very soon, we will have that system on board. It will greatly assist the planning procedures in this country and it will also help us at the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives to identify and match the unemployed with jobs in this country. I have no doubt that with that kind of system, we would be able to make a further dent on unemployment in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am very sceptical when I hear those opposite make all sorts of remarks about what they could have, should have and would have done. They could sit there and tell us all about what they had planned to do, but the point is whether they could have done it. I want to tell you this evening that this Bill is a worker friendly Bill and, because of that and other things in the Bill, I would lend my support and I am sure that those opposite—despite whatever they have said before—will join with us and, at the end of the day, we are going to work towards an integrated, efficient and cost effective library service of which we will all be proud. I am in total support of my colleague on this Bill, and I thank you.

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Nariva made a fairly brief contribution to this debate, but I think that I can safely suggest that the Member's contribution could quite easily be looked over because credibility is the issue here. This is a Member who appeared to be a professional journalist and rather neutral for many years, and suddenly removed his mask around October, 1995. We all know him for what he is. His credibility is at

stake here and I, on that basis, feel there is precious little to be said except, of course, as it applies to the people of whom he just spoke. He just sought to assure us that employees in the various library services have nothing to fear at the hands of this Government. But, Mr. Speaker, when we consider firstly the track record of this Government for the short two and a half years it has been in office, we can never feel as comfortable as he wants us to feel with that half-baked assurance.

Mr. Speaker, let me get into the heart of the matter. The Minister highlighted clause 20 of the Bill which deals with the question of employment of the public officers. He correctly pointed out that upon the effective date of this legislation that three options are open to the employees. They may take a transfer—subject to the approval of the Service Commission—to NALIS; they may be seconded to NALIS, or they may take up employment in the public service at a remuneration rate commensurate with the previous office held.

Of course, he did not reinforce the point in clause 20(2):

“Where no office is available, the officer shall become eligible for terms provided at section 15 for the Pensions Act.”

What does that mean? The employee would be expected to finalize arrangements, take his pension and head for home. A number of employees in the system at present were involved in discussions working towards the legislation that is before us today. This Government has a track record of vindictiveness. This Government is very capable of earmarking one of those employees for a certain kind of treatment, if it feels unhappy with the contribution made by that employee.

We have seen, only recently—if I might say so, to demonstrate the record of this Government—that in the borough of Arima, the Minister of Local Government, who ought to have nothing to do with the day-to-day running of that borough, found himself—according to newspaper reports—making very violent threats of a cut-throat nature and, in fact, by the following morning, the brother of one of the people who protested against the presence of the Minister at the market was on his way home. This is a reality in this country. We have seen the same Minister involved in a confrontation with a certain senior police officer and, sooner than you know it, before you could say “Pointe-a-Pierre”, the officer was sent on vacation leave, never to be heard of again in public life in Trinidad and Tobago.

8.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has a track record and we can take very little from them and feel secure about it. So, if I might say so, what he did not remind us of is that in clause 20(5) it says:

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"A period of secondment shall not exceed three years."

When that three years' secondment is up, we go right back in clause 20(6)(a) to the transfer to NALIS; or

- "(b) return to the public service in an office at remuneration commensurate with that of the office held by him in the public service, prior to his secondment to NALIS;
- (c) where no such office is available, to become eligible for the terms provided at section 15(4) of the Pensions Act."

That means a lot of opportunity for Government to do all kinds of things.

One of the questions we have to consider as we debate this legislation is: What exactly is the state of play in respect of the employees? They want assurances and the assurance coming from the Minister certainly is not good enough, in my view. The bottom line is, trust and confidence is sadly lacking.

So, that said, let me deal with other issues which arose in the context of this debate. This bit of legislation, as one of my colleagues mentioned rather cryptically over tea, is not about a mere Bill, neither is it about a building; this Bill reaches the social fabric of Trinidad and Tobago. This is a Bill, as we have heard, which is designed to establish NALIS; serious implications for the future of this nation, one would imagine. No one can gainsay the fact that it is education which makes a people civilized and cultured, hopefully towards becoming serious contributors to the society in which they are put.

Secondly, not only making a positive contribution, but providing minimal risk to other people who operate in that society; and that bears in on the question of crime. It is also clear to human beings now from our own observations and experiences, that all human beings are capable of displaying or manifesting the higher instincts, if I can call them that, and similarly, the baser instincts. It is education that resolves those extremes and creates a society where one has some certainty and fairly predictable human conduct. It is the application of intellect, stimulated by information and/or learning which civilizes us and causes us, as I have indicated, to be more humane.

Mr. Speaker, on March 5, 1966—a reference was made to this in the other place—Dr. Eric Williams addressed the Librarians' Association of Trinidad and Tobago. Before I quote some of what he had to say, I saw under the rubric of "The humanity of Hinduism" an article written by the Maha Sabha and published in

the *Daily Express*— In passing, the article said rather dangerously, that someone was suggesting that certain scriptures and writings be banned, but it is suggesting here:

"...let others maintain the racist preferences created by the Eric Williams governments over a period of 35 years.

Prof. John La Guerre and Dr. Selwyn Ryan's study of employment practices in the public sector is a national record of Williams's racist policies."

This was written in a daily newspaper in Trinidad and Tobago recently; about two weeks ago.

I want now to read a bit of what Dr. Eric Williams had to say when he spoke to the librarians on March 5, 1966, 10 years after the birth of PNM, roughly approaching four years after the independence of this nation. He said and I quote:

"The librarians in the country and anyone who is connected with books who is trying to propagate the use of books in the country, will come up against certain basic obstacles which are not your fault, which are not my fault, but which I think we all ought to recognize; and the first major obstacle, ladies and gentlemen, is the very powerful anti-intellectual tradition in the country."

Well, of course, this has to do with the history of slaves, indentureship and colonialism past which Trinidad and Tobago had experienced. Dr. Eric Williams went on further to talk about another obstacle, and I quote:

"...perhaps in the long run much more dangerous than the traditional obstacle to which I have just referred, is the total lack of concern with standards in the country. In fact, sometimes it becomes more than a lack of concern...it becomes an open opposition to the suggestion that one should establish certain standards. I am talking now about intellectual standards..."

This is Dr. Eric Williams speaking.

Mr. Speaker, the same could be said about other standards, quite apart from intellectual standards. He went on further to say:

"...possibly I am a little more aware of it than you are...relates to our daily newspapers."

I need not elaborate.

Mr. Speaker, those quotations from Eric Williams, I ask for your judgment and for the nation's judgment: could it be said that there is anything racist about those?

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Yet, the article to which I have just referred suggests that all Eric Williams said in this country and he did for 34 years, and the PNM, by extension, has been sectorial or racist. We will see how it is related.

For my own part, having read those words on this business as he addressed the librarians, all I heard were positive urgings by the then Prime Minister of this country, the father of our nation. All I heard were words of enlightenment and words designed to inspire us to manifesting the higher instincts, the higher elements of the human being in this country. As I indicated a while ago, when we spoke of standards it includes the behaviour of Parliamentarians in the Parliament as well.

Clause 4 of the Bill deals with the functions of NALIS. The Bill is before us all, but I want to read a few of them.

- "(a) provide a national library and information service, easily accessible to members of the public, in order to facilitate cultural, economic, educational, political and social development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago;
- (b) maintain, develop and make easily accessible to members of the public, a comprehensive collection of material and information, with particular emphasis on that produced within and about Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region;
- (f) provide, and arrange for the provision of educational, advisory and informational services relating to the establishment and conduct of a library;
- (j) act as a national depository and resource for material published by the Government;"

I think by way of an adjustment, the word should be, in my humble view, "repository" rather than "depository". Maybe the person who piloted the Bill can make an adjustment, if it pleases him. So I would say: "act as a national repository and resource for material published by the Government".

Mr. Speaker, these functions are listed here in the Bill, but the question arises: What is the rationale behind the establishment of this? The Member for Arouca South pointed out that when the idea was conceptualized, when the committee was put together, when consultations ensued with a view of arriving at the legislation that is eventually before the Parliament today, a number of considerations were ventilated. We know that in modern society there is much said about cost effectiveness. Present expenditure on the library service of Trinidad and Tobago is about \$30 million a year, I am advised.

I listened to the Member for Arima as he advanced this legislation here today. It can only be described, sadly, as being sterile and visionless. One would have thought, particularly given the ministerial office that he holds, that the Minister would have sought to locate this Bill in the context of a vision of a knowledge of information society. Because we have heard it said from the Members for Tobago East, Oropouche and Arima, that the issue is not about books alone. It was said so in the other place. I listened to him as he alluded to it, but he did not develop the concept. Perhaps because he was reading from somebody else's thoughts. I thought we would have heard a little more about a knowledge and information society.

We are looking at creating—they call it a total quality nation. We are talking about competitiveness, intellectual, capital. We are looking at moving the institution of the library from a learning organization and to create a learning society. One is not looking at the building—as I said at the beginning of this contribution—nor indeed, seeing the Bill merely as a piece of legislation to be passed.

Now, there are elements of a learning organization. There ought to be a shared vision, what is called systems thinking—*[Interruption]* Yes. Well one has to invest if one wants to develop. Of course, there are national implications for all of these. This legislation ought to be seen against the background of all of that. It was important for the Minister to seek to establish a vision of what NALIS is supposed to be doing in the context of a growing society.

We listened to the Member for San Fernando East and I was particularly pleased and proud. I was not a Member of Parliament at the time, but I would recall, and as he reminded me today, various ministers of the government espousing the terms of that vision that was outlined for the development of Port of Spain, at least infrastructurally, so that when we come to the establishment of one unit of this, the national library, I would have been expecting to hear a little more about exactly what it ought to entail. If we are talking about getting to the Internet and a knowledge and information society, as it were, there are some real problems.

Only recently, I read several complaints from citizens that it is very difficult to access the Internet, particularly at certain times. Is it not? Therefore, if one is talking about NALIS and these issues, I would have expected that our friend from Caroni East or even the very Member for Arima would have told us about Government's plans to ensure that we do not have difficulty. Because, at the same time, this Government has put forward a policy in the last budget statement and I think it has since implemented it, where public servants can access a \$15,000

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interest-free loan for the purpose of obtaining computers; except of course, that all that vision must not be vision in abstract.

The vision explained by the Member for San Fernando East today was being carried out against the background of sound and prudent financial management of the country and the economy. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, order please.

8.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, they are talking about the \$15,000 loan as being solid in terms of its vision. I agree, but the fact of the matter is at \$500 a month there are many public servants who are unable to access it. Why? The question is public servants have not had increases in salaries for a very long time. We know that but we also know that in 1991 when this Government came into power the economy was what it was. We also know, as a matter of fact, that the Manning administration repaired and made healthy again the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. We are also able to tell you, as a matter of fact, and you heard the Member for Diego Martin Central say it several times over the last week, and in a very beautiful and illuminating article I read this week in the papers, that the economy of Trinidad and Tobago is showing signs of rot again.

As a matter of fact, I read—please permit me—this is a report.

Hon. Member: Who is the author of that report?

Mr. F. Hinds: The author is Earl Manmohan; somebody you know well. Under the rubric “Public debt crosses \$17.7 billion.” What was the public debt at the end of 1995? They do not even know and they are in Government. It is not my business to teach them. They must check and they will see that it is alarming to people who observe that the public debt is now \$17.7 billion again in two and a half years. These are according to statistics from the Auditor General’s accounts. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Order please.

Mr. F. Hinds: You are the Minister of Planning and Development. You ought to know. I do not have to come to teach you, you better find out.

We are suggesting that the economy of Trinidad and Tobago is showing signs of wear and tear again. Therefore, if public servants might have been expecting improvements in their remuneration packages, that is now going through the

window because this Government, in two and a half years, has come to be characterized by its mismanagement and corruption. No one can dispute that. How else would they answer \$30 million gone in National Flour Mills? Answer that. How can they explain almost \$1 billion in waste at Caroni (1975) Limited in two and a half years after the PNM wrote off \$1 billion in debt from that company? How do they explain that?

Mr. Speaker, in terms of corruption—a term that can be as wide as it is broad—you will recall that we had a lot of noise in this Parliament when they came here with a Bill with adjustments in the accounts from the budget to approve a \$52 million pay-out to a certain insurance company, Maritime. None of them have the courage to dispute that mismanagement, corruption and mishandling of the resources of this country are allegations that can be put squarely at their door. *[Interruption]* We are not talking about the past, we are talking about your time in Government. I want to say in respect of that—let me leave that alone.

Mr. Speaker, we have concerns about a number of issues as we deal with this legislation. The service as now exists can very well be improved but we hope that this concept of cost effectiveness makes it better for the members of the public who need to access it. I hope we would not see little libraries like those around villages in Trinidad and Tobago such as in Siparia and in Belmont. I want to remind you that in 1995 they took the library building off the PSIP; the hon. Member for Oropouche today denied that he said certain things and we had to remind him with quotations from *Hansard* and, of course, he has gone flat and quiet since then. I know I read as well in a daily newspaper that the Minister of Works and Transport, hon. Sadiq Baksh, said rather flippantly and foolishly I suggest, that it was better to have 10 libraries all around Port of Spain rather than the big one that we were planning south of us. What he did not understand is that there were to be computer links between all the libraries as they now exist. You understand, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, there are about 125 library facilities including those in government departments all around Trinidad and Tobago. The idea and the rationale, as it came from the Member for Arouca South, in this was to co-ordinate all of these so that the citizens of this country would be able to access information within the system here and, of course, internationally, at a moment's notice.

This takes us to the very important question as raised in this Bill; the question of the qualifications for the office of the Executive Director of NALIS. Mr. Speaker, clause 12(2) of this Bill subclause says:

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“The Executive Director shall be appropriately qualified in library and information science and have a minimum of five years’ managerial experience in library and information services.”

I was browsing, as I prepared for this debate, an article by Martin Waterman entitled, “The age of the cybrarian.” Mr. Speaker, if I may read a small part of that article:

“The information highway has produced a new organizational post: Internet cybrarian. These individuals are for the most part traditional librarians but since their environment is cyberspace their role as information gatherer has been dramatically expanded. No longer is the scope of their searches limited to the physical realm, a card file system or inter-library loan. Furthermore, since the Internet is often an interactive medium, these cybrarians are also called upon to distribute information, share information with similar organizations via common links, and even design home pages and resource sites for their clients, organizations or departments.

Another difference between a cybrarian and a regular librarian is that they, cybrarians, can instantaneously access the four corners of the globe.”

Mr. Speaker, one would have thought that if the Minister of Information and whatever else he is, the Member for Arima, gave serious consideration to the question—one has to be forward looking when one gets into these realms. The question is not so much about how much experience the person would have had. The question is—because if I may say so, I read recently, and it was mentioned here, I think by the Member for Tobago East in another debate, that a 13 year-old in Jamaica was hired as a consultant to one Minister or department or to the Cabinet perhaps. That demonstrates a kind of forward looking attitude if you like. This has to do with new skills and I would want to suggest that, as it stands here, we are not looking for five years’ experience. We are looking for people who have the capacity to fulfil the vision, if you like, that this NALIS is supposed to carry out.

When it comes to the question of employing or hiring the Executive Director, no doubt this Government will seek, as it has been doing for the past months or years of its existence, to try to place friends and families in certain places. If they want to dispute that, they must explain to this nation—Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Oropouche was replying to the Member for Arouca South she had suggested, I think it was clause 10, a problem about the relationship between the Minister and the board. She expressed a fear that not only we on this side, but people throughout the country, hold about this Government. We have seen the

stubborn resistance of this Government, even in the face of suggestions and protests from the trade union involved, even at the risk of destroying the entire demonopolization process at National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited, this Government, lead by the Prime Minister, insisted on holding on to a certain contracted person, Mr. Ken Soodhoo, in the face of all the serious criticisms that had been made. *[Interruption]* Yes. It is your history. It is your track record.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we recently saw in the \$30 million fiasco at the National Flour Mills this Government pushed aside the former Chairman of that board. This Government—and I have already pointed out in this debate the very adverse and horrible behaviour of the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre in respect of the Arima Borough Council only this week. This Government is quite capable and the fears that the Member for Arouca South expressed are legitimate fears. We would hope that when the time comes to get the Executive Director for this very important institution, this Government finds the capacity to rise above its baser instincts and select the person who is best able to operate in the sphere of NALIS rather than to insist on one of their friends or supporters merely for the sake of political patronage.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tobago East spoke a lot about illiteracy and I do not think there is too much to be said on that anymore. What we have to ensure is that as we put this new organization and machinery in place, we do not lose the essence of what the library ought to be. What is the essence of the library? Of course, I heard—I think it was the Member for Nariva—the library has to be accessible to people. From my own experience while I was in London I can say within five minutes in either direction from my home there were four libraries within a stone's throw of my home and I was fascinated by that. Mr. Speaker, between the college library and the other libraries that I had access to, I, at one time, held eight library cards. It meant that those libraries were very accessible to people and they were well fortified with books and the computer. My first introduction to computer was in those libraries to learn how to access books and material and research in general. I was thinking when I saw this Bill and when I learnt about its purport that this is the sort of direction we would want to be going where libraries are user-friendly and accessible.

Libraries are more than the place as we have already agreed. I remember an example where the libraries took a position in that country that was very, if you like, forward thinking as well, very socially potent.

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Mr. Speaker, as children, we read much of a certain writer's works—Enid Blyton. She made a certain comment that persons in the London borough found to be racist and discriminatory, and the libraries in the entire borough decided to take her books off the shelves as a mark of protest until she was forced to render an apology to the Asian family that she had offended. I saw that as a very progressive move.

I merely highlight that to show that the library is not only a place, it is really a social institution and it has great force. A friend of mine once said, "Libraries are your mind's best friend." That is very true.

Hon. Member: Do not forget the reference library.

Mr. F. Hinds: I am hearing of the reference library on the other side. Yes, libraries are also to be outfitted with very effective reference sections. One ought to be able to go into a library and get information on all kinds of things. For example, scholarships. I looked at a thick book recently and saw there were actually thousands of scholarships and bursaries advertised therein. Students should be able to walk into a library in Port of Spain and see, for example, all the bursaries and scholarships that are available in England and even Europe. That is the sort of thing.

Hon. Member: They must come from quite Siparia and South.

Mr. F. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, I am being disturbed from saying what I have to say.

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. F. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, clause 23 deals with the question of funding of this library which has been spoken about in this debate today. Subclause 2(b) says:

“(b) such funds as are appropriated to NALIS by Parliament;”

Again, that raises the question of the capacity of the Government to transfer funds to NALIS. If the Government is not managing the economy properly and there has to be, as exists now, cutbacks on public expenditure, then quite naturally, the bright vision that we have set out for NALIS will fall by the wayside. [Crosstalk] So I want to say again, whether they like it or not, they have threatened the economic stability of this country and continue to threaten it; the portents are not very encouraging, and this Government, as it brings this Bill to institutionalize NALIS—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. F. Hinds: —must recognize that it has a responsibility to manage the country properly. If it cannot do that, then subventions or funds from the Government, via the Parliament to NALIS would be history, or non-existent. But, more than that, the Minister said that the floor space was increased and they have allowed for commercial activity in the complex. The Member for Diego Martin East was comprehensive in his analysis of the ridiculousness of that, because Mr. Speaker, it is a fact—I have not seen it myself, but I am told and verily believe—that when it was about to be implemented in the heart of the Port of Spain General Hospital, and if I am wrong I stand corrected, where the dispensary used to be, I think this Government has overseen, if you like, the implantation of fast food outlets in that very hospital. I understand that there is pizza and other things being sold there. What a place to do that! So this Government, again, on the basis of that alone is capable of almost anything. *[Interruption]* The hospital's management of the kitchen and all that is a totally different thing.

Mr. Speaker, today we are dealing with the implementation of this programme three years later and, as the Member for Diego Martin East pointed out, with an increased bill of \$40 million. That, as he correctly pointed out, is the present figure of \$40 million. As he said, and I endorse that, it is quite possible that by the time the construction starts and is completed, it could be \$100 million. Nobody could explain in this country—economist, political analyst or otherwise—what became of the \$100 million that was frittered away in the Piarco project. Not one person has been satisfactorily able to explain that. We have to be careful with this.

A library must not only be user-friendly, it must not only allow for physical access, it must also allow for social access. I was reading an article in the *Trinidad Guardian* of August 11, 1998 which had to do with education and I was reminded, as I heard the Member for Oropouche speak today, that between the 1986—1991 NAR period, of which some of the Members of that side were a part at that time, that the school book grant was removed. As a parent myself, I am set with three school booklists to sort out my children for the reopening of term and I was fascinated when I read, under the headline “High cost of education”, booksellers telling the journalist who wrote the article of their experience with people who came to them, seeking to have booklists sorted out for their children. I quote from the article:

“One Port of Spain bookseller experienced an incident in which an elderly woman was prepared to trade a treasured family heirloom—an 1895 minted gold coin—for her granddaughter's fourth standard books.

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We had the coin assessed and it was worth well over \$2,000 in gold and what she wanted was maybe ‘\$400 in books,’ he recalled. ‘What we did was to

The article went on to point out and I can testify to this:

“The average fourth standard primary school booklist can run up costs ranging from \$650 to \$750. And for a first form student: \$1,500 to \$1,700.”

This is no fun for many people. There are many people with two and three children for whom this poses a serious difficulty. While we will establish NALIS, we need to understand that the libraries must also, because there are many children attending school who may be going to those libraries who do not have books, school clothes and all sorts of things, and this Government—well not this Government, but the NAR government of which the Member for Oropouche and others were a part, was responsible for removing that very important element of assistance for the children of this nation. One would have thought—they could be upset, but I will say it, because there are many of my constituents who are afflicted by it—that they would have been able to take a strong and growing economy which they met in 1995 and been able to reintroduce all these social programmes, but they are worsening the situation and, from the reports and statistics—

Hon. Member: Why did you not do it?

Mr. F. Hinds: He is asking me why we did not do it. I have time and again explained that we implemented it; it was the NAR that removed it and when we returned to take control of the economy after the NAR, it was in utter shambles. We rebuilt the economy; we left you with a strong economy and now you are destroying it again. That is why.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the concerns that we share and like the Members for Arouca South, Diego Martin East and San Fernando East, we are very much agreed with the implementation of NALIS; we support the measures, but we have expressed our concerns and we hope that the Government will take them into account.

The Member for Arima who piloted this legislation in this House—
[*Interruption*] Well, you know the genesis of it.

Mr. Maharaj: The exodus.

Mr. F. Hinds: The exodus. Your exodus is coming soon.

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. G. Singh]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. F. Hinds: Thank you very kindly, Mr. Speaker.

As I come to a conclusion, today we had what I thought was a very important and stimulating debate. It was fascinating. It ranged far and wide. We have been talking about education. In preparation for this debate and, moreso as I listened to the Member for Arima today, I went into my briefcase and took out the book *Roots* written by Alex Haley. At page 28 of that book in the penultimate paragraph, there is a conversation recorded between an elder of the village, Toumani and young Kunta Kinte, the hero of the book *Roots*. Kunta Kinte was learning in his teenage years from Toumani who was telling Kunta Kinte about villages around theirs where nine young boys from Juffure village suddenly disappeared. I quote:

“‘But you're not safe even inside the village gates,’ said Toumani, seeming to read his thoughts. A man he knew from Juffure, he told Kunta, deprived of everything he owned when a pride of lions killed his entire herd of goats, had been caught with toubob money soon after the disappearance of two...boys from their own huts one night.”

Now toubob was what they called the white man, the fellow who came to capture the slaves.

Mr. Sudama: What is the point in all this?

Mr. F. Hinds: The passage is saying that one man lost all his goats to a pride of lions and shortly after the disappearance of two boys, he was found with some of this strange money in hand. When questioned:

“He claimed that he had found the money in the forest, but the day before his trial by the Council of Elders, he himself had disappeared.”

Mr. Sudama: Tell us the moral.

Mr. F. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the Member for Arima, I remembered this passage. The moral of the story is clear for all who have eyes to see.

Mr. Sudama: I want to hear the moral.

Mr. F. Hinds: He who has eyes will see.

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As we have indicated, we support the terms of NALIS. We have urged the Government to take into account the few suggestions we have made and I join my colleagues in supporting this measure. With that, I say thank you.

9.15 p.m.

The Minister of Information, Communications, Training and Distance Learning (Dr. The Hon. Rupert Griffith): Mr. Speaker, we have been here for well over eight hours listening to a debate and after that time I have much difficulty in finding anything to which to respond. The few points that sounded literate and somewhat sensible, my colleagues on this side already responded to them. However, I feel it would be remiss of me if I do not say a few things in winding up this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important Bill for the development of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The purpose of this Bill is to establish a statutory authority to facilitate the development and integration of library and information services in Trinidad and Tobago, but it took us on a journey to Siberia and a definition of “Siberian” and “Librarian” and we still do not understand the difference between them. This Bill took us on a journey to Yugoslavia, Herzegovina and all over Africa. It took us to Germany and told us all about Hitler and what he did and did not do. An important Bill like this took us on a journey of such irrelevancies.

Mr. Speaker, I am so disappointed because the former prime minister talked about the importance of library services in Trinidad and Tobago and in his wisdom he had brought it under the office of the Prime Minister because he wanted to oversee it and make sure that this Bill and the integration of this library service would have pulled together so that we could have an effective and meaningful library service in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for San Fernando East took library services and put it under the Member for Arouca South. I thought that coming here today, the trained attorney—the Member for Arouca South—would have come here with something that would have improved this piece of legislation for Trinidad and Tobago. I think that the Member for Arouca South would have done better talking about rice than talking about the national library system and she would have been more effective.

To go back to the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for San Fernando East—

Mr. Maharaj: They have several leaders you know.

Dr. The Hon. R. Griffith: Mr. Speaker, that is why I said the Member for San Fernando East. I remember something that my grandfather used to tell me when I was a little boy growing up. It was a clear example of what happened here tonight. I remember him telling me that when you are very close to things—and he would take a document up and put it close to my face and asked me what I saw—you are really blinded. One is really blinded when one is close up to something. However, I have many things to be thankful to the good Lord above for but one of the things I would be forever grateful to him for is when he spoke to me and said, “come ye from among them, especially under that leader from San Fernando East”.
[Desk thumping]

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, after 27 years in this honourable House this Member for San Fernando East, in a debate on a piece of legislation which is a highly technical issue because one is talking about the laws of Trinidad and Tobago—one does not come here and *ad lib*. One comes here and presents a bill and provides technical information so that we would have proper legislation. That is what one does.
[Desk thumping] This Member for San Fernando East—I am sorry he is not here because there are many things I would have liked to say to him tonight—tried to ridicule me saying that a public servant wrote my contribution for me and I read it. After 27 years’ experience in Parliament and as Prime Minister, and now Leader of the Opposition, it appears that he has never presented a bill in this House. If he did, he would know this is done.

Mr. Maharaj: No, he has never.

Dr. The Hon. R. Griffith: If he did, he would realize the importance of properly presenting a bill giving the technical information for that piece of legislation. [Desk thumping] Obviously, he did not.

More than that, Mr. Speaker, in his normal state of banality and triteness, he said that in Arima they call me Mr. Rat.

Hon. Member: Dr. Rat.

Dr. The Hon. R. Griffith: He elevated me to a doctor; Dr. Rat. What the leader should have done—the leader of a party that is weaning and dying and he is killing it fast—was to compliment me for the step that I took in that Arima market. The Borough of Arima, which is under the control of the PNM, presides over the local government. There is a mayor there who is arrogant and totally oblivious to

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the needs of the people and insensitive to the sanitary conditions of the market. When we tried to bring it to his attention he totally ignored it so I had no choice but to take my colleague, the Member for Pointe -a-Pierre, to Arima to look at the very unsanitary conditions in Arima. [*Desk thumping*] He is encouraging that.

Mr. Speaker, more than that, having gone there in the best interest of the people to ensure that the market that is infested with rats—it is well-known that a rat bit a little boy there just a few days ago—I would think a reasonable leader would have called his mayor in and said, “Look, that situation should not exist and you should really do something about it”. It took two caring ministers from this Government to take time off to go into that market, look at the situation and propose corrective measures. More than that, when we saw the deplorable conditions, we called for an investigation by the Ministry of Health and my good colleague, the Member for Princes Town, immediately acted and we visited that Arima market and cleaned it. [*Desk thumping*] He should have been here complimenting us tonight.

Then, when I listened to all other contributions, there is absolutely nothing of substance. We wasted all this time—eight hours, Mr. Speaker. When one talks about—I do not want to say irrelevance because you are the person who presides over that—certainly what I would say, Mr. Speaker, is that based on the precious little that came from that side it was a waste of our time over the last eight hours.

Mr. Speaker, let me just touch on a few things because I felt my colleagues dealt with most of them. The Member for San Fernando East spent so much time on buildings that one can see where their thinking is and why they got voted out in 1995. Yes, I know they would say I was there, but I won my seat. The people put me there and that is why I am on this side because I wanted what was in the best interest of the people and I have absolutely no regrets. [*Desk thumping*]

The Member for San Fernando East spoke at length about buildings, planning the city and so forth.

Hon. Member: Ambiance.

Dr. The Hon. R. Griffith: Ambiance; brick and mortar. He does not realize that in today’s trend and with today’s technology bricks and mortar is an archaic technology when it comes to library services. Yes, one needs a structure, but if he had listened to the presentation today he would have understood that what we are talking about is a library information system; a service that we would provide to allow greater access to information; a service that we would provide to allow

people not only to access the knowledge, but to use it to solve problems and doing the kinds of things we need in Trinidad and Tobago, accessing the information for their development and enhancement. Putting the state-of-the-arts technologies in place so that our people can develop rapidly.

I talked about all of that and I do not want to repeat what I said today. The time is long gone. More than that, the information technology that would be placed in that library—and they are worried about erecting buildings all over—people would be able to access library information from wherever they are and that point was made forcefully. Just recently the Minister of Education and I put a number of information centres in place—in St. Anthony's, Fatima, QRC, down south and so forth—to allow students with a local area network that we would put in place, with a cable system, to access information right from their schools. If one may wish to go to a library, yes, we are going to be constructing a library that is also user-friendly.

What we are emphasizing is access to library information and the information technology would be put in place to allow citizens, wherever they are, to access that technology. [*Desk thumping*] So what is this big emphasis on bricks and mortar all over Trinidad and Tobago and spending all this time on the designs?

Then we went on to the former minister who was responsible for libraries, the Member for Arouca South, who spent all of her time literally begging for recognition for the precious little she did in four years. She was just begging for credit. Even that she did not understand. Mr. Speaker, I said that in 1993, the former administration appointed a committee to advise on the integration of library services in Trinidad and Tobago. I gave them credit for the little they did. Even that she could not comprehend.

I even went on further to say that the committee reported in 1993 and activities towards the integration of the libraries were implemented through a Cabinet decision. Whose Cabinet? Their Cabinet. Is that not giving them some credit for the little they did, Mr. Speaker? The Member for Arouca South did not understand.

Then I also said, which is a fact, that because of so many decisions that they took they just could not implement. I would have been ashamed, if I was still on that side, to come here to debate in this House and talk about all the “coulda”, “woulda”, “shoulda” and they did not finish it. Four years that Member for Arouca South sat, playing around with that Library Information Bill and did nothing about it. She could not bring it to the Parliament.

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9.25 p.m.

This Government, within a period of two and a half years, brought the legislation to the Parliament, and they came to criticize us. That is the worst. The Member for Laventille East/Morvant spoke all kinds of things. He is the “Siberian” man, I suppose. He is the one who made the presentation about “Siberian” and “Liberian”. Maybe, one day in one of his goodly debates he might really define what is “Siberian” and “Liberian” and the difference between them.

I think there is one thing he said that warrants a response. I remember when I was among them before the good Lord spoke to me, arguing his case. When we were coming up to the election in 1995, the Member for San Fernando East said he did not want any rastas in his Government, and I was one of the persons who stood up for him. When he was sent back to Laventille I was among those who said “no, bring the man and interview him, one must not judge a man by the colour of his skin or by his hair, but what is in his heart, his character and what he is capable of doing.” [*Desk thumping*] And, that Member is here tonight trying to talk about the Member for Arima and all of the things that he talked about that were all over the place, he did not talk about the Bill—I did not say irrelevance.

Clause 20 talks about the public service officers and how they lack flexibility and the fact that they will feel insecure in a situation like that. The Member for Laventille/East Morvant is a learned attorney. This clause has three options for workers, and it says:

- (1) An officer in the public service, who, immediately prior to the coming into effect of this Act, was employed in a library, in a Ministry or Department or the Central Library of Trinidad and Tobago established by the Act referred to in section 37(a)...

And what clause 37 (a) talks about? It says:

“...shall within six months of the coming into effect of this Act exercise the

There are three options, and let me read it for my good friend, the Member for Laventille/East Morvant. It says:

- “(a) with the approval of the appropriate Service Commission to be appointed on transfer to NALIS, upon such terms and conditions as acceptable to him, NALIS and the Commission;”

What is the threat? What is the insecurity? Then, there is another option at (b) which says:

“(b) with the approval of the appropriate Ministry and Service Commission opt to be seconded to NALIS;”

What is the problem? Then there is a third option:

“(c) to take up employment in the Public Service in an office at remuneration commensurate with that of the office held prior to the commencement of the Act.”

Yet, the Member spent time talking about the person being threatened, insecure and so forth. The only conclusion I could come to is whether the Member read the Bill and if he did, whether he understood it. Clearly, based on his explanation it is either he did not read it and if he did, he did not understand it.

I think that most of my colleagues covered most of the areas. I do want to say however that the Member for Diego Martin East in his usual way comes to this House and talks about everything else but the Bill. He talked about the Government spending \$40 million in excess and all they gain would be two more floors. He does not even know the facts of this matter. He is an engineer and I would think he would have an interest in architecture, in building and construction. The Member for Diego Martin East spent four years in the last administration as the Minister of Works and Transport. I was among him—and we all make mistakes in our life time. How many buildings has he completed? The Member comes here tonight and criticizes this Government to say it has not completed any buildings.

Mr. Speaker, that Member in particular, should reflect on what he did when he was Minister of Works and Transport with that said project. He spent thousands, maybe, millions of dollars—I am not sure of the exact figure; I was trying to get it in time for this debate, but a lot of money and what resulted under his leadership, direction and control, was a big hole in the ground. It was so poorly done that the current contractor has to reconfigure that hole to continue with the construction and the Member for Diego Martin East comes here tonight talking about this Government's failure to build a library. The Member for Diego Martin East could not even preside over a hole in the ground. Plummer Construction Company is having a lot of difficulty to reconstruct that hole in the ground so that the building can proceed and the Member for Diego Martin East comes and talks a lot of nonsense.

The Member also talked about this Government spending more money. The fact is, under the PNM the plan for that building was 18,000 square feet and it

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would have been six levels. The Government saw it necessary to hold back on the construction of that building to re-plan it so that it can maximize the resources of that building it wants to construct for library services in Trinidad and Tobago. Whereas, under the PNM there would have been 18000 square foot, under this UNC government there would be something like 240,000 square feet, approximately nine levels. At what cost?

The cost under the PNM would have been \$131 million. Under this Government you are looking at \$127.03 million and yet the Member for Diego Martin East hid these facts and showed that the building would have cost over-runs and there will be only two more floors. That is the level of thinking of the former Minister of Works and Transport here tonight.

9.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if there is anything else on which I wish to touch. The precious little which the Opposition has brought, my colleagues dealt with it extensively and I thank hon. Members, even those on the other side because they participated and I think one has to be grateful for that, and as I said, whatever little emerged from that side, I thank him.

I also thank my colleagues on this side and the public servants who stuck through to the end of this debate. We are here because we are elected to be here and it is our choice; the public servants have to be here because that is their job and we must recognize them for their patience and fortitude to go through with us and particularly with what came from the other side.

Mr. Speaker, having replied to those few things, I beg to move.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I want to indicate—because both sides, at different times have found it necessary to refer to what has been regarded as going outside of the terms of the Bill—when any of you sit where I am sitting, you would appreciate that one could start to talk on a Bill on fish, but the other side could say that houses are more necessary than fish and try to explain why they are. Much depends on Members themselves, whether as parliamentarians the word "filibuster" has not been invented in this country, it is to be found all over the world and it talks to the maturity and the seriousness of Members of Parliament themselves on both sides, whether one would talk about fish, or houses or streets.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

National Library Bill

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Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

Clauses 1 to 38 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Hinds: If we go to clause 4(j), to the word "depository" should it not be "repository"?

Mr. Singh: It is correct.

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

House resumed.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, August 19, 1998 at 10.00 a.m.

Before you put the question, may I indicate to hon. Members that on that day we shall be dealing with the Dental Bill, the Prisons Bill, and the Tobago House of Assembly Bill.

May I also announce to hon. Members that I indicated to the Opposition Chief Whip, and there is a notice to that effect, that there would also be a meeting of the Finance Committee and the Government intends on Friday, August 21, 1998 to deal with the Supplementation and Appropriation, 1998 Bill.

I think I owe it to hon. Members also, and I indicated to the Opposition Chief Whip that we were going to do the Equal Opportunities Bill on Monday, but I communicated with him that the Government was still receiving public comments on the Bill which is still being studied by the Law Commission, the Ministry of the Attorney General and Cabinet and we shall make an announcement of the debate on that bill in due course.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 9.48 p.m.

APPENDIX

TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL TEACHER

99. Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Would the Minister provide a list of persons who applied between the period January 01, 1993 and December 31, 1996 for the position of Technical Vocational Teacher and could he indicate the persons on that list who have been successful at interviews and have since been appointed to positions in the Teaching Service?

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Adesh Nanan): Attached is a list showing that two hundred and ninety (290) persons applied for positions of Technical vocational Teachers during the period January 01, 1993 to December 31, 1996. Of these applicants two hundred and seven (207) were successful at the interviews conducted by the Teaching Service Commission and as at July 1998 seventy-six (76) have been appointed to positions in the Teaching Service in the fields where vacancies existed.

KEY

(a) indicates applicants who were successfully interviewed in the following subjects areas:

- Agriculture
- Air-conditioning/refrigeration
- Auto and Diesel
- Beauty Culture
- Carpentry/Chemical Engineering

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Civil Engineering
Draughting and Technical Drawing
Economics
Electrical Installation
Electrical/Communication Engineering
Electronics
Home Economics
Machine Shop
Masonry
Mechanical Engineering
Metal Work
Plumbing
Principles of Accounts/Principles of Business/Management of Business
Typing/Shorthand/Office Procedures
Welding

LIST OF APPLICANTS FOR POSITIONS OF TECHNICAL
VOCATIONAL TEACHERS DURING THE PERIOD
JANUARY 01, 1993 to DECEMBER 31, 1996

NAMES

1. Sookaran Ragoobar
2. Shaffie Imamshah a
3. Dolly Maharajh a
4. Sally Shah
5. Celia Smith
6. Malcolm Gomez
7. Alexander Bain a
8. Ivan Dadd a

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9. Darren Robertsona
10. Simone Reid a, b
11. Anna Daniel a
12. Derryck Dhanoosingh a
13. David Edwards
14. Bethelomew Williamson a
15. Stacy Soyer a, b
16. Jasen Lugo a, b
17. Khemchand Seemungal a
18. Mercedise Woods a
19. Randall Soanes a
20. Joscelyn Archer
21. Vida Bridgnath a
22. Devendra Mahabir
23. Milton Morgan
24. Curtis Lemessy a
25. Russel Foncette a
26. Joanne Graham-Stenson a
27. Debbie Turpin a, b
28. Michelle Mohammed
29. Ronnie Simon
30. Ray Ramdass
31. Elizabeth Mitchell
32. Derick Sharma
33. Dilip Kumarsingh
34. Garvin Montoute a

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35. Grace Redmond a, b
36. Shiraz Mohammed a
37. Ravendra Ramnarine a
38. Dilip Samaroo a
39. Madan Manoo
40. Ricardo Jacob
41. Dexter Honore
42. Cherry Ann Mc Millian a, b
43. John Boyce
44. Indradaye Ragbar
45. Ricky Ramkissoon
46. Eldon Thompson a
47. Arvind Gopee a
48. Shoba Sirju a, b
49. Garth Duke a, b
50. Sandra Quashie a
51. Verleen Mootoo-Derry a
52. Tricia Joseph a, b
53. Vivien Hosein-Leonard
54. Randy Bailey a, b
55. Angus Murray a
56. Neil Aliasgar a
57. Louis Owen a
58. Darwin Sahadath a
59. Rattan Boodram
60. Clifford Bharat a, b

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61. Lystra Mundy a, b
62. Stephen Mackoon a
63. Delores Toney a, b
64. Terrence Rampersadsingh a
65. Lalchan Sumessara, b
66. Cindy Bhagwandeem a
67. Abigail Hosein a
68. Marvin Douglas
69. Suresh Boodoo
70. Vinod Rajkumar
71. Rajesh Ramnanan a
72. Isabella Lovell a
73. Ramesh Singh
74. Laurel Ann Hudlin a, b
75. Rajesh Narine a
76. Karen Imamshah a, b
77. Neil Williams a
78. Jimmy Arthur a, b
79. Theodora Libert a
80. Vashti Teelucksingh
81. Shiva Rajkumar a
82. Waheeda Mohammed a
83. Leslie Nandlal a
84. Gerard Wharton
85. Susan Singh a
86. Balkaran Sirju
87. David Nelson

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88. Shareeda Mohammed a
89. Ava Billy a, b
90. Pearl Alman-George a
91. Dexter Nesbitt
92. Dhaniram Maharaj a
93. Amelia Bhola
94. Curt Weston a
95. Densie Poonram a
96. Jason John
97. Oliver Cole a
98. nn Marie Panchoo
99. Colins Wason a, b
100. Lelsie Ann Morris-Elisha a
101. Hayden Smith a
102. David Roberts a, b
103. Marlon Francette a
104. Brian Beckles a
105. Leslie Samm a, b
106. Shazir Hosein
107. Denise Smart a
108. Denis Parbhu a
109. Andrew Briggs a
110. Derek Ramdatt a, b
111. Indra Dass
112. Rajdaye Khan a, b
113. Fitz-Patrick Skeritt a, b

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- 114. Curtis Baldwin a, b
- 115. Shivanand Pancham
- 116. Richard King
- 117. Roy Logie a, b
- 118. Rhonda Ramlochan
- 119. Michelle Bronte-Tinkew a

NAMES

- 120. Simon Sobransingh
- 121. Ralda Alexander
- 122. Amrita Sawh a, b
- 123. Montgomery Guya, b
- 124. Mercury Smith a, b
- 125. Charmaine Spencer a, b
- 126. Yvette Beckles a
- 127. Jael David a, b
- 128. Adrian Thompson a, b
- 129. Seeta Maharaj a
- 130. Debbie Bachu a, b
- 131. Daren Hernandez
- 132. Wilbur Kalloo a, b
- 133. Tracey Baptiste a
- 134. Dion James
- 135. Dexter Broome a, b
- 136. Larry Ramphall a
- 137. Andy Newton a
- 138. Fitzherbert Taylor a

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139. Jenise Monsegue a, b
140. Glenn Bridgmohan a, b
141. Oswald George a, b
142. Anthony Lokai
143. Brian Akow
144. Marilyn Ramlal a, b
145. Indranee Nanan a
146. Giselle Precilla a, b
147. Gresha Gonzales a, b
148. Kathy Ann Thompson
149. Brenda Greenidge a
150. Shivanti Balkaransingh
151. Charmaine White a, b
152. Eartha Otway a, b
153. Florence Rackal a, b
154. Johnson Lee Tang a, b
155. Michael Leslie
156. Natasha Hall
157. Pernel Roberts a
158. Dexter McGillvery a, b
159. Yvette Maikoo
160. Winnola Phipps a
161. Natalie David a
162. Vashty Dabiedeen-Ramdeo
163. Mary Quashie a, b
164. Franklyn Noel a

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165. Raffick Ali-Khan a
166. Nicole Jones-Ifill a
167. Tracey Ellisa, b
168. Anthony Khan a
169. Barbara Lochan a
170. Kevin Jogie
171. Glenn Joseph a, b
172. Gerald Richardson a
173. Rawle Sahadeo a
174. Cherry-Ann Edwards a
175. Fareed Mohammed a, b
176. Allan Redhead
177. Brian Adams a
178. Jacqueline Ramlogan
179. Jennifer Johnson a
180. Judy Hallal-Murray a
181. Rick Lashley a, b
182. Darren Mohammed
183. Anthony Mahabir a
184. Elvis Sankar a
185. Kermit Dick
186. Clayton Elwin
187. Karryl John a, b
188. Evangeline Moore-Rajkumar a, b
189. Michael Padarath
190. Lallita London
191. Bernadine Elcock a

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192. Judith Mc Gillvery a
193. Moonsham Dan a
194. Rheno Ramberose a
195. Glenford Codrington a
196. Jennifer Niles a
197. Alan Ramasar a
198. Gail Gomeza, b
199. Kishore Daberam a
200. Marva Rodriguez a, b
201. Dilip Boodram a
202. Richard Wooding a, b
203. Ignatius Grant a
204. Alicia Archer a
205. Qaasim Muhammad a
206. Doogra Mungal a, b
207. Steve Harry a, b
208. Carolyn Byer a, b
209. Heamant Binaisse
210. Helen Guzman a, b
211. Mala Persad
212. Doodnath Hetai a
213. Richard Williams a
214. Margaret Birch a
215. Levan Rajkumar a
216. Lyndon Ramharry a, b
217. Sharon Persad a, b

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218. Vashtie Mohammed a, b
219. Chandra Olliviera a, b
220. Michael Baldeo a, b
221. Russell Rampersad a
222. Myrna Edwards
223. Neerupa Ramnath a
224. Murcheson Flemming a, b
225. Camille Roome a, b
226. Vedath Singh
227. Urvan Wilson a
228. Audrey Jack a, b
229. Khemrajh Bachoo a
230. Lukshmi Seenath a
231. Beverly Scott
232. Sylvia Brereton
233. Davindra Ramai a, b
234. Cheryl-Ann Fraser
235. Henry Spencer a
236. Sashtri Doon
237. Riaz Mohammed a
238. Enid Jones
239. Anil Lutchman a, b
240. Rand Karmody a
241. Joseph Valley
242. Dianne Peters a, b
243. Natalia Spicer-Montoute
244. June Woodley a, b

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245. Rasheed Ali a, b
246. Allan Ram a
247. Geta Rampersad a
248. Judith Richardsona
249. Joanne Maharaj a
250. Roger Mulzac
251. Wiltshire Douglas
252. Merlin Beidaise a
253. Crishendaye Sinanan a
254. Delora Wildman a
255. Allison Millette
256. Ezekiel Roberts
257. Heman Maharaj a
258. Davanand Dookhoo
259. Cindy-Ann Singh a
260. Gertrude Ramoutar a
261. Merlene Callendar-Thompsona
262. Myron Scanterbury
263. Nicole Nimrod-Blake
264. Jagdip Ramdass a
265. Arlene Blackman a, b
266. Garth Maundy
267. Hans Joseph
268. Denyse Nelson
269. Keith Clement a
270. Damain Roberts a

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- 271. Jacqueline Frederick-George a
- 272. Junior Bereton a
- 273. Elicia Honore
- 274. Margaret Richardson-Cox
- 275. Kirk Sealey a
- 276. Brenda John a
- 277. Austra Deonarine
- 278. Heather Price
- 279. Michelle St. John a
- 280. Milton Holdip
- 281. Charmaine Downing a
- 282. Marsha Blackett a
- 283. Michael Ramroopa
- 284. Caroline Kalloo a
- 285. Marilyn Duggins a
- 286. Wayne Ghool a, b
- 287. Aisha Peters a
- 288. Judy Boodoo
- 289. Dexter Pritchard
- 290. Darien Baptiste a, b