

*Leave of Absence**Friday, March 26, 2004***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, March 26, 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 following Members requesting leave of absence from today's sitting of the House. They are: Member for Tobago East (Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis), Member for Arouca South (Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis), Member for Point Fortin (Mr. Lawrence Achong) and Member for Couva South (Mr. Kelvin Ramnath). The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Institutional Strengthening Programme of the Women's Affairs Division of the Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs (now Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs) for the year ended September 30, 1999. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]  
*To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.*
2. Annual audited financial statements of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2002. [*Hon. K. Valley*]
3. Annual audited financial statements of Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year September 30, 2003. [*Hon. K. Valley*]  
*Papers 2 and 3 to be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Speaker, of the questions for oral response on the Order Paper today, the Government is able to answer the following questions: Nos. 55, 57, 58, 64, 91 and 92. We ask for a deferral of the other questions for a two-week period.

**Mr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, so questions Nos. 68, 69, 71 and 93 require a two-week deferral?

**Hon. K. Valley:** We are requesting a two-week deferral, Mr. Speaker. We cannot both be standing at the same time. I am asking for a two-week period to avoid having to come back and ask for a further deferral.

**Mr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder what explanation the hon. Leader of Government Business has for the written questions which have been on the Order Paper since December.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (Siparia):*

**Russel Latapy High School  
(Information on)**

- 68.** A. Would the hon. Minister of Education state:
- (i) the estimated and the actual costs for constructing, equipping and furnishing the Russel Latapy High School;
  - (ii) the start up and completion dates of constructing, furnishing and equipping of this school;
  - (iii) the number of students the school was built to accommodate and the actual number presently accommodated?
- B. Could the Minister state:
- (i) the name/s of the persons/companies and directors of each company awarded contract/s for constructing, equipping and furnishing of the school;
  - (ii) whether tenders were invited for the contracts awarded and if so, the bids made by each tenderer;
  - (iii) the procedure and criteria used to award each contract?

**De-shifting of Schools**

- 69.** Would the hon. Minister of Education state:
- (i) which schools have been de-shifted since January 2003;
  - (ii) which schools are still operating on a shift basis and the number of students attending each;
  - (iii) the total number of teachers actually employed in each of these schools;
  - (iv) the expected date each school will be de-shifted?

**Student Support Services Unit  
(Improvement of)**

- 71.** Would the hon. Minister of Education list:
- (i) the steps and date/s of each step taken since January 2002 to make operational and improve the Student Support Services Unit of the Ministry of Education and the reasons for the delay in doing so;
  - (ii) the date when same would be fully operational?

*The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Dr. Roodal Moonilal (Oropouche):*

**Executive Chairman, Petrotrin  
(Works done at Residence)**

- 93.** (a) Can the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries indicate the cost incurred by Petrotrin or any other state agency for repairs, refurbishment and enhancement recently undertaken to the residence and compound of the Executive Chairman of Petrotrin?
- (b) Can the Minister name the contractors that undertook such repairs, refurbishment and enhancement of the residence and compound of the Executive Chairman of Petrotrin?
- (c) Can the Minister indicate the basis upon which those contractors were selected and whether they are regular and/or registered contractors with Petrotrin?

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

**Video Lottery Terminals  
(Details of)**

- 55. Mr. Ganga Singh (Caroni East)** asked the hon. Minister of Finance:
- (a) Would the Minister indicate whether a committee was set up to review the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Lotteries Control Board (NLCB) and the Betting Levy Board (BLB) with GTECH for the provision of Video Lottery Terminals in Trinidad and Tobago and all other aspects of the gaming industry?
  - (b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, could the Minister provide the following information:
    - (i) A list of the names of the people appointed to this committee;
    - (ii) The terms of reference of this committee?

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Speaker, the committee to review the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Lotteries Control Board (NLCB) and the Betting Levy Board (BLB), with GTECH, for the provision of video lottery terminals in Trinidad and Tobago and all other aspects of the gaming industry has been set up.

The committee comprises the following persons:

Mr. Eric James Acting Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance	Chairman
Mrs. Antonia Popplewell Acting Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of Social Development and Gender Affairs	Member
Mr. Nayak Ramdahin Acting Assistant Commissioner Board of Inland Revenue	Member
Mr. Raffick Ali Acting Collector, Long Room Customs and Excise Division	Member
Ms. Savitri Ramcharan Business Analyst Ministry of Trade and Industry	Member
Mr. Andy Thomas Project Officer Trade and Investment Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	Member
Mrs. Patricia Lee Browne Acting Director Project Planning and Programming Division Ministry of Planning and Development	Member

*Oral Answers to Questions*

*Friday, March 26, 2004*

Ms. Karen Boodan  
State Counsel III  
Ministry of the Attorney General

Member

Mr. Peter George  
Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of  
Industry and Commerce

Member

The terms of reference of this committee are as follows:

Evaluate the social impact of the gaming industry in Trinidad and Tobago;

- Make recommendations with a view to optimizing the industry's contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's economy, in the event that the industry is allowed to continue;
- Review the Memorandum of Understanding between GTECH, National Lotteries Control Board and Betting Levy Board in relation to Government's policy framework and recommend a course of action.

I thank you.

**Advertisements  
(Amounts Paid)**

**57. Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar** (*Siparia*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Would the Minister state the total cost of advertisements placed by the Ministry of Education in the print and electronic media and the amounts paid to each media house from January 2002 to date?

**The Minister of Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning):** Mr. Speaker, the total cost of advertisements in the electronic media is \$20,987.50, which represents television promotion of the Student Support Visa Electron Book Grant for secondary school students in 2003.

The total cost of advertisements in the print media for January 2002 to January 2004 and the amount paid to each media house is as follows:

YEAR	MEDIA HOUSE	TOTAL
2002	Trinidad Express	\$129,328.92
	Trinidad Publishing	11,753.70

YEAR	MEDIA HOUSE	TOTAL
	Newsday	Nil
	T&T News Centre	1,840.00
	CCN TV6	Nil
	The Wire	2,152.80
	All Media Products	118,397.10
2003	Trinidad Express	455,824.69
	Trinidad Publishing	176,275.48
	Newsday	156,129.93
	T&T News Centre	26,076.25
	CCN TV6	20,987.50
	The Wire	908.21
	All Media Products	Nil
2004	Trinidad Express	153,367.55
	Trinidad Publishing	153,670.03
	Newsday	92,048.40
	T&T News Centre	26,798.45
	CCN TV6	Nil
	The Wire	<u>Nil</u>
	All Media Products	<u>Nil</u>

In addition, during the period January 2002 to the present, the Secondary Education Modernisation Programme Co-ordinating Unit has disbursed the following sums for print media advertising:

YEAR	MEDIA HOUSE	TOTAL
2002	Trinidad Express	\$ 75,261.64
	Trinidad Publishing	21,661.77

YEAR	MEDIA HOUSE	TOTAL
	Newsday	25,000.74
	T&T News Centre	Nil
2003	Trinidad Express	124,695.96
	Trinidad Publishing	46,193.76
	Newsday	20,626.70
	T&T News Centre	Nil
2004	Trinidad Express	Nil
	Trinidad Publishing	Nil
	Newsday	Nil

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to remind the Member for Siparia that it was under the UNC government that the IDB/SEMP loan was signed and one of its main conditionalities was the inclusion of a marketing component. Insofar as this Government is concerned, we must fulfil the mandate and obligations under the loan provisions to continue with these specifications; hence, the largest percentage of advertisements was placed for professional development opportunities of our human resources, institutional strengthening, as well as placement of advertisements for staff to manage the SEMP programme.

With regard to the fourth basic education programme of the World Bank at the Education Project Co-ordinating Unit, the advertisements placed have been mainly for tender notices for the provision of furniture for Early Childhood Care and Education Centres, School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and School Management Grants (SMGs) and the following expenditure has been incurred:

YEAR	MEDIA HOUSE	TOTAL
2002	Trinidad Express	\$4,655.20
2003	Trinidad Publishing	3,838.13
2004		No expenditure

Take note, Mr. Speaker, that this figure was far less than in 2001—2002, when expenditure on advertisement for the EPCU was \$84,561.56.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Would the Minister care to explain why there is such a discrepancy in the amounts paid to various media houses? Why are there such

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[MRS. PERSAD-BISSESSAR]

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high amounts to certain media houses and nil to others? Would the hon. Minister please explain the criteria?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** If that question is put in writing, Mr. Speaker, I will do the research and be able to answer.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Mr. Speaker, the question asked was: What is the total cost? The Minister has given a breakdown. Would she care to give the total?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I would have to give a count to be able to tell her. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** We can add. I guess the Minister believes we can add. Perhaps she cannot do so.

We had asked about the amounts paid from January 2002 to date. The Minister has indicated in certain respects that “to date” means to January 2004. Does this hold for both electronic and print? I see that there are advertisements after January 2004.

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I would have to do the research to be able to answer her. I do not have the answer now.

### **Computers to Schools (Details of)**

**58. Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar** (*Siparia*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Would the Minister state:

- (a) the number of schools which have already received computers as at January 2002;
- (b) the number of schools which are still without computers?

**The Minister of Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning):** Mr. Speaker, as at January 2002, 114 primary schools have received computers from the Ministry of Education and have computer laboratories. The computers were distributed in three phases as follows:

#### **Phase I By Primary School**

Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
Caroni	6	Caroni Hindu	14
		Carapichaima R.C.	16



<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
		Raghunanan Road Government	16
		Carapichaima ASJA	16
		Chaguanas R.C.	21
		Chaguanas Government	21
Port of Spain and Environs	5	Rosary Boys' R.C.	21
		Sacred Heart Girls' R.C.	19
		Belmont Girls' R.C.	21
		Diego Martin Boys' R.C.	21
		Belmont Government	12
St. George East	5	St. Joseph TML	15
		Arima Girls' R.C.	21
		Curepe Presbyterian	21
		St. Joseph's Government	14
		La Horquetta North Government	21
St. Patrick	7	La Brea R.C.	21
		Avocat Vedic	21
		Cedros Government	10
		Siparia Boys' R.C.	15
		Siparia Hindu	15
		Brighton A.C.	10
		Siparia Road Presbyterian	10
North Eastern	4	Guaico Presbyterian	15
		Salybia Government	05
		Jubilee Presbyterian	08
		Matura Government	15
South Eastern	5	Rio Claro Hindu	15
		Robert Village Hindu	21

<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
		New Grant Government	16
		Guyaguayare R.C.	21
		Rock River R.C.	13
Victoria	6	San Fernando TML	21
		St. Gabriel's Girls' R.C.	21
		Grant Memorial Presbyterian	21
		Marabella Boys' A.C.	11
		Monkey Town Government	12
		San Fernando Boys' R.C.	12
Tobago	7	Belle Garden A.C.	16
		St. Andrews A.C.	16
		Bethesda Government	14
		Golden Lane Government	13
		Moriah Government	08
		Montgomery Government	08
		Roxborough A.C.	14

**Phase II**  
**Primary Schools Only**

<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
Caroni	3	Couva A.C.	05
		Chandernagore Presbyterian	05
		Palmiste Government	05
Port of Spain and Environs	5	Morvant A.C.	05
		Diamond Vale Government	05
		Gaines Normal AME	05
		Patna Village/River Estate	05

<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
		Four Roads Government	05
St. George East	5	Maracas R.C.	05
		Las Cuevas Government	05
		San Juan Seventh Day Adventist	05
		Curepe A.C.	05
		St. Joseph Boys' R.C.	05
St. Patrick	10	Penal Government	05
		Penal Rock Presbyterian	05
		Penal Rock Hindu	05
		Penal Presbyterian	05
		Penal Quinam Government	05
		Rousillac Hindu	05
		Siparia Road K.P.A.	05
		St. Christopher A.C.	05
		St. Dominic's R.C.	05
		Vance River R.C.	05
North Eastern	2	Toco A.C.	05
		Cumana Seventh Day Adventist	05
South Eastern	4	Cushe Government	05
		Fifth Company Baptist	05
		Princes Town ASJA	05
		William Webb Memorial	05
Victoria	3	Cocoyea Government	05
		Mohess Road SDMS	05
		Ramai Trace SDMS	05
Tobago	3	Lambeau A.C.	05
		Scarborough R.C.	05
		Whim A.C.	05

Total Number of Schools receiving computers in Phase I = 46

Total Number of Schools receiving computers in Phase II = 35

Phase III consists of 33 primary schools outfitted through donations of 165 computers from an offer which this Government accepted from the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China. These computers have been distributed to the undermentioned primary schools, again reported by educational district.

**Distribution of Computers donated by the  
People's Republic of China**

<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
Caroni	3	Longdenville Government	05
		Edinburgh Government	05
		Warrenville TIA	05
Port of Spain and Environs	8	St. Agnes A.C.	05
		Chinapoo Government	05
		Eastern Boys' Government	05
		Gloster Lodge Moravian	05
		La Puerta Government	05
		Laventille Boys' Government	05
		Nelson Street Boys' R.C.	05
		Point Cumana R.C.	05
St. George East	6	Arima Centenary Government	05
		Arouca Government	05
		Bourg Mulatresse R.C.	05
		La Pastora Government	05
		Maloney Government	05
		San Juan Boys' Government	05
St. Patrick	2	Erin R.C.	05
		Santa Flora Government	05
North Eastern	4	Cumana R.C.	05

Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
		Guaico Government	05
		Sangre Grande Seventh Day Adventist	05
South Eastern	2	Mafeking Government	05
		Sixth Company A.C.	05
Victoria	8	Anstey Memorial Girls' A.C.	05
		Mayo R.C.	05
		San Fernando Girls' Government	05
		San Fernando Methodist	05
		Pleasantville Government	05
		Tabaquite R.C.	05
Tobago	3	Hope A.C.	05
		L'Anse Fourmi	05
		Signal Hill Government	05

Mr. Speaker, at the secondary school level, our computerization programme is in support of the implementation of the new curriculum in schools. Computer laboratories are being installed to support computer-based learning activities and to utilize computers as one of the several media for teaching and learning.

In 2001, the SEMP programme delivered 110 computers to secondary schools for administrative purposes. Subsequently, 624 computers have been distributed to 18 schools; 39 computers per school. In addition, through the assistance of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, 200 computers were received for distribution to secondary schools. One hundred and eighty-nine (189) of the 200 computer received were distributed to the schools. The remaining 11 computers were distributed among the education district offices, the head office and the computer laboratories.

The following is the breakdown of the distribution of computers received from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries:

Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
Caroni	16	ASJA Boys' College	01
		ASJA Girls' College	01

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<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
		Aranjuez Junior Secondary School	02
		Barataria Junior Secondary School	02
		Barataria Secondary Comprehensive School	01
		Carapichaima Junior Secondary School	02
		Carapichaima Senior Comprehensive School	02
		Couva Junior Secondary School	02
		Cunupia High School	02
		Holy Faith Convent, Couva	02
		Miracle Ministries Pentecostal High School	02
		Presentation College, Chaguanas	01
		Saraswatie Girls' Hindu School	02
		St. George's College	02
		Vishnu Boys' College	02
		Waterloo High School	01
		<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPUTERS ISSUED</b>	<b>27</b>

<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
Port of Spain and Environs	13	Belmont Boys' Secondary School	02
		Belmont Junior Secondary School	02
		Bishop Anstey High School	02
		Diego Martin Junior Secondary School	02
		Mucurapo Senior Comprehensive School	02
		Sixth Form Government Secondary School	02
		South East/Port of Spain Secondary School	02
		St. Anthony's College	02

Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
		St. Mary's College	02
		Success/Laventille Composite School	02
		Tranquility Government Secondary School	02
		Excel Composite School	02
		St. Pierre Composite School	02
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPUTERS ISSUED</b>			<b>26</b>

Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
St. George East	11	Curepe Junior Secondary School	02
		Five Rivers Junior Secondary School	02
		Hillview College	02
		Lakshmi Girls' Hindu College	02
		Malick Secondary Comprehensive School	02
		San Juan Secondary Comprehensive School	02
		St. Augustine Girls' High School	02
		St. Augustine Senior Secondary Comprehensive	02
		St. Joseph's Convent, St. Joseph	02
		Blanchisseuse High School	02
		ASJA Girls' College	02
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPUTERS ISSUED</b>			<b>22</b>

Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
St. Patrick	14	Point Fortin Junior Secondary School	02
		Siparia Junior Secondary School	02
		Penal Junior Secondary School	02
		Cedros Composite School	02

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[SEN. THE HON. H. MANNING]

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<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
		Fyzabad Composite School	02
		Siparia Senior Comprehensive School	02
		Vessigny Government Secondary School	02
		Iere High School	02
		Palo Seco Gov't Sec. School	02
		Shiva Boys' Hindu College	02
		Holy Faith Convent, Penal	02
		Holy Name Convent, Point Fortin	02
		Point Fortin Senior Secondary School	02
		Fyzabad A.C. Secondary School	02
		<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPUTERS ISSUED</b>	<b>28</b>

<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
North Eastern	4	Holy Cross College	02
		Swaha College	02
		Valencia North Seco. School Centre	02
		Malabar Composite School	02
		<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPUTERS ISSUED</b>	<b>08</b>

<b>Education District</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Names of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Computers</b>
South Eastern	7	Barrackpore ASJA Girls	02
		Mayaro Composite School	02
		Moruga Composite School	02
		Princes Town Junior Secondary School	02
		Princes Town Senior Comprehensive School	02



Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
		Rio Claro College	02
		St Stephen's College	02
		<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPUTERS ISSUED</b>	<b>14</b>

Education District	No. of Schools	Names of Schools	No. of Computers
Victoria	14	ASJA Girls' College	02
		ASJA Boys' College	02
		Presentation College, San Fernando	02
		Naparima Girls' College	02
		Corinth Sixth Form College	02
		Pleasantville Senior Comprehensive School	02
		San Fernando East Junior Secondary School	02
		Naparima College	02
		St. Joseph's Convent, San Fernando	02
		San Fernando Secondary Comprehensive School	02
		St. Benedict's College	02
		Marabella Senior Comprehensive School	02
		Gasparillo Composite School	02
		Parvati Girls' Hindu College	02
		<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPUTERS ISSUED</b>	<b>28</b>

Mr. Speaker, it would be of interest to note that a number of schools, in addition to receiving computers from the Ministry of Education, have received donations of computers from corporate citizens, past pupils of their schools and from fund raising efforts. Some schools have even used the establishment of computer facilities for revenue generation for their respective institutions.

According to data collected from the Education District Offices throughout the country, of the 488 primary schools that exist, approximately 35 schools are without computers. The Secondary Education Modernisation Programme Coordinating Unit has indicated that it has provided 110 of the 132 secondary schools with at least one computer. Only 20 schools have not been provided with a computer through that programme.

For 2004, the Ministry of Education is embarking on Phase IV of computerization for primary schools and is obtaining quotations to purchase over 3,000 computers for primary schools. The purchase of these computers will be phased. The emphasis on primary school computerization intensified in 2002 when the majority of schools received computers. In order to place computers in schools, however, we must first ensure that the adequate infrastructure is in place to support our curriculum at both primary and secondary school levels. In this regard, the Ministry is involved in a comprehensive technical upgrade of schools, including those built under the first phase of the Secondary Education Modernisation Programme (SEMP), to ensure state-of-the-art computer laboratories, science laboratories, technology studios and multimedia centres.

**2.00 p.m.**

At the primary school level 1,250 schools were upgraded under the 2003 vacation repair programme. This programme continues in 2004. Following this, the necessary outfitting with computers will be done. The allocation in this year's budget is as follows:

- \$30 million for primary schools;
- \$3 million for the Ministry of Education;
- \$5.6 million for secondary schools under the SEMP;
- Over US \$5.1 million is being spent for technology upgrade and the provision of computer laboratories at over 100 secondary schools.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** I know in this House you have ruled that one cannot direct how a question should be answered. I had asked the hon. Minister for the number of schools that had computers for 2002 and the number without. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hon. Minister for giving a good record of UNC achievements for the computerization of schools.

**Dr. Nanan:** Can the Minister tell this honourable House if the appropriate software has been supplied to the schools which received computers?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Could you repeat the question please?

**Dr. Nanan:** Could the hon. Minister tell this honourable House if the appropriate software has been delivered to all schools which received computers?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Yes, Sir.

**Dr. Nanan:** The hon. Minister stated that in phase three of the programme, the Mayo Roman Catholic Primary School received computers. Is the hon. Minister aware that the Mayo Roman Catholic Primary School received computers approximately nine months ago, and to date the computers are not working because the appropriate software has not been delivered?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** I am not aware, but the delivery of computers is an ongoing exercise and we would be continuing right on.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** Would the hon. Minister please indicate whether, with respect to all the computers that have been delivered, these computers are working in all the schools?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, as much as I look forward to all these questions—I am very happy to answer them all, to show you exactly what the Ministry of Education and this Government is doing—at this point in time, I really cannot answer that. I ask that the Members let us know when their computers are not working so we would fix them. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Well said. [*Desk thumping*]

**National Broadcasting Network Limited (NBNL)  
(Government's Policy)**

**64. Dr. Roodal Moonilal** (*Oropouche*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information:

- (a) Could the Minister indicate to this House, the Government's policy as it relates to the winding up/closing down or dismantling of the National Broadcasting Network Limited (NBNL)?
- (b) Could the Minister indicate clearly the mandate, operations, nature of ownership and estimated employment levels envisaged for any new broadcasting company to be formed in the aftermath of the NBNL?
- (c) Could the Minister indicate how workers are to be severed and/or retrenched from the National Broadcasting Network Limited?
- (d) Could the Minister indicate whether existing employees who have accepted their termination packages will be considered for employment in the new company?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith):** Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question: for the last six years, the National Broadcasting Network Limited (NBNL) has been under-performing, generating substantial losses and continuing to bend heavily on the State for financial support. An evaluation by the firm of Pannell Kerr Forster, of the financial condition of the company as at December 31, 2002, concluded that the company was technically insolvent, with declining profitability and escalating liabilities. The report showed the following:

- losses before taxation increased by 72 per cent from the previous year to \$23.4 million in 2002;
- the working capital deficit increased by 26 per cent to \$14.3 million for the same period; and
- liabilities continue to escalate reaching \$30.3 million by December 31, 2002.

The Government intends to wind up the operations of NBNL. We would liquidate the debts of the company and all obligations to the workers would be met. The assets of NBN, including radio stations 610AM, 98.9FM, 100.1FM and television channels 2, 13, 9 and 14 would be transferred to a new company to provide a fresh start.

In response to (b), the new company would be a 100 per cent state-owned broadcasting entity. Its present mandate will be to compete for market share to be commercially viable. Through a tendering process, seven bids were received to assist the new company in defining its strategic direction. BBC Technology Services Limited has been engaged to prepare a five-year business plan to enable the new company to meet this mandate. Employment levels can only be determined when the business plan is approved.

With respect to part (c), NBN has 251 employees. Negotiations are proceeding with the representative trade union for a mutually agreeable separation package for eligible employees.

With respect to part (d), all suitably qualified citizens of Trinidad and Tobago would be considered for employment by the new company which, I am sure, would want to make use of some of the experience and expertise that resides in the present staff of NBNL.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could the Minister clarify and confirm that it is the intention of the Government to close down one state enterprise and open another state enterprise?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** The intention of the Government is to close down the present NBNL, which has found itself almost insolvent, really because it lost creditability over the last six years, as the station that people would watch their programmes, and to create a new entity with a mandate to be commercially viable, with a business plan that speaks to that. Hopefully, it would regain its creditability. The Member is well aware why it has lost its creditability.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Would the Member be prepared to allow us to look at their research findings as to the creditability of NBNL, to ascertain that it has lost creditability?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** I am sure the surveys of market share are published regularly. If the Member wants I can get it for him, but he knows.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Would the Minister indicate whether or not any attempt was made by Government to involve the private sector in the management and operations of NBNL before a decision was taken to close down and send home the 251 workers?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith:** As far as I am aware, under this administration, no effort was made to engage the private sector.

**Dr. Khan:** Did you say that the new entity which would be opened would be 100 per cent state owned? Is it going to be a propaganda machine of the Government?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not an allowable supplemental.

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
(Moneys Payable)**

**91. Dr. Hamza Rafeeq** (*Caroni Central*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

- (a) Could the Minister state the quantum of fees or other moneys payable to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the procurement of the 100 UNV doctors for Trinidad and Tobago?
- (b) Could the Minister state the quantum of fees or other moneys payable to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the procurement of ambulances for Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister of Health (Hon. John Rahael):** In reply to the question:

- (a) The contract between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the UNDP, for the supply of doctors was lodged with the Clerk of the

House on September 05, 2003 and has been available for scrutiny by Members of this honourable House since that date.

**Mr. Singh:** Did you tell us?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** All relevant information is contained within that document.

With respect to (b), the quantum of fees or other moneys payable to the UNDP for the procurement of 40 brand new, fully right-hand drive Mercedes Benz ambulances is US \$3,022,876 equivalent to TT \$19,043,212 or TT \$476,080 per ambulance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Dr. Rafeeq:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I heard the answer correctly. I asked for the quantum of fees payable to the UNDP.

**Mr. Sharma:** What “yuh” hiding? What is your commission?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** That is the total cost that I have been given. We can also make that contract document available to you.

**Dr. Rafeeq:** Mr. Speaker, we had asked this before and the Minister said that he did not know. This is why I ask the question today. The Minister still has not answered the question.

**Mr. Sharma:** Imbert would have never done that.

**Dr. Rafeeq:** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware that he could have gotten the same or similar ambulances for the same or cheaper price than he is paying without having to pay any commission. Is the Minister aware of that?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** No, I am not aware of that, Mr. Speaker.

**Dr. Rafeeq:** Is the Minister not aware, because the purchase of these ambulances was not advertised?

**Mr. Sharma:** “Yuh” hiding too much. There is too much of deal making.

#### **Public Health Sector and Regional Health Authorities (Staffing Details)**

**92. Dr. Hamza Rafeeq** asked the hon. Minister of Health:

- (a) Could the Minister inform this House as to the number of doctors, nurses, nursing assistants, pharmacists and radiographers in the public health sector employed by the Public Service Commission as at January 31, 2004?

- (b) Could the Minister inform this House as to the number of doctors, nurses, nursing assistants, pharmacists and radiographers employed by the Regional Health Authorities as at January 31, 2004?

**The Minister of Health (Hon. John Rahael):** In reply to question No. 92:

- (a) doctors, 256; nurses, 929, nursing assistants, 1,347; pharmacists, 69; and radiographers, 10; and
- (b) doctors, 615; nurses 1,237; nursing assistants, 756; pharmacists, 49; and radiographers, 38.

#### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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

#### **National Flour Mills (Contract Details)**

- 14.** (a) Would the hon. Minister of Finance state:
- (i) the names, job designations and remuneration packages of each person or company hired on contract;
- (ii) the names and job description of each person or company awarded contracts for the supply of goods and service and the cost of each such contract awarded at the National Flour Mills since January 1st, 2002?
- (b) In the case of companies, the names of the directors of each company;
- (c) Whether the jobs/tenders were advertised and if they were, where and when were the advertisements placed;
- (d) In the case of tenders, the bid made by each tenderer;
- (e) What was the procedure and criteria used to hire each person and company and/or used to award contracts for the supply of goods and services?

*Vide end of sitting for written answer.*

*The following question was asked by Dr. Roodal Moonilal (Oropouche):*

#### **Sugar Manufacturing Company (Hiring Details)**

- 33.** (a) Could the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry provide the House with a full listing of all personnel hired by the Sugar Manufacturing Company to date and their job titles?

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- (b) Would the Minister also indicate what was the hiring policy, the names of members of the selection/interviewing panel and their job titles?
- (c) Could the Minister further indicate for each new worker, how many years experience each person had with Caroni (1975) Limited?

*Vide end of sitting for written answer.*

*The following questions were asked by Dr. Fuad Khan (Barataria/San Juan):*

**X-ray type Equipment**

- 50.** (a) Could the Minister please itemize the make and function of the X-ray type equipment that was recently bought?
- (b) Could the Minister state:
- (i) what was the cost of each item?
  - (ii) the name of the local supplier/suppliers of this equipment?
  - (iii) the names of the Members of the Committee who decided on the supplier/suppliers?

*Vide end of sitting for written answer.*

*The following questions were asked by Dr. Fuad Khan (Barataria/San Juan):*

**Use of Private Jet by the Prime Minister**

- 60.** (a) Could the hon. Prime Minister indicate whether he was the beneficiary of the use of a private jet by any foreign company?
- (b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, could he name the company and the dates travelled?

**National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO)  
(Rental Details)**

- 67.** (a) Could the hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development state whether National Entrepreneurship Development Limited (NEDCO) has rented a floor in the Melville Shipping building on London Street, Port of Spain?
- (b) Was this rental done by open tender? If no, please indicate how Melville Shipping was chosen.



**Housing Units  
(Details on Applicants)**

- 89.** Could the Minister state whether the occupants of the newly built Housing Units in Barataria/San Juan, St. Joseph, Tunapuna, San Fernando West, Ortorie/Mayaro have been selected, and if yes, provide a list of the names of the successful applicants and the date of application?

*Vide end of sitting for written answers.*

**DEFINITE URGENT MATTER  
(LEAVE)**

**Statutory Authorities Service Commission (SASC)  
(Failure to Insulate Public Servants from Political Interference)**

**Mr. Ganga Singh** (*Caroni East*): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 12 of the House of Representatives, I hereby seek your leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the following matter as a definite matter of urgent public importance namely, the failure of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission (SASC) to carry out their lawful and constitutional duty to insulate public servants from political interference.

The matter is definite, since it points to specific instances of political interference which were not refuted in High Court Action S14/2004, in the matter of the Judicial Review Act No. 60 of 2000, in the matter of an application by Marlene Coudray, Chief Executive Officer of the San Fernando City Corporation, for leave to apply for judicial review pursuant to Order 53, Rule 2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court and section 6 of the Judicial Review Act and in the matter of the unfair and/or illegal and/or unreasonable transfer of the applicant to the Point Fortin Borough Corporation between Marlene Coudray, the applicant and the respondent.

The matter is urgent, because under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, all service commissions were established to be independent bodies, free of political control and/or interference.

The matter is of public importance because immediately after the judicial decision in the aforementioned High Court Action S14/2004, serious doubts have been expressed by organizations and members of the public about the ability of the SASC to make decisions free from bias, discrimination, favouritism and political influence.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the leave which the Member for Caroni East seeks is denied. [*Desk thumping*]

**NATIONAL EMPLOYERS SURVEY**

**The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, the Members of this honourable House will agree that education and training are intrinsically linked to a nation's productivity. As a consequence, the Government, through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, has been working assiduously at developing and upgrading existing training programmes as well as embarking on new training initiatives to ensure increased opportunities for our citizens to upgrade their skills, through the delivery of high quality and relevant training programmes.

Honourable Members will agree, however, that it is necessary to align our training programmes with the actual demand for skills in the country so that these programmes will be relevant to our country's long-term development and graduates will also be given the best chance of sustainable employment. To ensure the relevance of its efforts, therefore, the Ministry has been engaging in consultation with stakeholders in industry, in the tertiary education sector and in the local labour market.

I am therefore pleased to announce Mr. Speaker, that yesterday Cabinet agreed that the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, through the National Training Agency (NTA), would conduct a National Employers Survey.

The proposed National Employers Survey will enhance and complete the Ministry's existing database of job opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago and the demand for skills in our country. The methodology to be employed would be that used in a previous survey carried out by the NTA over the period June—December 2003.

Mr. Speaker, you should note that the previous survey covered approximately 10 per cent of the registered industrial establishments throughout Trinidad and Tobago, and gave us useful information on existing job opportunities. In this National Employer's Survey however, the NTA will expand its coverage to all companies and/or all state enterprises that currently employ 10 or more persons in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, hon. Members should note that a National Employers Survey of this magnitude, which will cover virtually every industrial establishment in the country, has never been attempted before in this country or even within the Caricom region.

The objectives of the survey are:

- to identify all existing vacancies in Trinidad and Tobago in all registered establishments, as defined by the Central Statistical Office;

- to classify vacancies according to sector and specific worker categories identified in the *Dictionary of Occupations* for Trinidad and Tobago; and
- to enable the Government to match people to existing vacancies thereby reducing the unemployment rate.

The survey is expected to be completed over a period of 11 months at a cost of approximately \$1.8 million. The results of the survey would be used to inform decisions on employment, training, re-training, scholarships, the emergence of new occupational areas and the degree of growth or shrinkage in our various industrial and commercial sectors.

Mr. Speaker, this landmark survey will serve as a tool to be used by training providers in the development and provision of programmes offered privately, as well as those offered by the State, such as the Multi Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST), which I announced in this honourable House just two weeks ago.

You will recall that the MuST Programme, which will commence next month, is designed to train at-risk groups in a number of key economic sectors in which a growing demand for skilled personnel has been identified. These include the construction sector, the tourism and hospitality sector, the process industry, and the agriculture sector. Members should note that the selection of focus areas for the MuST Programme was based on the results of the previous survey conducted by the NTA.

Another training programme delivered through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, which would utilize the data emanating from this survey, is the Retraining Programme which targets displaced or retrenched workers with the key focus of retooling individuals in relevant skill areas to access employment and self-employment opportunities from a different standpoint.

To date, approximately 4,300 individuals have graduated from our retraining programme, which now focuses on re-tooling retrenched and displaced workers, compared to what it did before. Training in 16 different areas is now offered in the Retraining Programme including recording engineering, upholstery and furniture design, woodworking, tile-laying, computer repairs, electrical installation and desktop publishing.

Mr. Speaker, we are also aware that care must be taken in ensuring that our higher-level academic programmes are in sync with the local and international labour market requirements. Higher education programmes, therefore, at both

private and public tertiary level institutions, must also remain relevant to local labour market requirements. The National Employers Survey will thus be invaluable in informing the nature and content of programmes at our institutions of higher learning. This is especially relevant in view of the imminent establishment of the new University of Trinidad and Tobago.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education is confident that the results of the National Employer's Survey will assist all of us in determining the parameters for the establishment of a reliable and relevant growth platform for our higher education and training sector. Once again, as we did with our MuST Programme, I ask hon. Members opposite to join with us in this very important exercise as we move our country forward.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**

[FOURTH DAY]

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

*Be it Resolved* that this House reaffirm 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 Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Hon. Jarrette Narine):** Mr. Speaker, the Private Member's Motion started sometime last year. On the last occasion, the Member for Couva South indicated that this Motion was brought by the Member for St. Joseph. The resolution states:

"...that this House reaffirms 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. Speaker, the preamble to this Motion is very interesting, in that the "whereas" states:

- Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination;
- Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- the Ratification on November 03, 1973 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination;

- section 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; and
- the National Anthem of Trinidad and Tobago.

The National Anthem states: “Here every creed and race find an equal place”. The next “whereas” is:

- section 7 of the Education Act, Chap. 39:01.

It is very instructive that the Member for St. Joseph used all these “whereas” in his preamble to bring this Motion to the House.

Mr. Speaker, all these conventions, treaties, legislation and public policies are all what PNM people feel proud of. It was the PNM, since 1956, which alluded to all these conventions and made them public policy. Because of that, he was able to come last year to speak about these things. After six years of UNC, they did not adhere to these declarations. As a matter of fact, they took us out of some of these conventions. It is for that reason the PNM is 48 years old today and has so many persons attached to the party. That is the reason why I am here. I adhered to these conventions and policies and joined the PNM in 1963.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this Motion. Actually, it is a Motion—  
[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** May I interrupt you for a short while. We are having a bit of difficulty with a piece of computer equipment, which is running hot. I am asking you to bear with us. I will suspend the sitting for two or three minutes. We can stay in our places. They are just going to change around.

**2.28 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**2.30 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the situation has been rectified. I now ask the hon. Minister to continue.

**Hon. J. Narine:** Mr. Speaker, the preamble to this Motion is one to which we on this side adhere: PNM’s policy, PNM’s convention. Over the years that the PNM has been in existence, we have been and are very proud to be part of this preamble as set out here by the Member for St. Joseph. We are also proud that we have re-committed to these conventions, policies and declarations; it is only the PNM that can do that. This is why the people of Trinidad and Tobago voted for us on this side to be in government, to reaffirm and to carry out non-discrimination to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Partap:** “Nah, nah, nah,” that is why you stole the election.

**Hon. J. Narine:** It is very clear that while the Member for St. Joseph brought this Motion to Parliament, when he presented the Motion he tried to get away from some of the facts: we are proud to be PNM; we are 48 years old. We are going to see to it that the people of Trinidad and Tobago, as always with the PNM, are not discriminated against, that they are treated equitably and we are going to stay in office as long as possible. Motions like these keep us in government and keep you in Opposition. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

The PNM has established a platform for democracy and fair play and non-discrimination in this country. Even in 1956 when the PNM came into office, the first government, we were coming from a colonial era. We were going into an era where the PNM and Dr. Williams was the godfather of Trinidad and Tobago at that time, because there was very little room for our people to express themselves to get education, housing, and even health in this country. I will go further to say that in 1956 there was only one scholarship in Trinidad, if persons who are as old as I am could remember. The Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) examination that took place yesterday will take 20,000 children into schools.

When I sat the Exhibition examination, there were 125 places in secondary schools. You had to go St. Mary's College, Queen's Royal College or to one school in San Fernando, Naparima Boys' High School. I attended Holy Cross College from the year 1957. After the PNM came into office, Holy Cross College, a Catholic school in Arima, was built, and Dr. Williams gave out an extended scholarship. Your humble servant was able to receive that benefit. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

I was not discriminated against then; I am not discriminated against now, and the people of Arouca North are very comfortable, because they are not discriminated against. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** But they are outside protesting!

**Hon. J. Narine:** They are outside; I will speak about that just now. The Member for Couva North said that he did not break down a single house in his term of office. Those are the same people outside whose houses were broken down in 2000 and 2001. [*Crosstalk*] It is this Member of Parliament who went to the National Housing Authority (NHA) and met with them, because people's homes were broken down who were there before the deadline date, January 01, 1998. Am I wrong or right? [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Members:** “Yuh right!”

**Hon. J. Narine:** But we sit here and hear the Member for Couva South talk about the removal of some people at Wallerfield, and then you hear the echoes on the other side saying that they did not break down one single home. [*Crosstalk*] That is not true. As the Government of Trinidad and Tobago said, once you had been there in the stipulated time, according to law, January 01, 1998, then you will not be interfered with. If we have to interfere with you, we will relocate you and make sure that you are comfortable. But you cannot leave your home and go into Wallerfield two months before, start to squat, rent out your house and then “sit down with yuh” baby outside and say, “PNM really bad; they discriminated against us.” You must find out what is taking place.

I remember seeing it on television. It is amazing: I have nowhere to live; I have no money; you break down my home, and then I say, “Sell me the place, I will buy it.” Do you find that good enough?

**Hon. Member:** “Yuh must try something! ”

**Hon. J. Narine:** “Yuh must try something?” Okay. [*Crosstalk*] Probably it is the same thing that happened with the Arouca North people at Bon Air, where Mr. Jack Warner and Mr. John Humphrey, a former Member of Parliament, a former minister, Mr. Sadiq Baksh, and some others, went up there and started this squatting situation, “rested votes” there to vote in Tunapuna. In the last election we found that out; they are all registered in Arouca North. I am the Member of Parliament for Arouca North, and I am going to be representing those people at all times.

The reason they are dissatisfied today is because of an Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) loan. While they were fooled for many elections—if you were in Arouca North you would have seen that two weeks before election Mr. Warner and others carried tractors to tractor the roads, trying to help them. As soon as the election was finished and Arouca North was lost by the landslide, the tractors were moved out, and they left the people there. We are not going to leave them there; it is just because the PNM is in office, they have confidence in the PNM and they know that they will be regulated. We will not give letters of comfort that you cannot get a loan in the bank with. You cannot do anything with that; all you can do with it is to get electricity, not even water. That letter of comfort was a sham for the election, and you lost the election.

These people did not get any letters of comfort. I am certain that with the representations we have been making during the last two years, those who were

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legally there are going to be regularized. I say that because this Member of Parliament is a serious person. When I speak to my people up on the hill, I am certain that they will be in agreement with me that we have represented them, and we are going to continue to represent the people of Arouca North. As soon as the money becomes available they are going to be regularized; they will have their amenities. They know that, they have copies of those letters that were given out by the Land Settlement Agency (LSA). You see them outside there today because they know they can do that; the PNM is in office, we will not discriminate against them. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, there is a march at Aranguez because they closed a gate. Imagine that! The corporation is losing equipment, people are pilfering, and MTS has taken the decision with the corporation to lock the gate, and they are marching for that; the PNM is in office. We have no Prime Minister who would say, "Do them before they do you." We are not going to say, "Do them before they do you." [*Crosstalk*] We are going to treat with them. We understand the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and we are certainly not going to discriminate against them. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Singh:** What he said to Marlene Coudray?

**Dr. Khan:** You threatened a woman, Marlene Coudray!

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

**Hon. J. Narine:** Mr. Speaker, you will understand that through the colonial system on to independence and republicanism the PNM has formulated policies; the PNM has done it all. During the six years of the UNC, they did not do very much but try to empty the Treasury; but that is another situation that we will talk about later in the afternoon. [*Crosstalk*] They were excellent at that; they did not discriminate in that. The Member for St. Joseph, who was in charge of the Treasury, did not discriminate; all his members could have gone into the Treasury and emptied it, but today he is talking about discrimination. The PNM put things in place to allow all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, every creed and race, religion and gender, age or sex, to enjoy equal opportunities.

Let me say this, of becoming the head of the largest organization in Trinidad and Tobago: you remember 1970; many people took credit for what happened in 1970, but the credit should have gone to the PNM and Dr. Williams for opening up this country.

**Mr. Singh:** What about NJAC?

**Hon. J. Narine:** They died; they took credit for it. A person like the Member for St. Joseph, who was a little boy from behind the bridge, could have attained



the heights that he has attained at the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, because of the PNM. He was able to get there, and come here today to talk about discrimination in the PNM. Imagine that! The PNM has been a trusted Government all these years since 1956; certainly we are not going to discriminate against anyone. We reaffirmed that when we were sworn in as the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, so we do not have to reaffirm that today. We already did that in 1956. We have been doing it for the last 48 years, and we will continue to do it for the next 48 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Couva South was the last person who spoke here and according to the *Hansard*, page 888, he indicated:

“No citizens from Arouca South will ever access jobs at Point Lisas and at Point Fortin.” [*Crosstalk*]

It is in the *Hansard* on page 888. The reason he said that was because the Member for Arouca South had indicated to him that her people were also educated: the people of Arouca North, the people of Tunapuna, the people of Arima. But the Member for Couva South was saying that nobody from our areas will be given jobs in Point Lisas, Point Fortin and these areas. The Member for Couva South also vowed that citizens of Arouca South will never get any jobs in the methanol plant and Ispat.

If people from Arouca North or South, Arima and Mayaro heard this in the Parliament on the last occasion we had this debate, they would have left this House feeling despondent. The people of Trinidad and Tobago are supposed to be treated with equity. We have been doing that all these years. I am sure that the Member for St. Joseph must have been shocked when he heard the Member for Couva South say that our people will not be given jobs in the buttered job industries of Trinidad. I am sorry that he is not here today, but I can tell him that we already have people working in these industries. It is because of the PNM's education system that we have people working in those industries.

Our people have been well educated and they hold some of the top jobs in Trinidad. Not only the boys from behind the bridge and central; you understand. The PNM has given education to all, and you are able to access tertiary education in this country. We are not going for dollar-for-dollar. You could have paid the dollar, because you owned the Treasury, but my poor people could not have paid the dollar; that will change. Those who cannot pay the other dollar will certainly get that free, and will be able to get a university education in Trinidad and Tobago. Since the PNM came into office it was so; it has always been so and it will continue to be so.

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Mr. Speaker, I heard someone say sometime back in 1995 that he was now proud to sing the National Anthem. Imagine that, in 1995! We are proud to sing the National Anthem, "Here every creed and race find an equal place"; we can have it here. [*Interruption*] I can do anything better than you; if you want to sing, let us get out here after the sitting and I will take you for a singing.

The Member for St. Joseph clearly stated in outlining his Motion that the key objective was to close the racial divide. I have a problem with what he said, that half of the population was discriminated against. I really want to know which half of the population; he did not say. [*Crosstalk*] I do not guess. I have been in politics for 21 years and I won seven elections; I do not guess. The Member of Parliament for St. Joseph said that half of the population was discriminated against. I want to know how, why and what half. Is it the half going from San Fernando, going east or going west? Was the Member for Diego Martin West discriminated against when he did not get his school on time; for six years no school? I want to know who was discriminated against. I looked all over the Member's presentation to find out who was discriminated against. I still cannot understand what was said.

Mr. Speaker, I quote the Member for St. Joseph from that same presentation when he said:

"I never said racial discrimination; I never used the word racial. I said that the PNM was discriminating against half of the population."

I am still waiting to find out which half of the population. I have records here from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. I know those on the other side like to read out names of people. I also have names from land distribution. All this is land distribution [*Member shows document*] even before we went into that ministry; it was the previous government. I can do an analysis of this. If I have time today I will show you discrimination that took place in those six years.

We are very happy to debate this Motion. The Member for Couva South also said that the Motion had nothing to do with race. He went on to say:

"I want to believe, and I speak for this side, that we could elevate this debate and we could jointly narrow the racial divide in this country."

I have a problem with that. What racial divide? You have divided the nation. In 1995 placards all over Central Trinidad, "Is we time now". Is it not dividing the nation, when you say "Is we time now"? All in Tunapuna; there is still a wall on the bus route, "Is we time now". [*Crosstalk*] Who is we? [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Singh:** Eddie Hart boys wrote that!

**Hon. J. Narine:** “Eddie Hart boys write that?” Who is Eddie Hart boy, Mervyn Assam? Mervyn Assam wrote it?

As a matter of fact, the political expediency of the Members opposite, led by the Member for Couva North in particular, discouraged their supporters and constituents from participating in certain government programmes. I remind the Members of this House and you, Mr. Speaker, what they said about the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP). They talked about CEPEP only painting pebbles. They spoke about CEPEP only having discrimination. They spoke about the dependency syndrome of the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP); all contained in this Motion.

They spoke about the psyche of the country. They promised non-cooperation with the Government. Do you remember the term “civil disobedience”? They spoke to their followers, the people that supported them all these years from party to party, about 10 parties that disintegrated under the watch of the PNM, they told to have nothing to do with the Government: “We are going to put down civil disobedience in this country, so do not go to any of these programmes.” [Crosstalk] That is a fact; I will show you why it is a fact. If you never played cricket, how would you get on the team? [Crosstalk] They did not apply. I will show you that, because the Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA) is included in this Motion.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Hon. J. Narine:** I have evidence of that.

**Dr. Khan:** He is misleading the House.

**Hon. J. Narine:** If you did not apply, how do you expect to get there?

**Mr. Singh:** Will the Member give way? Could the hon. Member tell this honourable House what was the procedure in 2002 for applications for CEPEP? It was never told to the country.

**Hon. J. Narine:** Mr. Speaker, he had his opportunity to speak; I am on my feet now, and I will go on to show why I am making these statements. I can back up every statement I make in this House. There were statements made by Members on the other side, and when you ask them some questions after they cannot answer, because they make statements that cause strife in this country: divide people, tell them about civil disobedience, not to go to the Government, and all these types of things. They are afraid that when people come to us, they

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would stay with the PNM, but it is happening. The results of the local government election last year certainly proves that. We won 83 seats and you won 43.

I was personally involved in the Siparia constituency. When we won that seat for the first time we went from 500 to 2,800 votes. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*] Why do you think that happened? We did not buy anything; the people are fed up with having the UNC give them all kinds of propaganda, “bad treat” them for the whole six years and then come back to beg them. You cannot fool the people all the time; you can fool them sometimes.

**Dr. Khan:** Speak to the Speaker.

**Hon. J. Narine:** I am speaking to the Speaker at all times. [*Crosstalk*]

I want to say something about how the YAPA programme came about. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Khan:** Listen to your leader.

**Hon. J. Narine:** He is senior to me; I respect that. You have no seniority. I respect my seniors.

Mr. Speaker, YAPA came to the front because when we got into office the PNM was not thinking about how best to empty the Treasury. We were looking for programmes that would go down to the grass roots in this community to alleviate hunger and poverty in Trinidad and Tobago; that is what the PNM is about. This came in as a new programme in Trinidad and Tobago, because the fact was that the farming population was aging; the average farmer in Trinidad was 60 years old at the time. My predecessor, Minister Rahael, had brought this to Cabinet, and it was approved. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Khan:** “De cut throat man.”

**Hon. J. Narine:** They have started saying things that they do not know about. It was intended that there would be a pilot project. It started on July 15, 2002 and went to September 30, 2002. We did not go in there and just opened up employment; we decided that in the little period before election there should be a small programme, a pilot project throughout Trinidad—I have the records here—not only involving persons brought into the programme based on advertisements, but the technical staff in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources was responsible for the programme. So we had agricultural officers who had 20 or more years service who were still involved in the ministry. We had persons who were well educated, who had degrees in agriculture, starting off this pilot project.

During that period there were 1,000 trainees as against last year when we had 3,000 persons who were trained; up to yesterday I went to a graduation in Sangre Grande. The forms were made available to all the agricultural offices in Trinidad. The response was good for agriculture, it is not something that interests young people; you have to grow in it, you have to love it before you are able to make good in agriculture. Advertisements went out in the *Daily Express* on July 12, 2002; May 09 and 10, 2003; October 16 and 17, 2003, and February 16 and 17, 2004. Likewise the same dates in the *Newsday*, but also February 12 and 13, 2004 and in the *Daily Express* February 16 and 17, 2004.

With this programme, although we were taking our time to sift out those 17- to 25-year-olds allowed to enter this programme, we said that we wanted the cream of the crop. Yesterday when I went to that graduation ceremony in Sangre Grande, out of 500 persons in eight cycles, only 10 persons were able to get to the second phase: four young men and six young ladies. Only six persons graduated yesterday. The four young men left the programme. It was a six-month programme. Right now our cycles are not six weeks, they are eight weeks, and instead of six months, the second phase of the programme where we are training the agriculturists in management and so on, will take a nine-month period. After that we are going to phase 3 where those who do not have lands will acquire plots, which will be managed with the overseeing of the ministry's technical staff.

Once young persons intend to stay in the YAPA programme, they will be able to elevate themselves. By the age of 25 they will be entrepreneurs for themselves; they will be able to go to the market. It was very satisfying yesterday to know that they were able to market all the produce grown by them, and they made money out of it. They had a stipend. Some of them just came for the stipend; those were the ones who went by the way side. The selection is between 17 to 25 years. They must have an interest in agriculture; be willing to take instructions from the farmers, and they must be prepared to be regular and punctual. We have farmers all over the country whom they go to, and they are very pleased to train young people to take over. Some of their grandchildren are involved in the programme; this is what it is all about.

The Member for St. Joseph will not like what I am saying here. I have a list of the different areas here where forms are now available, after having advertisements in the newspaper: the Regional Administrative Office North, Farm Road, Curepe; Caroni Agricultural Office; El Reposo Demonstration Station; St. George Office East in Wallerfield; St. George Office West, and Farm Road in Curepe; Regional Administrative Office, Kings Wharf in San Fernando, Craignish Demonstration Centre in Princes

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Town; Penal Demonstration Station in Penal; Rio Claro Demonstration Centre and Point Fortin Demonstration Centre. So it is nothing that we are hiding.

The records that I have here, Member for St. Joseph, in cycle one, for the numbers that applied in St. George West 1996, do you know how many persons got in on the programme? Ninety six persons. The number of persons who applied in St. George East was 68; 65 of those came in on the first cycle. So when you say that our people applied and were left out, how is it that 96 persons applied in St. George West and 96 persons got on the programme? Tell me what magic you are making with the figures? Like when 500 persons applied and we took in five. This programme was 96 persons who applied, and 96 persons were taken. [Interruption] I can go on. That is what I said: if you never played cricket, you could not get on the team. You have to apply for a job before you can be considered. You have to send the forms in before you can be considered.

In St. Andrew/St. David, a real agricultural district, on that first cycle we got 196 forms; 83 of those persons got on the first cycle, and subsequent to that, those who were available were taken in on the other cycle. Some people got a better job; some people, for whatever reason, did not come back, but we were able to take in on the second cycle the persons who missed the first cycle. In Caroni 62 persons applied. At that office 62 persons came on the first cycle. So tell me where was the discrimination? It is in the Motion that we have discriminated in YAPA. [Crosstalk] You pumped that in their heads by telling them about non-governmental support and civil disobedience. You caused them not to apply, but 62 persons in Caroni did apply, and 62 persons went on the first cycle. [Crosstalk] That first cycle is North Trinidad.

**Dr. Khan:** That is PNM people!

**Dr. Rowley:** Who is "PNM people"? [Crosstalk]

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

**Hon. J. Narine:** I will make a comparison: in South Trinidad, Victoria, 122 persons applied; we would have taken only 63, so 63 got on. In the following programme we did not discriminate against those from the 132 who wanted to get on the second programme. In St. Patrick East, 58 persons applied, 57 got on; the other person did not come on the programme. Of the 78 persons in St. Patrick West who applied, 64 were taken on; 95 persons in Nariva/Mayaro applied, and 75 got on the programme. I am certain that the Member of Parliament for that area would tell you that those who did not get on the first cycle obviously got on the second and third cycles, if they were still interested, because young people in

Trinidad and Tobago now have the opportunity to go on to other programmes. We have so many programmes now for training, that they are allowed to go on to other programmes to make a better life for themselves.

So when the Member talks about discrimination and put the YAPA programme inside this Motion saying that we discriminated—the former Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources made forms available to every Member of this Parliament. Before the programme started he sent packages to every one of us; the only person from the opposing side that sent back in his forms was the Member for St. Augustine, and all the people he sent got into the programme. If you have to take the position that I am not sending my people to work in this programme, because it is a PNM programme, let them suffer; you caused them to suffer; you caused them not to apply; you caused them to have guns in their hands today, and you are telling me that they applied and did not get on. [*Crosstalk*] You did not get any forms? Probably you were abroad; everybody got. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Ramsaran:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(5), “Imputing improper motives”.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Member has raised a point of order, Standing Order 36(5), Imputing improper motives. I do not think that he is imputing any improper motives, but I was trying to get your attention to indicate to the Member for Barataria/San Juan to just tone it down. Please continue, hon. Minister.

**Dr. Khan:** He is provoking me, Mr. Speaker, he is attacking me.

**Hon. J. Narine:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sometimes the truth hurts. I cannot be annoyed with that.

**Dr. Khan:** I am raising the same issue again, Standing Order 36(5).

**Mr. Speaker:** It does not apply; continue please. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. J. Narine:** The achievement report for that programme has shown that a lot of young persons were involved in vegetable production and tree crops such as cocoa and coffee. The vegetable production was hot peppers, melongene, sweet peppers, tomatoes, patchoi, cabbage, pumpkin, cucumbers, lettuce and so on. I was able to go to those farms and see them do this; root crops like sweet potatoes and cassava; livestock farming, dairy cattle, milk pasteurization, goat and sheep rearing, poultry production, rabbits, pigs, agriculture, ducks.

One of the areas in Trinidad that is getting popular now is rabbit rearing. Do you know why? Rabbit meat is low in fat, low in cholesterol, high in proteins and is selling at \$15 a pound. The 4H clubs are now getting involved in rabbit

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production. Barbados' entire tourism industry is using rabbits. We have a culture here in Trinidad of not eating rabbit, but that will change, because we are building a slaughter house so that when you rear your rabbits you will be able to carry them to the slaughter house, have them slaughtered, packaged and made presentable for the groceries. It is the best meat to eat. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Singh:** Is the Member going to name this product "Bugs Bunny"? [*Laughter*]

**Hon. J. Narine:** The Member was never listening. There is a culture in Trinidad that prevents us from eating rabbits, and he just proved that. But there is culture now being created that if I can rear rabbits, which multiply very fast, is low in fat and cholesterol, and high in protein, and I can get \$15 a pound for it, then I will forget what you are saying.

**Dr. Khan:** What about rearing mice?

**Hon. J. Narine:** Do you eat that? I went to China and I did not eat that. [*Crosstalk*] They also have ornamental horticulture and floriculture, anthuriums and so on, and fruits: pineapple cultivation, citrus and pawpaw. I have the figures of how many persons in the cycles were trained. I also have the figures for those who were able to move on, and we kept in contact with them. In the northern region, 20 persons have been retained and continue to be employed by farmers to whom they were attached during the training period. The farmers who had trainees with them were able to keep those trainees and they are now employed with them. With the first cycle in North Trinidad, 20 persons did that.

Six trainees have started grow box cultivation in a private capacity. The grow box cultivation can be done if you have a small parcel of land at the back of your home. [*Interruption*]

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

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. J. Narine:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nine trainees have started rabbit farming, that is in North Trinidad alone of the first cycle. Three trainees who were attached to the sugarcane feed centre have enrolled in the centre's six-month employment scheme, and that is in Central Trinidad. One trainee, with assistance from his parents, has purchased a farm in Toco, which he proposes to develop and farm as a full-time activity. I recently visited with that trainee and he is doing an



excellent job. The officers from the ministry make periodic visits to that farm, encouraging him and giving him the technical advice that he needs.

In South Trinidad, another trainee has applied for a scholarship to do Agricultural Science at a Venezuelan university; that is what we have on our records. Mr. Speaker, 56 trainees in South Trinidad were employed in agriculture on a regular or casual basis, and that is working for other farmers; 89 of them have employed themselves in their own agriculture enterprises with their family holdings. It means that the young people from that training programme in agriculture who have families with abandoned estates, can now tell their parents, "I am going to take that parcel of land, clear it, and stay there for the week," because with agriculture you need to be vigilant; you need to be there at all times for the people who might be coming to steal your produce. It is not an easy thing. But they have been able to encourage their parents to get back into agriculture.

My grandparents were into agriculture. My father left Guatapaharo in Cumuto to come to Arima for our education, and we never went back; the lands are still there, abandoned. One of my children is now building a house there so that he could return to the property that we had inherited from my great grandparents, because my grandparents did not go back to India, they got lands, in lieu, and stayed here in "sweet T&T"; that was the sense behind it. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, 91 persons are not engaged in agriculture, but have become engaged in other training or study programmes. They came to the YAPA programme for training and decided, "Hello, I like how this Government is moving; I am going to another training programme; I am going to the Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE) programme; I am going to the On-the-Job (OJT) Training programme; I am moving myself around."

The programme that the Member for Diego Martin East spoke about today, I understand that the General Secretary of the UNC is on that board. "Ent?" That is discrimination, "ent"? We have people who can hold that position, but he is still there. Your General Secretary is working with the Member of Parliament, in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, but the Member for St. Joseph wants Trinidad and Tobago to know that there is discrimination.

**Mr. Imbert:** If it was the other way around!

**Hon. J. Narine:** We know. It is they who started it, and are still perpetrating discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago. The people are fed up with you; we are going to stay here for a very long time. I can go on and on to tell of the success of the YAPA programme. I targeted that programme, because the Member for St.

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Joseph came here and mentioned YAPA. I congratulate my predecessor, Minister Rahael, and the Cabinet for having the foresight to have this programme started, so that today we can benefit from it.

I also want to say something about lands in agriculture. While the UNC was there, everybody felt that they had to go to the minister for the minister to give them a piece of land. I am still treating with people who want to meet me to get land. The policy that was laid down there since 1993 by Dr. Rowley, the then Minister, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, indicates that when lands are available those plots are going to be advertised in the daily newspapers. The last advertisement was in December; the closing date was on December 31, 2003. They are now conducting interviews for these people so that they will be allowed these lands. We have fast-tracked the process. You must have seen in the newspapers that during last year and this year we were busy giving out land all over Trinidad. I went to Point Fortin a couple of months ago and distributed about thirty something parcels of lands on February 03, 2004, Royal Engineer Road, Phase 3.

Mr. Speaker, you know they like to come here and read names; I do not like doing that; it is a bit insulting. I will call the surnames so that you will understand: one fellow named Joseph—he was not African; I will say no more. [*Crosstalk*]

**Dr. Khan:** How you know that?

**Hon. J. Narine:** I was there; I gave him his deed; Singh; Bob; Boodhan; Chatoor; Deonarine; Dipnarine; Ramdath; Balgobin; Singh; Gopee. [*Crosstalk*] You know what I am drawing reference to here, Mr. Speaker? They must tell their people do not apply for agricultural lands. It might benefit the 50 per cent that the Member for St. Joseph talked about who was discriminated against.

**Hon. Member:** Sing for your supper.

**Hon. J. Narine:** I do not have to sing for my supper; my supper is well made, so I do not have to do that. [*Desk thumping*] I do not have to talk discrimination. I represent a constituency that is PNM and will remain PNM. You tried all “kinda ting” to win it, and we beat you every time; come again. We are going to beat you again. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Ramsaran:** Sing for your supper, boy.

**Hon. J. Narine:** They got a football administrator to spend \$3 million on his colleague, who is now a Member of the Senate. After I beat him so badly, he was placed in the Senate by the UNC; he, too, got blows. [*Crosstalk*] I am certain that we have plenty more seats to win in the next election. I say that, and I mean it.

**Hon. Member:** House padding! [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. J. Narine:** Mr. Speaker, when we advertise lands in Trinidad and Tobago, we make sure that we give them to persons who do not have any other enterprises. We give them to the unfortunate people in Trinidad who are landless; I make sure that happens. It is only if you have a larger enterprise and you are trying to bring in a new type of arrangement with high-tech and all that, that lands will be made available for small and micro enterprise, for heavy and light industries and housing. Agricultural lands will be vested to do agriculture; whether it is cane farming, rice production, vegetable or whatsoever.

When we scrutinize the list of people who apply for these lands, we must be sure that they are agriculturists. They have to bring a proposal; they do not simply apply. They must have some training in agriculture or have grown up in an agricultural family and have knowledge and experience in agriculture. We do not just give out lands, like what was done in some years: give land because they want to give people land. There are also conditionalities placed there, so if you do not maintain your agricultural plot for a six-month term or one year, it will be taken away from you; that must happen.

Mr. Speaker, no one knew how many products we were selling to Barbados until they stopped us the other day. Remember? One little country in the Caribbean decided, "We will give Trinidad and Tobago some pressure," and it backed up here in Trinidad. Watermelons, everything you could think about, the prices in the market went down because Barbados alone was saying that we have to wait 15 days before it accepts our products. It happened to one exporter in Sangre Grande, Miss Sookhoo; she is now happy because PNM in office. We negotiated; she is now sending her products to Barbados. She supplies the entire Caribbean with her products for the tourism industry.

She is from Sangre Grande; we never discriminated against her. She got help from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, and all the officers who are in charge. Some of the Caroni citrus crops went to her. She was the person when the mistake was made; who the Caroni security stopped from taking the produce out; she had paid for it already. She continues to purchase and to carry her business forward. We now have a packaging plant at Piarco. We are looking for an agro-processing zone; the feasibility is now being done. We can then sanitize our produce here and keep the world market standard, so we can send our products all over the world; this is what it is all about. [*Desk thumping*] Our farmers must be made proud in Trinidad and Tobago, that they can ship to

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Europe and North America, and get into the South American countries. [*Desk thumping*] It is about talking about discrimination; I have a problem with that.

I was going through today's *Newsday*. Anybody who has that newspaper can watch the full-page advertisement. Yes, we paid money for it. What does it say:

“Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources Extension Training and Information System Division Farmers Training Centre training courses for April 2004.”

All over Trinidad; and we are not discriminating. We have all types of courses taking place at the Farmers Training Centre, Centeno; Debe; Point Fortin; Cumana; Caroni; Macoya and Sangre Grande. It hurts when you get a Motion like this. After today, I feel that the Member for St. Joseph should say, “Okay, let us do another motion.” He made a mistake; we accept that, but we should move on, you understand.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago has been moving on. I want to remind you of all these programmes that were shut down by the UNC: the OJT programme; the Civilian Conservation Corps. You have been hearing about all the youth camps, the conditions of the John Donaldson Technical Institute and the San Fernando Technical Institute. You have been hearing that we now have to spend a lot of money to refurbish and buy new equipment. We have obsolete equipment. Why? Because for six years nothing was done. They stopped the young people from getting proper training in this country at John Donaldson and San Fernando Technical Institutes and other areas in Trinidad and Tobago, which means, what I was saying, that figuratively they actually put guns in the young people's hands, by not having these programmes for six years; shutting them down; stopping Best Village because it was a “PNM ting”. Nonsense! When you are in office you treat with the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Ramsaran:** Liar!

**Hon. J. Narine:** Mr. Speaker, one must know—lie what! You closed down Civilian Conservation Corps; you closed down the youth camps and you are saying no? [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Ramsaran:** Liar!

**Hon. J. Narine:** You were supposed to give a wheelchair to a girl in my constituency; she never got it.

**Mr. Ramsaran:** You are a liar!

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member for Chaguanas, that is an unparliamentary expression, I will ask you to withdraw it, please.

**Hon. Members:** Get up and apologize!

**Mr. Speaker:** Are you withdrawing it? You referred to the hon. Minister as a liar; you know you cannot do that.

**Mr. Ramsaran:** Mr. Speaker, I was not on my legs and I did not call anybody's name.

**Dr. Rowley:** Withdraw it!

**Hon. Members:** Get up!

**Mr. Speaker:** I sat here; I know who you are referring to. Are you withdrawing it? [*Crosstalk*] Are you withdrawing the remark you made about the hon. Minister?

**Mr. Ramsaran:** Mr. Speaker, if he could come here and tell untruths; if he is prepared to talk the truth, I will withdraw it.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, no. Are you prepared to withdraw it?

**Mr. Ramsaran:** If he withdraws the lie, I would apologize.

**Mr. Speaker:** If you are not going to withdraw your remark, I will have to ask you to withdraw, so you decide whether you are going to withdraw. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Ramsaran:** I never closed youth camps. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** I am asking you for the last time, hon. Member, are you prepared to withdraw that remark? [*Crosstalk*] Are you going to withdraw?

**3.30 p.m.**

**Mr. Ramsaran:** Well let him withdraw the statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am asking you for the last time, hon. Member, are you prepared to withdraw that remark?

[*Member does not respond.*]

In the circumstances, hon. Member for Chaguanas, I will ask you to withdraw from today's sitting.

**Mr. Ramsaran:** "All yuh must learn to speak the truth, then we wouldn't call yuh liar." I never shut down Best Village, I never shut down Youth Camps. Total liar! "Yuh have to learn to talk the truth. God would deal with all yuh."

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[Member leaves his seat and goes to talk with Mr. S. Panday]

**Mr. Sharma:** This is PNM House?

**Mr. B. Panday:** This nonsense has to stop otherwise there will be no Parliament.

**Dr. Rowley:** “Yuh bad.”

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member for Chaguanas, are you leaving the Chamber?

**Mr. Ramsaran:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Speaker:** No, no. If you need to talk to the hon. Member for Princes Town, you would have to do it outside. Are you leaving the Chamber?

**Mr. Sharma:** Look what PNM bring this House to. What a sad day!

**Mr. Speaker:** I will suspend the sitting of this House for five minutes to allow the Member sufficient time to exit the Parliament.

**3.32 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**3.38 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister, please continue.

**Hon. J. Narine:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to repeat that the Chaguaramas Youth Camp was closed. The Member for Chaguanas closed it and the Member for Diego Martin West was the one who brought a question to Parliament. They said they were going to reopen it and were thrown out of office before it could have been reopened.

Steps are now being taken to reopen the youth camp. So in keeping with the Member for Chaguanas, who is saying that I am a liar, I would like it to be clear to the media, to this House, and for the *Hansard* record that up to this point, the Chaguaramas Youth Camp is closed.

**Mr. Imbert:** By them.

**Hon. J. Narine:** Mr. Speaker, may I say that what happened here today reminds me of when I was a young man playing cricket on the street where the person who bats first, once he was out, he took up ball and bat and went home. “Game done, but game ain’t done here.” They can go home, we are going to stay here and carry out the business of this nation because we are responsible people.  
[*Desk thumping*]

What I had planned to say on the next part of this Motion is that the Member for St. Joseph also said in the presentation that he was not really interested in hearing what happened from 1995 to 2001, he was interested in what is happening now. Obviously, he is not serious. I ask: What has been the history of 1995—2001? Why does the Member for St. Joseph not want to hear about 1995—2001? Is that irrelevant to the country? He does not want to hear the facts. Not only that; was Trinidad sleeping? Will we strike out those seven years from the history of Trinidad and Tobago? Was it a bad nightmare? Some of us know that it was and we tried to blot it out but every time we see a UNC T-shirt, banner, or a UNC Member of Parliament, everybody in Trinidad say: There goes the people who brought this country to its knees in a matter of six years. That should never happen in Trinidad and Tobago again. [*Desk thumping*]

The Member for St. Joseph wants us to believe that Trinidad and Tobago came into existence just two years ago. Maybe he is right—after the PNM was re-elected—we just came after that period of six years, the PNM returned to office two years ago and sanity came to Trinidad and Tobago. The people are comfortable.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is happening in Trinidad and Tobago today? There was a demonstration at Aranguez this week with the corporation and MTS. There were negotiations because the corporation was losing equipment and they asked MTS to shut a particular gate and open one at the side where there was a guard so they could monitor the persons coming in and going out of the gate, because there are renters who also occupy that compound. The gate was closed and workers are demonstrating now.

That is the situation because they feel free, they are not under a government that said, “Do them before they do you.” They are not under a government that was criticizing the media up and down Trinidad. They are not under a government where the Member for St. Joseph does not want to hear about InnCogen, and the desalination plant.

They do not want to hear about rice that never reached Trinidad from India; they do not want to hear about the airport; they do not want to hear about Sumairsingh, their colleague who was murdered because he stood up against the corruption that was taking place when that government was in office. The man lost his life and the Member for St. Joseph does not want to hear about that. Forget those last six years. It is a nightmare for him, but it is not for us.

They feel that the people of Trinidad and Tobago are short in memory. We are going to remind them every day that we are in office. We are going to remind them of all that they did, and we are going to remind them that they would not get

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a chance. Because they are hearing more gas, more oil, better prices, Trains 4 and 5 are on stream, and the Treasury is getting full: “Boy is time for we to get back.”

Mr. Speaker, that is not going to happen because people trust the PNM to make the decisions that would take Trinidad and Tobago forward, that would have my children attend university, and my grandchildren’s future well protected. That can only be under a PNM Government, not under UNC.

We are not going to allow these people to come here and bring a lie to the Cabinet stating that PNM has been discriminating. The Motion did not say so, but if one goes through the Member’s presentation he was talking simply about race, and the Member for Couva South was quoting from some university document by John La Guerre—and that was 12 years ago—which was saying while the Member for Couva South was congratulating the Member for St. Joseph for a good Motion, he said in the debate that the report said that Chinese do not employ Africans in this country. This is a paradox. On the one hand you are saying something and on the other hand, contradicting it in the same debate.

I am saying that Trinidad and Tobago are in good hands. I want to remind you, Mr. Speaker, of the discrimination that took place. Imagine they do not want us to talk about 1995—2001. I want to remind the country that the then Prime Minister—on that side—said to the media: “That’s insulting.” He said to Mr. Gordon, “pseudoracist”. He went on to declare war against the media. I would want to remind Trinidad and Tobago of the phrase: “Do them before they do you.” I want to remind Trinidad and Tobago of the several journalists who were injured at the Rienzi Complex.

I also want to remind them of the discrimination that took place against our regional corporations. For six years there was no money. I have said that before and I am saying it again. The Arima Borough Corporation got no money for six years; Port of Spain, none; Tunapuna/Piarco, nil; Diego Martin, nil; Point Fortin, nil; San Fernando City Corporation, nil; but in one tranche Princes Town got \$7.7 million. Chaguanas, in 1998/1999, got \$6.6 million; Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, \$9.8 million; and the others like Sangre Grande got a little \$500,000; Siparia, \$732,000 and nothing for the PNM corporations.

One would recall that the chairman at that time, Mr. Jerry Narace, took the Minister to court and won the matter that the UNC was discriminating against the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation and us. So what am I to say when they come here to talk about discrimination?

I recall the Dhanpur Mill that they bought—



**Mr. Speaker:** You have about one minute left.

**Hon. J. Narine:** I recall the Dhanpur Mill they bought from India for \$20 million. It was constructed in 1837, and it cost the Trinidad and Tobago Government about \$80 million and it is still not working. We paid \$20 million, spent about \$60 million on it and it is still breaking down. An 1837 mill!

I want to remind Trinidad and Tobago when \$69 million was paid to bail out an insurance company in Balandra, the Balandra Beach Resort. That Minister of Finance paid \$69 million to a company that was a privately-owned insurance company, a bail-out.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that I have made it clear that the preamble to this Motion is all PNM, PNM, PNM. The resolution which states that we should re-affirm our commitment to equality of treatment from public authorities and so on. I am saying it is only the PNM that can do that.

I thank you. I am happy to be here this afternoon and with the entire Opposition walking out, it was my pleasure.

**Mr. Speaker:** Are there any other Members to speak? In the interest of the minority, which is the Opposition, I would not allow this Motion to lapse. So if there are no more Members to speak, perhaps you may want to move the adjournment.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Speaker, in view of your ruling, reluctantly, I move the adjournment of the House to Friday, April 02 at 1.30 p.m.

I would like to inform the Members opposite, wherever they are, that on that day the Government plans to complete the debate on the Insurance (Amdt.) Bill, after which the Government would debate Bill No. 2 on the Order Paper, An Act to provide for the establishment of an Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago and for related matters, and, of course, I inform the House that given time, we also want to do Bill No. 1 on the Order Paper, the Telecommunications (Amdt.) Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 3.55 p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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

**National Flour Mills  
(Contract Details)**

14. (a) Would the hon. Minister of Finance state:
- (j) the names, job designations and remuneration packages of each person or company hired on contract;
  - (ii) the names and job description of each person or company awarded contracts for the supply of goods and service and the cost of each such contract awarded at the National Flour Mills since January 1st, 2002?
- (b) In the case of companies, the names of the directors of each company;
  - (c) Whether the jobs/tenders were advertised and if they were, where and when were the advertisements placed;
  - (d) In the case of tenders, the bid made by each tenderer;
  - (e) What was the procedure and criteria used to hire each person and company and/or used to award contracts for the supply of goods and services?

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):** National Flour Mills Limited (NFM), a company incorporated under the Companies Act, Chap. 81:01, is governed by the provisions of that statute. It should be noted that with effect from September 23, 1999, the 51 per cent shareholding held by Government in NFM was legally transferred to National Enterprises Limited (NEL). Shares in National Enterprises Limited are now traded freely on the Trinidad and Tobago Stock Exchange and the Government is no longer the major shareholder in National Flour Mills Limited. As a consequence, the Solicitor General has advised that the information sought falls within the sphere of private corporate matters and, as such, should not be released by the Directors of the company. The Member is thus advised to follow the relevant procedure under the Companies Act to elicit the information

*The following question was asked by Dr. Roodal Moonilal (Oropouche):*

**Sugar Manufacturing Company  
(Hiring Details)**

- 33.** (a) Could the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry provide the House with a full listing of all personnel hired by the Sugar Manufacturing Company to date and their job titles?
- (b) Would the Minister also indicate what was the hiring policy, the names of members of the selection/interviewing panel and their job titles?
- (c) Could the Minister further indicate for each new worker, how many years experience each person had with Caroni (1975) Limited?

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** (a) The labour required by Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited (SMCL) at its main areas of operations, namely the Factory and the Refinery at Usine Ste. Madeleine and the Shipping Terminal at Point Lisas, is provided primarily through four (4) companies contracted to do such. The companies and the level of employment provided are as follows:

- a. Alprom Limited (360 employees);
  - b. Technical & Maintenance Company Limited (150 employees);
  - c. R. B. Engineering Services Limited (29 employees); and
  - d. Sugar Testing Company Limited (29 employees),
- (b) The four (4) companies/contractors, were engaged by the Board of Directors of SMCL to manage the relevant aspects of SMCL's operations. The companies were selected due to the fact that they are headed by former Caroni (1975) Limited employees with vast experience in their fields of expertise and who were managers of their respective Divisions at the time of closure of Milling operations at Caroni (1975) Limited

The companies provide the following services:

- a. Alprom Limited: Operations, management and labour supply for full process to SMCL Factory at Usine Ste. Madeleine based on twenty-four (24) hour operations during Milling Period.

- b. Technical & Maintenance Company Limited: Operations, Management, sale of refined sugar and labour supply for full process to SMCL Factory at Usine Ste. Madeleine based on twenty-four (24) hour operations year round.
  - c. R B. Engineering Services Limited: Management and labour supply to SMCL Shipping Terminal at Point Lisas, for handling of raw sugar imports and exports.
  - d. Sugar Testing Company Limited: Full laboratory services on a twenty-four (24) hour basis during Milling Period.
- (c) These companies were established for the specific purpose of providing services required by SMCL and to supply appropriate labour specific to their area of responsibility. The companies selected the staff as they deemed fit.

#### **X-ray type Equipment**

- 50.** (a) Could the Minister please itemize the make and function of the X-ray type equipment that was recently bought?
- (b) Could the Minister state:
- (i) what was the cost of each item?
  - (ii) the name of the local supplier/suppliers of this equipment?
  - (iii) the names of the Members of the Committee who decided on the supplier/suppliers?

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Minister of Health: (Hon. John Rahael):** (a) The make and function of the diagnostic imaging equipment purchased by the Ministry of Health in 2003 for use in our local hospitals and health institutions are as follows:

#	Equipment Description	Qty.	Supplier	Function
1	Mammography System (Analog Type)	2	Siemens	Radiography of Breast
2	Mammography System (Digital Type)	3	Siemens	Radiography of Breast with interventional capabilities (e.g. biopsy of lumps)

#	Equipment Description	Qty.	Supplier	Function
3	Mobile X-Ray System	7	Siemens	General Radiography (at the patient bed, Operating Theatres, ICU, etc...)
4	Mobile C-Arm	3	Siemens	Fluoroscopic and radiographic procedures (in Operating Theatres, e.g. Orthopaedic and Urological Surgery and procedures)
5	General X-Ray Systems	8	Siemens	General Radiography procedures such as bones, chest, etc...
6	Ct Scanner	1	Siemens	Computed tomographic procedures such as bones and soft issues
7	CT Scanner Multi-Slice	1	Siemens	Computed tomographic for all anatomical procedures with 16 slices in one pass
8	Fluoroscopic Systems	8	Siemens	Special radiographic procedures such as barium meal and barium enemas, Intravenous Procedures (IVP), etc.
9	M.R.I	1	Siemens	Magnetic resonance imaging procedures of anatomical regions of interest

(b)(i)

#	Equipment Description	Equipment Unit Cost US\$	Additional Costs* US\$	Total Cost per system US\$
1	Mammography System (Analog Type)	52,550.00	37,950.00	90,500.00

#	Equipment Description	Equipment Unit Cost US\$	Additional Costs* US\$	Total Cost per system US\$
2	Mammography System (Digital Type)	166,130.00	39,870.00	206,000.00
3	Mobile X-Ray System	29,320.00	18,680.00	48,000.00
4	Mobile C-Arm	98,280.00	19,720.00	118,000.00
5	General X-Ray Systems	70,540.00	43,097.50	113,637.50
6	Ct Scanner	417,980.00	292,020.00	710,000.00
7	CT Scanner Multi-Slice	879,920.00	470,080.00	1,350,000.00
8a	Fluoroscopic System	205,900.00	59,100.00	265,000.00
8b	Fluoroscopic System w/overhead tube	268,000.00	81,000.00	349,000.00
8c	Digital Fluoroscopy systems	302,850.00	98,350.00	401,200.00
9	M.R.I	1,105,660.00	359,340.00	1,465,000.00

Additional Cost includes the following:

- Room preparation including electrical, plumbing and air-conditioning where required
  - In addition to the full Warranty on the 1<sup>st</sup> year, full Maintenance contract for a period of 4 years inclusive of all parts and labour and a guaranteed up-time of 95 per cent
  - Training either in Germany and/or USA and/or Trinidad of radiologists, radiographers and technical support staff
- (ii) The supplier of the Diagnostic Imaging Equipment is **SIEMENS Medical Solutions** a wholly owned subsidiary of SIEMENS AKTIENGESSELLSHAFT of Erhlangen, Germany who offered the lowest bid.

The local agent of SIEMENS is Caribbean Industrial and Medical Services Limited of St. Augustine, Trinidad.

- (iii) The names of the members of the Evaluation Committee who recommended that an Award of Contract be made to the lowest evaluated bidder are:

- Dr. Leonard Jaggassar, CEO, NWRHA
- Dr. Omar Khan, Clinical Director, Radiology Department, EWMSC
- Dr. Anne Albert, Specialist Medical Officer Radiology, Port of Spain General Hospital
- Dr. Anthony Ameerah, Specialist Medical Officer Radiology, San Fernando General Hospital
- Mr. Deonarine Prashad, Chief Radiographer, EWMSC
- Mr. Ram Rampersad, Biomedical Engineer/Hospital Engineer II, NWRHA
- Mr. Anthony Davis, Manager-Quality and Systems Audit, TRHA
- Mr. Michel Turcotte, Procurement Specialist, Project Administration Unit, Ministry of Health

#### **Use of Private Jets by the Prime Minister**

- 60.** (a) Could the Prime Minister indicate whether he was the beneficiary of the use of a private jet by any foreign company?
- (b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, could he name the company and the dates travelled?

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):**  
The answer to part (a) of the question is yes. The Prime Minister, accompanied by members of Trinidad and Tobago's delegation, travelled by a private jet provided by British Gas from London to Spain on December 10, 2003 and by a private jet provided by Repsol YPF from Spain to London on December 11, 2003.

#### **National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) (Rental Details)**

- 67.** (a) Could the hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development state whether National Entrepreneurship Development Limited (NEDCO) has rented a floor in the Melville Shipping building on London Street, Port of Spain?
- (b) Was this rental done by open tender? If no, please indicate how Melville Shipping was chosen.

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (Hon. Lawrence Achong):** In respect of (a) of the Question, the answer is yes. In response to (b) the answer is no.

At the time of NEDCO's start-up activities, management had sourced for assessment and costing, the following four (4) buildings for its Port of Spain Head Office location:

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1) AS Bryden & Sons Limited Building   | Independence Square |
| 2) Anthony P. Scott Company Limited    | Don Miguel Road     |
| 3) De Nobriga Inniss & Company Limited | Edward Street       |
| 4) Melville Shipping Building          | London Street       |

The first three (3) premises were determined by management to be inadequate given the company's anticipated space requirements in its immediate future. It was therefore decided that the property put forth by Melville Shipping:

- 1) satisfied the company's existing and future needs; and
- 2) offered competitive rental costing and terms.

**Housing Units  
(Details on Applicants)**

**89.** Could the Minister state whether the occupants of the newly built Housing Units in Barataria/San Juan, St. Joseph, Tunapuna, San Fernando West, Ortorie/Mayaro have been selected, and if yes, provide a list of the names of the successful applicants and the date of application?

**The Minister of Housing (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley):** The Government's housing programme is not formulated on the construction or distribution of housing units on a constituency basis.

However, the Minister advises that no allocations have been made as yet in the areas mentioned in the question hence the names of the occupants of these new units are not available.