

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, October 01, 2004.*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communications from the following Members requesting leave of absence from today's sitting of the House of Representatives: The Member for Arima (Hon. Penelope Beckles), who is out of the country on official business; the Member for Point Fortin (Mr. Lawrence Achong) and the Member for La Brea (Mr. Hedwige Bereaux).

The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES  
(REPLACEMENT OF)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have to announce that Miss Gillian Lucky, Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, will replace Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar for the duration of the deliberations on the matter at present receiving the attention of the Committee of Privileges.

**CONDOLENCES  
(MISS DAWN DOLLY)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, by this time all of you would have heard and learnt of the passing of Dawn Dolly, the Clerk of the Senate, who at times acted as the Clerk of the House. As Speaker, I share a close working relationship with several members of the staff of Parliament and Dawn was one such member, so I speak here in that capacity.

There were many sides to Dawn. She was a loving daughter and sister to her family members, a devoted friend to many and a dedicated servant to this Parliament. Those of us who shared many hours with her each day in this building had the privilege of seeing all those sides of her. Thus we could not help but admire, appreciate and respect the person that she was. It was Dawn who insisted that the staff must eat properly for their own well-being. She had a saying: "You cannot work on a hungry belly."

Dawn was the person to regularly highlight to parliamentary staffers that their professional manner of dress was necessary in view of the institution they served. She often reminded members of staff that they worked in a Parliament, not a parlour.

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Dawn went beyond the extra mile; as Clerk of the Senate and Deputy Head of the Office of the Parliament, she was quite a boss. She always insisted on things being done in a proper manner and never compromised on what she thought was good and right. Behind the scenes here at Parliament—a place hidden from the view of many of you—there is a team of professional, hard-working men and women who complement one another by their various strengths. Dawn's strength was the energy she never failed to invest, regardless of the hour, in order to ensure that Members were adequately prepared for the task before us. It is a profound tragedy that a young woman with such a devout respect for the sanctity of life, who took great care with her own life, died under such unfortunate circumstances.

She was a person always willing to learn and further her education. Quite recently, she graduated with her Bachelor of Law Degree.

Dawn will be sadly missed.

Tributes and condolences have been received from a number of other parliaments and from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The Office of the Parliament is in deep mourning. We are struggling to come to terms with her loss.

I have happy memories of the times I spent with Dawn on two overseas assignments earlier this year. As Secretary to those delegations she was extremely professional and a fun person to be with. The President of the Senate and I, together with the Clerk of the House and the staff of the Parliament extend to her father, Mr. Sydney Dolly, her mother Mrs. Francisca Dolly, as well as the rest of her family and loved ones, our deepest expressions of sympathy on the occasion of her untimely passing.

In due course, I will ask the Clerk of the House to communicate with her parents, expressing to them the sympathies that I have expressed and I am sure that Members on both sides of the House would like to follow.

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Speaker, I first met Dawn Dolly in 1987, the same year I entered the Parliament. From the beginning I appreciated her efficiency, especially when she became the Clerk of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee in 1988, which I chaired.

Immediately, Dawn struck me as a most competent individual. She was professional in the approach to her job, in her manner and in the implementation of any assignment given to her.

Mr. Speaker, we all marvelled at the efficiency she demonstrated in leading her staff during the recent opening of Parliament. In merely one week, Dawn

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Dolly regaled us with the required pomp and ceremony befitting the occasion. Nothing in the two-week period since that function, prepared us for the tragic events of Tuesday afternoon.

Who would have thought that this fine human being—who was full of life; committed to taking care of herself; dedicated to her work, family and friends—would have been snatched away from us in the blink of an eye; cut away in the prime of her life.

It really makes one wonder what life is all about. Is life really like the cocoon that the caterpillar passes through on its way to becoming that beautiful butterfly? While this frailty of human condition is laid bare at moments of loss—such as the passing of Dawn Dolly—the real gift we share is the quality of life that we lead. The final moment of passing is the great equalizer, but our real worth is defined in the years we spend on planet Earth, and the impact we have on the lives of others. While most of us have accepted the inevitability of death, we are nonetheless startled by its sudden occurrence—illness prepares us, suddenness is bewildering—sudden that is, indeed, the reality of our own mortality and an affirmation of our humanity.

There is always a lesson in the passing of a dear friend, and as leaders in this great country of Trinidad and Tobago, let us resolve today to heed the most pressing message, that is, to live as God would have us.

As we mourn Dawn's passing, let us reflect on the professionalism with which she treated all of us: having no favourites, discriminating against none, respecting all, but fearing no one.

Dawn Dolly, may you rest in peace.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We extend our condolences to the bereaved family of Dawn Dolly.

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):** Mr. Speaker, it would be very remiss of me if on an occasion such as this I did not make some small contribution to the deliberations of this honourable House.

The death of someone is always a sad occasion. It is bad enough when that person has lived a full life; when that person has completed his or her contribution to humanity and has gone to the great beyond to be associated with his or her Maker, hopefully, for eternity. But it is extremely tragic, Mr. Speaker, and particularly sad, when the person involved has died in the prime of his or her life. Such has been the event that descended on us this week with the untimely passing of Dawn Dolly.

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I have known Dawn ever since she came to this Parliament—I preceded her in this Parliament—and I have had a chance to observe her, as indeed, I have observed all the parliamentary staff over the years. What my colleague has just said about her professionalism is something that is immediately manifested to anybody who spent any time observing her.

Earlier this year, she was a member of a delegation to a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Conference in Australia of which we formed a very integral part, Mr. Speaker, together with the Minister of Education. On the return of that delegation the Minister of Education reported in very glowing terms on Miss Dawn Dolly, Secretary to the team, for the way in which she discharged her responsibilities, drawing attention to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago in a manner that would be an everlasting credit to us all.

Mr. Speaker, she has been taken away while in this Parliament, and in the parliamentary annals of Trinidad and Tobago, she was on the rise; there is no question about it. She was the Clerk of the Senate and on occasions had participated in the deliberations of this honourable House, seated at the table.

Mr. Speaker, she had become known in the Commonwealth, especially in CPA circles. The professionalism that we saw in the deliberations of this Parliament, whether it was in the other place or in this honourable House, was a professionalism that had been noted in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and in parliaments around the world.

I would like to join my colleague, the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central, and I am sure all hon. Members on this side and hon. Members opposite, in expressing our condolences to the bereaved members of her family, and to let them know that even though on this occasion we understand that they are sad, perhaps one way of rationalizing it all is to recognize that she has gone to the great beyond to be with her Maker, forever.

Mr. Speaker, it also underscores the fact there is no such thing as a simple medical procedure. No medical procedure is simple. Whenever people are exposed to medical procedures there are great risks associated with them, as I am in a good position to advise this honourable House. In the case of Dawn Dolly, she did not emerge from it successfully.

I would like to express my personal grief and the grief of hon. Members at her passing. May her soul rest in peace and may she find solace in the arms of the Holy Father.

Thank you very much.

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**Dr. Adesh Nanan** (*Tabaquite*): Mr. Speaker, we are still in shock and disbelief at the untimely passing of Dawn Karen Dolly, the Clerk of the Senate. Dawn, a fitness freak, was often seen jogging around the Queen's Park Savannah. Dawn passed away at the St. Clair Medical Centre (Medcorp Limited) due to postoperative complications following minor surgery.

Mr. Speaker, the mysterious power of death could strike anyone at any time. What is death? Many view death as a relentless war between flesh and spirit in which the physical body eventually succumbs. While ageing is a slow betrayal of our bodies by forces we cannot control, these passing years provide the opportunity for the soul to prepare itself for its return journey to eternity. Many view death as a miracle that releases the soul for elevation to the heavenly dimension. Death is the beginning of a golden flight from darkness into light and from physical decay to eternal preservation. Dawn Dolly began her golden flight on Tuesday, September 28, 2004.

Dawn was born on August 01, 1960, in the town of Plymouth in Tobago. As a child growing up in Tobago, from primary school, she was always involved in athletics. She came from a close-knit family, well centered in the Anglican teachings. Dawn attended Bishop's High School in Tobago where she was a good student, again involved in athletics. She was an exemplar to all students, well loved by her classmates and teachers. Words to describe Dawn include: a very pleasant person, a diplomat, a wonderful human being.

Dawn worked hard at being a success. She encountered and overcame obstacles that would have daunted others. She became a teacher in 1981, and proceeded later to Cave Hill University in Barbados to complete her degree in Public Administration and Law. In 1987, she obtained a job as a Parliamentary Clerk II and continued on the ladder of success to the position of Clerk of the Senate in 2001. Dawn did not stop there. She wanted to become a lawyer and this year she completed her studies in the law.

I remember Dawn in the House Committee meetings always capable of finding solutions, and was up-to-date with all the research material requested. In these meetings and throughout the halls of Parliament, her smile was radiant. In fact, many people visiting Parliament would seek out Dawn, for her enthusiasm was infectious and her joy contagious. From all her friends, Dawn was the sparkle of the Parliament, leaving a void whenever she was on conferences. While she is no longer here with us, her influence, knowledge, love, enthusiasm and compassion would continue to have an impact on all those she touched, forever.

May God bless her soul.

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**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I would ask you, kindly, to stand for a minute of silence.

*The House of Representatives stood.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Members.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a special audit of security in primary schools. [*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. Loan agreement dated September 03, 2004 (Technical Assistance-Feasibility Study and Preparation of Final Designs for Buccoo Community Development) between Caribbean Development Bank and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Tobago House of Assembly. [*Hon. K. Valley*]
3. Loan agreement dated September 03, 2004 (Technical Assistance-Institutional Strengthening Programme of Tobago House of Assembly) between Caribbean Development Bank and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Tobago House of Assembly. [*Hon. K. Valley*]
4. Report of the Supervisor of Insurance for the year ended December 31, 1999. [*Hon. K. Valley*]
5. Report of the Supervisor of Insurance for the year ended December 31, 2000. [*Hon. K. Valley*]
6. Report of the Supervisor of Insurance for the year ended December 31, 2001. [*Hon. K. Valley*]
7. Report of the Supervisor of Insurance for the year ended December 31, 2002. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

**CARONI (1975) LIMITED AND ORANGE GROVE NATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED  
(DIVESTMENT AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT) (NO. 2) BILL**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to provide for the vesting of the operational undertakings of Caroni (1975) Limited in another company and the vesting of the real estate undertakings of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited in the

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and to provide for the management of and for the development of those real estate undertakings, be now read a second time.

The Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited (Divestment and Business Development) Bill, 2004 is intended to transfer lands held by Caroni (1975) Limited to the State, and to allow the State to determine its use for the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Bill represents a key aspect of Government's strategy for the effective management and use of the nation's land in keeping with the principles of sustainable development. This is a critical advancement of government's effort to restructure the sugar industry, including a redefinition of the role of Caroni (1975) Limited.

Mr. Speaker, the objectives of the Bill: These would enable the Government to honour its commitments to the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited and to enable the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited to manage the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited, and to stimulate and facilitate economic activity in certain areas, through the establishment of light manufacturing estates, agricultural estates, housing projects and commercial complexes.

The mechanisms used to achieve these objectives are: the vesting of Caroni's and Orange Grove's real estate undertakings in the State, and the provision for management and development of business activities on the real estate undertakings. The vesting of certain operational assets of Caroni in the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited; a company formed to undertake processing and refining activities.

In 2002, Caroni (1975) Limited produced 101,078 tonnes of sugar. The cost of production at Caroni was TT \$4,634 or US \$735 per tonne. As a matter of fact, this cost of producing sugar was 1.4 times the cost of other Caribbean territories, which produced sugar at approximately US \$538. It was two times higher than that of the cost in Africa, which was the proximate cost of US \$340 and 2.7 times higher than the average cost of the 10 lowest cost producers, which was US \$272.

In 2002, Caroni (1975) Limited received \$90 million in cash support and \$489.3 million in loan support from the Government. There has been a similar pattern of expenditure for many years. As a consequence, in 2002, the Government undertook a comprehensive review of the sugar industry. The review was conducted in a global issue of efficiency and competitiveness in the industry. Government formed the judgment that Caroni (1975) Limited, in existing corporate form, would have been unable to discharge efficiently and effectively its

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principal function: sugarcane cultivation and sugar production, and the management of its considerable legal estate holdings.

As a consequence, the decision was taken to restructure the sugar industry. A critical component of the restructuring arrangements of the sugar industry involved the establishment of a wholly-owned state company—the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited (SMCL)—to undertake separately and exclusively, the sugarcane processing and sugar refining business formerly conducted by Caroni (1975) Limited. The new company is purchasing sugarcane from private farmers and is producing sugar for its preferential and local markets.

Mr. Speaker, Government intends to introduce a quality-based system for purchasing sugarcane on the basis of sucrose content. The sucrose content is to be determined through testing by an independent testing committee. However, in 2004, SMCL purchased sugarcane at the factory gate at a cost of \$180 per tonne.

In 2004, in the milling period, sugar production target was 60,000 tonnes, while actual production was 42,835 tonnes. Production was negatively affected because of adverse weather conditions, labour issues, low syrup purity in the cane, and high volumes of extraneous matters. To meet this shortfall, SMCL is importing raw sugar for its refining operations. The refined sugar is being sold to our domestic manufacturing sector and domestic and regional retail trade partners.

Mr. Speaker, having addressed the issues relating to the sugar industry, Government needed to be assured that the substantial real estate undertakings of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited would be managed in such a way as to provide maximum value to the national community, and in particular, to the 9,007 employees of Caroni (1975) Limited.

In February 2003, all daily-paid and monthly-paid employees of Caroni (1975) Limited were offered an enhanced VSEP. By August 2003, all employees availed themselves of the VSEP. Eleven commitments were made in respect of the VSEP.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the first commitment, severance payments were made in accordance with the collective agreements between Caroni (1975) Limited and the unions. The sum of \$339 million was paid to 7,870 daily-paid employees and \$226.8 million was paid to 1,137 monthly-paid employees; a total severance payment of \$568.8 million.

**2.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the second commitment was a monetary enhancement. This included \$98.8 million to daily-paid workers and \$73 million to monthly-paid

employees. By the end of August 2003, 9,007 former employees were paid a total of \$737 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago reduced the likely tax burden on former employees by enacting legislation to increase the tax exempt lump sum in respect of severance payments. This lump sum was increased from \$100,000 to \$300,000. As a result of the legislation 7,870 daily-paid employees did not pay any taxes on their severance.

Regarding commitment No. 4, the severance and monetary enhancements were recalculated upon the conclusion of negotiations for a new collective agreement for the period 2002—2004. At present, there remain two associations representing monthly-paid staff which have not yet settled their collective agreements. These are the Sugar Industries Staff Association (SISA), and the Association of Technical Administration and Supervisory Staff (ATAS). This exercise cost \$75 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Government made a commitment that all pension eligible employees would receive pensions on the due dates. Presently all pensioners are receiving their pensions from Caroni (1975) Limited on a timely basis. Caroni (1975) Limited is working assiduously with the various stakeholders to ensure that pension arrangements are placed on an actuarially sound and credible basis. The framework is expected to be coordinated by a group of insurance providers.

Mr. Speaker, the sixth commitment was the provision of counselling and financial advisory services. In March 2003, Caroni (1975) Limited engaged an independent consultant to assist in the design and coordination of training and counselling; group counselling in the area of managing change, managing investments and job search strategies. Individual sessions were held to offer psychological and financial counselling.

Mr. Speaker, Financial Advisory Services: By way of this we had over 15 financial institutions which provided financial advisory services.

The seventh commitment was retraining and retooling. Twenty million dollars were provided to fund a wide range of programmes for former daily-paid and monthly-paid employees. Out of 1,137 former monthly-paid employees, 662 registered; and out of that, we have 162 or 24 per cent who have completed their training. Two hundred and twenty-six are still in the process of the various courses and 274 are on enrolment.

We have engaged the resources of in excess of 26 training institutions. Courses include agriculture, technical skills, academics, computer technology,

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health, safety and the environment. Out of the 7,870 former daily-paid employees, 2,284 employees registered for various courses. These included carbon steel welding, pipe fitting and fabrication, construction, electrical, industrial mechanical maintenance, building construction, agriculture, OSHA, computer repairs, small gas engine repairs and many more. By the end of August 2004, 1,680 of these employees had successfully completed their training and 604 of these employees are in the process of completing this training.

The relatively low rate of participation particularly among the former daily-paid employees: This arose also due to the deliberate dissemination of misinformation to former Caroni (1975) Limited employees by a number of well-known detractors. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! Hon. Members, we have in our midst a Senator who is making her presentation. She is from the other place. You will all have your 75 minutes. Please, Member for Couva South, I am asking you as a seasoned parliamentarian, you ought to know better. Please, hon. Sen. Minister, continue.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Sahadeo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Accordingly, Government took the decision to take a more proactive role to inform former employees as to their entitlement with respect to training; to engage in more direct interaction with former employees with a view to ascertaining their training requirements; to generally encourage increased participation particularly among the daily-paid employees. To this end, Government launched the People on the Move Initiative which included a series of community outreach programmes. This walkabout has been broadly successful and has resulted in an increased participation of the former employees.

Caroni (1975) Limited is also collaborating with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education regarding job creation and, rightly so; many former employees have already found meaningful employment. The Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited, the refinery, the shipping terminal, laboratory and grounds are managed by former Caroni (1975) Limited workers who are now service contractors and they have employed in excess of 500 former employees. The contractors engaged to harvest the sugar canes have also employed a further 700 former employees. Rum Distillers of Trinidad and Tobago has reabsorbed approximately 25. Other former workers, approximately 4,000 private farmers continue to be involved in the cultivation of sugar cane for the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited.

Mr. Speaker, the concern on this side is also in terms of job creation. We established in August 2004, a Job Placement Programme to identify vacancies for

the former employees. To this end, Caroni (1975) Limited has also constructed a skills bank of former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited which would be accessed by potential employers.

Mr. Speaker, Caroni (1975) Limited has 76,608 acres of land—this is in addition to Orange Grove lands of 3,796 acres. Government remains committed to offer priority to lease a lot of land to each of the daily-and monthly-paid employees who on January 01, 2003 did not own a house. The interagency Land-use Planning Team was appointed in January 2004 to ascertain which lands would be considered most suitable for the development of residential estates. In 2004, Government endorsed the recommendations of the Interagency Land-use Planning Team. Twenty sites have been identified for residential lots, some of which have already been surveyed. Caroni (1975) Limited is in the final stages of writing the various employees advising them of their eligibility in terms of a residential lot of land. A final list, as I indicated, I understand from Caroni (1975) Limited would be sent to former employees within one week of today. All of this information would be made available in a developmental plan which would be submitted at a later date.

The Government's commitment to provide certain former monthly-paid employees with the option to purchase the company houses which they occupied at January 01, 2003: Houses would be offered at the market price as at February 17, 2003 less 1 per cent for each year of service up to a 20 per cent discount. This commitment is in an advanced stage of being completed and a number of these houses and associated plots have already been surveyed and would be distributed shortly.

Mr. Speaker, the tenth commitment is the priority to lease agricultural land. Government committed itself to offer priority to lease a plot of agricultural land to each daily-and monthly-paid employee for the sole purpose of agricultural activity. Government took due note that Caroni lands accounted for approximately 25 per cent of the arable land in Trinidad. Government needed to be assured that the sites on which these agricultural plots could be allocated should satisfy the entire existing technical criterion for the development of agricultural lands. Government considered that Caroni lands were categorized within the framework of the Trinidad and Tobago Land Capability Survey Protocol, 1974, class 1, representing lands best suited to agriculture and class 7 characterizing lands best suited to forestry and environmental protection. There are no class 1 lands and class 2 lands are negligible. Class 3 represents 32.69 per cent of Caroni lands and class 4, 36 per cent. Classes 5 to 7 represent 31 per cent of Caroni lands. Government, using the methodology of determining the suitability of lands available for agricultural use, has proposed 13 different agricultural activities considered suitable for these lands.

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Profile of the lands: We have for the proposed heavy, light and commercial, 1402 acres; proposed residential for distribution to the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited 1,022 acres; proposed residential NHA, LSA SILWC 1,318 acres; existing built development 4,262 acres and available for agriculture and other uses—48,604,000 acres. Approximately 6,856 former employees are eligible for agricultural plots and 17 sites have been identified for agriculture.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and the Estate Management and Business Development Company would develop on a phased basis agricultural plots on those 17 sites. The allocation process to former Caroni (1975) Limited employees would be undertaken once surveys of the respective sites have been completed.

In excess of 4,000 queries have been satisfied and we continue to resolve queries as they come to hand. Notwithstanding the proposed developments being undertaken, as part of the commitments to the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited, a number of sites have been identified for the establishment of light manufacturing. Eteck has been assigned responsibility for establishing the light industrial estates we have at hand, and they would be undertaking development of light industrial estates at Debe, that is 62 acres, Tarouba, 98 acres, an extension to Frederick Settlement, 403 acres. The development for infrastructure will take place on a phased-basis commencing in March 2005. Potential employment would be approximately 2,000 jobs in the construction phase and 15000 jobs in the post-construction phase. NEC would be responsible for heavy industrial development. It is envisaged that the establishment of businesses on these heavy industrial estates would lead to the creation of hundreds of both temporary and permanent jobs.

Mr. Speaker, our initial focus with respect to the development of Caroni's land was aimed at satisfying the commitments Government had made to the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited. This notwithstanding, Government is mindful of a need to develop on a sustainable basis the lands of Caroni and Orange Grove for the benefit of the national community. The Estate Management and Business Development Company has a responsibility and proactive role to play in the achievement of this objective.

The Bill now before this honourable House seeks to define clear goals for the State, the Estate Management and Business Development Company and the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited, in the management of substantial commercial assets and real estate undertakings owned by Caroni and Orange Grove.

As a first step, clause 4(1) of the Bill provides for the title to the real estate undertakings at Caroni and Orange Grove to be transferred to the State. This means that the State would have the principal responsibility for ensuring that these undertakings are developed and utilized within a framework that is consistent with the broad national objective. The transfer of ownership, however, would not prejudice pre-existing obligations and commitments properly given in respect of those real estates.

Clauses 4 and 5 provide that the State would honour all such commitments and obligations thus, for example, contracts entered into by Caroni or Orange Grove prior to the effective date of the Bill would be honoured.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that in dealing with these substantial landholdings it may be necessary to incur significant expenditure to go back to a number of historical land records in order to provide a proper root of title, the Bill provides in clause 6 that this legislation would be a good root of title thereby minimizing the cost of title searches. In other words, the Bill would provide an authority as to the ownership of the real estate undertaking mentioned therein as regards future transactions. Let me point out at this time, in clause 6 there is a small typographical error which would need to be corrected at the committee stage.

Furthermore, while the Bill in its present form seeks to deal with the real estate holdings of Caroni and Orange Grove, and attempts to list such holdings in the First Schedule, clause 7 makes provision for the Minister to make amendments to the First Schedule from time to time. Once again, the Bill recognizes that in dealing with substantial land acreages, there is likelihood though, minimal, that certain parcels may have been excluded or certain parcels may have been included through inadvertency.

Clause 8 of the Bill provides the basis for SMCL to become fully operational in its business of sugar manufacturing and refining. This clause would enable the Minister responsible for estate management and business development currently, the Minister of Finance, to transfer or vest in SMCL the operational assets of Caroni (1975) Limited, necessary for SMCL to undertake the business of sugar cane processing and sugar cane refining. The vesting would have to be effective by Order published in the *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette* and may be on such terms and conditions as the Minister determines. It must always be noted that it is not Government's intention that SMCL be treated as a subsector company of Caroni (1975) Limited. As such, clause 15 of the Bill seeks to exempt the relevant provision of the Industrial Relations Act.

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Mr. Speaker, you would appreciate if Government were to apply the Stamp Duty Act, Chap. 76.01, to land and assets transfers of this magnitude, the resulting duties would be prohibitive and, in any event, would have been in relation to transactions between the State and entities fully owned by the State.

Clause 9 of the Bill would therefore exempt these transactions from the application of stamp duty legislation so long as the State remains the owner of these entities. Let me also acknowledge again here, in clause 9 there is a small typographical error which would have to be corrected during the committee stage.

Clause 10 of the Bill provides for the powers and responsibilities of Estate Management Business Development Company as regards the real estate undertakings. Where the real estate undertakings are prescribed for management by EMBD, under clause 10(5) EMBD would be empowered to exercise certain rights of ownership provided in clause 10(1) and 2), such as a right to “manage, rent, assign, exchange ...or evict from or otherwise deal with the real estate undertakings and prepare and, ...execute in the name of the President, such grants, deeds, transfers, leases, assignments, agreements, or ...other assurances ...” as may be necessary for EMBD to discharge its mandate. Furthermore, the requirement for real estate undertakings to be prescribed under clause 10(5) of the Bill means that EMBD must have the prior sanction of the Cabinet before managing any real estate undertaking.

I also wish to emphasize that clause 10(3) prohibits EMBD from executing any legal instrument without the necessary approval of the Cabinet. Furthermore, clause 10(4) precludes EMBD from executing any instrument to which the public seal of Trinidad and Tobago is required to be affixed.

It must also be noted that EMBD would not be exempt from the application of legislation, regulation and policies which are applicable to the use and development of lands in Trinidad and Tobago. In particular clause 10(6) of the Bill requires EMBD to collaborate with the various institutions involved in the process of land use and development to ensure compliance with the issues of land use and capability in the environmental protection compliance and economic use. Additionally, notwithstanding the powers and obligations that the Bill seeks to grant to EMBD, clause 10(8) contains a caveat to the extent that these powers may only be exercised where the State has a controlling interest in EMBD and not otherwise.

In reviewing the land records of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove it became evident that these real estate undertakings were used for various purposes including residential. Unfortunately, one of the consequences of having to manage

large real estate undertakings, in some areas illegal structures have been constructed and in a few instances communities have been created. In August 1991, Caroni established a spontaneous settlement programme and a principal feature of this programme was that approximately 1,600 persons were recognized as residential squatters on Caroni lands and on that basis became eligible for regularization in accordance with the policy through a programme of land purchase. Mr. Speaker, on an ongoing basis these persons complete their payments to Caroni and become entitled to receive a deed of conveyance. In order to fulfill its obligations to those 600 persons who are still making their payments and those residential tenants and other persons who are entitled to purchase residential lands from Caroni, the Bill provides in clause 11 for these sales to continue under the authority of Parliament. This Parliament would be informed on an annual basis of the land transactions undertaken by the manager. In the first instance, the manager is required to report to the Minister on all transactions within three months after the end of each year and thereafter the Minister would lay that report in Parliament within three months of the date of receipt of the report of the manager.

Clause 14 operates together with clauses 4 and 5 in securing and preserving, for the avoidance of all doubts, those rights and privileges which may have been properly acquired prior to the passage of this Bill, particularly under the Agricultural Small Holdings Tenure Act. Government made 11 commitments to the 9,007 former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited in the Caroni (1975) Limited VSEP of February 17, 2003 in just 5½ months that is, August 15, 2003., Government's programme of delivery is well on the way. In fact, by August 15, 2003 four of these commitments were already delivered. Over the last nine months, a fifth commitment was delivered, the recalculation of the severance benefits and monetary enhancement.

As I have demonstrated, the remaining six commitments are well on their way to completion. Further to those commitments, Government, through the passing of this vesting Bill, would ensure that lands formerly owned by Caroni (1975) Limited would be optimally used to the benefit of all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Basdeo Panday** (*Couva North*): Mr. Speaker, this Bill is the final nail in a coffin which the PNM has been building for the burial of sugar workers for the past 27 years; sugar workers who have been the salt of this land, the sons and daughters of slaves and indentured labourers upon whose blood, sweat and tears

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this nation was built. Today, I see the hon. Minister, I beg your pardon, junior Minister appropriately dressed in black. She has come to bury them but she looks like the merry widow.

When I listen to her argument, it is so reminiscent of what her former leader said in 1977, I think it was. So that this plan to dismantle the sugar industry did not start yesterday and she is merely mouthing the policy of the PNM which was evolved more than two decades ago. The plan to dismantle the sugar industry, one must remember only too well the remarks of the late Dr. Eric Williams, the then Prime Minister, on October 18, 1977 at the start of the construction of the Iron and Steel Complex at Point Lisas later to be known as ISCOTT. Sugar was to give way to iron and steel and petrochemicals were to replace sugar and agriculture on the lands of Caroni.

The argument went on like this; it was too expensive to grow food. We can buy it much cheaper than we can produce it and we have the money to do so. We had the money from oil and from gas and, therefore, agriculture was irrelevant. Such was the thinking of the PNM even in those days. You see, the lives of the people who depended on the industry for their survival did not matter, as it does not matter today.

For me, today is a sad day. It is a sad day as the PNM performs the last funeral rights on the sugar industry and upon sugar workers. It was the industry to which I had given the best years of my working life. [*Desk thumping*] I shall never forget in 1965 when I joined the struggle for sugar workers for a better life. The wage of a labourer was 45 cents an hour and when I became president of the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factories Workers Trade Union as it was then known, the wage of a labourer was 63cents an hour, \$5.04 per day. And since they worked for less than six months of the year many of them had an annual average income of \$600 per year. Many who were paid by the task did not even earn that. In those days many of them lived in barracks in mud huts, wattle houses, roof thatched with carat leaves. Over 150 years they toiled in this way until 1974 when through our struggles they were guaranteed nine months work in the year and when in 1975, upon monumental and bloody struggle they got a wage increase of 100 per cent. I remind you that meant a minimum wage of \$10 a day. But it was \$10 a day with new hope as they set out to create a new life, but a new life not from handouts, not from CEPEP, but from blood, sweat and tears. And it is upon \$10 a day that they built homes, modest though they may have been, and from \$10 a day they educated their children who are today's lawyers, doctors, engineers, economists, teachers, nurses and businessmen. Now that in 1975 when they began receiving a

decent wage by which they could continue to improve their lives, this PNM Government has not only taken away their wages but their jobs and consequently their lives by extension.

This is the appropriate occasion to ask why the PNM is doing this to the sugar workers. Is it out of spite, malice, envy, greed, hatred, discrimination or is it pure unadulterated racism. Some argued it may well be a combination of all of these.

Some experts argue that the PNM has always seen sugar workers as the recalcitrant Indian minority that always supported those in opposition to the PNM, and they argued that if you destroyed the industry you destroy the base of the Opposition but that, of course, is a fallacy. Not only because the industry is comprised of Trinidadians and Tobagonians of all races, but also because the recalcitrant minority has now become the decisive majority who no longer live in the sugar belt but are disbursed throughout the country hence the need to house-pad and gerrymander and to change the electoral boundaries.

But the most powerful argument so far is that the motivation behind the destruction of the sugar industry is greed; greed for the lands of Caroni and Orange Grove. And you see this Bill is about that. This Bill is about Land. This Bill is about passing power to give away land.

I think we are about to witness one of the biggest land grab this country has ever seen since Independence. In fact, this is what this Bill is all about. But I predict that the grab for Caroni's land would result in one of the bloodiest clashes this country has ever seen.

In the Preamble to the Bill, the Government says that the main purpose of this Bill is to divest the real estate holdings of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company and provide for the management thereof, and for the development of business thereof, particularly in areas of light and heavy manufacturing, housing estates, commercial complexes and agricultural estates. It is not surprising that agriculture is mentioned last, as an afterthought, because very little agriculture is going to take place on the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited. What is going to take place is light industrial, heavy manufacturing, housing, commerce, malls, Zoom, Queensway. That is what is going to happen there. But the most important thing about Caroni (1975) Limited is that Caroni's lands are going to be used as I said, for putting up industries and that sort of thing. They are laying the foundation for the destruction of agriculture.

Everyone knows that there has been a land capability study in Trinidad and Tobago and you do not build houses on agricultural land. Once you build houses

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on agricultural land it is lost to agriculture forever. It is very unlikely they are going to break down those houses and plough it up and plant food crops. As I said, it is grabbing land for the purpose of patronage.

I remember before the advent of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1973 and as a consequence meteoric rise in oil prices, agriculture used to be the mainstay of this country. It was the mainstay of Tobago. You destroyed it in both islands and prior to OPEC, in 1962. Do you remember when the Government invited the World Bank to use development funds to help them to establish farming settlements focusing on dairy, pig and orchard farms; do you know what they did? That was an opportunity to set up a very good base for Trinidad and Tobago. They simply made a mess of it as they are going to make a mess of the lands of Caroni. Three areas were selected for dairy farming: Wallerfield, Carlsen Field and Esmeralda in Williamsville. As you are aware, you cannot grow on the stone of Wallerfield and Carlsen Field. The projects were doomed to failure from the very beginning. This Bill is the final nailing of the destruction of agriculture which the PNM has aimed at for over 27 years.

Wallerfield sits upon the worst soil type in Trinidad and Tobago. It is called the Piarco fine sand, the worst place one can think of if one wants to plant grass and mind animals. To compound matters, the Government went and handpicked settlers—I am trying to tell you there is a pattern and we are going to see that pattern emerge. They handpicked settlers who were PNM activists to occupy these farms. Of course, the farms no longer exist.

In Tobago they played out the same scenario, once a land of milk and honey exporting to Trinidad and Tobago, no longer under the PNM. The richest soils in Tobago, the alluvium of the Goldsborough River Basin was used to accommodate pig farmers from the same World Bank programme. It is ruined again, because they handpicked their supporters to run the farms. Where are the orchard farms? They are nowhere to be seen, of course. The development programme has come all but to an end. The same pattern was followed in the Crown Lands development programmes where the Government proceeded to destroy agriculture by establishing the Trincity Housing Estate on fertile arable lands of Orange Grove National Company, a company the rest of which lands they are about to take.

So one sees that the plan for agriculture has always been to destroy it and not to promote it and, therefore, one cannot take the Minister's word that any kind of agricultural production is going to come out of the distribution of lands as a result of this Bill before the honourable House. Government continues its true form as it will continue; that is, with undue haste to build houses primarily for its supporters with

the undiluted political objective on our most arable lands. Indeed, Government's ongoing development of Ramgoolie Trace in Curepe is located on the choicest soils of the country, the St. Augustine lawn. And this Minister has the audacity to stand up and tell us they are going to promote agriculture, this land is for the promotion of agriculture. You put houses upon the best agriculture lands. You mention agriculture here as a last word. The others are housing, light industry and so forth. No thought of food security for this nation. Why did you not build houses on the Wallerfield gravel—most adequate for building your new city; like, they are going to build an industrial estate with agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, this is what one can expect with the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited. According to the Bill, the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove will be vested in the State through the mechanism of a wholly-owned state enterprise to be known as the Estate Management Business Development Company. But who would manage the distribution of the lands?

Clause 10, I think, says that the manager would have the power to do so. But who is the manager? The manager is the development company. A most confusing situation! You have a manager—you appoint a company and say they are the manager and the manager would have the power. It would certainly seem to be rather confusing but I expect that. What is not confusing is the definition of Minister which the Bill defines as the Minister to whom the responsibility for the management of this company is assigned. So what is all this confusing mumbo-jumbo really about? Is the person whose name would be used to distribute the lands being seized the person to whom responsibility for the manager is assigned? That is the junior Minister who, without so much as fluttering her false eyelash, so shamelessly presented this Bill to the House today. This is the same junior Minister who would flagrantly and unapologetically interfere with the day-to-day affairs of the state enterprises of which she is the line Minister. This is the kind of thing we are going to have to deal with even when that institution is a bank. Does this junior Minister not realize that she is being used as the former Minister of Agriculture—the Member for Port of Spain North was used to initiate the destruction of the sugar industry? It is significant that they used him to initiate it and they are using you to complete it.

He is now in the dog house together with some of his colleagues. Of course, he has his own house, but neither she nor he understood the sugar industry, and they did not understand that there was an alternative for the industry than its destruction and the grabbing of this land as is taking place in this honourable House today.

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The UNC had a plan for Caroni (1975) Limited that would have involved growth and not contraction. We stated over and over that the philosophy behind our thinking was our ability to distinguish between Caroni and sugar. Caroni is not sugar and sugar is not Caroni. The words are not synonymous. The sugar industry is not Caroni. Caroni (1975) Limited is not the sugar industry. Caroni (1975) Limited consisted of sugar cane cultivation and sugar manufacture but it also consisted of beef and dairy farming, citrus cultivation, feed production, rum manufacturing, research engineering works, whereas the sugar industry includes thousands of independent sugar cane farmers who do not belong to Caroni (1975) Limited. Their only relationship is a trading relationship of sugar cane.

We drew that distinction because we realized that whereas sugar production of Caroni's (1975) Limited was not profitable, the other aspects of Caroni activities and operations could be made viable. It was upon that basis that we formulated a plan which would include the establishment of a subsidiary for each of its activities, each of its diverse functions with the participation of the private sector. For example, a subsidiary that would produce rum; one for dairy farming, one for citrus production and so forth. And what was to become of the sugar aspect of Caroni (1975) Limited then? It would have been subsidized, if necessary, as so many developing companies are subsidizing their agriculture. Agriculture is not profitable in most of the developed countries.

Why should it be profitable here? So you cut Caroni (1975) Limited away, you subsidize the sugar production and you make profits from its other activities. It was as simple as that. We started implementation of this plan with the attempt to find a private sector partner in the rum subsidiary. We failed when our prospective private sector partner withdrew from negotiations because of the nasty and vicious attacks upon the integrity of that company and of the effort by spreading the propaganda that the UNC government was giving away the rum stocks of Caroni (1975) Limited, which Ramesh Maharaj and the PNM and their agent Rafique Shah, claimed was worth more than \$1 billion. What has happened to the \$1 billion Caroni rum stocks? Where is Ramesh, and where is Rafique or "ratchefique"? Where are they today? Why do they not sell the rum stocks and make a tremendous amount of money and they could give away the lands after that? What has, in fact, happened to the rum division now? Who is running it? Are they making a profit now that they have taken it away from Caroni (1975) Limited? That was the same Ramesh Maharaj, former attorney general who became estate agent and told the sugar workers that he was going to the United States to find investors to buy Caroni (1975) Limited to save their jobs. Where is he now? I suppose he is now telling them that he would do something to save

their homes which are being threatened with seizure. I guess they probably know better now.

Mr. Speaker, had the Government implemented the plan for Caroni (1975) Limited, 9,000 workers would today have been employed as opposed to languishing on the breadline as they are now.

Junior Minister, they are languishing on the breadline as they are now. Does the junior Minister know that thousands of Caroni's former employees are now unemployed with no source of livelihood? And if she knows it, does she care? Does she know that they cannot send their children to school? Does this arrogant, self-opinionated, pompous narcissistic junior Minister—

**Mr. Speaker:** Please hon. Member—

**Mr. B. Panday:** What is wrong with that? When I am speaking you must sit down you know.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, I find that language very intemperate, the words used to describe the hon. Minister.

**Mr. B. Panday:** Narcissistic. Which one? You are going to have trouble protecting her here today, you know, because she is destroying the lives of people that mean a lot to us. [*Desk thumping*] Not today! Any other day.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order please!

**Mr. B. Panday:** Does she know, this same Minister whom I described in those words, that sugar workers are becoming suicidal because they cannot pay their debts, mortgage, their loans to the bank? Where is the land that they were promised? Not one square inch of land has been given to a single sugar worker over the last two years and they are home. A company was set up to give them land. Not one inch! And what of their promise to retrain retrenched workers? A farce! How many of them have you retrained? What have you trained them to do? But what is even more important, how many have got jobs as a result of your training?

Let me tell you something about the sugar workers in case you did not know, or which you know and prefer to forget. It is well known that Caroni (1975) Limited's daily-paid workers do not possess a level of literacy which would lend to the maximization of such opportunities and accordingly, it is recorded that the attendance rate at these training courses is very low. What do you want them to go there to learn? These are sugar workers and that is why we said their jobs must be preserved. You come here to fool them. The average age of the sugar worker is 35 years and those persons need to seek immediate, continuous employment to

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maintain their families. You are going to train them at 35 years of age, people who do not have secondary education, people who have been working in the sugar industry for all their lives. You are telling me you are going to train them to get them jobs. Where? Flying planes?

**3.00 p.m.**

Of course, the fact that the Government saw it necessary to include counselling as part of its activities is indicative of the fact that they realize they have caused them enormous trauma. What a sad day it is!

The junior Minister knows in her heart that she is being used to deceive the sugar workers and, by extension, their families and, by further extension, her own family and friends. It is out of the womb of those self-same sugar workers that she emerged to be born, to grow, to be nurtured, to be mothered, fathered and educated; and now she scorned the base degrees by which she did ascend. They say:

Lowliness is young ambition's ladder

Whereunto the climber upward turns his face,

But once he does attain the up most round

Then onto the ladder he turns his back

Scorning the base degrees by which he did ascend. [*Laughter*]

I am glad to see her laugh. At least one of you could laugh. The others are crying—9,000 of them. Does this Junior Minister not feel the slightest tinge of guilt and shame, knowing that she is being used as a Trojan Horse, bedecked in embroidered sari and all, carrying within her entrails the poison of PNM's deceitful promises, which she is spewing out to these hapless sugar workers? Has she not learned from experience at Felicity that the sugar workers are not as stupid as she thought they were? Does she not know that she is being set up to take the blame for all the tragedy that has befallen Caroni (1975) Limited? All of it will be laid at her feet. Already the PNM is spreading the word that she knows where all the assets of Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited have gone.

Now Caroni (1975) Limited had tremendous assets. Last week, in preparation for this debate, I called a Member of that side of the House and I asked him what had happened to the assets of Caroni (1975) Limited since its closure. I was told if I wanted to know that, I must ask the Junior Minister of Finance, she knows. I ask today. First of all, we know that when Caroni (1975) Limited was operational, it

owned and possessed hundreds of millions of dollars worth of equipment and other assets. No one seemed to be willing to give an unequivocal answer to my query as to what had become of the huge capital assets of the company. There were hundreds of tractors, motor vehicles, cranes, engineering tools and equipment, locomotives, hundreds of buffalypsoes and other animals on Caroni's farms, the stocks at Mon Jaloux, the citrus plantations, timber—the list is too long to mention.

First of all, was an inventory taken? Secondly, where is the inventory? What has become of all these valuable assets? Madam Junior Minister, the ball is now in your court. The country is waiting for an answer. [*Interruption*] Did somebody cackle? [*Laughter*] [*Interruption*] The action though that tempts me to believe that spite, malice and vindictiveness were part of the motive in destroying Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited was the manner in which they dealt with the possible historical artefacts of both companies. It was as if the PNM wanted to wipe out the sugar industry from their psyche, from their subconsciousness. They wanted nothing of it to exist.

We talk about tourism, we talk about our heritage and so on. There were these locomotives and these rail tracks. Could they not have been preserved for posterity, so that our children could enjoy them and see what they were? They were all destroyed—all the locomotives, all the tracks; everything has been destroyed. No one can tell where the machines are. They destroyed Reform. Nothing has been preserved of it. They destroyed Woodford Lodge; nothing has been preserved of it. They destroyed Forres Park; nothing has been preserved of it. They have no sense of history. They on that side know how to destroy, not how to build and preserve. They can preserve nothing.

Would it not have been nice to preserve these as part of our history, so that our children could look back and see where the forefathers were brought here from Africa and India; what they were brought here for and where they reached? There is none of this because the object of this Bill is to seize the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited and share it among their friends and family. I could only wish, Mr. Speaker, that all this would end in peace.

Thank you.

**Dr. Roodal Moonilal** (*Oropouche*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On this occasion, it gives one little pleasure to speak on the measure before us, particularly after the contribution of the former Prime Minister of our Republic, who has outlined, with great detail and emotion, the treachery, vindictiveness and malice, not only of this PNM administration, but also of other PNM administrations.

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I intend to reflect on a few items pertinent to the Bill, particularly matters involving employment and industrial relations. It is also my intention, Mr. Speaker, to raise some matters concerning the restructuring of the sugar industry, future employment prospects for the former Caroni (1975) Limited workers and communities.

We often believe that when we talk about Caroni (1975) Limited, we are talking only about the former 7,000 daily-paid workers and about the 600 monthly-paid members of staff. Few people remember that when we talk about Caroni (1975) Limited, we are really speaking about several communities; not so much social communities, but economic communities. For example, those familiar with the landscape of Caroni (1975) Limited, would know about Reform, Golconda, Debe, Woodland and so on. It is not just the social environment, but the economic environment that one has to reflect on. We must look now at the damage done to that environment—the social and economic environment. I intend to speak a bit about that.

It goes without saying that where we are today is a result of a particular approach by this administration; an approach defined by spite and vindictiveness. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to remind Members of this House and the national community that it was in 2002, in the aftermath of this administration's entering office, after an 18/18 electoral tie, and in the absence of a Parliament sitting without a Speaker, that the Prime Minister went to Woodford Square and indicated to the media and to the national community that if those of us on this side of the House did not vote for a Speaker, Caroni (1975) Limited would not get money and they would have to close down. That was in the press.

The Prime Minister himself indicated that to the workers of Caroni (1975) Limited at that time. He made a call. He told the employees of Caroni (1975) Limited to tell their representatives to go to Parliament and assist him to get a Speaker, otherwise there would be no money for Caroni (1975) Limited and they would close down.

That was in February and later in March of 2002. It is important to remember that because Caroni (1975) Limited and the employees were threatened that they would see no good times unless those of us in the UNC surrendered to the will of the PNM. That was the approach. It was defined by threats. Later, when they offered what they called their VSEP programme, they were clear that they either take it or be retrenched. What type of voluntary package was that—to tell vulnerable workers they were either to take what they were offering or go without anything? That was their approach.

Then they defied and violated industrial relations principles and practices by imposing a VSEP. The Industrial Court ruled on the matter. We have the judgment here. They said that the Government violated industrial relations practices and conventions. They went back to the board of directors and to the workers and continued with that campaign of threat, vindictiveness and malice. I am just setting the backdrop here.

At the same time, the Cabinet went to a post-Cabinet press conference—at that time the Prime Minister would host a press conference every week. Now that has changed. The Prime Minister said that WASA was in a worse position than Caroni (1975) Limited, but WASA did not lose 7,000 workers; it got 1,200 more workers.

When they were talking about restructuring at Lake Asphalt and the separation of workers in deep south, the Prime Minister went on record as saying they could not touch that; that it was a national treasure, but Caroni (1975) Limited had nothing national and it had nothing to treasure. That is the long and short of it.

Mr. Speaker, how tragic it is that an administration and a political party that has presided over more than 70 per cent of our post-independence period and had spent more than 90 per cent of the revenues accruing to this country could today have an agricultural sector that has collapsed. After presiding over two energy booms—windfalls—one ongoing, today this country cannot feed itself; today they cannot present a plan to the Parliament for the agricultural sector. When we asked the former Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources what was the plan for Caroni, he said they had the plan and that they were bringing the plan to Parliament. That was two years ago. There is no plan. I want to say categorically that this Government is a government of tricksters and “hoaxsters”/hucksters.

What happens is that you can con people; you can fool people, but you cannot trick people forever. You cannot continue as a “hoaxster” and get away forever. Already mid-term in their administration, we are seeing the signs that persons close to their party are now turning their backs on them, realizing that it is really a bunch of incompetent people governing this country.

We saw the Prime Minister a couple days ago on the newspapers with people around him holding up the national flag. I thought he was at Brooklyn, Boston or Miami and some PNM supporters were greeting him. I could not believe that the Prime Minister had returned to Trinidad and that there was a Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) gang at Piarco International Airport holding up national flags.

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Mr. Speaker, at mid-term, the country is waking up to the reality that this really is a hoax. Many of us are familiar with colleagues on the other sides and we are well aware of their competence, or lack thereof, but many people felt that it was really the Ministers in the other place who would save this Government. We know what we have in our Chamber and we know the level of incompetence, but now they are being exposed one by one.

Another Junior Minister of Finance was the subject of an editorial in the newspaper a couple days ago, showing him up to be a “hoaxster”. Now we are dealing with another junior minister. Another junior minister presented a bill today. This junior Minister had a rough ride of late by some confrontation with a very prominent businessman/former government minister/distinguished member of the fairness committee. They are being exposed one by one and the country will wake up to the realization that they have no plan.

Today, we know they have no agricultural plan. We know that we will only know what Vision 2020 is next year some time. The committee promised that in the next year we will know what that is. I will stay on the matter before us, which is the matter of the land use. I have in my hand a copy of the report addressed to Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith, Minister of Public Administration and Information, dated April 30, 2004. This is a report of the Inter-Agency Land Use Planning Team and we are told today that the Government supports the report. This report handed to the Minister of Public Administration and Information—he is not involved in the matter before us today, but I imagine that he must have had some interest in this matter before being deposed by the Junior Minister. The report is an interesting report. It states, among other matters, that the Estate Management Business Development Company Limited (EMBD); that is the long name for the Uthara Rao committee.

They received applications for land from 5,748 applicants, former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited. They then busily screened out former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited to reduce the 5,800 to 4,700. The report says:

“The team anticipates that the present 4,766 eligible employees could be reduced by the expanded screening process now being conducted by Caroni and the EMBD...”

It is very important to note that. This report says that although 5,800 former employees applied for land; although 4,700 employees were deemed to be eligible, they could be screened out further with a more intensive screening process, so the number could be reduced further.

Mr. Speaker, on page 2 of the report, addressing the issue of how much of Caroni (1975) Limited lands would be made available for housing and proposed agricultural activity, one is also struck by the following statement:

“The residual 58,612 acres or 76.5 percent would remain available for agricultural activity or for such purposes as determined by Government...”

This means the Cabinet. This is a transfer of control, of course, to the Cabinet, and just as they sit and approve CEPEP contractors and NEDCO loans and so on—and that NEDCO is another scandal—they will sit and preside over the distribution of this land. It is in this report. Of course, it is stated here that another committee will work on the recommendations of this team and that committee would report to the Minister of Finance, Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo, who would appoint that committee.

When we hear this talk about land for Caroni (1975) Limited workers, one has to be very suspicious. They promised the employees of Caroni (1975) Limited land. They are saying in the report that 90 per cent or so of Caroni lands would remain in agriculture, but it would be determined by Government according to their National Physical Development Plan; and we know of their physical development plan. That is Tarouba North housing project; that is Circular Road, San Fernando and that is off the highway, Chaguanas. We know of their development plan. It is also known as voter padding and house padding.

When they appointed the board of the Estate Management Business Development Company, EMBD, I received from my constituents, applications for land. I took it upon myself to go to the office of Mr. Rao. He was very courteous. He received me with my applications on behalf of constituents. He was there, I think, in Valpark Shopping Plaza. At that time, I could not help but notice a photograph of the Member of Diego Martin Central displayed on the wall of that office. I assume that at that time he would have had some oversight of the Estate Management Business Development Company. I imagine that photograph has been removed.

Mr. Rao was at pains to explain to me that he had a big book in front of him with all the plans and vision and so on; but he said, “Thank you very much for your letter and your request on behalf of your constituents and so on, but I am sorry to inform you, I cannot do anything. I must wait on Cabinet to approve.” So all this EMBD they are talking about is really subject to Cabinet approval to Mr. Rao and others to give out land. Those are the tricksters at work. That is how they operate.

That Estate Management Business Development Company authorized security personnel to tear down the shacks of persons on Caroni Lands, who have been

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living there for over eight years. That was their job—to tear down the shacks and to receive applications.

We then saw in the press an obscene campaign of propaganda. It is well known that this Government likes marketing. It goes without saying. Every single day of this Government's life is a political campaign. They pay for marketing. They market every idea. They will throw a big fanfare at the Hilton. When they embarked upon the "conmanship" of the workers of Caroni (1975) Limited, they embarked upon an obscene public propaganda campaign involving the junior Minister in what was called "Walkabouts". The junior Minister and the Ministry would pay for one-page ads. We woke up in the morning to see the Hon. Minister on a centre fold. [*Interruption*] Two pages together; I mean a centre spread. This is the obscene level to which they go, conning the workers of Caroni (1975) Limited in communities, with pictures and meetings to find out how they are going and expressing care for them. They announce in these expensive ads that they are providing assistance for Caroni workers from the Diabetes Association, Alcoholics Anonymous, The Heal House, Cancer Support Group, and so on. So, they are well on the way to helping. Then there is a picture of the Minister embracing an elderly lady.

They did this on several occasions and today, when they have to tell the Parliament and the country how many people got jobs from all this nonsense, they can say nothing. They were trained to make toolum and sweet bread. That is what they were doing. "Walking towards your future". They go into a community every weekend, walk around the place, meet a few people in shops and so on and tell them they care. Today, if 10 persons alone got jobs, they should tell us. And do not be too smart, tell us their badge number at Caroni. The truth is that they were not able to help anybody secure employment. Workers from Caroni (1975) Limited come to our offices every week looking for "a little end", for employment to drive a bread van here and there, watchman, labourer; they cannot even get a job with CEPEP or URP.

Notwithstanding the evil that they perpetrated, could they not have mobilized the daily-paid workers? They could have said, "We know what we did to you. We have CEPEP, URP and other government programmes, you may access those programmes". They will not do that. Do you know how former Caroni (1975) Limited workers got jobs? I will tell you. We asked a question in this House relating to the workforce of the Sugar Manufacturing Company and we got an answer.

Before I go to that, let me just put, for the record, that it was cheaper to produce sugar at Caroni (1975) Limited than it is at the Sugar Manufacturing

Company. The tonne for sugar/tonne for cane, TC/TS ratio was 1:12 at Caroni (1975) Limited. It is 1:15 at EMBD. The efficiency was greater at Caroni (1975) Limited.

The labour force of EMBD is composed of workers from four subcontracted companies and the management of these companies include formerly monthly-paid employees of Caroni (1975) Limited, who were selected when they closed Caroni: Wayne Inniss, George Mouttet and so on, directors of VIRGO Consultants. Officers of the PNM formed companies and they asked them to hire people to work in the sugar manufacturing company. That is their idea of employing workers from Caroni (1975) Limited.

There is enormous labour exploitation at the Sugar Manufacturing Company. You could be working today and the contractor comes and tells you not to come back on Monday. They have nothing for you. That is how it is. They have removed all the protection afforded former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited by having four contractors operate at the Sugar Manufacturing Company.

Another important area in this Bill that I would like to address now is clause 15. Clause 15 provides that sections 47 and 48 of the Industrial Relations Act would not apply to the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited. That, to me, is a serious provision proposed in the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence to read the relevant sections of the Industrial Relations Act. Clause 15, as I said, states:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, sections 47 and 48 of the Industrial Relations Act shall not apply to the Company.”

The word “Company” of course, is the “Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited”.

“Sections 47 and 48 of the Industrial Relations Act provide:

- (1) The terms and conditions of a collective agreement registered under section 46 (...a “registered agreement) shall be binding on the parties thereto and shall be directly enforceable, but only in the ‘Court’.

That is, the Industrial Court.

- “(2) The terms and conditions of a registered agreement shall, where applicable, be deemed to be terms and conditions of the individual contract of employment of the workers comprised from time to time in the bargaining unit to which the collective agreement relates.

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- (3) Registration of a collective agreement shall be deemed to constitute actual notice of all the provisions thereof.
- (4) The foregoing provisions of this section shall have effect notwithstanding section 6 of the Trade Unions Act, or any other rule of law to the contrary.”

Mr. Speaker, section 48 of the IRA states:

- “(1) For the purposes of section 47, the following persons shall be deemed to be the parties to a registered agreement:
  - (a) the recognised majority union;
  - (b) the employer who has entered into the registered agreement or on whose behalf or with whose concurrence the agreement has been entered into;
  - (c) Any successors to, or, in the case of an employer, assignees of, such employer or recognised majority union as the case may be.
- (2) Notwithstanding section 43(1) the terms and conditions of a registered agreement shall, in so far as they relate to procedures for avoiding and settling disputes, be deemed to continue to have full force and effect until another collective agreement between the parties or their successors or, in the case of an employer, assignees...
- (3) For the purposes of this section any question whether a person is a successor or assignee of another shall be determined by the Court from all the circumstances in accordance with good conscience and the principles of good industrial relations practice and shall be binding...”

I thought it important to read the sections of the Industrial Relations Act from which the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited will be exempt. Clause 15 of this Bill exempts the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited from the provisions of the IRA. Section 4 of the Constitution of our Republic protects, inter alia, the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law and freedom of association.

Mr. Speaker, section 2(7) of the Industrial Relations Act provides:

“Nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to abrogate, abridge or infringe the principle of freedom of association, whether of workers or of employers in trade unions or other associations...”

From the Constitution and from the IRA, every worker has those rights. Every worker has the right to collective bargaining, to representation, to worker protection and to be the member of a union. All workers in Trinidad and Tobago enjoy these rights, including workers employed in the government service. If you work at the Water and Sewerage Authority, T&TEC, Petrotrin, Trinidad and Tobago Petroleum Marketing Company; if you work at any state enterprise, and other companies, you enjoy those rights under the IRA. Why deprive the workers of the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited their right to enter collective agreements and have them registered and enforced by the Industrial Court? What sin have they committed?

All other citizens of Trinidad and Tobago have these rights. Why not workers of the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited? Is this not discriminatory? This, to us, is very serious and this Government today will flippantly dismiss these issues of the rights of workers because they broke the back of the union and they will not sit idly by and allow another union to emerge in the sugar industry; or whatever is left of the sugar industry. That is the motive.

It is well-known that one of the major causes of disputes in industry is the differences as they relate to terms and conditions of employment. The best way to have these terms protected is by entering into collective agreements, and that is why the IRA came into being. The Court cannot enforce unregistered agreements, so they are putting the workers at the SMDC at a great disadvantage, where the company and these contractors will have the right to fix terms of employment, to fix terms of exploitation that they will not be able to enforce legally.

Mr. Speaker, is this the equality of treatment meted out to workers of Trinidad and Tobago? We know what happens in CEPEP and URP. They are promoting the same thing at the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited. More than that, the union has already pointed out that the Trinidad and Tobago Government stands today in violation of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organization. They are violating conventions of the ILO; conventions that guarantee that workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, have the right to establish and to join organizations of their own choosing with a view to furthering and defending their respective interests. Mr. Speaker, they are in violation of conventions of the ILO to which this country is a signatory.

Convention No. 154, I might add, promotes free and voluntary collective bargaining. This Convention applies to all economic activity and the State is obligated to take measures to promote collective bargaining. This is what the State has done by passing the IRA.

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Section 5(1) of the Constitution provides:

“...no law may abrogate, abridge or infringe or authorise the abrogation, abridgment or infringement of any of the rights and freedoms...recognised and declared.”

This includes the right of the individual to equality before the law and freedom of association. Is this another dramatic move on the part of this Government to remove the rights of workers to collective bargaining and freedom of association?

They will have to explain why the clause is in the Bill in that way. Is it that they just want to protect the new company from agreements made before with the union, so that those agreements cannot be transferred? Or are they absolutely denying workers their right to associate; the right to pursue collective bargaining? That, Mr. Speaker, is, to us, one of the most controversial clauses in this Bill.

We have been informed that the Government and the Minister received advice, contrary to what is in the Bill, from technical sources, indicating that this clause is unconstitutional; but in typical fashion, they will come to impose it upon the Parliament and upon citizens. We are also informed that what we have been hearing about at First Citizens Bank, the same management style operates at Caroni (1975) Limited. It is only a matter of time before managers and senior managers at Caroni (1975) Limited tender their resignation in disgust. I hope when they are ready to tender, they tender them to the right source and it goes to the correct minister.

We understand that the same frustration faced by Ken Gordon at NCB is being faced at Caroni (1975) Limited. There is an attempt to micro-manage and to control. There is an attempt to frustrate the work of managers at Caroni. While ministers play games with chairmen and board members and managers, that is fine. While Ministers play their power-hungry games—who has power and who can vote for money to go to the Dominican Republic and so on—it is the poor man that suffers.

At Caroni today, there is a case of over 180 persons, who have entered into legal agreements with Caroni (1975) Limited and who have paid money for their lands; they have receipts, and they are waiting to get their deed, so that they can use that in furtherance of other business interests and matters involving the banks; to build a house or whatever. Over 180 persons have purchased their property and have their agreement and since December last year they have been waiting on the hon. Minister with responsibility to get Cabinet approval for the deeds to be delivered.

Can you imagine these poor and desperate people who have paid their money and are waiting for their deeds and there are no deeds coming. They are waiting for Cabinet. I asked my constituents, who tell me this: When they deny you the deed, did they give you back your money? No. They took the money, but they do not want to provide the deed. They said that they are waiting for the Bill to be passed. What does the Bill being passed have to do with giving the people their deed? They are frustrating the people. That is also the motive. This is a mentality. We know it well. Come to the office and when you are turned down three times, do not bother to come back. We know that. That is the particular rule they have.

You go looking for a job and after three times, when you get fed up, you forget them and fight for yourself. That is their operation—to frustrate people. When this happens, they are presiding over the destruction of the agricultural sector.

The Member for Couva North outlined the vision of the UNC government to develop Caroni (1975) Limited as a holding company and to develop other profit centres in the Caroni family of companies. That was our vision.

### **3.45 p.m.**

The Government undermined that vision and closed down Caroni (1975) Limited. They pay lip service to the agricultural sector. I have written letters to the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources of this PNM government because sometimes they complain that those of us on this side do not write. I am one who writes. I wrote asking for assistance for my constituents. I do not write them for a favour. I do not need a favour. I need you to do your job to assist my constituents. I wrote a letter on November 27, 2003—this is one of several—calling on the Minister with responsibility for agriculture to use his office to assist us to clear and repair agricultural access roads. I have not received a reply, far less help. You do not receive a reply, far less help.

One of the bigger scandals to hit the market, as far as agriculture is concerned, is when they were busy giving out money throughout the Caribbean—let me say for the record, those of us on this side support deeply our colleagues. We support deeply our Caricom neighbours during the recent devastation brought about by the hurricane. As a party we responded appropriately. When the Government was busy handing out money to everybody, they forget that there were persons in Trinidad and Tobago who suffered, too. We had farmers who suffered flood damage and want to get compensation for their crops. Farmers are saying—what is the line they run from the ad, fix me first—fix Trinidad and Tobago first. This is a country where the Government boasts about helping all the islands. The Prime

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Minister told his counterpart in Jamaica: "Call me when everything is finished and tell me what you want." That was the approach. While that was happening, the Ministry of Works and Transport wrote me a letter. I made a request for road humps in my constituency. The Ministry of Works and Transport told me:

"Currently our material resources are very limited to undertake the construction of the same."

That is road humps, not a bridge. I did not ask for a runway for \$27 million.

**Mr. Singh:** He "cyah" build that!

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** They cannot build the runway. That is not a smiling matter. The sum of \$27 million has gone. Mr. Speaker, for road humps they are asking the Member of Parliament, I quote:

"We are requesting assistance from you in order to give this matter expeditious treatment."

Imagine the Ministry of Works and Transport is asking me for two bags of cement and a load of gravel. That is where they have reached. They are presiding over the disbursement of over \$1 billion to Caricom neighbours. We want some speed humps to protect children from being knocked down and killed when walking on the roads. They asked me for a load of gravel and two bags of cement to help them. That is how the Ministry of Works and Transport treats its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, coming back to the matter of agriculture, I want to point out another scandal. Our good friend, the Member for Arouca North, can be seen on television handing out cheques for flood damage. That Member for Arouca North entered my constituency last Wednesday, unknowing to me. He came into the constituency sneakily and gave out cheques at a demonstration farm. I am told that he gave out 10 cheques out of 50. When he gave out the first 10 cheques he ran. He asked the other people to go outside and collect the rest of the cheques. I have a copy of the cheques in my hand. The Government gave out \$35 million. The Minister went sneakily into the constituency. A constituent lost three acres of land under vegetable cultivation. He received a princely sum of \$51.08. Another person did their examination. For one acre of agricultural produce, the Government was kind enough to give compensation to the tune of \$47.83. Mr. Speaker, another constituent had two acres of land under vegetable cultivation which was destroyed by flood. This person did well. He received \$109. These are the cheques I have in my hand. Persons who got less than \$41 felt ashamed to give me their cheques. Some of the cheques that were given out were for \$10 and

\$21. These cheques were given out to farmers who lost acres of produce which were destroyed by the floods. They received \$41 from the kind administration.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired. Before I take the Motion, I have granted leave to the Prime Minister to make a statement.

#### BUDGET DAY

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to announce that the budget for fiscal year 2005 would be presented to this honourable House on Friday, October 08, 2004 at 2.00 p.m. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

#### CARONI (1975) LIMITED AND ORANGE GROVE NATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED (DIVESTMENT AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT) (NO. 2) BILL

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed. I thought the hon. Prime Minister would indicate to the House that having taken account of what I am saying, he would like to investigate the circumstances surrounding this scandal over compensation to persons who have been damaged by floods in Trinidad and Tobago. I thought he would have wanted to investigate this matter. These cheques are dated September 16, 2004. They got them this month.

This is how they consider farmers and agriculture. I want to announce to my friend from Arouca North that on the occasion he was in my constituency last week—of course inadvertently he failed to indicate to me. The farmers have met me. We have had a meeting and they would like the Minister from Arouca North to return to the constituency when they can present him with these cheques. They want to return the cheques to the Minister. They are waiting. They would like the Minister to return to the constituency and duly receive the cheques. I told the constituents do not destroy these cheques and, if they wish, I would extend an invitation to the Minister to return to the constituency and collect them. He can put them in another fund for disaster victims.

Mr. Speaker, do you know why I raise this? This is symbolic. It is a shame, but it is also symbolic of their concern with this sector. Today, Mr. Speaker, persons in the Caroni (1975) Limited establishment will tell you that Caroni (1975) Limited, as the Member for Couva North indicated, was in charge of plant

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and equipment, including houses and offices throughout Trinidad; several bungalows and office complex. Today when you ask what has happened—that is state property—you are told that they have been vandalized. Important properties have been stolen. Doors and windows from the Caroni (1975) Limited compound have been stolen. They are not being used. There is no vision or plan as to what the Government is doing.

We hear about light industry, heavy industry and medium weight industry. There is really no plan. If you ask the Government to give us that plan, there is none and there will be none. What you will see happening is that overnight, there will be grading of land under sugarcane cultivation and suddenly you would see people moving in and putting down material for a shopping mall and a strip mall. When you check, who are these people or who are they connected to, the picture would be revealed as to how they reached there. The plight of the sugar industry in Trinidad and Tobago is truly a tragedy. It is a tragedy on several fronts but at a time—probably the only thing that the Minister said is correct—when it is a fact that sugar producers, particularly in Guyana, Latin America and South America produce sugar, given other factors, at a cheaper rate than Trinidad and Tobago; when several areas in the western hemisphere are expanding sugar production, not just for the sake of producing raw material but for downstream industrial development—Trinidad and Tobago has closed down the sugar producing facilities.

The Government estimated 75,000 tonnes of sugar for 2004. What was the final count? It was 42,000 tonnes after 75,000 tonnes. There is still something to be said about the Sugar Manufacturing Company. We are reliably informed that there may be a need to have a complete audit of the Sugar Manufacturing Company to cook up the books to make it look as if they are being efficient. We are also informed that several charges have been made and drawn on the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources from Central Government. Another trick that they have been using is that to show that the company is producing at an efficient rate and that the cost of production is not as high as Caroni (1975) Limited, they take cost items from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, so the Ministry pays directly. That is another trick that they are perfecting.

The point I was making is that at a recent conference in Trinidad, held in collaboration with the International Union of Agricultural Workers and including several experts in the sugar industry, they are now speaking about downstream value added industrial development feeding off sugar. The UNC was talking about that a long time. We were concerned not just with sugar production, but downstream economic activities involving the private sector. We were going to

call the private sector to participate with us and go into all the goods and products that can be made from sugar.

We are now reading in the newspapers where persons are talking about ethanol production, beverage and food. That is what we were about. To hear in 2004, when all the workers have gone home, that they are interested in downstream agriculture production and that they want to import sugar as raw material, is really a farce. It is another hoax just like the training initiative. That is another hoax like the finding of jobs. Have you noticed, with this Government, everything they are on to is training? There is something called training fatigue. We are told that it is the same persons who graduate from toolum making go back and do the same course in sugar cake making. The same persons would go back and learn to make doilies, hats and handicraft. There is something called training fatigue that this Government does not understand. Their concern is just to throw money at training. They are training everybody in the world. At the end of the day the same persons are going for training. Persons who are trained cannot go on the open market and get jobs.

It is a shame in this country today that the On-the-Job Training Programme, run by my friend, the Member for Diego Martin East, now operates like a white collar URP. Do you know what has happened in the country now? Because the non-energy private sector is no longer generating jobs for graduates from O'level, A'level and diplomas, the Government has to now move in and create opportunities for persons with O'levels and A'levels. The non-energy private sector is not generating employment. The On-the-Job Training Programme is used to put people out to work on six-month training programmes. Many of them, when they finish the six months, cannot find permanent and sustainable employment because there is only so much that the private sector is hiring.

Remarkably, a friend drew to my attention an article in the *Miami Herald* where a Trinidadian employer, who once operated a business in Trinidad and Tobago, placed an ad in the *Miami Herald* inviting American workers to apply for jobs in a factory he is opening in Miami. He fled from Trinidad, scared of crime, kidnapping and murder. Today the American workers are benefiting from him because they are applying for jobs. Whereas his factory would employ 60 persons in Trinidad, there are 60 Americans who would benefit from a Trinidad and Tobago employer. That is where we have reached. More and more persons will leave this country. If you do a poll in this country asking young people who have their O'levels and A'levels, if they would like a visa to go to North America to seek employment, I put it to you that eight out of 10 would say yes. They would

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not stay here. They have no confidence in the country. They have no confidence that they will get a job and be treated equally.

Many of the children of these sugar workers who are on the breadline; do you know what they are looking for? They are looking for an MP to sign their application forms for visas and passports and recommendations for visas. That is what MPs do now. The children of the sugar workers would not find jobs. Their parents are unemployed. They are going to the United States. You ask yourself why would you want to go there, where it is cold? Sometimes a person has to do two jobs and live in a basement during the winter. Do you know what constituents tell me? I thought this is instructive. They say: “Yes, but when you work hard there you will be treated fairly. There would be the opportunity for upward mobility. You can accumulate, enjoy life and be treated fairly.” They prefer to go there and slave than stay in Trinidad and Tobago. That is a reflection. That is why our goodly Minister in an article of the *Business Guardian* of Saturday, August 14, had to plea.

“Employers urged to hire ex-Caroni (1975) Limited workers—pleas Minister.”

Nobody is hiring. This is the very Minister who announced before that Caroni (1975) Limited workers will be absorbed on the platforms offshore. I read that in the newspapers. I do not know if other colleagues saw it. I do not know if colleagues heard when the Minister said former Caroni (1975) Limited workers will be absorbed on the offshore platforms in the IT section. He comes to the House today and says no one is coming for the training. How would they be absorbed? Doing what?

**Mr. B. Panday:** Nanotechnology.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Nanny? Nanotechnology.

**Mr. B. Panday:** Maybe it is nanny technology.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** I do not know about that.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making, which I made from the beginning, is that these are tricksters we are dealing with. They are training and training. We have the figures today. They are very interesting. We got the figures from the Minister’s mouth. Mr. Speaker, out of 7,870 persons who are available, 2,284 entered the courses and 1,600 completed training. The sum of 1,600 persons took a course in making whatever, out of a workforce of 9,000 people. The 1,600 persons, who were trained, presumably will go on the offshore platform to work

in the IT department. I do not know whose platform, but they would presumably go and work.

Mr. Speaker, we call upon this Government to outline to us clearly and unequivocally their employment plan for the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited. Tell us categorically how many persons have received training and how many have received jobs. I also want to make a call for the Minister to use her good office, and the support of her colleagues, and establish, not an employment bureau—employment bureau is where you send people with their CV and you end up with files of applications—but a placement agency and tell us how many persons have been placed into employment. We do not want the employment bureau. We know who are unemployed. We do not want to hear about the Diabetes Association and the South Cancer Research Foundation. We want to know how many persons have been placed in employment, in the aftermath of the closure of Caroni (1975) Limited. That is what we would like the Government to tell us and to establish a placement agency and cut out the propaganda. This would get you nowhere. This would not endear the Government to anybody by being in the newspaper everyday hugging and kissing. This will not get the Government anywhere. I do not know what can save the Government; but what can assist is if the Government decides to be honest with the population and Caroni (1975) Limited workers.

We are also calling for full transparency as it relates to the distribution of the lands. This is not a Government known for transparency. We are calling for it. How many legal orders, under this administration, have we had according to the Freedom of Information Act? Central Bank and NEDCO exempt are the two Orders. This is not a government known for transparency. We are calling for the Cabinet and the Government to be transparent, as it relates to the distribution. What is wrong with taking into consideration the voice of the population and different groups whether they are workers, farmers, the Land Tenants Association, whomever; taking into account their views and submitting to Parliament, regularly, the list of persons who have received land, using the principles of fairness which they support? What is wrong with that? Why can they not come to the Parliament and give us a list of the names of persons who are eligible for land and when the appropriate time comes, the names of persons who have received the lands and on what criteria. Why can they not do that? If the Government does that, it would have to explain what happened in Tarouba and Circular Drive. The Government would have to explain how that works.

Mr. Speaker, there will be no future for agriculture. There will be no future for several of the communities dependent on Caroni (1975) Limited, unless and until

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this Government is prepared to be honest and transparent. It is very clear that they have no agricultural plans. There is nothing there. It is clear that the Government intends to give out lands to its friends and clique members. Maybe I could ask all my colleagues in the House if there is anyone who has applied for Caroni (1975) Limited lands for business purposes to declare it. [*Crosstalk*] I am not referring to anybody who is talking. I would like to ask anyone, whether it is the Member for Port of Spain North or the Member for Tunapuna, who is party to applications for lands from Caroni (1975) Limited. Declare it now and tell us so that we would know. When we start seeing these developments we will be very clear on it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to this House and the population, that the story of Caroni (1975) Limited must not be permitted to die in this way. Many of us on this side of the House believe that consideration must be given to the reengineering and return of Caroni (1975) Limited. It is not unforeseen that a future UNC government will have to seriously rethink this policy of the PNM Government. [*Desk thumping*] We may have to rethink this policy and we may well have to preside over the return of Caroni (1975) Limited according to our own vision. We may have to preside over the return. Studies made available to us, from the sugar unions and the cane farmers in particular, tell us that we can return Caroni (1975) Limited to producing 75,000 tonnes to 100,000 tonnes of sugar and return the full time labour force to almost 4,000 persons in Caroni (1975) Limited. A future UNC government will create jobs. [*Interruption*] “When” it is coming closer than you think. Have you noticed everybody is on fairness? I hope you also stand for fairness. A future UNC government will rethink this policy on Caroni (1975) Limited and will be prepared to consider an increase in sugar production to generate over 4,000 jobs in the sugar industry, to produce the sugar to consume in the first instance and to be used in manufacturing. That is what a future UNC government will consider.

All is not lost. Help is indeed on the way. They sit, talk and boast as if they would be there forever. I told you at the beginning, the tricksters and hoaxers do not last forever. There is a shelf life for hoaxers and tricksters. You cannot last forever. Persons felt that you should have a chance, notwithstanding the circumstances under which you entered office. There were persons in the national community who felt that you should have a chance. Look at what has happened! They maligned the airport. There was a Commission of Enquiry into the Airport. The Government attacked the UNC government on corruption at all fronts. The Minister of Works and Transport—\$27 million, and dismissed it with a smile. The sum of \$27 million was given out in a contract in 2003. I think the Federal Aviation Authority deemed that the runway is not up to certain specifications. I

wonder whether we would have a commission of enquiry into the paving of the runway. Let us have a commission of enquiry and call back Lindquist and Bernard. Let us go back on television and call the Minister to account.

If you are constructing a runway, surely you would have a team from the Ministry and the airport overseeing the project. The sum of \$27 million has gone and the FTAA now decides that the thing is bad. The pilots are complaining that there are bumps on the runway. It is only in Trinidad and Tobago, under a PNM government, the pilot complains of potholes, not drivers. This is only under their government. We on this side are calling for an enquiry. The Government should enquire into the corruption with respect to the compensation to farmers for flood damage. The Government should enquire into NEDCO, where everyday it is like a pack of cards. Everyday someone is coming forward with a story about NEDCO with respect to loans given and loans gone delinquent. [*Interruption*] Hyacinth Whiteman. You know of her? Should I say more? Or is it Jan Thompson? Mr. Speaker, I would have much more to say about NEDCO later.

Mr. Speaker, this Government must look into the mirror and by the same standards they wanted to hold the UNC Government to account, they must hold themselves to account by those same standards. I am not singling out one, but all of them must hold themselves to account. That is what they must do. In doing so, they will then understand why citizens of this country have lost all hope in this administration. They have lost all faith in this administration, providing goods and services and securing us.

On this Bill, other Members on this side of the House will have much more to say. I am reliably informed that our friend from Couva South will at some appropriate time enter the debate. There is wild anticipation that the Member for Couva South will enter the debate. The Member for Couva South also has in his possession the report of the Inter-agency Land Use Planning Team that deals in detail with the recommendations that went to the Cabinet of the country. The Member for Couva South has his own evidence and intelligence gathering with Caroni (1975) Limited. We are sure that other issues will be raised.

In closing, let me join the Member for Couva North to put on record the tragedy of Caroni (1975) Limited. Just to remind the Parliament and the country that it was not too long ago that Caroni (1975) Limited, in 2000 won Exporter of the Year Award from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago beating out Angostura, Trinidad Distillers, S M Jaleel, Trinidad Cement Limited and others. It was not too long ago that a company could have won the "Exporter of the Year" award and today the company is no more. We must look in our history and the

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Commonwealth to see if we have examples of companies that have been so far on the upswing and then cruelly destroyed in the shortest space of time. To that I say to the PNM, they delivered. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Health (Hon. John Rahael):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The tragedy would have been if the UNC was still in power and the poor workers of Caroni (1975) Limited would have gone home with a lot less than what they eventually got when they accepted the VSEP. I have already placed on record, because of the limited time I have today, the plan the UNC had for Caroni (1975) Limited. I quoted a document with respect to their plan. The Members for St. Joseph and the Minister of Trade and Tourism—the super minister at the time—the plan for the UNC was to shut down Caroni (1975) Limited and send all the workers home with only their severance benefit, with no enhancement, no programmes, nothing in place for their purpose—nothing. [*Desk thumping*] That is what they were going to do. They come here today to talk about tragedy and the demise of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, during their term in office for six years we saw the decline in agriculture year after year. From 1996 to 2001 agriculture declined during their term in office. As a matter of fact, they had not one, not two, but three ministers in agriculture. At one time they had two ministers in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources who were not speaking to each other. They did absolutely nothing to contribute towards the agricultural sector during their reign. [*Desk thumping*]

We have the Member for Couva North coming here this afternoon, instead of speaking on the Bill, actually making derogatory remarks about the Senator from the Ministry of Finance, having absolutely nothing to contribute towards the debate but referring to “orhanie” and the wear of the hon. Senator.

**Mr. B. Panday:** She can talk about Reebok.

**Mr. Singh:** He never said “orhanie”!

**Hon. J. Rahael:** What is happening now is that they cannot take it. We have to excuse them. Any Member on this side can walk proud into their heartland with the Balisier tie and will be welcomed throughout all their constituencies. [*Desk thumping*] That is what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose we are here this afternoon is to vest the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited to the State. The Opposition spoke about land grabbing, greed for land and that the Government would be giving away the land. Mr. Speaker, what does the Bill say? It states in clause 12(1):

“The Manager shall submit in writing to the Minister, under the hand of the Chairman of its Board of Directors or Chief Executive Officer, a report of all transactions undertaken under sections 10 and 11, in the form and manner determined by the Minister, within three months after the end of the year.”

Since 1975, board after board after board, government after government after government, we have been hearing acquisitions and allegations that the boards and CEOs of Caroni (1975) Limited were in fact leasing out the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited to their friends and families. We are putting in place a system where the manager, on his own, or the CEO and the board will not be able to do that. It must be referred to the line minister who would then go to the Cabinet and get Cabinet's approval. It means that there will be transparency in every single transaction and at every point. More than that, what does the Bill say? It goes on in clause 12(2).

“The Minister shall lay the report in Parliament within three months from the date of its receipt from the Manager.”

It means, therefore, every single transaction that is made with respect to the lands that are being vested in the State will be laid in the Parliament. You want transparency? That is transparency. No board, with its own Chief Executive Officer would be giving away the State's lands and having no recourse. Here it is the line minister, the Cabinet, whoever is in government. We will be in government for a very long time. The Cabinet will have the final approval. We are going to lay it in the Parliament, so that the entire country could be aware of every single company and every single individual who would be able to lease land that is now Caroni (1975) Limited's. It will be known. The question of people declaring or not declaring, the fact is that there would be full transparency and it will be laid in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the only correct statement the Member for Couva North made is that Caroni (1975) Limited is not the sugar industry. He is quite right. Caroni (1975) Limited is also about land that was under its purview for many other agricultural produce, whether it was cattle, shrimp or rice. Every single area that Caroni (1975) Limited endeavoured in, lost. We come here and hear about profit centres. They were going to create profit centres with the same organization and the same products, but they were bringing private sector. Which private sector? The big private sector! The oligarchy! That was the type of private sector they were talking about. Do you understand? What we are doing now is making sure that there is full transparency with respect to all the lands of Caroni (1975) Limited.

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We have already indicated and this Government is a government that keeps its promise. We said we were going to provide enhancement on the severance package. We did that. We said that we would put the necessary funding to ensure that the pension plan for the daily-paid workers would have been fully paid up. Under the UNC government, the pension plan was underfunded to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. It took this Government to ensure that the pension plan is properly funded so that all those workers who are entitled to receive pension from that fund will be able to do so. [*Interruption*] That was done. We have made that subvention and we are proceeding accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt that the workers of Caroni (1975) Limited received the best possible package than any employee of the State at any given time. [*Desk thumping*] That is a fact. For the very first time we took the severance benefit and enhanced it by 30 per cent. We made sure that we provided training and facilities for training in almost every single area including agriculture. We ensured that those persons who accepted the VSEP would have the first call on agricultural lands, if they wished to continue with agriculture. Those are the private persons we want to encourage to get into agriculture. It is unfolding. We have heard the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance talk about the number of applicants we have. It is in the thousands. We are going through the process.

**Mr. Speaker:** The sitting of the House is suspended for tea and will be resumed at 5.05 p.m.

**4.30 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

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

**Hon. J. Rahael:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was making the point with respect to the agricultural sector, and now that the land is going to be vested in the State, the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited would have an opportunity to lease parcels of the land. They would also get the lease for the land, and then they would proceed to use the land for agricultural purposes.

What is going to happen now is that someone who has a lease for a parcel of land for a minimum of 30 years would get an additional 30-year lease. The policy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is to provide a 30-year lease, and an option for an additional 30-year lease. A worker would now have security of tenure for a parcel of land. That worker would now be able to access loans and be able to do much more because of the fact that he or she has security of tenure for a parcel of land. The worker would also be able to feel a sense of

ownership of the land. It is expected that the land would produce more because of the efforts of the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited. Now, what is that going to do? That is going to increase the contribution of the gross domestic product (GDP) to Trinidad and Tobago's economy.

Mr. Speaker, I was also making the point that during 1996 to 2001, there was a decline with respect to the contribution of agriculture to the GDP. In the year 2002 to 2003, we were able to arrest that decline to show a very moderate increase with respect to the contribution of agriculture to the GDP.

During the year 2001 to 2002, we were once again able to open up the export market for agriculture within Caricom. I think it was in 1996, we had a problem with the mealy bug in Trinidad and Tobago, which affected agricultural produce. All the Caricom countries had placed a ban on agricultural produce entering their countries. We were able to sign new protocols with our Caricom brothers and sisters to export agricultural produce once more to Caricom countries.

Mr. Speaker, I am told that in Antigua, the price of a simple product as watermelon, could be as much as EC \$3 per pound.

**Mr. Singh:** That was before Hurricane Ivan or after Hurricane Ivan?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** That was during the year 2002. Antigua imported watermelon from Miami. Watermelon and citrus were not allowed into Antigua because of the mealy bug problem during 1996 and 1997. We dealt with that problem in a matter of months. No one at the time took the initiative and said, "Well, look, let us get our Caribbean countries to remove the ban and restriction on agricultural produce going to these islands." A simple, but important move that we made in 2002, allowed our farmers to export their agricultural produce to Caricom countries. We saw that change with respect to that indicator—the declining of agriculture—and we were able to arrest that decline to show a slight increase. We are hoping that would continue.

With respect to the restructuring of the sugar industry, that is going to have a negative impact on the contribution of agriculture to the GDP. With respect to sugar, let us look at what is happening in the world today. Members were saying that we would be able to re-negotiate the Cotonou Agreement with European Union countries but, in fact, that is not happening. That is being brought forward. I am told that by the end of 2005, we would see the beginning of the dismantling of the quota system and the guaranteed price. That is going to be phased out. That is the best that we could hope for. That is what the European Union countries are suggesting.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has already signalled that they are not prepared to accept that. In fact, the WTO has already signalled that they are not going to support that because they are moving toward dismantling all of these artificial subsidies and quotas where European Union countries have been supporting small island countries in the West Indies and other parts of the world. So, the restructuring of the sugar industry was timely; it was well executed; it took into consideration all those who were affected; and it has opened up the land that was under cane cultivation to other areas of agriculture. As I said earlier, this is unfolding, and you would see many of the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited benefiting from the restructuring and getting leases for agricultural lands.

In addition, there is the whole question with respect to housing. Again, we have made the point, over and over again, that the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited, who do not own their home would be given the first option to access a plot of land or an NHA house built on Caroni (1975) Limited land.

Mr. Speaker, more than that, the Unit Trust Corporation and the Agricultural Development Bank also came up with a very innovative proposal. The workers of Caroni (1975) Limited who received a lump sum of money wanted opportunities to invest their money. One of the innovative forms of financing that the Unit Trust Corporation and the Agricultural Development Bank came up with was to put the money in the Unit Trust Corporation, and the income from the units would then be used to service the loan that the farmers would be able to access from the Agricultural Development Bank. The income from the investment with the Unit Trust Corporation would have paid off that loan. I think it was a five-year or six-year period that the employees would have invested their money for in the Unit Trust Corporation. The money invested was protected and, in addition to that, the loan that the employee took from the Agricultural Development Bank to invest in agriculture would have been repaid, thus preserving the capital that the employee would have received. All of these things were innovative proposals that were put in place to assist the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited.

The various training programmes that were put in place were for the workers to access. Again, with respect to teaching a 35-year-old person how to use a computer, I do not know what is wrong with that. We said that 35 years was the average age of the workers of Caroni (1975) Limited. A person who is 35 years old is a young person, and there were also younger persons employed by Caroni (1975) Limited. I know many former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited who went on to access, not only the VSEP funding, but the Dollar for Dollar programme to attend the University of the West Indies, or the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of

Technology (TTIT) and other institutions like the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) for higher learning, so that they could improve themselves and be further educated. Again, that opportunity was there for the workers.

Mr. Speaker, we come here today and hear remarks about spite and racism, from the other side, and what was our objective because we wanted to grab the land and use the land for our own purpose. We have no purpose for the land other than to make the land productive by giving the first option to the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited to access the land.

When we talk about industrialization, do you know that the land in Point Lisas, where a large part of our revenue comes from, was owned by Caroni (1975) Limited? So, Caroni (1975) Limited land that is suitable for agriculture would remain in agriculture; and the land that is not suitable for agriculture, would be used for housing and industrial purposes. The land is there. We know the soil that is suited for agricultural produce and that land would be used for agricultural purposes. We are going to maintain that. At the same time, we are going to lease land that was under cane cultivation and which was, in fact, a drain on the economy, by making it more productive by using it for housing and commercial purposes. So, the plan was well thought out. It took many meetings; it took time and we applied all our resources to ensure that we were able to accommodate all the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited.

Mr. Speaker, we interacted with the workers themselves and their union representatives. I saw no one from Couva North or Couva South coming forward and making any representation with respect to the areas that were affected. Not one of them came forward and made any representation on behalf of their constituents at that time! Not one of them came and said, "Well, look, this is a suggestion." There were no representatives from central or south Trinidad, from the other side, coming forward with any recommendations or proposals. As a matter of fact, all we had was a Cabinet decision by the United National Congress (UNC) to close down Caroni (1975) Limited. They are the ones who were going to bust the workers' throats; not us. I have already laid that document in this Parliament.

**Mr. Dookeran:** I want to thank the Member for giving way. Could the Minister let us know what is the Government's position with respect to the University Position Paper on the land distribution of Caroni (1975) Limited which was done within recent times?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** I do not know what paper the Member is referring to.

**Mr. Dookeran:** That is the University Position Paper which was published and made available to the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. I was wondering whether you could tell us; what is the Government's position with respect to that document.

**Hon. J. Rahael:** We have not studied that document. I remember seeing the document.

**Hon. Member:** Where is the document?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that we are ensuring that the land would be put under productive use, whether it is agricultural land, industrial land or commercial land. That is the point I am making.

In addition, we met with all the representatives of the various unions and they made certain recommendations and suggestions. One of the recommendations made was to increase the non-taxable severance benefits from \$100,000 to \$300,000. So, any employee receiving up to \$300,000, together with their enhanced benefits, we made it tax-free. That was a recommendation from the unions that represented the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited. We accepted that recommendation and we took other recommendations the unions made into account.

Again, there were approximately 150 workers who were living in bungalows and houses that were owned by Caroni (1975) Limited. These workers have been living there for many years. We said that we would make those houses and the land those houses were situated on—up to a certain square footage—available to those workers who were occupying those houses up to 20 per cent less than the actual valuation price. Again, we were putting a human face to the whole question of the restructuring of Caroni (1975) Limited. That is what we did. We did not force anything down anyone's throat. We clearly stated that our objective was to restructure the sugar industry and, by doing so, there would be displacement of employees. The best package was the one that the PNM Government offered where, in addition to workers' severance benefits; they received an enhancement benefit of an average of 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we could have simply said that we were closing down the company, as they claimed that we did. Since we are no longer in that business, we could have paid off the workers, according to the union agreement with Caroni (1975) Limited, and we would have been acting legitimately and within the laws of Trinidad and Tobago, and with good industrial practice because that was the agreement between the union and the company, but we did not do that.

We felt that the union that represented the daily-paid workers did not negotiate the kind of benefit that the daily-paid workers should have received, and that is how the enhancement package came about. The question of enhancement was not really directed toward the monthly-paid employees, but to the daily-paid employees. We decided that if we had to give the daily-paid workers an enhancement, we had no choice but to also make it available to the monthly-paid workers. I know there are some monthly-paid workers who might be in the Chamber, who felt that they were not given consideration, but they were given consideration because they got the same package that the daily-paid workers received. That is what we did.

So, when we have the Member for Couva North coming here and not really contributing to the matter at hand—the vesting of the land to the State—and making certain kinds of derogatory remarks and personalizing everything, that is indeed very sad.

Mr. Speaker, again, they mentioned the land in Ramgoolie Trace. The UNC had targeted all the agricultural lands in that area for office buildings. They were putting an office complex on those same lands. The majority of the land there that is suitable for agriculture would remain for the purpose of agriculture. To come here and make statements that we are going to disrupt the agricultural sector in Trinidad and Tobago is really not stating the facts.

I think a question was asked with respect to that plot of land. The union recommended that we give out a minimum of two and a half acres. Quite honestly, my recommendation at the time was that there should be five-acre plots, but the union said, no. The union said that some farmers would require just two and a half acres for short crops, and since they would be planting short crops on the land, they would get a faster turnover. The unions are the ones who recommended that the minimum plot should be two and a half acres, and we went along with that recommendation.

With respect to rice cultivation, we have already approved 2,000 acres of irrigated land for the Nariva Farmers Association and also the Caribbean Rice Farmers Association for rice cultivation. That decision has already been taken. They are now in the process of going onto the land to start rice cultivation. More of that is happening as we continue to make the land of Caroni (1975) Limited available to the workers of Caroni (1975) Limited.

There is one matter with respect to clause 15 of the Bill that the Member for Oropouche raised. The information I have with respect to clause 15 is that the

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intention of that clause is not to deprive any worker access through the court to collective bargaining, or freedom of association, or right to union representation. That is not what this clause is going to do. The intention of that clause is to really relieve the Sugar Manufacturing Company of the archaic customs, labour and management practices that have strangled Caroni (1975) Limited for so long, in an effort to achieve efficiency and so forth.

**Mr. Singh:** What do you mean by that?

**Hon. J. Rahael:** That is really what this clause is about. I suspect that some of my other colleagues would elaborate more on that matter. We on this side are happy with the progress that we have been making. The hon. Minister who is now responsible for ensuring the distribution of the land, and the fact that she is having these walkabouts in Members' constituencies, they should not be afraid of that. Do not panic because we are already in your constituencies doing walkabouts. When the time comes, I am sure that it would be a very interesting time.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday, October 08, 2004 at 2.00 p.m.

**Mr. Singh:** The Member is not finished.

**Hon. K. Valley:** No, he is not finished.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, let me just clarify this matter. The hon. Minister has not finished his contribution. The Minister has 13 more minutes remaining from his first 45 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.30 p.m.*