

*Leave of Absence**Friday, January 30, 2004***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, January 30, 2004*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Member for St. Augustine (Mr. W. Dookeran) requesting leave of absence from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Central Marketing Agency for the year ended December 31, 1986. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Central Marketing Agency for the year ended December 31, 1987. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

Papers 1 and 2 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, questions for written responses are on the Order Paper. These responses should be passed to the Clerk for circulation.

Government /IDB Housing Agreement

The following question was asked by Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (Siparia):

23. Could the hon. Minister of Housing state with respect to the agreement entered into by the Government and the IDB on June 21st, 2001 for loan towards financing the Government's housing programme:
 - (a) The amount of the loan and the terms and conditions of repayment of same;
 - (b) The amount of funding, if any, that is required to be made under the loan agreement by the Government for this housing programme;

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- (c) What are the main conditionalities and obligations of this loan and what are the deadline dates for the meeting of each of these conditionalities and obligations;
- (d) Have any of these conditionalities and/or obligations been met and if yes, which ones have been and when;
- (e) If any conditionalities and/or obligations have not been met, the reason(s) for same;
- (f) Have any moneys been drawn down from this loan and if yes, the dates and amount of the drawdowns and the purpose(s) to which each drawdown was put/will be put;
- (g) Has any counterpart funding by the Government been utilized and if so, the amount and the purpose(s) to which same was put/will be put?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [November 28, 2003]:

Be it Resolved that this House re-affirm its commitment to the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and the right of the individual to equality of treatment from public authorities. [*Mr. G. Yetming*]

Question again proposed.

The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on the Motion brought to this honourable House by the Member for St. Joseph, which proposes a resolution on equality of treatment of individuals from public authorities.

Mr. Speaker, the Motion cites the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination; the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights; and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. Firstly, for the parliamentary record, let me state that the citation at the first clause of the Motion is incorrect.

The Article 3 clause quoted was taken from the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination which was proclaimed by the General Assembly Resolution 1904(XVIII) of November 20, 1963. Article 3 of this Declaration states, and I quote:

- “1. Particular efforts shall be made to prevent discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic origin, especially in the fields of civil rights, access to citizenship, education, religion, employment, occupation, and housing;
2. Everyone shall have equal access to any place or facility intended for use by the general public, without distinction as to race, colour or ethnic origin.”

Mr. Speaker, you will note, from the outset, that the Member for St. Joseph neglected—I prefer to use that word—to include the word “racial” in his quotation of Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination; not just discrimination simpliciter.

Mr. Speaker, I start off in that vein because, from the outset, the mover of this Motion is moving a Motion that is rooted in deception. Apart from this, I say this in the context of the Member of Parliament, when he moved the very Motion insisting throughout his presentation, that he was never talking about racial discrimination and he would not be using the word “racial”. He was hoping that we would listen and respond logically and that they would put into evidence, as he puts it, the information that showed very clearly that there was discrimination. He also hoped that there would be no name calling; but he was not talking about racial discrimination. It is so unfortunate that he used, as his premise, an Article from the United Nations Declaration on Racial Discrimination, but tried to deny it all through his presentation.

Mr. Speaker, what is very disturbing is that he tried to indicate that he was talking about discrimination against half the population, but that the Motion was not rooted in race. We contend that it is not only rooted in race, but in deception and false premises. [*Desk thumping*] In fact, false premises seemed similar to those which have overtaken even the guardian of our democracy; the very media. It pains me to have to say that this is what seems to be happening. We were horrified to see an article in the *Express* newspaper with a banner headline talking about “terrorism in Trinidad and Tobago and that the LNG shipments were in danger.”

What was even more horrifying is that the article appeared to quote from an Ottawa newspaper where direct information was taken. But what was sad is that—first of all, the article appeared to quote from that newspaper. Secondly, when you look at the actual article from the Ottawa newspaper, interestingly, certain bits of information were left out from our local newspaper, which would put a lie to the information that was, in fact, published.

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You may recall on the Morning Edition Programme of Thursday of this week, where the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Citizens in Ottawa spoke on this very article, and one of the things that person said continuously was that they felt the article was politically motivated. Mr. Speaker, let me say why I tend to agree with the person. Mr. Speaker, I want you to link the two things: the article was a banner headline in the Trinidad and Tobago *Express* newspaper of this week, and the actual article was written in Ottawa and it was supposed to have been taken from that article. Interestingly enough, certain information was left out from the article, which led the person—who was speaking on behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago citizens in Ottawa—to say, that the article was politically motivated. I have the actual Ottawa article here and, with your permission, I would like to quote from it. It was taken from *The Ottawa Citizen*, dated January 24, 2004 and the author is Donna Jacobs. The article says:

“Besides murders, Trinidad is experiencing a relatively new criminal phenomenon—kidnappings. Nobody knows the real number, and estimates vary from 50 (official) to 200 (unofficial). Several victims were slain and survivors—including children—sometimes suffer severe abuse. Many families quietly meet ransom demands up to \$2 million and kilograms of cocaine and marijuana.”

Then it goes on:

“Manohar Ramsaran, a member of Parliament for the United National Congress (UNC), the Indian-dominated opposition party, says that last year, as many as 400 people paid kidnappers protection to avoid their own abduction.”
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: What?

Mr. Valley: Did you say that, Manohar?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Mr. Speaker, I continue to quote:

“Thousands of Indians have signed petitions asking Canada, the U.S. and British embassies to grant them sanctuary based on racially-targeted kidnappings.”

Manohar Ramsaran, a Member of Parliament for the United National Congress.

[*Interruption*]

Mr. Ramsaran holds up The Probe newspaper. [Crosstalk]

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: *The Probe.*

I continue to quote:

“Many others have already fled, closing businesses or sending families abroad.” *[Interruption]*

Mr. Ramnath: True.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: *[Interruption]* Bring us the evidence. I am still quoting from the article, Mr. Speaker.

“UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, enjoying a two-week Christmas holiday on Trinidad’s beautiful sister island, Tobago, was cornered by UNC legislators. They stopped short of asking for UN intervention—though, they said, it may be unavoidable.

In 2001, Canadian-educated lawyer and Trinidadian Senator Robin Montano wrote a letter to then-prime minister Jean Chretien asking him to shine an ‘international spotlight’ on a dual threat: Trinidad’s crime wave, and government collusion with the Muslim group Jamaat-al-Muslimeen—known as Jamaat.”

[Interruption]

Mr. Imbert: Robin Montano.

Mr. Ramnath: That is true.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Mr. Speaker, they were the ones that the Member for Couva North were first to visit in the towers. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Please, hon. Members, let us have a very quiet sitting this afternoon, please. There are only three Members who have contributed in this debate, so you will all have an opportunity to speak. Please continue Minister.

Mr. Ramnath: She is irrelevant, you know.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The article continues:

“Mr. Ramsaran confirmed Mr. Montano’s early warning: last month, he says, more than 3,000 people requested refuge in Canada.”

[Interruption] You want to hold up the *Probe* newspaper again. That is *The Probe* headline. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: Imagine that.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Mr. Speaker, the article continues:

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“The terrorism threat, Mr. Montano says, puts Canada’s citizens and its multi-billion dollar oil and gas, chemical and banking interests in jeopardy of sabotage and kidnapping.”

Ramsaran continued:

“Within the next two years, we will have the largest liquid natural gas installation in the world. If things don’t work out properly for Jamaat, they could always go and blow up an installation.”

[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Who say that?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Ramsaran.

Dr. Rowley: Or! That is where it came from.

Mr. Imbert: Ramsaran said that!

Mr. Narine: Yes. He has direct link with the Jamaat.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: The article continues:

“I consider that our only protection is the outside world, and one of our first lines of defence is Canada,” said Mr. Montano, whose father is Spanish and mother is Canadian, and who holds dual citizenship.

Neither Mr. Chretien nor Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade answered Mr. Montano’s letter.”

Mr. Speaker, I decided that I needed to quote from this article in circumstances where, from the outset, the basis of the Motion is rooted in deception. Secondly, I decided to quote from this article to indicate to this honourable House that the Members on the other side are on a concerted path to try to destabilize this country at all costs. [*Desk thumping*] At home, they come with spurious allegations and abroad they are doing the same thing! [*Desk thumping*] We are in perilous times if we allow this to permeate the public's consciousness.

I wish to remind this honourable House that the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination was ratified by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on October 04, 1973. I repeat the date; October 04, 1973, and entered into force for Trinidad and Tobago on November 03, 1973 under a People’s National Movement Government. [*Desk thumping*] [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the *Hansard* reporter is right in the middle of both sides and she is having difficulty recording the contribution. Please. Continue hon. Minister.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In ratifying this Declaration the Government of Trinidad and Tobago joined other nations worldwide in affirming:

1. The necessity of speedily eliminating racial discrimination throughout the world, in all its forms, manifestations and the like; and of securing, understanding of, and respect for the dignity of the human person; and
2. It also ratified the need of adopting national and international measures to that end, including teaching, education and information and that was in order to ensure and secure the universal and effective recognition and observance of the principles laid out in the Declaration.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Joseph, in his prosecution of this Motion, indicated that he wanted us to bring incontrovertible evidence that we were not engaged in discrimination, as he puts it. Mr. Speaker, he wanted us to bring the evidence. He who accuses, must prove. Throughout his presentation, he failed to bring any information, which would prove that there was any form of discrimination, racial or otherwise, being pervaded on this side by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, his allegations are baseless and spurious. Whilst he asked us not to go into name-calling or make any list we are faced with a situation where they are making every effort to destabilize this country at all costs. Mr. Speaker, we will bring the evidence that they failed to bring. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Nanan: Mr. Speaker, with respect to Standing Order 36(5)—

Mr. Speaker: 36(5)?

Dr. Nanan: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: No. Please continue.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the first case allow me to take this opportunity to bring evidence that cannot be contradicted. The Member for St. Joseph has said that Government programmes, Government institutions and the public service are pursuing a policy of discrimination. But let me take the opportunity to talk about the 25th Annual Report of the Ombudsman, and you know, Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman examines Government institutions, state enterprises and the like, to have an

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understanding of the complaints that have been brought before him. I would like to bring to your attention the 25th Annual Report for January 01 to December 31, 2002. Just to give you an idea of some of the complaints that were received during that period:

The Board of Inland Revenue:

- delaying the processing of income tax refunds;
- income tax refund outstanding;

The Ministry of Education:

- failure of the department to remit monthly salary owed to teachers;

The Environmental Management Authority (EMA):

- dust and fumes from the operations of a brick factory in a residential area causing illness;

The Lands and Surveys Department:

- inordinate delay in the processing of an application for the lease of state lands;

The Ministry of Legal Affairs:

- delay in the payment of compensation for land which has been compulsorily acquired;

The National Housing Authority:

- purchase agreement for sale of the Duplex Housing Unit breached;

The National Insurance Board (NIB):

- inordinate delay in the processing of claims;

The North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA):

- unable to obtain a medical report;

The Police Service:

- inordinate delay in the execution of warrants;

The Regional Corporations: [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member for Princes Town, during the entire contribution of the Minister you sit in your chair and you make outbursts. Please. You would have your chance of 75 minutes. Please continue.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Regional Corporations:

- failure of the corporation to take action to alleviate nuisances;
- failure of the corporation to take the required steps under the Public Health Ordinance;
- failure of the corporation to take corrective action to update health nuisances;

The Town and Country Planning:

- planning permission denied;

The Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission:

- failure of the commission to take appropriate action with respect to neighbour's use of compressor;

The Ministry of Works and Transport:

- Failure of department to repair and maintain public drains;

The Water and Sewerage Authority:

- premises incorrectly classified for billing purposes;
- application for the supply of water to residents denied.

Mr. Speaker, this was a summary of complaints received in 2002. Not one of the complaints received by the Ombudsman in the 25th Annual Report talked about discrimination of any type.

Let us look, however, at the period from 1998 to 2001. It states:

“The 21st Annual Report—January 01 to December 31, 1998.”

As far as I can recall, the United National Congress was in government from 1995 to that time. Let me start with the first complaint:

- claim of discrimination against the Ministry of Education with respect to the selection of candidates for scholarships awards to pursue bachelor's programme at the University of the West Indies;

Evidence!

- Unfair denial of a contract by the Public Transport Service Corporation to transport school children, although maxi-taxis had passed the required inspection test;

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- Assistance requested in having the Teaching Service Commission review placement on the seniority list of teachers at school;
- Discrimination in employment practices by regional corporations.

22nd Annual Report—January 01 to December 31, 1999; summary of complaints received during 1999, among other things:

- Junior workers being preferred for appointments to higher grade positions before complainants;

Discrimination in employment practices by regional corporations:

- The 23rd Annual Report—summary of complaints received in 2000. Ministry of Local Government Regional Corporations:
- Discriminatory employment practices;

Delays in processing of claims for old age pension:

- Denial of public assistance;
- Application for reinstatement of old-age pension refused;

Public Transport Service Corporation:

- Senior citizens treated discourteously;

The 24th Annual Report—summary of complaints received from January 01, 2001 to December 31, 2001:

- Alleged discrimination in employment practices;

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Joseph brought no evidence of anything of this nature happening under the current administration.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see anything marked PNM here. If they are saying that the information that comes from the Ombudsman is PNM information, that is for them. [*Interruption*] If they are saying that the Ombudsman's information is manufactured, that is for them. [*Interruption*] As far as I know, the Ombudsman we have now was appointed during your administration. He has not been replaced by this administration. [*Desk thumping*]

What is very interesting, as we talk about replacing persons and they talk about discrimination, it was during the currency of that administration that consistently CEOs were fired from state enterprises. Mr. Speaker, you will recall

on the last occasion when we sat in this House and discussed the Public Assistance Bill, that either the Member of Parliament for Naparima or the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas asked that the current chairman of the Self-Help Commission be removed—Ramcoomar. The current chairman of the Self-Help Commission was there during the currency of the UNC administration. He was good during that period. *[Interruption]* Well, they are now saying he was no good, but he was good during their administration. At that time, he was good, because the National Self-Help Commission made several—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker, I am hearing a question, “What this has to do with discrimination.” I just want to remind the Member for Couva South that the Motion talks about—because apparently he has not read it:

“*Whereas* since December 24th 2001 there has been a renewal and an institutionalization of the victimization of and discrimination against employees of State Enterprises, Statutory Authorities, Government Ministries and Public Authorities by the PNM Government;”

Information on the Self-Help Commission has everything to do with discrimination that they are claiming, *[Desk thumping]* as was information from the Ombudsman’s office.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you some information and evidence. National Commission for Self-Help Limited, payments made toward community development fund projects January 1997 to December 2000:

Arouca North	\$105,592.01
Diego Martin Central	\$189,307.75
<i>[Interruption]</i>	
Diego Martin East	\$628,859.50
<i>[Interruption]</i>	
Diego Martin West	\$75,671
<i>[Interruption]</i>	
Laventille West	\$332,582.96
<i>[Interruption]</i>	
Port of Spain South	\$225,924
Mr. Speaker, let me make a comparison:	
Caroni Central	\$762,587.65

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[*Interruption*] Ten times more than Diego Martin West—[*Interruption*] over the five-year period, 10 times more than Diego Martin West.

Caroni East \$846,207.24

[*Interruption*]

Chaguanas \$1,081,024.98

[*Interruption*]

Couva North \$437,664.42

[*Interruption*]

Nariva \$900—

[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: Who was the minister?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: The minister was the current Member for Chaguanas. [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Chaguanas \$1,081,024.98

[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Nariva \$999,308.09

[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Princes Town \$1,062,019.47

Dr. Rowley: “Diego Martin get \$75,000.” [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Interestingly—[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*] Interestingly, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Order please.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Interestingly, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*—the constituency of Toco/Manzanilla, [*Crosstalk*] one of the constituencies that they thought they could win, \$1,149,039.01—[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*—a constituency that they thought they could win, Toco/Manzanilla. [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, please, I am again appealing to you, it is unfair to the Hansard reporter. When the Member is on her feet, the rules say that other Members should remain in their seat and be silent except you raise a point of order, so please, pay some respect to the Hansard reporter and to yourselves.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Mr. Speaker, another constituency that they thought they could win, Tunapuna—\$1,163,072.95; discrimination of the highest order [*Desk thumping*] and the Member for St. Joseph wants to come here to this House and try to convince us on this side and convince the national community that the People’s National Movement Government is discriminating? That is far from the truth, Mr. Speaker. I repeat that the Member for St. Joseph asked for evidence from our side that we were not discriminating. [*Interruption*]

I just want to make the point again that it was during the currency of the UNC administration that CEOs of state enterprises were dismissed summarily. I would take this opportunity to quote from the editorial of the *Guardian* of Thursday, February 15, 1996. The headline is “Leaving out Mr. Jones”. It was said by the *Guardian* at that time:

It seems a shocking and unprecedented act of disrespect for the chief executive of a major state enterprise who has been given no intimation of his fate but left in limbo when he saw the list of new directors installed by the recently elected UNC/NAR coalition government. There can be no excuse for this kind of treatment which not only violates all the norms of proper corporate behaviour but also smacks of political victimization from a government which has come into office preaching the gospel of national unity.

I just want to repeat:

...smacks of political victimization from a government which has come into office preaching the gospel of national unity.

Mr. Speaker, the mover of the Motion talked about victimization from this current administration. For want of a better word, I would call that hogwash. [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

I take this opportunity, before I indicate some other areas where they are the ones guilty of discrimination and victimization and the like, to indicate the Government of Trinidad and Tobago’s policy. [*Crosstalk*] First of all, the Government has said from day one that this is a Government that is people-centred, people-focused and about the business of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] This is a Government that has said that our vision is one to improve the standard and the quality of life for all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] With respect to teaching, with respect to education with respect to information, certainly in recognition of the importance of ensuring that each and every citizen is afforded the opportunity to develop to his or her full

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potential, we are ensuring that all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are fully empowered to make his or her contribution to society.

As such, Mr. Speaker, the Government has made concerted efforts to ensure that substantial investments have been made in primary, secondary and in tertiary education. There will also be initiatives undertaken in ensuring universal early childhood education. This is a Government that has indicated that we will universalize, to every extent possible and in accordance with the country's resources, access to tertiary education opportunities. We have spoken about Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses Programme (GATE) and we have spoken about Helping to Expedite the Lengthy Process (HELP). All students who wish to access tertiary education will be able to access funding from the government—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: All, all, all!

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: We repeat, all students, Mr. Speaker, all. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Imbert: GATE is open to everyone.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: The reality is that the explicit actions of the Government in focusing its attention on people-centred development and the education of all our people has been a clear renewal and a reinforcement of Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination about which the hon. Member speaks.

I take this opportunity to deal with unsubstantiated and spurious allegations made by the Member for St. Joseph of victimization and discrimination against employees in, and I repeat what he has mooted, state enterprises, statutory authorities, government ministries, public authorities, the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP), Community Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP), National Entrepreneurship Development Company (NEDCO), Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA), On the Job Training, Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE), the Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme and other public programmes.

I repeat that his argument was baseless and unfounded but I would take this opportunity to present for the information of this honourable House that, with regard to the On the Job Training, that programme was re-launched, and I stress re-launched, because, during the currency of the last administration, they closed that programme. All craft programmes were scrapped, all youth camps were

closed down—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the On the Job Training Programme was scrapped, the youth camps were closed down, the craft programmes were scrapped, the Civilian Conservation Corps was closed down. Mr. Speaker, without let or hindrance, they went through these youth-oriented programmes and closed each and every one of them and offered nothing in return. They left a vacuum that we are now trying to fill. [*Desk thumping*]

With regard to the On the Job Training Programme, [*Interruption*] the main target groups are graduates of secondary schools, technical and vocational institutes and tertiary institutions. This programme, I am sure you will recall, Mr. Speaker, was launched in full view of the entire public. Full-page advertisements were put in all newspapers, and also, requests were made to private institutions to assist the Government in placing the on-the-job trainees. The information that was solicited on the registration form asked for name, address, age, gender, marital status, level of education and the on the job training desired.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Arouca South has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues in the House.

With regard to the On the Job Training Programme, the registration process left a database of some 20,000 young people wanting on-the-job training, Mr. Speaker. I ask the question, is this discrimination? Is this victimization? They are the ones who, in circumstances where now 20,000 people want on the job training, the other side closed down the On the Job Training Programme overnight.

With regard to the trainees, the selection of trainee applicants for all available job places is based on the date of the application, the residential address in relation to the location of the enterprise and the match between the level of education, the skill of the applicant trainee, with that required by the workplace. Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate that there are no considerations of ethnicity, origin, colour, religion, social status or the like. The trainee programme is available to all interested young people. I would just place on the record, that in 2003, 2,832 young persons benefited from this programme.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move on to the Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture, another highly successful programme that has been

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started by the current administration, another innovative programme for youth in agriculture, another programme that was heavily advertised in all newspapers and interested persons were asked to apply. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, gave the Members on that side forms so that people from their constituencies could also apply; but perhaps what they did is what they had done with other programmes and told members of their constituency, do not apply for these programmes. [*Desk thumping*] [*Interruption*] They are the ones who said, "Do not apply for these programmes." [*Interruption*] Yes, I am very serious. [*Interruption*]

Again the application form is very open, and, in 2003, 1,500 persons benefited from the programme. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, they could cry "ludicrous" as much as they want, but, clearly, what they are referring to as ludicrous is the very Motion that they have brought before this honourable Parliament. [*Desk thumping*] The evidence that we are bringing today is incontrovertible.

The HYPE programme, Helping You Prepare for Employment, is another innovative programme of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, another programme that targets the young people of Trinidad and Tobago. The first cycle of the HYPE Programme admitted 628 persons, the second cycle 512 and, in respect of the advertisements, again they were in the daily newspapers and all interested persons could apply. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, there was no intention to stop anyone from applying. All interested persons could apply because the information was presented publicly and in all the newspapers of Trinidad and Tobago.

The existing HYPE training centres are at Macoya, Debe—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Debe? Debe?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:—Debe, Sangre Grande and in Tobago. So when they are saying that their supporters are not getting into these programmes, one of the centres for HYPE is in Debe and, Mr. Speaker, we know that there are PNM people in every part of Trinidad and Tobago and with each year and each day the numbers are growing. [*Desk thumping*] So if you are saying that they are in the PNM part of Debe, hundreds of people are probably going to the Debe institution. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, the information is that there have been some 800 applications and approximately 500 to 600 spaces are available for training—Debe. Mr. Speaker, for the year 2004, centres will be placed in San Fernando, Mayaro, Couva, Diego Martin and Point Fortin, throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

The Member for St. Joseph talked about the Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme. It is here in his list, and this is a programme that is already 10 years

old and entering its eleventh year. The pilot was implemented in 1993 and the programme has been implemented ever since. The programme offers an intensive three-month full-time training programme for young persons 17 to 25 years old and engenders discipline and a proper work ethic and attempts to bridge the gap between the young and the old.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO), the Member for St. Joseph in his preamble says in one of his recitals:

“*Whereas* throughout our nation, through victimization and discrimination by the PNM government, citizens are denied the opportunity to access jobs, contracts and loans in the...(URP);...(CEPEP) and...(NEDCO) and other public programmes;...”

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about NEDCO, that is, the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited. [*Interruption*] This is a programme that provides a complete package of advisory training, mentorship and funding services to micro and small business enterprises. The target group includes youth and single mothers who cannot access capital or support entrepreneurial activity. NEDCO was established on August 02, 2002 and the company has consistently embarked on an aggressive publicity and promotion programme. You will recall that NEDCO was launched on the Brian Lara Promenade and NEDCO has established 10 offices to extend its operations to the public at large. The head office is at Port of Spain and there are other offices in Chaguanas, Sangre Grande, Point Fortin, Arima, Port of Spain, Tunapuna, San Fernando, Moruga and Tobago, [*Crosstalk*] and it is interesting that the same NEDCO that they claim has been discriminating, has advertised aggressively to [*Crosstalk*] Caroni daily-paid VSEP recipients and is participating in their “Open Day” today [*Crosstalk*] and that is in Ste. Madeleine. It is an open day to sensitize persons to new opportunities for expert re-training, new skills development, computer literacy and financial management advice.

This is one of the ads that NEDCO has put out; huge ads in the daily newspapers, Mr. Speaker—huge ads in the daily newspapers, Mr. Speaker—daily newspapers. This one is from the *Newsday*, this one is from the *Express* and it is targetting all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It is very disconcerting and painful for us to have to stand here and talk about the spurious allegations by those on the other side but we will talk about it in circumstances where we know that theirs is not an objective to work in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

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Mr. Speaker, let me talk about the CEPEP programme. The CEPEP programme is another programme that is available to all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. On January 23, 2004 this ad appeared in the newspapers:

SWMCOL, your partner in defence of the environment

Looking for entrepreneurs

Interested individuals and groups must demonstrate ability to function as a small contractor, create a small business, manage localized, community-based environmental projects, manage between 40 to 60 semi-skilled and unskilled workers, manage multiple projects simultaneously. Applicants must also provide any other information which will be useful.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize. This ad came out in June 2002. I said January 2004. It came out in June 2002. It is asking for applications for the CEPEP programme. Whereas they have been trying to convince the public that the CEPEP programme is not for all people of Trinidad and Tobago, there is an ad [*Interruption*] in the newspapers that is asking for persons who are interested in CEPEP in the year 2002 to apply for contracts.

Mr. Ramnath: Will you give the names of the applicants? Will you give the names of the applicants? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: A question was asked in this House for the names of the applicants. All the names of the applicants were given, all the names of those who got CEPEP contracts were given. Mr. Speaker, that is information of which the full House is aware.

Mr. Ramnath: There is no applicants list.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Mr. Speaker, we on this side are saying that the mover of the Motion and those who have supported it thus far have given no evidence of discrimination, racial or otherwise, no evidence of victimization, no evidence that this administration is trying to deny people access to employment, access to jobs, or any other similar situation. What we on this side have already been able to show is that discrimination by government has been the hallmark of that administration. They have discriminated not only against persons; they have also discriminated in their treatment of areas of the country.

Allow me to take this opportunity, again I would like to call it incontrovertible evidence, and give you information from the Auditor General's Report of the year 2000. The section of the report is headed "Unemployment Fund (Special Projects)". Mr. Speaker, let me, from the outset, indicate that the Auditor General's

Report indicated that the “Unemployment Fund (Special Projects)” was limited to Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation, Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation, the Siparia regional corporation, the Penal/Debe and the Princes Town corporations. The Auditor General’s Report indicates that several special projects were undertaken in these corporations and in no others. The list of corporations is clear. This special fund in the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation was used to pay and as said by the Auditor General:

“The following were observed:

Certain payments did not appear to relate to this Fund:”

This is in the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation.

“...\$15,454.77 paid to TSTT on behalf of an official of the Ministry of Local Government.

a 10% deposit of \$42,500 was paid towards the purchase of a property at San Juan and a payment of \$1,000.00 for the valuation of this property.”

This so-called special fund was used to purchase a property in San Juan—

Hon. Member: For who?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:—for somebody, by the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation, all under their administration.

Mr. Speaker, “Unusual Expenditure”:

“Payment to a Religious Organization	\$20,000
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Repairs to an MP’s office	\$108,695.66”
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Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo—I think it was Couva South. [*Interruption*]

The Penal/Debe Regional Corporation. Mr. Speaker, this was another corporation where financial statements showed that:

“...releases totalling \$2,684,000 were received...The Schedules to the Warrants issued by the Ministry of Finance indicated that amounts totalling \$3,286,000 were allocated to this Corporation.”

However, under the special fund, which was only for Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, Mayaro/Rio Claro, Siparia, Penal Debe and Princes Town, money was double allocated. Mr. Speaker, this is a clear indication again that discrimination, victimization, and the like—[*Interruption*—were abundant under the last administration.

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The Member for Couva South says for 30 years nothing was done. So I also include, during that 30-year period, the NAR period when he was a member and a minister and the UNC period when—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, I recall that the Member for St. Augustine admitted that for five years he sat there and did nothing, so perhaps that was part of that 30-year period where nothing was being done. [*Interruption*] I am not misunderstanding, I am just agreeing with you. I am quoting from what your Members have said and your 30-year period includes [*Interruption*] your time in office.

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that those on the other side could talk about discrimination, victimization and the like because they have brought nothing to this House which shows discrimination, victimization, or any type of evidence which supports the Motion that is now before this Parliament for debate. What we on this side have shown by statistics, by information from the Ombudsman's Office, by information from the Auditor General's Report, by information that is quoted from the newspapers with regard to the firing of CEOs and by information from the activities in which we have engaged since coming into Government, is that there has been no form of discrimination, no form of victimization; nothing could be further from the truth with regard to the Motion that has been raised.

I take this opportunity to relate to a particular incident that is now brewing. In this House on Wednesday, there was a claim that the form for accessing the disability assistance grant was asking for ethnicity, was asking disabled persons to indicate their ethnicity. [*Interruption*] The Member for Chaguanas, of course, the one who told the Canadian reporter all those—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, order!

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:—all those untruths, for want of a better word, about Trinidad and Tobago, a country that they claim they love. By the fact that they are the representatives for the areas that they, in fact, represent, obviously they claim that they love Trinidad and Tobago; but the form for a claim for the disability grant does not in any way talk about ethnicity. [*Interruption*] The form for the claim for disability—I am being very specific, Mr. Speaker. The form for the claim for disability grant does not ask for ethnicity. It talks about several other things. Let me indicate that—[*Interruption*] Forms do not have a date. You have to put in the date. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Ramnath: When was the form issued?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Today. Mr. Speaker, there are forms that have been prepared for persons with disabilities that do ask for ethnicity but it is not for the

decision in relation to the grant. The form is a research form which asks for this information because *[Interruption]* what has been realized by the social services delivery office is that certain disabilities result from certain diseases like diabetes. Certain disabilities result from certain diseases which are peculiar to certain ethnic groups. *[Interruption]* As a consequence of this, in an attempt to be able to help the disabled, they are doing research. So there is a form that asks for ethnicity, *[Interruption]* it is a research form, but it is not the form that will determine whether you get the claim or not. So again, the Member for Chaguanas is misleading the House.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that in the same genre as the form that is being used by the social services delivery office, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) has the form to determine the population and housing census and this is a form, a research tool, similar to the other form that asks for ethnicity, *[Interruption]* which asks for your ethnic group. In terms of medical certificates for the births and deaths registration, that is another form that asks for ethnicity. Neither of these research forms will determine whether somebody gets assistance or not. The form that will determine whether somebody gets a claim for public assistance or for disability assistance does not ask for the person's ethnic origin. So again, while the Member for Chaguanas seeks to misrepresent information, we on this side on every occasion will clear up the misinformation that they are trying to put into the system. *[Interruption]* *[Crosstalk]*

Mr. Speaker, that is why from the outset on this side I stood and indicated that the Member for St. Joseph raised spurious allegations. His very premise was spurious and pretentious because, I repeat that he said that he was using information from the UN Declaration on All Forms of Discrimination and he was not referring to race. Mr. Speaker, the actual declaration is rooted in race and we on this side, because we know from our history of being the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, *[Crosstalk]* a Trinidad and Tobago that has the entire breadth of races in this twin-island state, we have consistently operated in a way that all the people of Trinidad and Tobago, all, feel comfortable under a People's National Movement administration. *[Desk thumping]* No matter what they attempt, no matter what they try to bring into the psyche of the people, the people of Trinidad and Tobago know the truth. They cannot rewrite history.

Whereas in several circumstances they have tried to twist information, we on this side will stand and speak the truth. Whereas this very Motion is rooted in untruth, we will stand on this side and consistently bring incontrovertible evidence of the truth. We on this side will not be daunted in our efforts to move

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Trinidad and Tobago forward. We will not be daunted by anything that they have to say that is negative about Trinidad and Tobago. Once we know that it is being done, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to indicate the truth to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

We would say we disagree fundamentally with the Motion and we reject it out of hand. Mr. Speaker, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Manohar Ramsaran (*Chaguanas*): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I think that to join this debate is a privilege but I want to start with the last point first, the registration form for persons with disabilities, district or office.

Mr. Ramnath: What is the name of it? What is the name of it?

Mr. M. Ramsaran: “Registration form for persons with disabilities”—I have not seen anything about investigation—to be filled out by or on behalf of persons with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, when we use the word, “lie”, when we use the word, “untruth”, when we use the word, “misleading”, I think that today the Member for Arouca South has used up all these words and much more than I could describe. I know some might be unparliamentary, but to use parliamentary privilege and come to this House and allude that the Member for Chaguanas was not telling the truth, I take great offence to that.

Name, surname, first name, middle;

2. Gender—male or female

3. What ethnic group do you belong to—African, Caucasian, East Indian, Chinese, Mixed, Other

Date of birth

Home or postal address

Phone number

Are you employed

If employed, please state the name of the company

Provide brief details of your work experience

Do you possess any skills

Level of education

Are you a student

Disability type.

Mr. Speaker, I read the entire form to show you there is nothing, [*Inaudible*] Mr. Speaker, but this form in my opinion is to apply for the disability grant. I think that the minister yesterday again in the newspaper, in the *Guardian*—and I want to put this on the record so that people will understand who is speaking the truth and who might not be speaking the truth. You know, this is indeed to me something that we must not allow to take place in this country. I want to just ensure that I read the correct thing, Mr. Speaker.

Page 10 of today's *Guardian*:

“During the debate on the Act, Kangaloo said her Ministry will create a database of all the people in T&T with disabilities.

The application form for the disability grants does not ask for the ethnic background of the applicant, contrary to the claims of Opposition MP Manohar Ramsaran.”

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Who said that?

Mr. M. Ramsaran: This is Christine Kangaloo speaking, Mr. Speaker. So they perpetrate an untruth in and out of Parliament. Hear what the head of the DPI said.

“‘I have a serious problem with this’, said Daniel of the...registration form.

‘I do not want the authorities to drag us into a racial issue. The one thing we all have in common is that we are disabled.’”

Mr. Speaker, to bring the disabled into this debate is something that I never wanted to do but, as we mention that, I want to put it on the record that the Members on that side came to this Parliament under parliamentary privilege and went to the *Guardian* and spoke untruths. I hope that you are taking note of this.

Mr. Speaker, the Member started her contribution about what is happening in Ottawa and the headline in today's *Probe*, “3,000 want Canadian Refugee Status”. Mr. Speaker, what is being said here this afternoon is something that we must—I would like to quote other parts of that article.

“‘Many others have fled, closing business or sending families abroad.’
...Trinidad and Tobago was now a ‘narco-democracy.’

One person said the drug trade ‘has influenced every government institution and funds a local al-Qaeda cell.’”

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Mr. Speaker, this is in today's *Probe*. I understand the hon. Minister of Education is now talking about drugs in school—drugs in school. Drugs are here, there and everywhere. Drugs seem to be taking over the beautiful country of Trinidad and Tobago. To quote from that very document from which the Member for Diego Martin East quoted and misquoted, I will show this honourable House that another lie, another untruth, has been perpetrated against the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but let me deal with the one to deal with drug abuse.

Page 37 section 93. This will be read in its entirety, not misquoting.

“The Ministry...”

That is the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and Community Development; that is in the years under the dynamic United National Congress. [*Desk thumping*]

“...operates six youth centres.

This is a World Bank report. This is not the Member for Arouca South coming and misleading this Parliament about youth centres being closed and so on.

“The Ministry also operates six youth centres and promotes mechanisms of developing youth leadership. The centres are located in poor neighbourhoods and each serves as a focal point for up to 300 youths, who can participate in organized recreational and cultural programmes. They recently began offering training in information technology on a small scale, charging a small tuition and they have also served as a venue for transmitting information on sexual and reproductive health through workshops and drug abuse prevention and outreach efforts through the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme.”

Mr. Speaker, the UNC not only talks the talk, we walk the walk. I will go back to this article a little later on to talk about the various programmes on which the Member misled this House and we must put it on the record.

I again continue that article that was read in this Parliament this afternoon and I want to start at the very top. Sometimes it is good to start at the very beginning.

“Port of Spain, Trinidad has a troubled kind of beauty.

Ostentatious wealth flourishes in disturbing proximity to severe poverty.

Exotic restaurants abound not far from garbage dumps where people fight vultures for scraps of food.

The vibrant Carnival rocks the island with explosions of colour and music...”

You see, when you read an article, somebody else might complete it:

“while people lose lives and loves in almost daily shootings and kidnappings.

The gorgeous sight of the sky turning blood-red from a flock of scarlet ibises twists the heart.

And so will the sight of a baby being bathed at a ditch waterpipe.

Trinidad is a study in extremes.”

[*Interruption*] This is what is written here. [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*] I cannot read what is not here. [*Interruption*] Why are you grumbling? Why do you not ask for a point of order and stand? You have no manners, Leader of Government Business. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: [*Interruption*]

“Ensalaco, director of International Studies and Human Rights at Ohio’s University of Dayton has studied Osama bin Laden and Middle East terrorism for a book he is writing *From Black September to September 11—A terrorism history from 1968 – September 2001*.

Al-Qaeda, he says, can ‘patiently organise in places where they think they can prosper.

‘I think you have one in Trinidad and Tobago.’

They could use Trinidad and Tobago to launder money, solicit funds, or, he says, ‘move their people through the Americas’.

However, if they are planning terror operations, ‘natural gas becomes a potential site of terrorist attack’.”

Mr. Speaker, I continue:

“In 2003, a record 229 people were murdered.

But a new, sinister crime—kidnapping—has shattered what remains of Trinidad’s sense of security.

It has also raised racial tensions between the country’s equal populations of Indian and African descendants.

Most kidnap victims are Indians; most kidnappers are blacks.”

Mr. Speaker, I continue:

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“Manning’s PNM is largely supported by blacks.

He eagerly sought and received Bakr’s help in winning the October, 2002 elections—even if Bakr had al-Qaeda ties.

Bakr describes himself as an ‘adviser’ to Manning on matters concerning black youth.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to move away from this.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, did you give the source of the—

Mr. M. Ramsaran: This is the same paper that was read by—

Mr. Speaker: You have to give the name of the newspaper.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Oh, it is *The Probe*, today’s *Probe*. I said that at the beginning, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, I just want to deal with a couple of untruths, but before I go into responding to the Member for Diego Martin East—because he knows full well that he misled this House on the last occasion because I am going to read from the document that he quoted from—I want to put something else on the table and again when people come to this Parliament and read a little part here and a little part there and try to mislead the House, I have a problem with that because you have to come here and sometimes be honest.

The Charter of the United Nations in Articles 1, 55 and 75, speaks three times about the respect for human rights and for the fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights obliges state parties to respect and to ensure to all individuals the rights without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social, property, birth or other status. Mr. Speaker, we must understand that when these various agencies—various countries have sat—even in our own Constitution, Mr. Speaker, we ensure that the right of every citizen is protected and the mere reason that we have to come to this Parliament to debate these serious issues is indeed a slap in the face of the people and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

You know, we heard so much about trying to sweep it under the carpet, but I want to put something on the record. I wonder why the Prime Minister of this country, as soon as he came into office, rather than institutionalizing the Equal Opportunity Act, what did he do? He appointed a race relations committee. Mr. Speaker, if there is no race problem in this country, why then did he put this into place?

3.00 p.m.

We have to ask these very serious questions. I am quoting here, Mr. Speaker:

“At a PNM local government meeting in San Fernando, on Tuesday June 24th, 2003, the Prime Minister announced plans to re-establish the Centre for Ethnic Studies at the University of the West Indies and the round table discussions at the Office of the Prime Minister.

As for the round table discussions, the following persons had been invited to participate: Pearl Eintou Springer, Selwyn Cudjoe, Sat Maharaj, Grafton La Borde, Deokienanan Sharma and Yacoob Ali.”

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, October 31, 2003, the *Newsday* reported that: Manning said it was for the reason of imbalances in the society that he re-commissioned the Centre for Ethnic Studies. When the Member spoke and tried to make people believe that this is a country where there is racial equity and everything is “honky dory”, it is contradicting the Prime Minister's statement.

It is not only the Prime Minister. On Thursday, May 29, 2003, at the Maha Sabha headquarters in St Augustine, President Max Richards announced that he would be setting up a committee to improve race relations and to develop strategies for unearthing such knowledge and presenting it systemically to the national community over a sustained period of 12 months. The members are Ken Ramchand (Chairman), Dana Seetahal, Ken Laughlin, Kirk Meighoo and Dr. Claudius Fergus.

Two of the highest offices in the land, the President of the country and the Prime Minister, have accepted that there are race problems in this country, and for the hon. Members opposite to come here and try to hoodwink the population, this is not the way to solve our problem. We must understand there is a problem. We must understand there is discrimination and the only time one could solve a problem is when one admits and acknowledges there is a problem. So, for Members to get up in this House and try to hoodwink people and try to quote here and there and try to erase the reality cannot work.

Mr. Speaker, you have been presiding in this honourable House when I came week after week, at least for the last year, to talk about the discrimination in various programmes in the constituency of Chaguanas. This might sound like a simple “ol’ talk”, but it has serious implications. Yesterday morning I was speaking to the foreman of a URP gang, an East Indian, and he said he was trying to employ a few other people like himself and every time he would bring a name to the office they would throw it through the window. I said, “Why do you not do

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something about it?" He said, "You think it is the UNC? They will cut my throat." This is the reality in Trinidad and Tobago.

People could deny this as much as they want. This is a fact. I invite you. I will walk with you. I will go to the stations. I will go to the URP offices and prove it to you. I do not have to come here and tell untruths. The truth is there for the people to see. We could read the names.

I want to show the nonsense that takes place in this country. We recently asked a question about the Airports Authority. Much was said about HYPE and others, but just to look at this, the Airports Authority, let me turn. Just read one name and one would understand what is happening at the Airports Authority. I will just choose any name. If this is not the right one, I will choose another one to see the names of the people employed in the Airports Authority. They are Waldron, Darlington, Downing, Fernandes, Ford, Lesley, Harris, Waldron, Watkins, Bleasdel, Campbell, Walcott, Cyril, Gibbs, Jack, Vidal, Warrick, Teemul—one—Alexander, Alfred, Cupidore, Ford, Gomes and Julien.

Mr. Speaker, do we need a rocket scientist to see something is wrong with this country. HYPE, 7 per cent of the 450 people who were hired on that programme, the names were East Indian. We must not try to hide and sweep things under the carpet. If we do that, we cannot make this country the place that maybe our President wants to make it. If you remember what he said when he came to this Parliament, we the people of this Parliament represent a beacon to which the rest of the nation looks for guidance. Let us, therefore, uphold high standards of which we can all be proud.

Mr. Speaker, are we able to say we are proud of what is taking place in this country? Do we understand what is happening? I want to turn to the hon. Member for Diego Martin East. I know he ran because he knew what he did. He said, when he was ranting and raving and telling untruths:

"I knew they would deny its parentage so let me repeat this was done by the World Bank and the Change Management Unit of the Ministry of Social and Community Development under the UNC and the Division of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs under the UNC which worked closely with a mission team to develop this document. In other words, the Member for Chaguanas was pivotal to the development of this document."

Let us go into the findings which he continued to misquote. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have been associated with this report. What this report did is to—I want to read. This report is about investing in the youth of Trinidad and Tobago.

Nowhere in this document says this report is about investing in the youth of Trinidad and Tobago of any ethnic origin. The youth of Trinidad and Tobago, especially those at the greatest developmental risk which is important for building social and human capital and improving the country's economic situation in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the main mission for Trinidad and Tobago benefited from the collaboration of several governmental and nongovernmental agencies. I want to read this into the record so you will understand, the country will understand, that the UNC has a proud track record of dealing with the problems of Trinidad and Tobago. We do not only come here and talk and then go back to the ministries and do nothing. Forty million dollars voted into the Ministry of Social and Community Development and that money was returned.

I continue:

“In recent years Trinidad and Tobago has experienced increasing social problems relating to its youth population despite the economy's improved performance. A major preoccupation of the Government is to understand the causes behind this situation and how to overcome them.”

I want to repeat that because we are hearing some noise from across there.

“A major preoccupation of the—UNC—government is to try to understand the causes behind this situation and how to overcome them. The overall goal of this report is to help in this task and establish the basis for interventions that would lead to improved youth development. The specific objectives of this work, which also frame the analysis, are to (i) uncover and analyze key issues facing the country's youth—”

You are supposed to applaud the UNC, not discredit them for this.

“(ii) explore a rationale for investing in youth development activities; (iii) review current services for youth; (iv) examine the existing and proposed policy and legislation relating to youth and capacity for its implementation; and (v) propose interventions to reduce the risks faced by youths and increase the potential for social and human capital development.”

Mr. Speaker, instead of coming here and misquoting certain sections of this and stopping midair, he should have come to this Parliament, the Member for Diego Martin East, and congratulated the United National Congress for looking at the problems and how to solve them.

I want you to listen to this very carefully. It goes on at 2:

“This report highlights the two principal exclusionary factors that contribute to increasing conditions of risk for youth in Trinidad and Tobago:

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(i) restricted access to the secondary education system, which leaves out about one-third of the school-aged population...”

Mr. Speaker, within two years of this report, the UNC solved that problem in Trinidad and Tobago forever. You cannot do anything about it. This problem about restricted access to secondary school education which leaves out about one-third of the school-aged population. It continues:

“(ii) the high level of unemployment, which reaches 30 per cent for the 15—19 cohort, compared to 14 percent for the rest of the population.”

Of course, it is history. Two years after this report we brought unemployment down to 10 per cent. In addition, poverty, family care, and so forth, were addressed because, Mr. Speaker, we of the UNC worked in collaboration with the World Bank to ensure that we know the problems and how to solve them.

This is good governance. This is not what we have today. Unless you come to this Parliament and make some sort of request from the Government and they start to think, all they do—and it is eight months without Parliament—they did everything that was illegal in Trinidad and Tobago. It will come to haunt them. If not them, it will haunt the people of Trinidad and Tobago, because when the leaders and fathers and mothers do things that are not good, the children will pay the price.

You know, I would not move on until I look at a few other areas just to understand this book. As the Member quoted, Report No. 20088-TR *Trinidad and Tobago Youth and Social Development An Integrated Approach for Social Inclusion*:

“In the past decade, Trinidad and Tobago has seen a rise in social problems and risk behaviours and the persistence of poverty and unemployment in its youth population despite the country's improved economic performance.”

Mr. Speaker, I am putting these things on the record so that when people come and look later on at what has been done in this country, they will understand the role of the United National Congress. The UNC not only talks. We understand the problems and we are proud of this document. If the PNM could look at this document, I recommend it to them. I could make copies and give it to them so they could follow where the problems are and how to solve them.

This is something that I would like to congratulate our leader and then Prime Minister and the hon. Ministers of Education for, for understanding the problems and doing something about them. Let me put this into the record. Again quoting from the report, it is interesting that people from that side quoted documents but they did not quote the part that is the truth, that will lead to saving this country.

It continues:

“A lack of adequate capacity in secondary schools has created a process of vacancy rationing in which some children are excluded altogether—for example, of 29,273 students taking the CEE in 1996, 22,468 passed...and 2,695 repeat Standard 5, leaving at least 6,805 children who appear to have fallen out of the system.”

Mr. Speaker, remember those days?

“Recent government efforts to increase the capacity of the system have been able to counter declining enrolment, and the proportion of students taking the common entrance exam (CEE)...”

This was in 1997—1998. The Government made efforts to increase the capacity, however many youths still remain excluded.

Mr. Speaker, at the time this document was printed, the United National Congress found places for all children writing Common Entrance in Trinidad and Tobago. That is a feat that could never be debated. That is something to put in their pipes and smoke it! What do we have now? We have a hapless Minister of Education. One day it is—what is causing the crime? Carnival!

Carnival is the national treasure of Trinidad and Tobago. People in this country enjoy carnival, but here we have a Minister as if carnival has only been discovered two years ago. Carnival has been here before most of us here, but now carnival is causing crime in schools. Then the hon. Minister went to drugs. Mr. Speaker, I would like that Government to be more responsible. I want them to put it on the record of this Parliament how many children in this country use drugs in secondary schools and primary schools. Do not blanket the 30,000 or 40,000 school children in this country. I have a problem with that!

For example, in the Cunupia High School, which is the best high school built in Trinidad and Tobago since maybe Fatima and QRC, was built by the United National Congress, and four years later, children who are doing mathematics and sciences have not yet seen scientific equipment. They cannot get a pipette, a burette or even a thermometer, and they are going to do CXC next year. This is the discrimination we talk about. Discrimination against schools in Central Trinidad. None of the schools that were built under the UNC has yet been equipped, and I call that blatant discrimination. If it is not discrimination, it is incompetence, so you have your choice.

Mr. Speaker, this is the one the Member misquoted. The Member for Arouca South contradicted the Member for Diego Martin East. I want to read the section in its entirety:

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“Inequity in primary and secondary school is evident both in the scores resulting from the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) and in the practice of ‘tracking’ which places students with poor scores in schools of lesser quality. Considerable variation is evident in student performance on the exam, based on a number of variables including the management authority of the primary school, education district, county of residence and student sex, socioeconomic status and self-declared race group.”

Mr. Speaker, race was not the only consideration.

“Most importantly, children from high socioeconomic status households scored significantly better than those from low socioeconomic households, especially ones in which nobody was employed...”

Of course that was around 20 per cent.

“Students of self-declared African origin have been significantly more likely to score lower (59) than those of mixed or Indian origin (64 in both groups).”

So it is not only black Africans. They spoke about every race.

“The latter in turn have normally performed more poorly than the Syrian, Lebanese, Caucasian and Chinese students (all above 72). Placement on limited secondary school slots is based on the CEE score.”

Mr. Speaker, this Member should be sanctioned. He should be brought before the Privileges Committee of this House. He should be censured from all the words you could think about and asked to speak the truth whenever he gets up to speak in this Parliament. The Member for Diego Martin East; he cannot speak the truth! It continues:

“The students from lower income families are placed disproportionately in inferior junior secondary, senior comprehensive and composite schools.”

Mr. Speaker, this is important, because the whole question that was raised by the Member for Diego Martin West about finding quota for school children is in this paragraph here:

“The students from lower income families are placed disproportionately in inferior junior secondary, senior comprehensive and composite schools...while students from upper and middle income families are more likely to enter 5- and 7-year traditional schools.”

This report was done in 1997/1998. This is what the UNC did. The UNC came and corrected this discrimination against the children of Trinidad and Tobago. And to

say that we discovered that and when we say something, it is not racial and when they say it, it is racial, that is nonsense. The Member for Diego Martin West, at a recent PNM convention, stood and said the Opposition talks race all day in Parliament. I want to add a line. They practise race every day in Trinidad and Tobago. I could go on reading from this booklet, but we have to understand that when hon. Members from the other side come here, they must speak the truth.

Mr. Speaker, just allow me to read one more paragraph into the record.

“Secondary school dropout relates to risk behaviour in adolescents, financial constraints, and the quality of education. A longitudinal study of a student cohort entering Form 1 showed that the cumulative dropout rate was close to 13% by Form 2 and 15% by Form 3. Dropout rates by Form 3 were highest for males, youths of African descent, those living with grandparents (36%) and fathers (28%), students from lower socioeconomic groups, and those attending composite schools (23%).”

Mr. Speaker, the point is that everybody faced this problem; not just African youths. It continues:

“The 1992 Survey of Living Conditions confirmed the large variation in secondary enrolment rates across socioeconomic groups—less than 50% of those from the lowest income quintile were in school in comparison to 76% for those from the highest quintile.”

Mr. Speaker, in case he does not understand the language, what this is saying is that the children from the lowest income brackets, those who are poorer in the country, maybe because they were not allowed to use schoolbooks, because we remember the schoolbook racket before the UNC. They were not given proper meals and they suffered because of this, and these are the reasons they dropped out. It has nothing to do with race. It is across every racial divide in this country, but we did not do that. This was a 1997 survey. We were in office for one year. This was done to correct something that was perpetrated against the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to continue to see how we could let the Member for Arouca South understand that when her contribution was made and she tried to hide the race problem under the carpet—I want to quote from hon. Patrick Manning in Chaguanas, Friday, June 27, 2003:

“The PNM is yet to achieve interracial solidarity...It would be a glorious day when the composition of the PNM is a reflection of the society from which we come...”

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I quote Lawrence Achong from the *Hansard* of June 25, 2003:

“One could gather that the UNC is totally opposed to Caribbean integration. I suppose if it was an alliance between Suriname, Guyana and Trinidad that would have been all right.”

Racist remarks.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant came to this honourable House and quoted about recalcitrant Indians in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Hinds: What is the word?

Mr. M. Ramsaran: I do not want to do that, but I could go back to the original document. I want to read the *Hansard* of June 25th, 2003:

“This is Dr. Williams speaking of India, a country that he related to and knew very well. I want to quote that again:

‘It is a respectable, reputable nation, respected the world over. It is the India of socialism, the India of Afro-Asian unity, the India of the Bandung Conference...’

That he and other leaders had attended.

‘This is the Indian nation talking, not the recalcitrant and hostile minority of the West Indian nation masquerading as ‘the Indian nation’ and prostituting the name of India for its selfish, reactionary political ends.

This, then, is the danger facing the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and the West Indian nation—the deliberate attempt of our opponents to exploit race as the basis of political power.’”

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Williams said that, and we thought that died, but here in Trinidad and Tobago in the year 2003, Mr. Hinds, the Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant, raised this. He was featured on a *Newsday* editorial headed, “Not so, Mr. Hinds”. It states:

“Mr. Hinds, instead of pointing to the limitations and constraints contained in the Bill, the PNM Backbencher chose to delve into Dr. Williams autobiography, *Inward Hunger*, quoting lengthy passages in which the late Prime Minister lambasted the Indian community for being what he described as a hostile and recalcitrant minority and accusing them of having a false allegiance to Trinidad and Tobago and bringing out the Indian vote by the hook and the crook.

This is the danger facing the people of Trinidad and Tobago exploiting race as the basis of political power. Williams saw it as a danger then and it is a danger now.”

Mr. Hinds: I said it is a danger now, and it is!

Mr. M. Ramsaran: This is Dr. Williams saying that. These people are trying to claim other people's work.

Mr. Hinds: I supported what Dr. Williams said. I stand by that.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: When the Member for Arouca South stood here and tried to hide race under the carpet, I had a problem with that. Let me go on. I want to come back to let the people of this country understand that if we want to become the beautiful country that we are without contradictions, if we want to make Trinidad and Tobago a country that we could be proud of, let us face reality.

Face reality. That rings a bell. Before I go to quoting something here, I would like to go to this whole question of “face reality.” Last week Thursday’s defence of “Cro Cro” by acting Prime Minister, Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams, is unforgivable and unpardonable and is an insult to the intelligence of the nation. What Mr. Manning did yesterday was rub salt in the wounds by saying, “It does not affect me. It affects the businessmen. It affects the other people in Trinidad and Tobago who were kidnapped.” It does not interfere with the Prime Minister of this country. He has his guards. He is surrounded by guards. He says he is not corrupt. What about the Repsol deal? What is taking place there? We want to know the truth.

Corrupt! He came to this Parliament and denied he has a child in Miami. He is doing everything in the country and he believes people do not know the truth. I want to say something. The first defence, and you are a learned lawyer, Mr. Speaker, when a thief comes to you, he says “Boss, I did not thief.” Without you asking a question, “I did not thief.” The Prime Minister says he is not corrupt, and I want to ask him, why did he say that? Was that a solicited answer? Did somebody ask him if he is corrupt?

I want to read into the record of this Parliament, Face Reality, and I would like at the very beginning to ask the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation to look at this song seriously. Let me quote in part:

“Ah begging meh bandit friend
kidnap them.”

I would like the policemen to question him. Do we have poetic privilege in this country to sing something like this? It means that Mr. “Cro Cro” knows the

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people who kidnap innocent people in Trinidad and Tobago and the police should go immediately after him.

A little lower down:

“So all Chadee family
Who used to depend on he
Begging Robocop dey friend
kidnap them”

Robocop is a known sobriquet of an alleged kidnapper in Central Trinidad, and I believe that “Cro Cro” should be questioned at length as to who the kidnappers are in this country. If this is not done, then I would be the first one to say do not listen to calypsos in Trinidad and Tobago ever again if somebody could have the poetic liberty to sing these songs. He knows the kidnappers, besides inciting.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, just now you referred to somebody by the name of “Robocop” being a known—I did not get the gist of it, but be careful that you are implicating somebody innocently.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but I was quoting “Cro Cro’s calypso. I am glad you said that. This is what Mr. “Cro Cro” is doing. He is singing about “Who used to depend on he, begging “Robocop” dey friend to kidnap them.” Dangerous.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I was not referring to your quotation of the calypso. I think you went on to say something about “Robocop” is a known associate of somebody. I think you need to be careful about that.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Thank you very much. I am guided, Mr. Speaker.

“All dem big, big, big store owners
Who does bring coke
In cloth containers...”

Mr. Speaker, if one looks at this whole calypso, and let me go back to the top:

“Face reality
Remember the master say
If you do wrong you have to pay”

Talking about who “tief” and which Minister is bringing in coke in containers. I do not know which Minister does that, but if I was a Minister now, I would be very careful as to being a Syrian and bringing coke in containers.

Mr. Speaker: Again, you are implying that someone is bringing coke in containers.

Members: “Cro Cro”!

Mr. Speaker: “Cro Cro” is saying that?

Members: Yes!

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Not only that.

“Dey children happy in London”

I understand the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro has children living in London. If I were him, I would be hiring guards around me, because he could be the next one kidnapped. He must face reality and understand that. He has a child living in London and he too is under threat by “Cro Cro” and the kidnapers in this country.

The Prime Minister of a country is a person who is responsible for the welfare of the country. He is saying he has nothing to worry about. He is only about himself. I always say that! He does not care about the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, anybody else or any businessman, or people in Central and South Trinidad. He cares about himself. He has that protection and I do hope that the other Ministers will have that sort of protection.

I want to put into the record the Indian Constitution which states:

“The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.”

Article 29(2) states:

“No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, language or any of them.”

South Africa, Section 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that:

“The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:

- a. Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.
- b. Non-racialism and non-sexism.”

Mr. Valley: He cannot read!

Mr. M. Ramsaran: You more tied-tongue than me! But I know what you are talking about. You must hear yourself. Monkey does not see its own tail.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ramsaran: Section 29 says that:

“(1) Everyone has the right

- (a) To a basic education, including adult basic education; and
- (b) To further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.”

Why I read into the record the constitutions of India and South Africa, the United National Congress was formed after studying the political parties of the Indian National Congress and the African National Congress and these two political parties put into their records that there must never be discrimination on the basis of race, religion or country.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Miss G. Lucky*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before I call upon the Member to continue, permit me to read an extract from May's Parliamentary Practice, the 22nd edition, at page 372, under the caption, Reading Speeches:

“A Member may read extracts from documents, but such extracts and quotations should be reasonably short. The purpose of this rule is to maintain the cut and thrust of debate which depends upon successive speakers meeting in their speeches, to some extent, the arguments of earlier speeches.”

Now, again, I am saying this, hon. Members, simply because some Members do tend to concentrate on reading voluminous extracts from newspapers and documents, so please, bear this in mind. I am appealing to all Members.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Members who are so threatened will take note. I cannot put to heart or to memory the Constitution of different countries, so I beg your permission to read. Let me come back to Trinidad; Customs and Excise. Very interesting developments taking place there, because

political discrimination is taking place in Customs and Excise, and I am very close to that division.

The Comptroller of Customs position is vacant. What is happening is that I understand the Chairman of the Service Commission will be leaving his office in June, 2004. What they are doing in the meantime, the two younger ones at the top who are supposed to be the Comptroller of Customs, they would remain there for about two or three years, but they have chosen one of their supporters to become Comptroller of Customs.

What is happening is right now there is an acting Comptroller of Customs whose post will be rendered vacant today, but up to now they have not yet named a replacement. What they are doing is putting somebody in place—the other one who is an older one—to act from Monday and he will go until June. June is the date, I understand from the birds, when Mr. Kenneth Lalla says he will no longer be the Chairman of the Service Commission.

He also said that no way is he going to promote somebody from way down the list, two hundred and something, to Comptroller of Customs and Excise. He would never do that. I am hearing some noise on the other side. Let them deny this. The new Comptroller will be my friend, Mr. Thompson, and his term ends in June. When he demits office, all bacchanal will break loose in there. I am warning the Members on the other side, once they promote somebody over 200 names, natural justice will take place. I know what the Minister said.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Not natural justice, court justice.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: The Minister in the Ministry of Finance said that, “Okay, so they will have some upheaval for a couple years, but by that time, the two hundred and something people will leave the Customs and then all things will take place.” We must understand in this country, if one does not want to be accused of discrimination or anything, do things in the proper way. This is happening all over the country.

In case they doubt me, this is the first time in the history of Customs that there is an advertisement of office of the Comptroller of Customs and Excise. First time in the history of Trinidad and Tobago—[*Interruption*] There is transparency my foot! This is to put their friend in office so that he will apply. What happened before, they would take the administrative officers, about eight to 10 in number, interview them and appoint the best person for the job, but this person is two hundred and I do not know where, and he is coming to be the Comptroller of Customs.

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Listen to this piece of folly, if there was ever folly. Minimum experience and training: extensive eight years and over experience in all phases of Customs. There are people there with 35 years of service and the advertisement says eight years and over. Understand what is happening. It is crazy. They know how to defend this.

Then, the other one again is causing some problems in the Customs and I got this in my mailbag yesterday. Special information bulletin from the PSA. This is a serious one. This is what was announced in passing by the Junior Minister recently when he talked about the special Inland Revenue service.

They appointed a committee to examine the feasibility of establishing a Revenue Authority in Trinidad and Tobago. I want to read how this Government is operating. No representative of staff. Nobody from the PSA was included. This was no accidental omission. This is a PSA document so let them worry about Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:

“The President of the Public Services Association communicated since May, 2002 with Minister Conrad Enill, both via formal letters and telephone conversations to have this situation corrected.

Following much perseverance the Public Services Association was eventually invited on August 15th 2002 to submit the name...”

And they submitted Mr. James Manswell.

Mr. Speaker, it continues:

“Low staff morale

Poor Human Resource Management practices

Inadequate/outdated technological support systems

Poor physical infrastructure and accommodation

Outdated legislative/regulatory framework

No succession planning”

In other words, the proposed board is not welcome by the public servants and this is being pushed down the throats of public servants.

As a matter of fact, as a person, I have no problem with moving forward and doing things. We know one has to challenge oneself to accept change, but sometimes the change must not be done and appear to be done without consultation. Once one continues to do this, it is problem. I am forecasting for the Customs and Excise there will be many problems in that division.

I just want to touch on a few things before I take my seat, but today in this country, the Parliament is debating discrimination. Discrimination, in my opinion, should not be a term in the 21st Century. We have to understand that a small country like Trinidad and Tobago with a population that is evenly divided between two major races, people should understand that not only because one wants to win a political election, one introduces race into everything.

That is why I am proud to be a member of the United National Congress. Our leader, since he entered politics, was talking about inclusion. Whether they deny that or not is not important to me. What I know and firmly believe is if one looks at the history and record of Mr. Basdeo Panday, one will see that almost every time he has entered an election or new thinking is created, he asks for national unity in this country.

What do we have on the other side? For political purposes! If they have any conscience and they examine the politics of Trinidad and Tobago, and my friend from St. Augustine would talk about getting the politics right, we can talk about the 18 seats along the East-West Corridor.

When in the 1976 Constitution the 36 seats were earmarked, there was equality in numbers. There was 16,000 in Diego Martin East and 16,000 in Couva North and Chaguanas. Today, what is happening, these constituencies have dropped in numbers to 16,000 and less. In Chaguanas, 29,000; Caroni Central, 30,000, Mr. Speaker. Check the records. They are there. The report was handed in recently. What has happened? These 18 seats on the East-West Corridor and the two in San Fernando, small constituencies that make up less than 30 per cent of the population control the democratic process in this country, and it is in their favour to introduce racism. That is discrimination.

Imagine house padding. What has happened in this country, in today's newspaper, Councillor Carol Cuffy-Dowlal brought a motion in San Fernando to debate the illegal housing in San Fernando and the mayor shut it down! They did not even have the courtesy to debate the motion.

Mr. Valley: The motion had to be seconded.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: The CEO of San Fernando was recently brought into a battle because of the same thing. I want to tell them that they have to be careful of what they are doing. They are destroying Trinidad and Tobago for their own political gains. That is not right. If they are an honest government, they will call on the Elections and Boundaries Commission to redefine the boundaries in Trinidad and Tobago according to population. Do it!

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We did not house pad. We did not build houses here or there, but what is happening in this country, they are illegally doing that. It is happening in Chaguanas, where I understand that the reason one of their Ministers came to me, one to one, and offered me a huge attractive package—you know what is their interest? It is not in the mayorship. They want to control the Chaguanas borough so they will come with house padding in Chaguanas. Not because of local government. You think they care about local government. Look what happened recently. Five million dollars spent by self-help in dealing with some problems. Eradicating the responsibilities of local government, all because of their wickedness and trying to divide this country further.

Maybe this is a warning. This should be recorded in *Hansard*. When one lives like that and wants to destroy institutions, destroy Trinidad and Tobago for one's own political gains, one is going to destroy this country with it. I want people to think about this very carefully.

Mr. Speaker: Again, hon. Members, I must appeal to you, the Hansard reporter is having great difficulty, especially Members on the Lower Benches, please. Give her the courtesy to take the notes as given by the Member.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Mr. Speaker, I want to warn the Government. Let me repeat one line. We are now in the 21st Century and you know something their Minister of Education said—I do not know if she said it or someone else. What was said was that children in this country are not as foolish as parents and teachers think.

I want to tell you something. This is not at all to degrade the hon. Minister of Education, but that Minister is now being ridiculed by the school children in this country. She is being ridiculed wherever we go. People are quoting her mistakes, even this week, the two reasons for school violence. I mean, who is she trying to fool with that?

When they come to this Parliament and behave in such an irresponsible manner trying to push racism down the throat with the guise of political supporters, this will only harm Trinidad and Tobago. I want to make this warning quite clear. I want people to go back to the dreams of our great—history is replete with examples.

Let me just talk about the American Declaration of Independence, 1776:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these

rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...

That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

Mr. Speaker, this is from one of my favorite American presidents, and I have to read this. President Kennedy said:

“Good evening my fellow citizens. This afternoon, following a series of threats and defiant statements, the presence of Alabama National Guardsmen was required on the University of Alabama to carry out the final and unequivocal order of the United States District Court... That order called for the admission of two clearly qualified young Alabama residents who happened to have been born Negro.

I hope that every American...will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents.”

Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago must follow. We are a young country. We must understand that we must learn from the Americans. They had their problems and they solved them. Why must we not learn from that?

I want to put into the record one of their mouthpieces, so to speak, Mr. Selwyn Cudjoe. I am making some very small quotes from Selwyn Cudjoe, and they will understand who are the haters who spread racism in this country.

On July 16, 1998, Selwyn Cudjoe called for the banning of the Ramayan. I read on today's *TNT Mirror* that he quoted me speaking in India. Mr. Speaker, I did not leave Trinidad and Tobago for the last six months, but in today's *Mirror* he quoted me having made a speech in India talking about race. They are so twisted in their thoughts that they do not understand what is taking place. I do not know where they got that information, but I was not in India, and I could ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs to check my passport.

At the opening of Parliament on Friday, January 12, 2001, Selwyn called for the overthrow of the UNC administration based on racist remarks. Selwyn Cudjoe, July 31, Cascadia hotel:

“No member of a multiracial society should feel snug and secure in the fact that 80 per cent of its university student body consists of one race, and where no one seems to be even thinking of the consequences of such a development.”

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The above statement was published in the *Guardian* of August 02, 2003, and the speech was entitled, "Towards a Common Good". Nobody from the other side objected. So he is the mouthpiece and spreads racial hatred throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Yet, in August 2003, when his Government was in office, he said "I do not believe we have a race problem in the country." You see how things change? When he was in Opposition, race. What we have here is a misunderstanding of the logical beliefs on the impact of national life.

Mr. Speaker, I have many quotations from Selwyn Cudjoe, but I do not want to give him too much prominence, except to end with this one. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker. You tell me, was it the UNC who preached hate in this country, or racism? Listen to Cudjoe:

"Do Indian teachers teach African students? And if they do, do they do it with the same tenacity as when they teach students of Indian descent?"

If this is not racism, what is?

"Too many of our children can be seen at the back of our classrooms, and it seems that the attention that is paid to them is an afterthought."

Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of National Lotteries Control Board (NLCB) was at that function. People reacted to what Cudjoe said.

Hon. Danny Montano, PNM Minister, *Express*, September 10, 2003:

"'UWI imbalance is not race related,' says Montano, as he disproved the notion of discrimination at UWI. He states, 'Whenever the inequities may exist, it appears to be other reasons.'"

Mr. Speaker, we must understand that maybe to satisfy the Indo population and the other population who might not support the PNM, and even the people who support the PNM, disassociate oneself from "Cro Cro", from racist calypsos, and from Selwyn Cudjoe. Make a public statement that one does not support the people who try to divide the country. Do it! You are in government!

I listened to the Prime Minister at his 40th anniversary celebration. Rather than come at the beginning of the year and say to his country, "Look, things are not going as well as I would have liked," instead he lambasted the media. He criticized the Opposition. He blamed everybody else for his ineffective leadership, but did not himself take blame for the crisis that is taking place in this country.

Education is the worst ever seen in Trinidad and Tobago. It is the worst run Ministry that I could ever remember. I heard Mr. Vernon Ramesar yesterday

morning, and I share his view, that the Minister looked like the West Indies cricket team: hapless, hopeless and does not know what to do. He said, "I feel sorry for the Minister. She should have been given an easy Ministry so that she could have handled it." She is a misfit in that Ministry.

I am calling his name. Vernon Ramesar, former school principal, on radio yesterday morning. He has the distinction of taking one of the Government schools in Trinidad and Tobago, the Couva Government Secondary School, and making it one of the principal institutes in Central Trinidad. Although we have many differences with Mr. Ramesar, I think we must quote that one because he, as he said it, feels that the Minister is a total non-performer.

We must talk about these things. Do not hide them under the carpet. Do not be scared to talk to your colleagues. Let them know what is happening. We throw up our hands in despair about what is happening to our beautiful country. What is happening to our children? We ask these questions with all honesty.

I want to quote Prof. Julian Kenny, *Express*, 2003:

"The attack is clearly on the university itself and is obviously founded on premises other than academic ones, but pity the poor university students in future as they submit their forms prior to acceptance and registration and birth certificates, A'level certificates, medical certificates, fee payments, receipts, and so forth, and yes, race certificates for Afros and Indos."

This is what this country is coming to.

Mr. Speaker, *Express*, 2003:

"Vice Chancellor of University dismissed notions of affirmative action at UWI was a waste of energy."

This is the Vice Chancellor, Rex Nettleford, on October 01, 2003:

"Vice Chancellor of University dismissed notions of affirmative action at UWI was a waste of energy, saying that to get bogged down by racial structures was a dead end. He said that, 'Any effort to discriminate should not be taken on. Certainly if we are going to keep anybody out, so-called East Indians are as West Indianized as those of African descent.'"

Mr. Speaker, this Motion before us proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that the people opposite are bent on destroying this country along racial lines.

Listen to Selwyn Ryan on October 05, 2003. This again surprises us:

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“I do not support any proposal to recruit students at UWI on any basis other than merit. Such a proposal is neither sociologically nor politically correct.”

Trevor Oliver in response to the Indian teachers not teaching African students:

“In response to Cudjoe's allegation that teachers discriminate, TTUTA President, Trevor Oliver, said, ‘There is no evidence to suggest that teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, regardless of ethnic background, discriminate against students on the basis of ethnicity.’”

Mr. Speaker, we have here the Government of the day proposing to racially divide our country, especially the young people, the university and other learning institutions, and I have quoted a number of prominent thinkers in our society.

Recently, I had the honour to listen to Mr. Lloyd Best, and he said that he is convinced that people in this country do not read and do not think. I am asking them on that side to think before they leap. Think before they do things to divide our country. This might sound like it is not politically right to think about, but I am warning again, let us build Trinidad and Tobago on the strong basis that was thought about when we formed our Constitution.

Section 4 of our Constitution states:

“It is hereby recognised and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms, namely—

- (a) the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law;
- (b) the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law;
- (c) the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life;
- (d) the right of the individual to equality of treatment from any public authority in the exercise of any functions;
- (e) the right to join political parties and to express political views;
- (f) the right of a parent or guardian to provide a school of his own choice for the education of his child or ward;”

4.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it continues:

- (g) freedom of movement;
- (h) freedom of conscience and religious belief and observance;
- (i) freedom of thought and expression;
- (j) freedom of association and assembly; and
- (k) freedom of the press.” [*Crosstalk*]

Again, this is the attitude of the PNM. This is the Constitution of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I could bet any amount of cloth that there is no PNM written in this Constitution. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, we do not claim responsibility for it, but we must honour our Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Member for St. Joseph as I read the last stanza of the Motion:

“*Be it resolved* that this House re-affirm its commitment to the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and the right of the individual to equality of treatment from public authorities.”

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now adjourned to Friday, February 06, 2004, at 1.30 p.m. I wish to inform the House that on that day, the Government plans to place item 1 on the Order Paper under “Government Business”, the Summary Courts (Amdt.) Bill, and, given time, we would want to complete debate on the Insurance (Amdt.) Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Before I put the question on the adjournment, there is a Motion before us by the Member for Caroni Central.

Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination

Dr. Hamza Rafeeq (Caroni Central): Mr. Speaker, before I get into the substance of the matter before us, I want to express my disappointment that this matter was raised with you since December 06, and was supposed to be debated on December 12. [*Crosstalk*] You had given approval for this matter to be debated on December 12. Today is the seventh sitting of the House of Representatives, and we are only debating this matter today.

Mr. Valley: Mr. Speaker, as you know, it is with discussion with the Chief Whip that this matter was deferred until today. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. H. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, the Chief Whip only said that he was told by the Leader of Government Business that the matter would be deferred. We had no choice but to accept it. We could not kidnap the Minister and bring her here to deal with the Motion. [*Crosstalk*]

The issue before us deals with the Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination (CAPE). Today, I am speaking on behalf of a substantial number of the student population of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly those writing this examination in 2004 and 2005. I would like the Minister to listen to the issues I would raise today, and I hope that she would take note and address them as she replies.

The Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination (CAPE) was designed by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to replace the Cambridge GCE A'level examination within the Caribbean. My information is that the Government's intention is that by 2006 or 2007 the GCE Cambridge A'level examination will be phased out, and all the students in the public education institutions in Trinidad and Tobago will write CAPE. Those who would like to write GCE would have to do so privately.

I have listened to quite a few presentations from the ministry itself, and I have not heard any compelling reason why we are doing CAPE instead of the GCE Cambridge A'level examination. In the syllabus itself, there are only two subjects: Literature and Caribbean Studies, which will replace General Paper. The syllabuses are a bit different, but in most of the other subjects, the syllabuses are the same.

I cannot understand the change, seeing that we have done so well at GCE A'level examinations. Our students have topped the world in many subjects. We have had so much experience with the Cambridge A'level examination. When our students write these examinations they do very well. When they go to universities in the Caribbean, or even abroad, they also do very well as a result of these examinations. We have not heard any compelling reasons as to why we should change something that is working so well for us.

Mr. Speaker, one of the first issues is one of recognition. We know that the Cambridge GCE A'level examination is widely recognized for matriculation. While we know that a lot of our students who write the A'level examination go to the University of the West Indies, which would be recognizing CAPE, we do not know what is happening in foreign universities. We have heard here and there, through the grapevine, that there are a couple universities abroad that will be accepting these examinations, but we are not sure.

Today, I ask the Minister if she could provide for us a list of the universities abroad that will be accepting CAPE for matriculation purposes; universities in England, Canada, the United States and other countries. Maybe she could even provide us with their letters of acceptance. We would also like to know the universities that have been approached by the Caribbean Examinations Council, and will not be accepting CAPE for matriculation purposes.

There are students who will be writing CAPE in 2004 and 2005, and there is that degree of uncertainty and anxiety among them, because they do not know if they will be accepted abroad. We have a substantial number of students who stay here, but we also have quite a number of them who go abroad, and this is a good thing for our country. When they graduate they come back here and share their experiences from abroad and so on. We would like to know, and the Minister must tell us, unequivocally, the universities that will accept CAPE for matriculation purposes.

The syllabus is structured in such a way that it leaves the students in the lower sixth form very little time for anything else. With Cambridge A'level examinations, after students sit O'levels, their next examination is two years later. There is a preparation time of two years before they do A'level examinations. With CAPE it is different; there are two modules: the first module is done in May or June of the following year, the next module the following year, and then the examination is written. Having started a course in September, the student has to write an examination in May of the following year, so the student has nine months to prepare for an examination, rather than two years as with the Cambridge A'level examinations. Thus, with CAPE, the student must enter the course in September, write a final examination on that module in May, enter the second year in September and, again, write a final examination in May of that year. The student, therefore, has nine months in the first year and nine months in the second year to prepare for examinations.

In the Cambridge system, after O'levels, the students enter the lower sixth form. During that year, they get themselves involved in a lot of extra-curricular activities like fundraising and being prefects. Students are taught responsibility during that time. You are not only preparing them during that phase of their lives to pass examinations, but you are also preparing them for life. With CAPE, they start in September, write their examinations in May, and there are a lot of school-based assessment projects that they are also involved in which gives them little time for anything else.

In the Cambridge set up as well, even a term before the examination, the students are given what is called a "mock exam". During that examination, the

students learn about their strengths and weaknesses, and they have time to do remedial work. With CAPE it is difficult, because you only have nine months to do a final examination. Even if they are given a mock exam, there is no time to do remedial work to catch up on areas in which they are weak.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the results of these examinations by other countries in the Caribbean doing CAPE—these are the results of the Physics examination for the year 2000: The mean as a percentage of the maximum was 34.34, compared with 33.76 in 1999. For Paper II, the mean as a percentage of the maximum was 19.52, compared with 37.78 in 1999. In 2002, the average mark out of a total of 90 for Paper I was 25.64. In the year 2003, for Paper I again, the average mark out of a total of 90 was 30.31. This is what we are dealing with. Because of the way the syllabus is structured, these are the kinds of results that the children get who are writing this examination in other countries.

Mr. Speaker, the next area deals with teacher training. I know that there have been a couple workshops for the teachers; that is not sufficient. The teachers are entering a new area where the teaching methods have to be different. Already, the time for preparation of the examinations is short, and there is no time to train the teachers properly to do CAPE. There are students who will be writing this examination in 2004 and 2005. If I can just quote from the *Guardian* of December 05:

“The issue of teachers being called away from classes to participate in workshops organized by the Caribbean Examinations Council was one of the concerns raised by secondary school principals. The President of the association of principals of public secondary schools and the principal of Holy Cross College said that taking teachers away from classes was a disadvantage to students, especially those classes where the work is so concentrated.”

Mr. Speaker, in Jamaica they are doing this examination. I quote from a report from the Immaculate High School, one of the top schools doing this examination:

“All subjects, save Art, were attempted with dismal results. Inappropriate teaching orientation was one possible explanation for this, as well as teacher reluctance to assume a subject for which there had been no proper orientation. The programme does not inspire confidence. Students who got good grades at GCE A’levels were recorded as having failed at CAPE and upgraded at subsequent remarking. The school has a record of high quality passes and high pass rates. At CAPE, there was a proliferation of threes and fours which are of no value to the students. All subjects need additional teacher time in order to assess and review student projects several times during the programme, and

again at the examination stage. In order to serve the students well, class sizes need to be small and students need to dedicate their time to the CAPE. This would require additional staff and resources, some of which are not easily accessible.”

This is the Jamaica situation; the situation is the same here in Trinidad and Tobago.

As mentioned in the report, additional staff and resources are required, because a lot of research needs to be done for these school-based assessment projects. Students need to have access to computers and the Internet; all of that is not easily available to the students.

Mr. Speaker, I now quote from the *Sunday Express* of January 18, 2004:

“CAPE of fear”

Mr. Ramnath: “Cudjoe Advanced Proficiency Exam”.

Dr. H. Rafeeq: The article reads:

“There are some principals who have not-so-secret plans to resist the new system until the eleventh hour in the hope that Government would rescind its decision. We see ourselves as training grounds for people entering university. We have no concrete answers as to who is willing to recognize CAPE, so we do not want it at all. But if we must have it, we intend to delay it until the very last minute.”

That is one principal speaking. Another principal said:

“If the third term is lost, it means a teacher has to rush down the syllabus and maybe teach during the holidays, because you are not going to finish your work in time. They want nine 40-minute periods in a day and it just would not be able to fit. There is going to be a time constraint problem, insisted a dean in a prestige school in San Fernando. Moreover, when is CAPE going to be recognized and by whom?”

You have the prestige schools resisting, so there must be a reason because we get the best results in exams. We have serious concerns and do not want the ministry to rush into anything. Why interfere with something that is working properly?”

That is the point we are making.

I did not realize that the time had gone so fast, but I want to make one other point concerning the issue of scholarships: I asked the Minister whether

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scholarships would be available to students writing CAPE in 2004 and 2005, and she responded last week. She said there would be scholarships available, but I also asked her how many and how will the selection be made. She said that there was a committee looking at it. There are students writing this examination from four schools in Trinidad and Tobago in 2004 and 2005. We want to know whether there will be scholarships in all the subject areas, how many there will be and, most of all, whether the President's medal will be available to these students.

Mr. Speaker, there is much more that I could have said, but time has run out. I hope the Minister will be able to answer some of these questions.

The Minister of Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning): Mr. Speaker, CAPE was developed in response to a mandate from the Caribbean Community of ministers responsible for education. The ministers requested a regional examination that would be, at least, equivalent in standard to Cambridge A'levels, but differing from that examination in its philosophy and, consequently, in its structure. I want to state, from the outset, that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago agreed to the phased implementation of CAPE in the year 2003, because CAPE brings academic, technical and vocational courses of study within a single system of certification. CAPE ensures that the individual is exposed to the world of work.

Mr. Ramnath: That is stupid talk!

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: In response to this mandate, 19 schools have voluntarily entered students for the examination in 2004. Many others have indicated their desire to do so in the year 2005. With effect from September 2006, all sixth form classes will follow the CAPE syllabus. This regional examination will then replace the Cambridge General Certificate Advanced Level Examination.

The Government has adopted several strategies that seek to minimize the possibilities of disadvantaging our students during this transitional period. The first strategy that the Ministry has used was to appoint an implementation committee which meets regularly to address concerns and challenges. We are in constant contact with the Caribbean Examinations Council to ensure efficiency in our implementation.

Our second strategy is to ensure that no one is disadvantaged. CAPE is new, and many feel that, maybe, with this equivalent to the GCE A'levels, students would not be able to do as well. We are coming on stream five years after the other Caribbean territories, therefore, we are benefiting from the lessons they have learnt. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, order!

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: The administrative and other procedures have been refined. CAPE is in modules, therefore, we are approaching it in such a way that the Cambridge GCE A'level and other examination authorities within the United Kingdom, and for their own international examinations are using the same modular approach as CAPE.

Thirdly, there is an internal assessment format called the School-Based Assessment (SBA), which is now being used to provide better all-round prepared students who intend to pursue tertiary level studies. This approach promotes the development of research, project management and critical thinking skills.

Mr. Speaker, the procedures are guided by the CXC, the examining body. The Caribbean Examinations Council is guiding the process by providing samples of completed internal assessments that reflect grades I to VII. The Caribbean Examinations Council is conducting training for teachers in all aspects of the implementation of the new syllabus. I take this opportunity to thank the CXC for guiding the process, in the same way that principals and teachers have congratulated the CXC on the presentation and content of the syllabus, and the identification of resources required.

I wish to remind this honourable House, that similar sentiments and concerns were expressed when the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate was first introduced in 1979; 25 years later, as the syllabuses are constantly reviewed and refined, graduates of our secondary schools are enjoying parity worldwide.

The third perceived disadvantage to our students is that CAPE will not prepare the University of the West Indies entrants to the field of engineering and medicine. Let me inform this honourable House, through you, Mr. Speaker, that UWI has approved that the two-unit courses in the single subject area are equivalent to A'levels for matriculation purposes. It should be noted that the subjects necessary for entry into the field of engineering and medicine are Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics, and they are all part of the CAPE offering. In addition, the CXC is in ongoing discussions with universities and community colleges in the region concerning exemption and advance standing in select areas.

It has come to the attention of the Ministry that there are also fears expressed as to the recognition of CAPE. I am happy to state that locally and regionally CAPE has been accepted for matriculation to the University of the West Indies, the University of Guyana and, moreover, UWI has agreed to give exemptions in some

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areas in the first year courses. [*Crosstalk*] Internationally, many institutions in Canada and the United States—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: Which ones?

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:—already accept students on the basis of results obtained at the end of fifth form. CAPE will only augment and boost their opportunities of getting exemptions and/or awards of credit. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, the view has been expressed that students writing CAPE in 2005 would not be considered for the award of national scholarships, but this is not so. The implementation committee set up in the Ministry of Education has begun a review of the scholarship award system. The Ministry has been, and will continue to be, in contact with sister ministries in Barbados, Belize and Jamaica to work out a collective determination for the award of scholarships. [*Crosstalk*]

Officers with expertise in measurement and evaluation are responsible for aligning the results in both CAPE and GCE A' level, to determine student placement on the order of merit list. The Caribbean Examinations Council will provide transcripts, as it does even now, that give details of performance to ensure objectivity and transparency in making awards for the scholarships. [*Crosstalk*] Cabinet will soon adjudicate in the award of scholarships in the transition phase, which should last from 2005 to 2008, and also for the long-term programme. The Ministry of Education will continue to reward excellent performance of deserving students, as it has traditionally done, and will continue to encourage our students to surpass their own standards.

Mr. Speaker, there is also the fear that schools would not have adequate resources, both human and physical, to meet the demands of the syllabi and students. I wish to state that the CXC has identified the resources needed for the delivery of the syllabi. Most of the reading resource material is available at the University of the West Indies, and the Ministry of Education has made the necessary arrangement for access by teachers.

Another fear is that staff, physical and material resources will not be available. The Ministry has asked principals to submit lists of physical and material resources and other requisites required, for example, additional staffing requirements, to cater for newer subject offerings. The Ministry will provide the resources required. The Secondary Education Modernization Programme and the decentralization action teams have been addressing the technical upgrade, construction and decentralization aspects of the ministry's operations.

Earlier this month, the Ministry began its \$2 billion upgrade and repair programme to refurbish over 100 secondary schools, which will be outfitted with technology, computer and science laboratories. Our mathematics scholars have expressed their concern that there are no additional mathematics and further mathematics syllabi for CAPE. I assure them that students will continue to enter for these subjects with an alternative examination body. [*Crosstalk*]

The introduction of CAPE has implications, not only for our school system, but also for the general public who has also been brought into the ambit of CAPE. We are aware of the need to ensure that our citizenry, especially parents, are kept abreast of the impending changes. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: This Government is convinced that our students, our national community and the Caricom region stand to gain much more from the introduction of CAPE, as we move to develop human beings capable of rational, ethical decision-making, demonstrating respect for themselves and others, as individuals and members of a wider community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 4.29 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Government /IDB Housing Agreement

The following question was asked by Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (Siparia):

- 23.** Could the hon. Minister of Housing state with respect to the agreement entered into by the Government and the IDB on June 21st, 2001 for loan towards financing the Government's housing programme:
- (a) The amount of the loan and the terms and conditions of repayment of same;
 - (b) The amount of funding, if any, that is required to be made under the loan agreement by the Government for this housing programme;
 - (c) What are the main conditionalities and obligations of this loan and what are the deadline dates for the meeting of each of these conditionalities and obligations;

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- (d) Have any of these conditionalities and/or obligations been met and if yes, which ones have been and when;
- (e) If any conditionalities and/or obligations have not been met, the reason(s) for same;
- (f) Have any moneys been drawn down from this loan and if yes, the dates and amount of the drawdowns and the purpose(s) to which each drawdown was put/will be put;
- (g) Has any counterpart funding by the Government been utilized and if so, the amount and the purpose(s) to which same was put/will be put?

The Minister of Housing: The response is as follows:

- (a) (i) The amount of the loan is thirty-two million U.S. dollars (US\$32,000,000)
- (ii) The terms and conditions of repayment are as follows:-
 - The Loan shall be completely repaid by means of semiannual, consecutive, and, in so far as possible equal installments. The first installment shall be paid on the first interest payment date, six (6) months after the date scheduled for the final disbursement of the Loan. The last installment shall be paid no later than June 15, 2027.
 - Interest payable on the Loan shall accrue on the daily outstanding balances of the Loan and shall be at a rate per annum for each Semester as determined by the Cost of Single Currency Qualified Borrowings in U.S. dollars for the preceding Semester, plus a spread, in accordance with the IDB's lending rate policy. As soon as practicable after the end of each Semester, the Bank shall notify the Borrower of the rate of interest for the following Semester. Interest shall be payable semiannually on the 15th day of the months of June and December of each year, beginning on December 15, 2002.
 - In addition to the interest the Borrower shall pay a Credit Fee on the undisbursed balance of the financing which is not in the currency of the Borrower's country, of 0.75% per annum, which shall begin to accrue sixty (60) days after the date of the contract.
- (b) The amount of funding that is required to be made under the loan agreement by the Government for this programme is eight million US dollars (US\$8,000,000).

- (c) The conditionalities attached to the loan agreement between the parties are as follows:-

Conditions Precedent to First Disbursement

The first disbursement of the Financing was subject to fulfillment of the following requirements to the satisfaction of the Bank:

Legal Opinion

The Bank would receive one or more well-founded legal opinions which establish, with citations of the pertinent constitutional, legal and regulatory provisions, that the obligations undertaken by the Borrower in this Contract, and those of the Guarantor, if any, in the Guarantee contract, were valid and enforceable. Such opinions were to also refer to any other legal question that the Bank might reasonably deem relevant.

Designated Officials

The Borrower, directly or through the Executing Agency, if any, would designate one or more officials to represent it in all acts relating to the implementation of this Contract and furnish the Bank with authentic copies of the signatures of said representatives. Should two or more officials be designated, the designation should indicate whether such officials may act separately or must act jointly;

GOTT Financial Provision for First Year

The Borrower, either directly or through the Executing Agency, if any, would demonstrate to the Bank that sufficient resources had been allocated to cover, at least during the first calendar year, the executing of the Project in accordance with the investment schedule referred to in the following paragraph. If this Financing constituted a continuation of the same lending operation, the earlier stage or stages of which the Bank was Financing, the obligation set forth would not be applicable.

Initial Report

The Borrower, either directly or through the Executing Agency, if any, was requested to present to the Bank an initial report prepared in the form indicated by the Bank to serve as the basis for the preparation and evaluation of the progress reports of these General Conditions.

Code of Accounts

The Borrower or Executing Agency should have presented to the Bank the plan, catalogue or code of accounts of these General Conditions;

Auditor

The official auditing agency referred to in the Special Conditions should have agreed to perform the auditing function, or the Borrower or the Executing Agency should have agreed with the Bank with respect to a firm of independent public accountants to perform the above functions.

Special Conditions Prior to First Disbursement

In addition to the conditions precedent stipulated above the first disbursement of the Financing was subject to the fulfillment, to the satisfaction of the Bank, of the following requirements:

- (i) Preparation of an IADB approved Programme Operation Manual.
- (ii) The appointment of a Programme Coordinator and an Information Technology Coordinator.
- (iii) Preparation of an IADB approved first annual work plan for the programme.

The revised deadline for satisfying these conditionalities was June 20, 2003.

- (d) All conditionalities were satisfied before the deadline date of June 20, 2003.

Legal Opinion	- July 25, 2002
Designated Officials	- July 31, 2002
GOTT Financial Provision for First Year	- August 28, 2002
Initial Report	- February 24, 2003
Code of Accounts	- November 8, 2002
Auditor	- June 13, 2003
Programme Operation Manual	- June 12, 2003
Employment of Programme Coordinator	- June 10, 2003
Employment of Information Technology Coordinator	- June 13, 2003
First year Annual Work Plan	- February 24, 2003

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- (e) Not applicable
- (f) The sum of U.S. two million, four hundred and forty-seven thousand, one hundred and nineteen dollars and thirty three cents, (U.S.\$2,447,119.33) has been drawn on the loan to date. The details are follows:-
 - July 31, 2003 - U.S.\$1,600,000.00 Establishment of revolving fund
 - November 12, 2003 - U.S.\$847,119.33 -Retroactive-financing for Squatter Upgrade programme
- (g) The sum of U.S. one hundred and eighty five thousand, nine hundred and fifty three dollars and two cents (U.S.\$185,953.02) has been utilized as counter part funding by Government for the Squatter Upgrade component of the Programme.