

*Paper Laid**Friday, June 10, 2005***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, June 10, 2005*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**PAPER LAID**

Annual report and financial statements of the Regulated Industries Commission for the period April 2001 to December 31, 2002. [*The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]

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

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
(PRESENTATION)**

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report 2004/2005 Session of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Proposals for the Supplementation and Variation of the 2005 Appropriation.

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, there is one question on the Order Paper for oral response today, but the answer is not ready as yet. I would ask for a further deferral of this question. To ensure that we would be able to answer the question on the next occasion, I ask for a deferral of two weeks.

Mr. Speaker: If you look at the footnote, you will see that this particular question has been on the Order Paper for some time.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. Speaker, consider the question and you will understand the research necessary to provide an accurate response to the Member for Tabaquite.

Mr. Speaker, Perhaps, instead of asking for deferrals of one or two weeks, you may need three or four weeks, you should ask for a longer deferral period, initially.

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Dr. A. Nanan (Tabaquite):

**List of Projects and Programmes
(Details of)**

17. Could the hon. Attorney General provide this House with a list of all projects and programmes involving state enterprises, statutory authorities and other state institutions in which parliamentarians have been engaged by the State, as well as the amount of moneys paid for their services since January 2002 to the present time?

Question, by leave, deferred.

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

Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 2005; [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken later in the proceedings.

Question put and agreed to.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
(ADOPTION)**

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in the name of the Minister of Finance:

Be it resolved that this House adopt the Third Report 2004/2005 Session of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on Proposals for the Supplementation and Variation of the 2005 Appropriation.

The Finance Committee of the House of Representatives met on Wednesday, June 08, 2005 and agreed to two proposals with respect to the 2005 appropriation. The first proposal was for the provision of supplementary funds in the sum of \$3,050,211,864 to fund urgent and capital expenditure to September 30, 2005.

The second proposal was for the variation of the appropriation for fiscal year 2005, in the sum of \$16,083,000.

The total increase in the heads of expenditure being proposed is \$3,066,294,864 and the total decreases of \$16,083,000. This represents a net increase of \$3,050,211,864 which is currently being sought by way of the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) Bill, 2005.

The details of these proposed changes were circulated to all Members of the Finance Committee and discussed at its meeting on Wednesday, June 08, 2005, where clarification was sought with respect to some of the proposed changes to the appropriation fiscal year 2005. In instances where responses were not readily available to the committee, written responses have since been circulated to all Members. It is anticipated that during the course of the debate, these proposals contained in this Motion will be addressed by various Members of the Government. Please permit me at this time to advise the Parliament on the proposals applicable to heads of expenditure for which increases in excess of \$250 million are being proposed.

Under Head 18, the Ministry of Finance, an increase of approximately \$348 million is being sought. The amount is made up as follows:

In the wake of the tsunami in South East Asia, Cabinet agreed that Trinidad and Tobago should contribute US \$2 million to the United Nations relief and reconstruction efforts. Consequently, a warrant in the sum of \$12,600,000 was issued from the Contingency Fund to honour that commitment. As a result, the sum of \$12,600,000 is now required to retire the warrant in accordance with section 16(4) of the Exchequer and Audit Act, Chap. 69:01.

An allocation of approximately \$1,356.9 million was made in 2005 estimates to be transferred to the Interim Revenue Stabilization Fund. Based on computation of oil revenues projected by the Ministry of Finance for the fiscal year, the surplus revenue over that estimated based on a US \$25 per barrel oil price is \$2,376.4 million.

In accordance with the present principle of transferring 60 per cent of the surplus revenue into the Interim Revenue Stabilization Fund, a sum of \$1,425.8 million will be required to be transferred to the fund. As a consequence, a further appropriation to the Interim Revenue Stabilization Fund in the sum of \$68.9 million is now being sought. This would facilitate the transfer of \$1,425.8 million within the 2005 fiscal year to that Interim Revenue Stabilization Fund.

In November 2004, Cabinet agreed that the Government of Antigua and Barbuda a shareholder government of LIAT (1974) Limited, be allowed to access a loan of EC \$5.7 million. No provision was made in the 2005 budget for this purpose. As a result, the sum of approximately TT \$13.6 million was transferred from the allocation for BWIA. In January 2005, Cabinet agreed that \$20.8 million be injected as equity in the National Quarries Company Limited. Again, no provision was made in the 2005 budget for this purpose and a further amount of \$10.4 million each was transferred from the allocations for BWIA and Caroni.

Additionally, Caroni (1975) Limited requires the sum of approximately \$49.5 million to meet its statutory obligations to the Board of Inland Revenue and amounts due to local and foreign creditors to the end of fiscal 2005. As a result of these transfers which were interim measures as well as the supplementary funding required for the Board of Inland Revenue provision is now being sought in the sum of \$24 million for BWIA and \$56.9 million for Caroni.

Supplementary resources in the amount of approximately \$123.8 million is also being sought for the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) to meet its debt service obligations to the National Gas Company in light of the increased market price of natural gas and the attendant cost to the utility.

Under Head 28, Ministry of Health, an increase of \$419,000,000 is being sought. This additional funding is required to meet, inter alia, the increases in the provision of services under the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP) in the sum of \$10.3 million and the provision of dialysis and other medical treatment in the sum of \$4.4 million.

A further sum is being sought to enable the North West Regional Health Authority to meet outstanding obligations to its creditors, as well as the Board of Inland Revenue and other statutory authorities. Increased provision is also required to meet payment of employee benefits and other incentives. The additional funding required to meet these expenses as well as the operating shortfall at the Eastern and South West Regional Health Authorities is \$337.3 million.

An additional sum of \$102.0 million is also required for the costs associated with the commissioning of new wards and the introduction of free services at the Mount Hope Medical Complex.

Under Head 40, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, an increase of the sum of \$650 million is being sought to meet the subsidy payments to the petroleum marketing companies consequent on the prevailing high prices for oil in the international market. As you are aware, the Petroleum Subsidy Act, Chap. 62:02—Petroleum Products Subsidy, is a subsidy when the price that the marketing companies pay to purchase these products is more than the revenue collected in sales at the pumps.

The sum of \$650 million is required to meet outstanding payments due to the National Petroleum Marketing Company, which in turn will enable that company to meet its accumulated debt to Petrotrin related to the unmet subsidy payments.

Under Head 43, the Ministry of Works and Transport, an increase of \$400.2 million is being sought. These resources are required to meet the following:

- (a) The cost of salaries and COLA and wages and COLA for the fourth quarter under the various divisions of the ministry. The shortfall arose as the allocations were transferred to facilitate payment to the Port Authority for leasing of two additional vessels for the Inter-island Ferry Service. It is now necessary to replace the allocations that were transferred.
- (b) Additional costs associated with the implementation of a short-term drainage programme which includes de-silting and widening of watercourses throughout Trinidad.
- (c) The additional cost of financing the deficit on the operations of the Inter-island Ferry Service for the period July to September 2005 and for the mobilization fee for interim leasing and commissioning of a high-speed ferry.
- (d) Expenses related to the provision of additional seating on the Trinidad and Tobago air bridge for the period May to September 2005.
- (e) Replenishment of the debt servicing allocation under the Airports Authority in order to meet payments due in the month of July 2005. Funds were transferred out of this vote to meet the cost of providing additional seating on the air bridge for the period August 2004 to April 2005.
- (f) Replenishment of the debt servicing vote of the Port Authority in order to meet its commitments due in the month of September. Funds were also transferred to meet the cost of providing additional seating on the Trinidad and Tobago air bridge.
- (g) Commitments on ongoing contracts under the Reinstatement and Stabilization of Field Slopes Programme have been accelerated to take advantage of weather conditions. Payments for works being undertaken on the Tobago component of the institutional strengthening of the National Highways Programme and also to meet payments of retention fees from previous contracts.
- (h) Advance payments on contracts awarded for the following major projects under the Trunk Road expansions; widening of the Churchill Roosevelt Highway from O'Meara Road to Santa Rosa; rehabilitation works from the Pillars to Antigua Road, Churchill Roosevelt Highway and feasibility study and designs for highway from Golconda to Point Fortin.

Supplementary resources are also being proposed for the Public Transport

Service Corporation for the following: the acquisition of 25 conventional buses which are due to be commissioned in June 2005; the purchase of spares and accessories to repair Marco Polo buses and the acquisition of 12 articulated buses which are due to be commissioned in June 2005 at a cost of \$4.9 million.

At this point I would like to address those heads of expenditure for which a reduction in the allocation is proposed. Those are the Industrial Court and the Ministry of Trade and Industry. In the case of the Industrial Court, Cabinet gave approval for the Director of Real and Property Estates to negotiate a lease agreement for a proposed location to house the Tobago Office of the Industrial Court. However, funds provided for this purpose have not yet been utilized and it seems unlikely that this process would be completed in this fiscal year.

With regard to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the designs for the information technology industry development project at Wallerfield are not expected to be completed by the end of fiscal 2005, as planned.

May I take this opportunity to inform the Parliament that the sum of \$950.5 million of the supplementary resources provided for in this Motion is earmarked for the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP). The Ministry of Planning and Development in collaboration with other ministries and departments conducted a mid year review of the PSIP and as a result of which, the sum of \$16.1 million is being varied among three heads and a supplementary of almost \$1 billion is required. It is therefore proposed to increase the allocation to projects which are in need of additional funding and reduce those projects that have performed below expectations.

They are the main objectives and issues that we have before us and we are at this time bringing to the attention of the Parliament the results. In so doing, I wish this honourable House to note that these projections will in fact maintain our policy of surplus rather than deficits. When this is taken into account, if the performance holds at 100 per cent we will have a small surplus in the vicinity of \$14 million.

There are those who will say that the amounts of funding that are being provided may not be spent and therefore, one may assume spending at a level that is unsustainable. It is our view that resources have to be given to ministries so that they can do their work. At the end of the year, any resources that have not been utilized, we are committed to ensure that those resources go to the Interim Revenue Stabilization Fund to be used for our intergenerational programming.

With these few comments, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Mr. Gerald Yetming (St. Joseph): Mr. Speaker, the final statement from the Minister that the end of the year would see a balanced budget which is in essence what he said, without giving an indication of where this \$3 billion of additional revenue will come from, is disappointing. One would have expected that in coming to this House to ask for an additional \$3 billion of expenditure, you need to reassure us that the money is going to come in and not simply say that we are committed to a balanced budget.

When we look at the individual items one could hardly argue with a lot of the additional moneys being sought. We cannot argue with an additional \$200 million for the Ministry of Works and Transport for the widening of highways; with the additional \$100 million to provide subsidies for the air and sea bridges, except we could debate whether that sum of \$100 million is being efficiently spent, that we should have the *Lynx*, *Sonia*, *Panorama* and whatever else. We are not confident and satisfied that that sea bridge is being properly maintained and run and there is not a substantial amount of waste in that. The principle of an additional \$100 million for subsidies, we could hardly have any problem with that.

We could hardly argue with an additional \$160 million for housing. We could debate whether the housing that is being put down is being fairly and equitably distributed to all those deserving of houses. We would plead for there to be balance and equity in the distribution of houses. Quite frankly, for an additional \$3 billion I would have expected more to go into areas such as that.

We could hardly argue with an additional \$100 million for the programme to provide additional pipe-borne water and street lighting for our communities, particularly our rural communities.

The problem we will have is the overall picture. In 2000, the total expenditure of the UNC government was \$14.8 billion; in 2001, the total expenditure was \$16.5 billion; a total of approximately \$31 billion. What is intended to be expended in 2005, is \$31 billion. In effect, within three years this Government is spending in one year, what the UNC government spent in two years, or put another way, for 2005, twice as much money will be spent than was spent in the last year of UNC administration.

The question is: What do we have to show for it? I will answer it. I will quote from an article in the *Trinidad Guardian* of Friday, May 27, 2005. The speaker said,

“We (PNM) have been in power for the last two-and-a-half years. Millions and millions have been allocated, but not a single bit of work is being done...”

We throw millions, billions on project...We will build the oncology centre, but at what cost?

Look at what we spend; look at the Scarborough hospital, how many cost overruns. I make no excuses for any government...

We are making first class criminals who are terrorising us. Ultimately, the Government is responsible for it.”

These quotes came from the Member for San Fernando West.

When I ask the question: What does the Government have to show the population for this sum of \$31 billion that is being spent and the \$23 billion that was spent last year? If we talk to the man on the street, the general consensus is nothing to show and endorsed so eloquently and honestly by the PNM Member for San Fernando West.

On education, in 2001, the Minister of Education spent \$1.686 billion; in 2004—I am not talking about the further increase in 2005—\$2.537 billion, an increase of \$850 million. It is pretty close to \$1 billion, within the space of three years. What does the Ministry of Education have to show for an additional billion dollars of expenditure? We do not see any new schools. We still get protest action throughout this country for the dilapidated condition of schools. Our young children are coming out on the streets with placards to demonstrate against the Government’s insensitivity and uncaring attitude towards them.

On health, in 2001, the Minister of Health spent \$1 billion; in 2004, \$1.578 billion, an increase of \$560 million. Has the health service improved? The answer is no.

On national security, in 2001, the Minister spent \$1.363 billion and in 2004, \$1.955 billion, an increase of \$600 million. Has crime decreased? Have the conditions in the police service, the regiment, coast guard and fire service improved? The answer is no.

In fact, Minister Saith in attempting to justify the \$850 million that the Government proposes to spend on a sports complex in San Fernando, when asked why spend money on a sporting complex when there are already five stadia in the country and instead of spending money on crime, said, according to this article in the *Express* dated Saturday June 04, 2005,

Saith: No lack of funds to fight crime

If the Ministry does not have the capacity to utilise the funds effectively, the money would either be misspent, misappropriated or misplaced.”

I find that is an incredible statement. I would say ludicrous and the Member for Port of Spain North will say “lucidous”. While Minister Saith is saying that there is no shortage of money for crime, in the *Sunday Express* dated May 01, 2005, there is a headline, “Cops: No guns, no work.” The article went on to say that several Western Division police officers refused to go on a raid on Wednesday because they were not issued firearms and furthermore, after the raid, when they had to go back to their bases or stations, they had to take taxis because there were no vehicles.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Singh: What! They found guns to go home by Panday.

Mr. G. Yetming: The police went on to say that without the firearms and transport, when they are called upon to go on raids they would not go. Mr. Speaker, we question why crime is increasing in this country; this explains it.

Mr. B. Panday: Total breakdown.

Mr. G. Yetming: They are saying money is not a problem. I have noticed on the Order Paper that the police Bills have now been advanced up the line. I think they appear from No. 6 and 7 on the Order Paper, which suggests to me that the Government proposes to debate the police legislation soon.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Again?

Mr. G. Yetming: I want to let the Government know that as far as the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill is concerned, where they intend to tamper with the Police Service Commission that they will not get our support. [*Desk thumping*] They could come with whatever Bills they want to deal with crime in this country but do not come with the Bill to interfere with the Constitution to mash up, so to speak, the Police Service Commission and replace it with some other body.

Mr. Speaker, they are showing contempt for this Parliament. When the three police bills were re-circulated and one saw at the titles of the bills: Constitution (Amdt.) Bill, 2005 and the other, 2005, and the third, 2005, replacing the previous three bills, which had been debated here before and which were for 2004, only the years were changed.

Mr. Speaker, two days before the debate on these Bills started we were called to the residence of the Prime Minister to have discussions on the Bills, where we

were handed 21 pages of amendments to these Bills. Each Bill had 7 pages of amendments. As I said, we were handed those amendments two days before debate on the Bills began. We debated the Bills and there was much debate which was broadcast live. The Bills came back and the only changes which were made to the original Bills were the years. Of the 21 pages of amendments not one amendment has been made to the Bills.

Mr. Speaker, a number of the amendments had to do with typographical errors so even if they did not want to put back the substantial changes, at least they could have changed where the typographical errors were. They did not even do that because they do not care. We now have to read the old Bills to believe that that is what they are coming back with. Then they are going to present to us, on the day of the debate, another 21 pages of amendments or more. We cannot be treated with that kind of contempt. Mr. Speaker, when they talk about crime, that they are serious about crime and they want to hang and not to hang and they want to do a repeat of the Glen Ashby and what have you—

Hon. Member: That is a mistake.

Mr. Singh: Murder!

Mr. G. Yetming: You cannot treat us like that.

Mr. Ramnath: “What all yuh have against black people? If yuh kill a white man—”

Mr. G. Yetming: Mr. Speaker, in the supplemental they are asking for \$160 million more for the Ministry of National Security. For the Ministry of National Security, under normal circumstances, \$160 million is no problem. If we have the money and we want to put more into that ministry that is fine. But \$95 million of that \$160 million has to do with back pay for the police and the army and so on. The \$65 million, which is the development part of that \$160 million, has to do with the improvement of the coast guard jetties and so on, and all that is fine.

The only benefit to today's crime in that \$160 million is moneys for 150 vehicles, that is all we could expect, Mr. Speaker. When people read in the newspapers that the Government is spending \$160 million more to deal with crime—because that is their interpretation of the provision to national security—I want them to know that the 150 vehicles is the only thing that money is providing for the police. Let us not, in the national population, including the 17 business organizations, get too excited about what is coming before us today.

They have come for an additional expenditure of \$3.1 billion. Let me itemize

a couple of the big items: gasoline subsidy, the Minister mentioned \$650 million; a loan for T&TEC to meet a loan payment, \$124 million; moneys to Caroni to pay the Board of Inland Revenue (BIR) and some outstanding creditors, foreign and local; \$50 million to the NWRHA to deal with the scandal of them withholding moneys from the BIR, WASA and T&TEC and spending it for other things—God alone knows what—\$288 million—just to fill a hole—for the Ministry of National Security for back pay to police, firemen and so on, because of a renegotiated contract, \$95 million, a total of \$1.2 billion.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that out of this additional \$3.1 billion, \$1.2 billion is to fill holes. There is nothing productive about this! My question is: Let us suppose that God did not smile on us and we were unable to generate this additional \$3 billion in revenue, what would we have done to deal with that \$1.2 billion of what could be considered accumulated old debts? What would we have done?

Mr. Speaker, while the Government goes off spending widely in all kinds of areas; agencies of the Government are developing outstanding obligations and debts, whether it is to BIR, WASA or otherwise, external and internal creditors, and then they are coming after the budget in a supplemental for the moneys to fill it up. Nothing productive!

With respect to the Revenue Stabilization Fund (RSF), we have commended the Government. The Prime Minister made an announcement sometime ago in Parliament on the new policy position with respect to the Stabilization and Heritage Fund and we look forward to the legislation. They know that we support, completely, the principle behind the fund. What I cannot understand is that if we are talking about an additional \$3 billion in revenue—that is my understanding—as I said from the outset, I do not know where the money is coming from. I have to assume that a lot of it is coming because of the price of oil. If I take the \$69 million that they have now put, additionally, into the RSF and I say that is 60 per cent of the surplus, it would suggest to me the additional revenue coming into the Government from the oil and gas surplus is only \$115 million. If you get \$115 million and you take 60 per cent of that, you come up with \$69 and you come for the supplemental to put it into the stabilization fund. Mr. Speaker, \$115 million out of an increase in revenue, that is all I have to go on from what I am told here today, of the \$3 billion.

My basic point is that we have no information with which to work. We have no idea of their computations for putting moneys into the RSF. While we certainly appear to agree and are at one with respect to a stabilization fund, stabilization

heritage, whatever, we have a problem with the lack of information that they are providing so that we can be satisfied that what is due to go into the fund really gets into the fund. We are seeing too many cases in here where moneys are being asked for to spend on all kinds of things, as I indicated earlier, with the \$1.2 billion of moneys to fill holes that have been created by waste and mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is getting an additional \$35 million, and quite frankly, \$35 million is nothing that we should really be talking about. I need to speak about it, however, in the context of the budget that was presented by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for 2005, in which he indicated that one of three economic strategies which was the overriding umbrella on the budget was the diversification of the economy. He identified six areas for the diversification and agriculture clearly was one. If it were that we are serious about diversification and if we are serious about agriculture, one would have expected that out of an increase of spending of \$3 billion, more than 1 per cent would have been given to agriculture—\$35 million.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its Article IV Consultation Report for 2004 told the Government that there was a need for determined implementation of an accelerated economic diversification. I repeat: determined implementation of an accelerated economic diversification. One would have assumed that the Government took note of the recommendations that came out of the Article IV Consultation Report from the IMF.

The Central Bank Governor, in the *Central Bank's Economic Monetary Report* for April 2005 spoke about rising inflation that, I think, moved by 4 percentage points up to 7.5 per cent. He warned that rising inflation could put a spoke in the growth wheel. He is warning! He indicated that food prices had gone up year after year by 25.6 per cent. He went further to say—this is the Governor of the Central Bank telling a Government, which has been in office now for three months short of four years:

“There is need for an urgent review of policies geared to increasing agricultural output.”

The Governor of the Central Bank had to tell the Government that there is need for an urgent review of policies geared to increasing agricultural output because agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago has been declining. It declined last year by about 15 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to hear that blame is being put on the fact that

Caroni (1975) Limited was shut down. If Caroni (1975) Limited was not shut down in such a brutal fashion, and if that were the reason for the decline in the agricultural output, then it would not have happened. If it had been done over a period of time, as was the original suggestion coming from the Divestment Secretariat, as you give a time frame for the shut down—let us say a 5-year period—you gradually move the employees on to the land and let them begin to plant. Instead, they have shut it down; they have put the people on the breadline and now they are waiting for land to be active; to do something, and the land is lying idle. I do not know where the common sense is.

Mr. Ramnath: Land for votes!

Mr. G. Yetming: Mr. Speaker, of the \$35 million some of the money went into two interesting headings: Water Management and Flood Control and there is an additional \$7 million there. It is being moved from \$8 million to \$15 million. Last year, in 2004, the budget figure for Water Management and Flood Control was \$8 million and the Minister spent \$3.2 million. He was supposed to get \$8 million again this year—I do not know how much he has spent up to now, but they have come today, three months before the end of the year to give him an additional \$7 million.

Mr. Speaker, in this supplementary they are asking for an additional \$13 million for access roads.

Mr. Ramnath: Shame on you Jarrette.

Mr. G. Yetming: The original figure was \$10 million and with an additional \$13 million he is going to have \$23 million for access roads. Last year he got \$7.5 million and he spent \$4.6 million. [*Interruption*] These figures came from the Auditor General's Report on the accounts of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Singh: Where is your report?

Dr. Moonilal: You would not know about that.

Mr. G. Yetming: The President of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, commenting on these 52,000 acres of idle Caroni lands, which is growing bush right now said: "Give me 1,000 acres of land and I will give you a billion dollars every year, year after year, forever. She said she would give \$1 billion for every thousand acres of land, forever.

Dr. Rowley: And you believe that?

Mr. G. Yetming: That is what she said.

Mr. Ramnath: How many houses have you produced?

Mr. G. Yetming: While the cost of living is going up and literally killing poor people in this country, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has now been reported to have said that in the next two to four years prices will go down. I do not know what he expects poor people to do over the next two to four years while he twiddles his thumb.

Mr. B. Panday: It is temporary, temporary.

Mr. G. Yetming: Minister Montano was quoted as saying on Friday, May 13:

“I have some proposals to submit to Cabinet in the next couple of weeks.”

He has the luxury of time to say that he is going to Cabinet in the next couple of weeks to deal with a pressing, killing problem of the rising cost of living in this country. It does not affect them! It does not affect us, maybe! But the poor people that they are trying to rush to help with the increased funding of \$160 million for the URP—their solution is to pump more money instead of dealing with some of the fundamental issues that are creating the problem of the cost of living. [*Desk thumping*] Minister Montano, who was the Minister of Consumer Affairs at the time, said: “In the next couple of weeks,” this is not a pressing issue, he would go with some proposals. [*Crosstalk*]

The *Newsday* editorial dated April 30, 2005 said and I quote:

“Delays at our Port and at custom and excise continue to add to the already high cost of living, as well as to make the locally produced goods less competitive in the regional and international markets.”

It is no big secret that one of the biggest problems of our manufacturers, that very sector, one of the six that they have identified for the diversification of the economy; that is creating all the good, sustainable jobs in this country, is under serious threat by the inefficiencies on the Port. After three and a half years, the Government has been able to do nothing about it. It is not just the manufacturers but it is the importation of food. The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is doing nothing about food security in this country so it has to come in through the Port.

Mr. Speaker, you would recall that since March 2003, full-page ads have been running for weeks about the Port of Port of Spain, with big headlines: “The Port of the Future.” Since 2003, we have been hearing about the Port to be disbanded

and out of which will come, at first, six new business units and then more recently from the then Minister of Works and Transport, the Port would be converted: broken up, disbanded and six business units would emerge.

The impression that I have and the impression that a lot of people in this country have is that if they do not like it; if they do not understand it; if they cannot control it; mash it up. If you do not like it; if you do not understand it; if you cannot control it, whatever the cost, mash it up and start over. Where the Port is concerned, mash it up and start over with six units. In the case of Caroni (1975) Limited, you mashed it up and you created the Sugar Manufacturing Company. In the supplemental today we have money for Caroni (1975) Limited. *[Interruption]* You mashed it up and you want to start over.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of workers from MTS marched the other day because they want to mash up MTS and “Cepepize” it. They want to create CEPEP units out of MTS.

They want to mash up NHA and create some new institution. I was not here in Parliament when the debate started on that.

Mr. Singh: They brought the wrong Bill!

Mr. G. Yetming: But I intend to hear what the Minister has to say about this new institution.

Mr. B. Panday: Jobs for the boys!

Mr. G. Yetming: Maybe there are valid reasons for it, but for the time being and until I have that understanding, Mr. Speaker, they are going to mash up the NHA. They are not going to fix it nor to reform it, but to mash it up and start something afresh.

We are still waiting to hear what will happen with BWIA. There was a suggestion some time ago to mash up BWIA and to start a new airline. Anything that they cannot understand, that they do not know how to deal with, that they cannot control, they want to mash up.

The Police Service Commission, you cannot control it; mash up and start something else; the Police Management Authority.

Mr. Ramnath: The Chief Justice, you cannot control him.

Mr. G. Yetming: You cannot control the Judiciary, mash it up; start with the Chief Justice.

There have been big complaints about the public service being unable to do

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what it is required to do so they created the Education Facilities Company, the National Infrastructure Development Company, Community Improvement Company; you want to mash up the public service and you are creating all those new institutions; those that you can control. You cannot control the public servant.

Mr. Speaker, while all of that is taking place, in the Auditor General's Reports for 2004, she reported that she sent an enquiry out to all government ministries and departments to enquire about persons on contract. Out of the forty-odd Government ministries and departments, 33 responded. The 33 departments that responded have a total of 2,500 persons on contract. In addition to this bloated public service that you cannot control and you want to mash up and create all these subsidiary companies you have, at least, 2,500 persons on contract. The worst part of the report is that the Auditor General said that for many of the contracts she has not seen the documents to know what is in them.

Mr. Singh: Job for the boys!

Mr. G. Yetming: Mr. Speaker, with respect to NBN; mash it up; do not fix it. Mash it up to create the Caribbean New Media Group.

Mr. Singh: Lee Sing! Lee Sing!

Mr. G. Yetming: They paid millions for VSEP to NBN. The start-up cost for this Caribbean New Media Group is \$71.5 million, according to the supplemental. They have come today for \$24 million of that \$71 million for this Caribbean New Media Group. The most interesting thing about that is that Minister Saith reported in the *Guardian* dated December 17, 2004, another incredible statement, another ludicrous statement—

Hon. Member: "Lucridous."

Mr. Singh: What did the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West say?

Mr. G. Yetming: "Lucridous". The Minister said about the new media group responding to the media who were asking him questions:

"If in two to three years it is still not commercially viable and cannot work, then you are free to look at something else."

Mr. Speaker, I am flabbergasted that we in this country could sit and listen to that nonsense!

Mr. Ramnath: And to listen to that fool!

Mr. G. Yetming: That you break up NBN and create a new entity. What that statement would suggest to me is that you did not do a feasibility study, you did not do any projections, you did nothing and you are now saying that if in two to three years it is still not commercially viable and cannot work then we would look at something else. You do not care about the \$71 million start-up cost and how many other millions would go on top of that in the two to three years, but this is the attitude of the Government; when you cannot control it; when you do not know what to do with it; when you do not understand it, mash it up and start over. When you start over and it does not work, mash it up again. That is the way! That is the way!

Hon. Member: Patrick Manning mash it up! [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. G. Yetming: So this is how we spend public money.

Mr. Speaker, when on this supplementary of \$3 billion we go line by line; each line, when you look at it in isolation it looks reasonable; it makes sense. But looked at from a more critical perspective, looked at overall, there is absolute madness going on in this country with the people's money.

Mr. Ramnath: Hang them, man; that is how you will succeed.

Mr. G. Yetming: Mr. Speaker, I have quoted Minister Saith, at least twice, making some incredible statements and while I am on him I want to talk a bit about the Integrity Commission.

Mr. Ramnath: I have not filed my—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. G. Yetming: —because there is \$17.3 million in the Supplementary Bill before us for the Integrity Commission. They were originally allocated \$10 million for the year; they have come for an additional \$17 million, so the Integrity Commission will have \$27.3 million for the year. Mind you, in the Auditor General's Report on the accounts for 2004, they were allocated \$11.5 million and they spent \$4.3 million. The Integrity Commission last year spent \$4.3 million. This year with an original allocation of \$10 million over the \$4.3 million, they are now going to spend \$27.3 million.

Mr. Ramnath: This is to investigate Panday you know. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Every cent! [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. G. Yetming: But, Mr. Speaker, what are we getting for this money? I recognize that the Integrity Commission is an independent body appointed by the

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President and we are not supposed to interfere with them. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to know what they are doing.

Mr. Ramnath: The President is not independent; the President is a PNM appointee. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. G. Yetming: I think that if we both have an interest in integrity, we both would have an interest in how that Integrity Commission performs. Because you believe that there is corruption, you say let us create an institution and you pass legislation to say that this body would prevent corruption in this country. What has been the evidence?

2.30 p.m.

On one hand, you created this institution for which you are spending money in the expectation that corruption would go down, but instead, it is going up. Let us use a very simplistic example.

If within this Chamber we are losing 100 pencils a day and we decide we are going to set up an anti-theft unit; we set it up and we give them all kinds of devices and procedures, and instead of losing 100 pencils a day, or the pencils being lost moved from 100, going up from 100 to 200 pencils a day. The point is, that there is little evidence to suggest that the Integrity Commission is succeeding in its work, whether it is because it is not doing its work, whether it is because it is being hamstrung in doing its work, the point is [*Interruption*] that is ludicrous—the Integrity Commission, and both sides should be concerned about it, assuming that what we are believing now to be so is not so. Both sides should be concerned that this Integrity Commission appears not to be doing its work because it is unsuccessful in reducing the perception and reality of corruption in this country.

If I were the Government, using what they have been doing with the National Broadcasting Network (NBN) and so forth, when they do not work, mash it up and start over.

Take the Anti-crime Unit—we had the Salaries Review Commission Report coming with salary for the new Anti-crime Unit. You created an Anti-crime Unit putting-powered, high-priced people, your expectation as with the expectation of the Integrity Commission, and the expectation of the general public out there is that this unit therefore will help reduce crime. If it is not being successful, I would expect that the Government will mash it up. Quite frankly, the Government

should be calling upon this Anti-crime Unit—they created it. They should be told that if we do not see a reduction in crime in specific areas by specific quantities within a two-year, three-year period, they will go home. They ought to be setting standards.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. G. Yetming: Thank you, Mr. Speaker for the extension. The point on the Integrity Commission I want to raise, which I expect would be of interest to all Members of the House, has to do with part of the reason for the supplemental for the Integrity Commission.

In the increase of \$17 million for the Integrity Commission, part of it is for development programme of \$15 million and of that \$15 million part of it is for, and I quote:

The development of communications capability for the conduct of public education programmes to bring into the national agenda the issues of integrity and ethics.

The Integrity Commission intends to go on a communication programme to talk to us about integrity and ethics, and I want to comment on that, and I want to talk, in commenting on that, on blind trust.

Mr. Speaker, a blind trust, without getting into the integrity legislation, is a temporary divestment of some or all of your assets according to the Integrity Act, into a qualified trust company. So that a person getting into public life would take his or her assets and temporarily transfer them into this trust, which trust would be managed, ought to be managed by a qualified trust company and that qualified trust company should have absolutely no contact with the individual so that the trust company would act independent and without recourse to the individual.

What happens is that when that person comes out of public life, the assets, the trust is terminated and the assets revert to the individual and any individual would expect the value of the assets over a period of time to have appreciated. The question I want to raise today, is whether in the context of Trinidad and Tobago, in particular a small society, blind trust can really be blind, and whether people are not hiding behind the legality that we provided to them here but refusing to acknowledge there is an ethical issue involved also? So that when the Integrity

Commission talks about coming for money—\$15 million, part of that \$15 million to develop a communications campaign to deal with integrity and ethics, I want the Integrity Commission to tell me whether it is ethical, while legal, for a person in public life to put an asset, particularly an operating service company, into a blind trust over an area of business for which he has responsibility.

I want to give an example. The reason Dr. Saith reminded me about this is that some time ago—I am not going to deal with current issues; let that take its course. When Dr. Saith was previously a minister and he put a company as I understood it, which owned a mall in severe debt into a blind trust and he used a qualified trust company, Scotia Bank Trust, he put an impaired asset into this blind trust and expected this blind trust without reference to him to deal with it. But the bank that dealt with the blind trust on that impaired asset was the First Citizens Bank, 100 per cent owned by the Government over which he had control by virtue of the appointment of the board. So that while he did it right with respect to the blind trust and the law, to me, he did it all wrong by virtue of the fact that he had some degree of control through his ministerial position and Cabinet of the management and directorship of the First Citizens Bank.

Mr. Manning: I thank the hon. Member for St. Joseph for giving way. Is the Member saying that Dr. Saith had control over the appointment of the board of First Citizens Bank in a situation where he was one of 20 Ministers in the Cabinet? Is that what the Member is saying? And, in fact, and in circumstances where the chairman of the committee and board appointments was not Dr. Saith?

Mr. G. Yetming: Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with theory. Let us deal with the practice of it. We could have—I am simply saying that apart from the legality there is the question of ethics and I deliberately wish to refrain from going into Maranatha because as far I am concerned there is something very ethically wrong with that transaction; [*Desk thumping*] maybe not legally, and that is not to say that he met the conditions of a qualified trust but there are ethics involved. When BP came out in defence and said “we acted in accordance with the law”, they were actually correct. But the question for BP: Is it ethically correct knowing of the ownership of Maranatha, knowing of the blind trust—because I believe they said they were aware of it or they had a copy of it—to deal with an asset belonging to the Minister, giving it business? Because that business, if it succeeds would redound to his benefit when that trust is terminated. And they do not wink an eye to say, we gave them some contracts. It would not surprise me.

I think the Member for Caroni East gave this example. It would not surprise

me, if the Member for Diego Martin East with his stadium, in construction, an engineering firm, put this company to a blind trust, appoint his wife as trustee and then start to build the \$800 million complex in San Fernando.

Mr. Manning: “What wrong with that?”

Mr. G. Yetming: “Plenty wrong with it.” Our view, how we are being seen by the eyes of the world with the Transparency International Report on corruption perception is bad in spite of the fact that we have an Integrity Commission with plenty teeth, because if you look at their responsibilities they do not have to wait on anybody to refer anything to them. One of their mandates:

“The Commission shall—

- (g) Examine the practices and procedures of public bodies, in order to facilitate the discovery of corrupt practices.”

Once they get a hint of corrupt practice they could move in.

But our image in the eyes of the world—and we have, Mr. Speaker, on the supplemental a figure of \$11.4 million, small amount, but I will make the comment that for the High Commission’s residence and office in London, where a total of \$23 million is being spent to renovate and repair the residence and office, including as I understand it from newspaper reports swimming pool costing \$1.6 million. I do not have, and we do not have a fundamental problem with the expenditure of moneys for repairs and maintenance. In fact, in the Auditor General’s Report for last year, the Auditor General made reference to the fact that a site visit was made to a number of locations externally. She reported on the residence in Ottawa and she reported dirty drapes and rotting windows. She spoke about the residence for the Counsul General in Toronto; she spoke about the High Commissioner’s residence in Kingston. She says—not in her language—it was shameful, so that while we talk about helping out with Tsunami, \$12 million and helping out with the trade the facility for the Eastern Caribbean and so forth, we have, through the Government’s representative offices in Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto and I am sure in other locations in the world, residences and offices that one would consider to be shameful. So that while you want to spend \$850 million for a sport facility which most people in the country are seriously questioning, particularly in the context of the existing five stadia and the lack of proper maintenance being provided on those new stadia right now, we have broken-down residences for our representatives abroad.

Mr. Speaker, God is smiling on Trinidad and Tobago. He is giving us every opportunity with any amount of money it appears that we want but, how are we showing our gratitude to him for the blessing he is bestowing on us?

I had an informal poll done; one in North, Central, and one in South. People of all walks of life, all races were asked. I cannot say for political persuasion because that was not asked of the individuals when they were questioned but the question was a simple one: Think of the Government and could you tell us in three words what comes first to mind? The words that were most given were: incompetent, wasteful, clueless, vindictive and spiteful—this poll was done a couple days ago so I can see where vindictive and spiteful will come from, indiscriminate, and now increasingly corrupt. It is clear to me that this \$3 billion is not going to help them in their cause, and it is increasingly clear to me based on the feedback out there which, I am sure they know, because their own people are telling them it is time for a change.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I did catch the Member for Barataria/San Juan. If it is that the Member is prepared to give way, I am not sure. You are not. Okay, proceed.

Dr. Fuad Khan (*Barataria/San Juan*): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to join in the debate. Once again by this Supplementary Appropriation Bill, we see the movement into the creation of a welfare state.

The Member for St. Joseph has quite accurately shown in a total delivery the different levels of incompetence that have been foisted upon us since December 2001.

I always go back to that fateful day when the government of the day was chosen because of certain watchwords: morality, spiritually and the like. One thing which was quite certain was that those watchwords, in the reason for the decision, were definitely the only reasons for a decision, but as a result of that, this Government, during that period got about \$20 billion to spend based on a budget created by the United National Congress. During that year what came about and what was seen was the amount of money that was transferred across without parliamentary approval to the school grants, NEDCO, CEPEP and the like. And all of this was just vote gathering and the start of what they call a voter-padding movement.

Mr. Speaker, this Supplementary Appropriation Bill speaks a lot about small things, some recurrent expenditure which takes up a whole part of it, back pay as the Member for St. Joseph said. It also shows in it a cover-up of a lot of corruption-type elements which are being justified in certain actions and I will get into it, the Scarborough Hospital.

A while ago I quoted from an article from the *T&T Review* dated June 07, 2004 by Gregory Mc Guire. "Offshore boom, onshore bust". He was saying we are doing well offshore but we are utilizing that fund to create a welfare state that existed from 1974 to 1983 when the then Williams government took that oil money and, as Manley indicated quite well, it went through this country like a dose of salts. We are doing the same thing because a lot of this recurrent expenditure has no productivity, and no productive movement and the path of an economy and the way an economy moves, it is dependent on the leaders of that country. And it is unfortunate that our country has not seen it fit yet to mature into an electorate that deals with performance and issues and not *mauvais langue*.

Mr. Speaker, continuing to give handouts as they have done since 2001, and perpetuated at each level calling it a social delivery response. I remember the then Member for San Fernando East when questioned early o'clock said he was going to rehabilitate the prisons, he was going to rehabilitate this and that and that is the social part of it. And, it takes me back to what I have been saying for the last three years about our road towards Cuba. The mechanism of approach is going that way. I maintain it and I will continue to say it until people understand that the only way out of this mess, is to register and vote them out.

This article indicates that we were:

"Blessed with a seemingly unlimited supply of economic rents from offshore, Government has been able to pursue many of the socioeconomic initiatives announced in the budget as well as others that were extra budgetary. The accelerated housing programme seems to be its flagship project. The initial target of 10,000 homes per year is regarded as highly ambitious and the Government seems to have tempered its expectations. Several social relief programmes (CEPEP, HYPE, YAPA etc) have been the main targets for wealth redistribution and have had increased allocation."

What do we see in this Supplemental Appropriation Bill, \$151 million to be given to gangsters of URP. As simple as that. URP is a programme whereby money is put into the local government area for whoever controls it at that time and people have gangs doing whatever work. The work is not checked properly, the supplies are not checked properly and the payments are made based on delivery notes. As a result of this, you have the proliferation of the "Dons", in the area creating names, and the Member for Caroni East always says it: "Jennifer Lopez," and you end up with ghost gangs. These ghost gangs just do as they have said in the courthouses and today, three persons were freed as a result of a certain misdemeanour and out of that came the level of corruption in the URP, the level of

ghost gangs, gangsterism. And who control the URP? It has been said that the majority of the Muslimeen controls the URP. And during the trial of Small it came about with heroine, gun running and different runnings and now we have these allegations.

So when we look at \$151 million being given to URP, we are increasing the criminal activity, the gun running, and the drug smuggling in our country today. There are no checks and balances although the Minister who failed in the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment was handed the portfolio of Local Government. He says he has it under control. He has been saying this for the last two years that the URP is under control and there are no ghost gangs, there is no corruption, but every year it is being shown that \$1 million was seen somewhere in the Ministry of Local Government.

When we look at these levels of social handouts and social giveaway and it is appropriated for in this Bill. The article goes on:

“Other key initiatives implemented include free drugs under the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme, textbook grant, the dismantling of Caroni, and several bailouts of BWIA, salary increase for most several branches of the public service.”

We see it again.

“These disbursements have contributed to the expansion of output and unemployment in Government and other non-tradeable sectors on the onshore economy. Sustainability depends on the continuous injections by Government which in turn assume that these resources will continue to flow from offshore ad infinitum.”

This was written on June 07, 2004 based on the previous activity, and I have always said that in 1965 when the PNM came into office Eric Williams created a movement saying “morality in public affairs”. That was one of his statements. And secondly, it is time to take back from the colonial “massas” and give out. He created a handout, a welfare society among the supporters. I will say something and it would ride roughshod based on the readings.

Dr. Eric Williams never associated with the people who voted for him. He associated with the country club people when he could not have been a person in the country club. But as a result of that he utilized the “give outs” to the masses and this is the same structure of the PNM. That is what they know. They are a Government that is accustomed to getting party affiliation and nepotism based on handouts.

The other governments that have come after them or had displaced them for a short while were governments who took the reins after the economy had dropped to almost nothing and they were given the mandate to fix the economy: the NAR government, the first UNC government, the second UNC government and as a result of that, the chain of handouts and rather what was broken.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, one thing we must say about that Government is that it has learned quite well from 1956 when Dr. Eric Williams was able to displace the people who won. It did not win the election fair and square in 1956. The colonial people of Albert Gomes won the election, but they were able to convince the British people then—Forbes Burnham did it as well—that these were communists; that they were letting the communists into the country. That is what they did. It is in the history books. As a result of that, they were able to take the government and, once again, they did it in 1961 with the voting machines.

I will show you, Mr. Speaker, how an election can be rigged using electronic systems. There is \$10 million in the Elections and Boundaries Commission for that. In 1961, and again in 2001, they were handed a government. At the end of the day, there is the welfare system and the propaganda. They are able to do the propaganda and sully one's character so well, that they can displace a government. That is what they are good at. We see it clearly in the Ministry of Health, with the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West. We are having health in this country by advertisement. As a result of that, they have learned the propaganda of displacement. We have a welfare system, a welfare state, give-outs and handouts. Do not let people think for themselves and propagandize it.

This expenditure is just a mirror image of what has been going on for years and we need to have a mature electorate that look on and realize that they are being kept deliberately on the lower rung of the social ladder by the PNM Government, so that they cannot think for themselves and vote them into office. Every single item of this expenditure has an element of handout.

I go on again in this article:

“An entirely different story emerges in the onshore-non-energy productive sector. Slow growth or stagnation is evident in both Agriculture and Manufacturing. The Tourism subsector seems to be on the upswing with the growth in arrivals in Tobago.”

The Minister of Tourism is boasting that no matter how much crime there is, people still come to Tobago in those large boats. He is counting each person on the boat.

“The President of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association confesses that the T&T manufacturing sector is shrinking due to unfair competition from cheap imports. Critical counteractive measures such as Anti-dumping legislation remain in abeyance, while the Trade Minister pursues the headquarters of the FTAA as his top priority.”

I think he realizes he is beaten on that.

We go again into the system. What are we able to extract out of our expenditure? In any household, if you expend money, you want to see results on something. In previous governments, when they expended money, they were able to raise the profile and become economic challengers to the outside world. We hope that we can become an economic challenger, not a social country.

If Singapore had gone along that line, it would have been like Tobago. It is the same size as Tobago. Lee Quan Yu, in those days, realized that if you do not produce you do not eat, so they ended up with a movement that raised the profile of Singapore. Our system was there at December 24, 2001. We ended up with a flip of government; from an economic moving government to one of a social handout government. That is the philosophy of both sides—just a philosophy. I think that the philosophy in this day and age needs to be changed. Like everything else, times have progressed. Management styles need to be looked at and changed for the benefit of the whole.

During the Finance Committee session, the Member for Caroni Central asked about the budgeted contract cost of the Scarborough Hospital. The response is that the total budgeted cost for the construction of the Scarborough Hospital is \$195 million. To date, the expenditure on that hospital is \$179.2 million. On the budgeted cost, there is only \$50 million for completion.

Mr. Speaker, the Tobago House of Assembly is being given close to \$100 million for the shortfall as of now. We have asked questions in this Parliament on the expenditure of the Scarborough Hospital and it took about three months for us to be given an answer and, when answered, bare facts were given and we were not able to look at the facts themselves. We asked if there was any expenditure on cost overruns based on pilferage and that was unanswered.

Mr. Speaker, I take you back to the time when the Member for Caroni East indicated to this House that there were subversive activities occurring at the site. In this article by Suzannne Mills in the *Newsday* Opinion, it shows that there were rumours circulating where material and labour were moving away from the Scarborough Hospital into specific areas. Unfortunately—I am not so sure; maybe the Member for St. Joseph could help me there—that may be another blind trust.

It shows quite clearly that the contractor at the site and also the designer, or something like that, are one and the same person. Perception in politics shows where it may or may not be so. The article by Miss Mills indicated that there was another important problem with the involvement of the Minister in land development—conflict of interest because of his Cabinet portfolio. First, he was Minister of Planning and Development and now he is Minister of Housing. It was alleged that he granted permission to himself for this project.

We now have to give to the Scarborough Hospital \$100 million. If we look at it, it is not even one-third complete. The budgeted allocation is \$195 million. To date expenditure has been \$179 million. We are into cost overruns and the contractor who is being used is the same contractor who, during the UNC tenure was making a lot of allegations, together with two of his friends from the Joint Consultative Council, Planning and Associates and someone else, and they were creating a certain aura around the government of that day indicting corruption, which has not yet been proven. Yet, we have found ourselves in a system where this one person is handling the Scarborough Hospital and other UDeCott projects and nobody is making a sound anymore. Is that not a bit unusual, Mr. Speaker? When they made the noise in the early days, they were saying a lot of negatives, but now things are coming back to haunt them and the cost overruns seen in this Appropriation Bill have demonstrated that there is possible corruption in that project.

The Ministry of Health, in section 28, has asked for \$419 million. In the recurrent expenditure, it has been indicated that there is a greater demand for drugs, in the amount of \$10,334,000, as a result of the expansion of the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP) to include all citizens. Mr. Speaker, I find it a bit strange that the pharmacies are almost completed and by their being completed, CDAP has to be expanded.

Initially, in the budget debate, this is what the Member for San Fernando East said:

“Mr. Speaker, the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme that provides free medication for persons afflicted with any number of Chronic Diseases was

initiated in October 2003. This programme has been highly successful and over 50,000 citizens have been benefiting from this programme to-date. During 2004 the scope of the programme was expanded to include Arthritis, Asthma and mental depression. In November 2004, the programme was made universal so that all citizens are now able to access free medication through this programme.

Mr. Speaker, the expansion of the scope and legitimacy of the CDAP Programme, by removing the age restrictions now means that over 500,000 of our citizens will benefit at a cost of \$50 million.”

That was done during the budget debate. Now they have asked to increase the movement of CDAP by \$10 million plus. The Minister of Health, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, has been on record in the last couple months indicating that the suppliers to the Ministry of Health are tardy. It appears that when you create a need, you create something to fill it. I am not saying anything derogatory or alleging corruption, but coming into the finance committee and seeing the increase in CDAP, is he going to increase the amount of drugs and the number of people benefiting—because they are benefiting already. Who will benefit? I would like some answers. Are any new drugs to be added to this?

What is happening is that there are many generic drugs on it and people have indicated that many drugs for cancer treatment could be placed on it and have not been. Also, there is an increase in the number of persons who need dialysis and other medical treatment, who are financially unable to meet the monthly costs. The sum of \$4,400,000 will be put aside for increases in the number of persons who need dialysis and other medical treatment and who are financially unable to meet the monthly costs. Is it only for dialysis or other medical treatment?

I will tell you why I ask that, Mr. Speaker. In the budget debate, once again, the Member for San Fernando East said:

“In order to increase accessibility of renal dialysis services to the general population, we will be providing, before January 1, 2005 two renal dialysis treatment centres...”

[*Interruption*] Look at it! I can still read.

“one in the north and one in the south, each providing treatment for 200 persons. This will be supplemented by a Renal Transplant Surgery Programme to provide renal surgery at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex at Mount Hope.

The Charitable Cataract Surgery Programme, in conjunction with the Ophthalmology Society of Trinidad and Tobago, will continue to provide surgery to patients on waiting lists...

The Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex will be expanded to include facilities for the treatment of cataract, glaucoma and a dedicated theatre for all types of eye surgery, as well as a full Cardiac Centre performing increased heart surgery.”

[*Interruption*] I am not against that at all. I would love to have that. I am saying that he mentioned that it would occur and they are appropriating for something else and are asking for more money for something they have already gotten.

The dialysis centres have not been established. What has been happening is that private concerns have been receiving lots of money for doing dialysis of public patients. The Minister can refute that. Their people have set up systems, firms and companies outside of the system—and some also belong to the system—in order to attract dialysis patients. They are able to do it because of contacts in the hospitals. It has also been done with the other types of surgeries that the Minister has been propagandizing and advertising. I would like the Minister to say how many cataract surgeries have been done in private and in public institutions.

What has been coming out is that people who have set up companies are doing many medical surgeries outside the system and they are being paid for by the Ministry. This is where much of the North West money will go, in addition to where the Member for St. Joseph has said. As a result of that, the public health institutions themselves are not advancing.

We should have a system where there are proper tendering processes and, at the end of the day, an upgrade of the system in the hospital, utilizing private insurances, et cetera, in the hospitals, to develop the public hospitals, rather than friends and well-wishers and certain financiers of the ruling party being able to access the money for surgeries.

Unfortunately, people are happy that they get things done, but one has to ask if the mechanism of how it gets done is correct. Who benefits? Like CEPEP, the friends and supporters of the PNM are once again being given priority in this regard. We have been promised a full cardiac centre in Mount Hope, which we have been trying to work on so that the Government does not pay an arm and a

leg for cardiac surgery for our citizens. That has not come, but money has been paid for it.

The sum of \$288 million is being given for the payment of PAYE deduction by the North West Regional Health Authority for the period June 2002 to June 2004. Outstanding payments to creditors include T&TEC, MTS and WASA. Funds are also required to facilitate payment of incentive professional clothing and special psychiatric benefits to doctors and nurses. Could the Minister indicate what psychiatric benefits he will give to the doctors and nurses for \$288 million?

I could swear—I looked it up before I came; I could not find it—that the Minister of Health indicated that the \$110 million or the amount of money that was missing that was not paid into the PAYE system was found. He said there was nothing missing. How could he come now to appropriate for money that he said was not missing?

Also, the sum of \$102 million for the commissioning of new wards and the introduction of free services at the Mount Hope Medical Sciences Complex has significantly contributed to increased expenditure by the North West Regional Health Authority. These developments created a shortfall in the budgetary allocation. Was it not the Member for Caroni Central, the previous minister, who indicated this to the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West when he was doing it in his budget debate? He said there would be no shortfall. They only got about \$25 million and they would handle that? Now he is coming for \$102 million, in addition to \$288 million?

I go again to the budget statement of the Member for San Fernando East. This is the last part of the budget statement last year:

“There exists in this country an inequitable and pernicious system whereby residents of the Mt. Hope and surrounding areas receive free medical treatment at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, while other citizens have to pay. We shall put a stop to that. With effect from the first of January 2005, all medical services including the use of the medical facilities offered at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex will be free to all nationals of Trinidad and Tobago.”

Mr. Speaker, do you remember that we questioned that? When we questioned that, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West indicated that all facilities and all usage at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex would be free. When we indicated that the cost factor of that would be immense, he said that the Government had enough money to handle it. I stand here to be corrected.

I want the Minister to say if all the people who go to the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, who are nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, receive free treatment in all departments. I have reason to believe that when people enter that hospital with letters from, let us say private practitioners, they are told that they have to pay for all services. They pay for labs; they pay for MRIs; they pay for CT scans; they pay for a lot of things. In order to enter that institution, you have now to go to a public health institution and request from the doctor a letter to go to the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex. In this budget debate, it was told that all would be free.

Subsequent to that, the Minister, for some strange reason, after we asked our questions and he indicated that it would not be so, indicated that it was only patients coming from a public institution. This was not promised to the people in this budget. This is an example of double speak, when a prime minister could stand in this Parliament and mislead the House like that. This is misleading the House.

They have never come back to the House and indicated that the medical services would not be free to certain people and free to others. The Minister must have said that outside. In this honourable House, where people purport, by means of rejecting one of our colleagues that integrity is one of the highest things, we want integrity. If as a result of misbehaviour in this House, we needed to sanction a Member, why did the Prime Minister not come back and say that he had not decided to give all nationals free services at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex? That, Mr. Speaker, goes into the realm of misleading the House.

Lastly, the sum of \$14,266,000 is for shortfall and operating costs in the Eastern and South West Regional Health Authorities. I ask the Minister to indicate whether he is aware that certain people in the health sector, especially the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, are making sure to block certain advancements in such a manner that they can then say that they did not have the goods and the services available, or the correct medical tests. As a result of that, they are funneling patients into private systems in the same Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex.

Many people have been going to the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex expecting free treatment—and we have been sending them there—but for some strange reason, they are being told that there are long waiting lists to get surgery or CT scans, but that they could get it if they pay for it. There are certain people who indicate to these patients that this system does not have X, Y and Z, but that

the private wing has it. I also want an investigation into what level moneys are being paid to private movements in that system and how much is being paid because programmes that are supposed to be advancing are not being advanced as a result of that.

I turn to the Ministry of Housing. Additional funds are being given to the accelerated housing programme—\$160,840,000. We have been saying time and again that the concept of constitutional reform and proportional representation is needed in our country for equality of treatment. The word “equality” seems not to be in the vocabulary of the Government. There appears to be in this country a serious level of political discrimination. If you look at the shenanigans of the housing programme, it takes your mind back to 1961, when voting machines were introduced and how the government won that election.

I will tell you why. I worked on those voting machines—well, at a polling station at that time. I always remembered that the number of votes cast was more than when you added up the two or three amounts of votes.

Mr. Breaux: Could the Member give way? Mr. Speaker, I did not hear him properly. Did he say that he worked on a voting machine in 1961? Is that correct?

Dr. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, I clarified that and said that I worked at a polling station that had a voting machine. I did not work as a worker. I was there and I saw what happened.

Mr. Speaker: I think he is asking you to clarify the year.

Dr. F. Khan: 1961. I was there. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, not 1961, I think it was in the 1970s. My uncle was a candidate for the Workers and Farmers Party in those days under Mr. Panday. When we tallied the number of votes cast, the machine gave a total vote, but it was more than what was given for the two sides.

Before the Member for La Brea threw me off, I was saying that the accelerated housing programme could be likened to that system where unfair advantage is being used for political gain. In Baratania/San Juan, many houses have been built and one still wonders how the keys were given, who were the beneficiaries of these houses, how they were given and what method was used to give them.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, our electoral system has, in a way, been—I want to use the word “corrupted”. It is the only word I can think about. I was privy to, it could be allegations—one of my campaign managers worked for the PNM in the 2000

elections and I was told that polling cards were hand-delivered to people in PNM strongholds such as Gonzales and Laventille and they came to vote in San Juan/Barataria and St. Joseph and that is how the PNM was able to maintain their position. I am mentioning this because there has been a clarion call for proportional representation. No matter where you build houses in this country, anybody could vote based on where the houses are.

The Member for Diego Martin East indicated that they want more constituencies. We call for no constituencies and make the whole country one constituency. In doing so, you will remove the bogie of voter-padding, nepotism and unfair practices by means of distribution of houses.

The Member for Point-a-Pierre, on her programme, indicated that in the Tarouba area, one wonders who were given the keys to these houses. As the Member of Parliament she does not know who is on the list. As a result of this, houses in the Accelerated Housing Programme are being built with money from the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago.

I now take you to a case in London where Dame Shirley Porter, a conservative Tory representative, who utilized her position to give Chief Counsel houses to supporters of the Tory Government. She was found out and had to flee to the Middle East. She was trying to return to England and was told that she had to cough up £130 million with interest for what she has done. It is only in this country one could voter-pad in marginal and other seats, to benefit their political ends and, at the end of the day, the country has to pay for it. The country has to pay, how much? It has to pay \$163 million to the Accelerated Housing Programme. They are buying 135 housing units from the Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago (UDEcCott).

Mr. Speaker, we recently got a handout from the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company. What struck me was that the Director/CEO of Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company—I think the Member for St. Joseph said that—is also the Chairman of UDEcCott. When you look at that—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Bereaux: Director and CEO?

Dr. F. Khan: Yes that is what is there. Mr. Calder Hart is the Director/Chief Executive Officer of the TTMF. It is there, check it. It was laid in this House last week or the week before. Mr. Calder Hart.

Mr. Bereaux: He is not the Chief Executive Officer.

Dr. F. Khan: Take a look at the document that was laid here. The plot thickens. As a result of that, we have a system of handouts in the URP and NEDCO because 4,000 people were given NEDCO loans at a cost of \$76 million. The sum of \$28 million has been repaid and the sum of over \$40 million has not been accounted for and will never be accounted for.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. F. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NEDCO loan payment of \$75 million has been paid out and the sum of \$28 million has been returned. There is a shortfall of \$43 million. There are people we know who were given loans and it was not accounted or documented.

I want to read something from the Representation of the People Act. This is section 98(1), Undue influence.

“A person is guilty of corrupt practice who is guilty of undue influence.

(2) A person is guilty of undue influence who-

(a) directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf, makes use of or threatens to make use of any force, violence or restraint, inflicts or threatens to inflict, by himself or any other person, any temporal or spiritual injury, damage, harm or loss upon or against any person in order to induce or compel that person to vote or refrain from voting at any election...”

It continues. Section 96 states:

“(5) An elector is guilty of bribery who, before or during an election, directly or indirectly by himself or by any other person on his behalf, receives, agrees to receive, or contracts for any money, gift loan or valuable consideration, office, place or employment for himself or for any other person for voting or agreeing to vote or for refraining or agreeing to refrain from voting.

- (6) A person is guilty of bribery who, after an election directly or indirectly by himself or any other person on his behalf, receives any money or valuable consideration on account of any person having voted or refrained from voting or having induced any other person to vote or refrain from voting.”

Mr. Speaker, the NEDCO Programme and the CEPEP programme, filled with supporters of the PNM, were given an unjust jump in front of proper tendering procedures. That could be considered valuable consideration. As a result of that, whoever gave these loans and contracts—what is being created is a private voting army for the next election. This private army of CEPEP and NEDCO people and the other 128 social services—because there is inequality in its distribution, we have been calling for the implementation of the Equal Opportunity Act which has fallen on deaf ears.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The court said certain things about it. Why do we not bring the amendments and fix it in this House so one can understand that if there is unequal opportunity in this country, it could be taken to court and people would have a different sense of being, when whatever government is in place?

As it stands now, this lack of equal distribution, as promised by our Constitution, has shown that the Representation of the People Act has been breached. As a result of that, people are getting valuable consideration of houses, NEDCO loans, CEPEP contracts and it goes on. This basically indicates that the law has been broken. Why is it that the law could be broken and one set of people is being attacked and pushed aside, and when somebody is breaching the Representation of the People Act nothing is being done? We call for an urgent passage of amendments of the equal opportunity legislation and implementation in our country, so that those people who are being disfranchised, because of their political affiliation—not so much their racial affiliation—will be able to take whatever mechanism or legal action to get justice in the country. One cannot write the amount of money that was given to NEDCO, the Ministry of Local Government, the Unemployment Relief Programme or the Ministry of Housing and expect it to fall in the correct hands if that degree of nepotism and cronyism is being exhibited. People may stand and say that is not so but the figures have shown it.

When 400 persons apply for CEPEP contracts and 110 are chosen and from that, over 90 could be identified as people who worked for the PNM and gave the PNM something in the last election, one has to look at it properly.

Hon. Member: One hundred per cent!

Dr. F. Khan: I see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you are shaking your head.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, I was telling the Member to stay quiet.

Dr. F. Khan: I thought you were agreeing with me.

I want to touch on the Elections and Boundaries Commission. I see it has been given a revised provision of \$10 million for the upgrading of the electronic voter registration system. I want to caution the Government on something I obtained from the website, www.informationclearinghouse.info/article. It states:

“News that you won’t find on CNN.

How To Rig An Election...

This story cuts to the bone the machinery of democracy...Democracy is the only protection we have against despotic and arbitrary government, and his story is deeply disturbing.

Imagine if you will that you are a political interest group that wishes to control forevermore the levers of power. Imagine further that you know you are likely to implement a highly unpopular political agenda, and you do not wish to be removed by a ballot driven backlash.

One way to accomplish this outcome would be to adopt the Mugabe, (Zimbabwe) or Hun Sen (Cambodia) approach. You agree to hold elections, but simultaneously arrest, imprison and beat your opponents and their supporters. You stuff ballot boxes, disenfranchise voters who are unlikely to vote for you, distort electoral boundaries...”

That is for the Member for Diego Martin East.

“and provide insufficient polling stations in areas full of opposition supporters.”

Shall I read it again, Mr. Deputy Speaker? All right.

“However as so many despots have discovered, eventually such techniques always fail—often violently. Hence, if you are a truly ambitious political dynasty you have to be a bit more subtle about your methods.

Imagine then if it were possible to somehow subvert the voting process itself in such a way that you could steal elections without anybody proving.

Imagine for example if you could:

- secure control of the companies that make voting machines and voting counting software;
- centralise voting systems and politicize the supervision;
- legislate for the adoption of such systems throughout your domain, and provide large amounts of money for the purchase of these systems;
- establish systems of vote counting that effectively prevent anybody on the ground...level...election—at a booth...level...
- get all the major media to sign up...removing the risk of exit- polling showing up your shenanigans.

And imagine further you:

- install a backdoor, or numerous backdoors in the vote counting systems

On the basis of polling you could pick your marginal seats and thus keep...to a bare minimum.

Such a system would enable you to minimise the risks of discovery of your activities.

- Each voting precinct (or booth) could be fitted with electronic voting systems, optical scanning systems or the more modern touchscreen electronic voting machines;

At the close of play each day...”

It goes on about politicizing the voting process.

When I read about the electronic voter registration systems, I became a little alarmed and decided to bring it to the attention of this House and hopefully that is not the way that things are going to go. We have already seen a couple of the approaches by Hun Sen and Mugabe about holding elections, about arrests, imprisonment and beating your opponents and supporters. It may sound ludicrous and it may sound funny but if we need to maintain democracy in our country, the Opposition or the alternative government has to be eternally vigilant and bring to force these types of methods that people in power—because of the Constitution that allows that level of dictatorship that could emerge from our Constitution. It could emerge to such an extent that this could occur. The powers that be may say: “I do not know about it. I never interfered in that process. I did not do this.” Mr. Speaker, the system allows that although we may have separation of powers, the powers may not be separated.

I caution our voting population to put aside the racial talk and watch the political discrimination talk. I would not bother to read this: “Racism at PNM meeting”. This is where somebody was accused of saying that— I would not say it because it is bringing down the PNM. It is there for those who want to read it. That type of racism that is exhibited in this country; subtle racism; but the higher point of political discrimination, because of party affiliation. Instead of bringing an Appropriation Bill to give handouts and create a bigger welfare state and a lower productive state, we call upon the Government to maintain the level of democracy and bring and implement as soon as possible the Equal Opportunity legislation.

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

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Patrick Manning):
Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a relatively brief intervention in this debate on the Report of the Finance Committee, following the very spirited contribution of the distinguished Member for St. Joseph, who, in his contribution before this honourable House, threw caution to the wind when he made two assertions; the first being that the Government had done nothing in its three years; secondly, where he condemned the Government's approach in utilizing new arrangements to ensure the execution of our very ambitious Development Programme.

I had the pleasure of holding the Office of Prime Minister between the years 1991—1995. In that time, we embarked on a very comprehensive and extensive programme of reform of the public service—public service reform—because we were convinced that, in the context of the object that we set for ourselves as a people and as a government, new arrangements were required to be able to carry out the business of the State of Trinidad and Tobago. It is well known, not just here, in jurisdictions that have a similar system of government such as ours, that because of the historical antecedence—because of the fact that the public service in these countries have been established as an administration and not an executing agency and because they were designed in a pre-colonial period to serve the requirements of a colonial system of government, and subsequent to the independence of this country in similar circumstances—the governments have not been able to reform the public service while levels of revenue have increased over time and, therefore, levels of expenditure in the context of a development programme, a public service designed in colonial times for essentially colonial objectives, was being called upon in the new circumstances of the day to be an executing agency where indeed it was developed as an administration. That led to poor performance of the development programme and significant delays in the

conduct of government business. It led to less than optimum execution arrangements. It led to cost overruns on development projects; projects being completed not on time and above cost. It led to all kinds of undesirable consequences that led us in 1991 realizing that, to embark on the very ambitious programme of public service reform to which I have earlier alluded.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

At that time, we had available to us an acknowledged expert in that field, now acknowledged not in just Trinidad and Tobago but after his period in Government, worldwide, Mr. Gordon Draper—coming as he did from the University of the West Indies with a background in public service reform and a big interest in it and seeking to put in place what in fact he had learnt and had been teaching at the university in the sphere of academia—who had embarked on a very comprehensive plan of action designed to transform the public service.

Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of record that four years later, by 1995, even though some progress had been made, we had to face the stark realization that the reform of the public service was a slow process and one that would consume a considerable amount of time.

In coming to that conclusion, we walked the route that countries in similar circumstances with developmental objectives as ambitious as ours had walked. These are countries such as Singapore, Taiwan and, in the latest incarnation of that, the country of Dubai, where a Member of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has just visited, our Minister in charge of public administration and information, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith. All of these countries recognize that if it is you set for yourself the objective of significant economic growth within any given time frame and, therefore, the need to execute a comprehensive and ambitious development programme, that existing structures, existing arrangements were inadequate to the task and that if that objective was to be realized, then new arrangements were called for.

The Minister of Public Administration and Information will tell you, that in Dubai, the ruler has taken steps to allow the reform of the public sector to proceed on as rapid a pace as is possible in the circumstances. The pace is unacceptable in the context of the time frame in which we are operating. He has done this entirely outside of the public service, setting up new arrangements, virtually setting up companies, giving boards of directors plenipotentiary powers and money to be able to do what they consider acceptable. In fact the way he did it was this: he called a board of directors together and in selecting the board or directors he did not restrict it to people from Dubai or even from the Emirates themselves. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: From the oligarchy!

Hon. P. Manning: Whatever it is, the fact of the matter is that it represents a paradigm from which we can learn. It represents that.

Mr. Ramnath: No. You are not the ruler here!

Hon. P. Manning: He brings this group of people together from wherever he could find them; the only qualification being people of accepted and acknowledged competence in the conduct of the affairs that they are being called upon to conduct. He gives them plenipotentiary powers and he tells them: "I will give you whatever money you require. Your target is this target. You have two years in which to do it and at the end of two years, we will meet again, either for a drink; your final drink, or to celebrate your success." That is how he did it.

Mr. Speaker, that approach is not available to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago because we operate under different constitutional arrangements. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learned in the principles associated with that approach; lessons that not only can be learnt by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago but lessons that are applicable to a country like Trinidad and Tobago in the developmental circumstances in which we find ourselves today. It was learnt in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. It was learnt in countries that have successfully walked the road on which Trinidad and Tobago is now embarked. Therefore, good sense dictates that whether it is an exact figure—it never is—that we examine those models and see whether there is anything from which we can learn.

More than that, in 1973, when there was the first oil price shock, there was a significant jump in oil prices at that time and the government of the day moved to take appropriate steps to adjust the taxation structure to enhance our revenue position. It happened in 1973. Following the war between Iran and Iraq in 1979, the oil price dropped again. It moved from \$2.50 per barrel in 1973 to above \$40 per barrel in 1979, eventually settling down to \$34 per barrel in 1981. Understand what such a significant increase in oil price did to the revenue position of Trinidad and Tobago and understand what it meant for a government struggling in all the post-independence years to develop a country, suddenly finding itself with revenues; what it meant for the developmental aspiration of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago.

In those years we tried a number of things. One of the things we tried was the government-to-government arrangement. Without going into the merits and demerits or details of it, suffice it to say, the model was not as successful as it should have been or could have been. It did not work as well. We tried a number of things. One of the things we tried was going to the state sector, state enterprises, under legal arrangements approved by this very Parliament, which allowed a government ministry to pass, just by way of deeming it, to a state enterprise control or wholly owned by the State, the authority to execute any item or part of the development programme. That is the model that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has now embraced. That is the model we are seeking to refine, because it was not a perfect model when we concluded our arrangements by 1986. It was by no means perfect. But experience elsewhere and here, since then, tells us that that model to accelerate the execution of our development programme is a model of great promise and a model which, with some modifications, promises to put us in a position to significantly accelerate the rate at which we execute our development programme.

Mr. Ramnath: Which state enterprise?

Hon. P. Manning: The Member for Couva South has just asked the question: "Which state enterprise?". The most celebrated success to date of a state enterprise operating in this way is UDeCott. I am not saying that UDeCott is perfect. I am not saying that at all. I am not saying that the arrangements have fully met all the requirements. I am not saying that either. The model however imperfect it is at this time, is a model that has given us a quantum leap, in terms of the execution of our development programme. [*Desk thumping*] Because Mr. Speaker, the tendering procedures of the public service and the constraints associated with that are not the same constraints that hamstring the conduct of the operations of a state enterprise. State enterprises have their own tendering procedures approved by the Minister of Finance, the shareholder. They have their own. State enterprises are free to hire, discipline, promote and fire as they see fit, in accordance with good industrial relations practice. It is not so in the public service. We have the Public Service Commission, as you know, to hire anybody and to insulate that practice from the political influences, the rules of the Public Service Commission are applicable. The commission has not distinguished itself in expeditious action, in terms of making appointments. There is the Chief Personnel Officer office which classifies particular positions. That is a process that takes a long time. The state enterprise has no such constraints. It labours under no such constraint.

The state enterprise is able to act much quickly and with less bureaucracy than the public service. When you look at the two; when you look at what happens in the public service today and when you look at what happens in the state enterprises, then you realize that the model of the state enterprise executing the development programme is a model that is well embraced by any government operating in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Member: Political influence.

Hon. P. Manning: The Member for Couva South will have his chance to speak. I assure him that when he speaks I will listen with rapt attention.

Mr. Ramnath: I will now take my leave, Sir.

Hon. P. Manning: Meanwhile, I would like to suggest to him that he just relax. You do not have to listen, but courtesy demands that that you could listen to what I have to say.

Mr. Ramnath: What you are saying is 50 years old.

Hon. P. Manning: You do not have to believe it. Even though it is 50 years old, as the Member for Couva South is saying, the very distinguished Member for St. Joseph, in his contribution before the House this afternoon, questioned the Government's approach in the execution of its ambitious development programme and it is to that that I am adverting and it is to that I dedicate this aspect of my contribution before this honourable House today.

With respect to UDeCott, what is our strategy for development? We took the position, even before we got into government—we did our work in opposition—that in the short term as we lay in place the fundamental planks on which we will bring about a transformation of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, we will reduce the unemployment levels in the country, by subscribing heavily to the construction industry. [*Desk thumping*]. The construction industry is an industry that, in an earlier incarnation, has demonstrated its ability to absorb significant numbers of people and to significantly reduce the unemployment level. We said construction; it was not just building construction. It was construction of public sector buildings, schools, the Ministry of Education, plants in the industrial sector, highways and infrastructural development, construction right across the board.

In the case of UDeCott it was housing construction. I almost forgot housing; a very significant housing programme never before embarked on by any government of Trinidad and Tobago, certainly representing a philosophy that was not shared by

the hon. Members opposite. They did not share the philosophy of building houses. In fact, it was a former Minister of Housing and Settlements from the other side who got up in this House and made it clear to us that it is land and not house.

Dr. Rowley: He said that there should be no Ministry of Housing. He said that there should be no Minister of Housing.

Hon. P. Manning: That is right. He said that there should be no Minister of Housing. Their position was clear. If today, we embark on a different course of action and the course of action on which we have embarked has results that are infinitely superior to results achieved by them in their term of office, then credit it to better experience in government and a better level of commitment by hon. Members on this side, in the execution of the functions that are entrusted to our care. Our housing programme goes with it also.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing—and they made the mistake once before, because the NAR in their manifesto made a major point in condemning mega projects. They did it in specific reference to the energy sector. It is as applicable to other sectors as it is to the energy sector. What the NAR said—and the Member for Couva North and a few of his colleagues, at the time, were an essential part of those arrangements. Not many of them are left; the Members for Couva South, St. Augustine and Siparia were. I do not think anybody else. They were all part. [*Interruption*] I am sorry. Member for Barataria/San Juan you were in the NAR, too? The Member for Oropouche was in short pants at the time.

Mr. Valley: He has started to get grey. He has suddenly gotten grey.

Hon. P. Manning: Their philosophy was, as it relates to the energy sector, they condemned the mega projects relying, as they say, on new sub sectors, the viability of which can be guaranteed on the domestic market. That was their policy. Of course, after three years, it did not work. They saw the error of their ways and they changed, but it was too late. In the same way, you are getting the same utterances coming from the other side today about mega projects where the Government of Trinidad and Tobago—operating in accordance with a vision to achieve developed country status by a certain time—2020—sets about on a development programme that is ambitious. We acknowledge that it is an ambitious development programme, but it is a development programme that will see this country move from a state of underdevelopment, such as we took it over in 2001, to a state of developed country status on or before 2020. That is the reality of it. [*Desk thumping*]

When today, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago says that it is going to build a sporting complex in Tarouba and the complex would be at a cost of \$850 million, but that the Brian Lara Stadium, which forms an essential part of the Brian Lara Academy cost \$275 million, I do not understand why hon. Members opposite have difficulty in understanding what is involved in that. I want to remind hon. Members that on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I went to the Caricom Heads of Government Conference and made it clear that in respect of World Cup Cricket 2007, we were making no bid; we were not interested in World Cup Cricket, everybody condemned me for doing that. I told everybody to take what they needed. If we are called upon, whatever we are called upon to do, we will do. Take, we are not interested. They took, but they accorded us the brown package. With that responsibility came an obligation and there was an obligation as a result of that, to construct the Brain Lara Stadium. If today, the Government acts in satisfaction of that obligation that arose as a result of contractual arrangements in the Caribbean in respect of World Cup Cricket 2007, then you cannot blame the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. We are merely doing what we say we are committed to do. Let me remind everybody that we said from the start that we were not interested. If in the complex in Tarouba—he is asking why. We were not interested in World Cup Cricket 2007. We did not say cricket. [*Interruption*] Because we did not feel that it meant as much to us as it meant to the economies of the other Caribbean islands; tourist-oriented as they were. That is what it was. They were interested in it because of the tourism potential. It is not cricket, it is the cost of it. It does not come free and the obligations are great. That is why we took that position.

If the Governments of Barbados, Jamaica or any other government in the region viewed it differently from us, then that is their right. We depend on oil and gas heavily to enhance our revenue position. They do not have that available to them. They could take that position. We said that instead of building a cricket academy alone, let us build a sporting complex that is dedicated to excellence, because shortly after Brain Lara made his 400 runs we had George Bovell, III winning a medal in Olympics in swimming for the first time, and in one of the heats breaking a world record. To honour that feat, let us do something for swimming, so we will put a 50-metre Olympic size pool as part of a training facility in the complex in Tarouba. That is how we decide on these things. Since we are going to be putting those two things together and there is a requirement for training facilities in other sports, let us put it.

We have distinguished ourselves in cycling, so let us put an Olympic size, a 250 metres smaller track velodrome in that centre of excellence. That is what

we said and that is how we built it up. It was no pie in the sky. It was not an attempt to profligate spending. It was a systematic determination of the requirements of Trinidad and Tobago to achieve excellence in sports and to bring us to developed country status, as we are now told in sport by 2012. [*Desk thumping*] No amount of “ol’ talk” about \$875 million for a cricket field, that is not true! It is an entire complex. When that complex is constructed it will be a centre of excellence in sports and a training facility of which hon. Members opposite and other members of the national community would be justifiably proud [*Desk thumping*].

Mr. Speaker, on my way to work on a Wednesday morning, when I go to the Ministry of Finance and I pass on Richmond Street do you know what I see when I pass? I see a major facility under construction called a Government Campus. Do you know what it includes? It includes a 10-storey Customs and Excise building which is going up very fast. It is virtually one floor per week. I see a 22-storey building to house the Board of Inland Revenue under construction. On the other side of the road is a park aid for 1,800 vehicles, a big one, to provide additional parking in Port of Spain, because of the traffic problems that we experience. The contract has now been let and construction has begun on another 22-storey building to house the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Legal Affairs. The contract will be awarded very shortly for the 10-storey building; the final building in the campus, to house the Ministry of Education. Those are four buildings: two, 22-storey buildings; two, 10-storey buildings; an 1,800 car park and, of course, the court yard. More than that, an essential element of that campus will be a big screen in the court yard to encourage people to use that courtyard after working hours and to bring some life back into the city of Port of Spain, in much the same fashion as the Brian Lara Promenade has been able to do.

You will remember, when we were constructing the Brian Lara Promenade the same comments were made: “What is Manning doing? He could take that money to provide employment for poor people in Laventille.” It was as if the promenade was being constructed by machines. Not only are we providing facilities for the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Board of Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise Division and the Ministry of Education, but as we construct those facilities, a significant number of jobs are created in the construction sector. [*Desk thumping*] That is one.

If you pass on Wrightson Road today—the hon. Member for St. Joseph is saying that we are doing nothing and what have we done in three years—you will

notice that Sheds 1 and 2 have been torn down. The sheds to the west of that are being torn down now. You will notice on site a tall crane doing a test pile. Do you know why? This is in anticipation of the construction of two government office buildings, both 26 storeys in height; the tallest buildings ever to be constructed in Trinidad and Tobago. Two of them, a hotel of 24 floors and a convention centre that holds 1,800 participants at any one time. Associated with that, is another park aid to house 1,200 vehicles. Do you know what the implications of that are for construction, or for the conditions under which our hardworking public servants work? It is not only that, I will come to that aspect of it in a minute.

It pains me to sit here, in the face of all of this, and hear the Member for St. Joseph accuse the Government of not doing anything in three years. Surely, Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Joseph was playing fast and loose with the truth when he spoke in those terms. If the Member for St. Joseph goes to San Fernando today, incidentally the waterfront development involves a brand new state-of-the-art breakfast shed. [*Desk thumping*] If the Member is still around, perhaps it is appropriate for me, even at this stage, to invite him later this year, because it will be completed before the end of this year, to join me for a meal in the breakfast shed.

If the Member goes to San Fernando he will see that the car park on Chancery Lane has now been cordoned off and the taxi stand has moved to Kings Wharf. Do you know why?

Dr. Moonilal: The Mayor blocked the road?

Hon. P. Manning: Because UDeCott, a state enterprise, wholly owned by the State, driving an ambitious development programme of Trinidad and Tobago, is constructing on that site a building with approximately seven floors in the office tower and there is also a shopping centre. If you see the complex and pleasing design! Mr. Speaker, I invite you to have a look at it. I would bring a scaled model if the Member wants to see it. That building cost approximately \$320 million. The development is not only in Port of Spain, the development is also in San Fernando.

In Siparia, the constituency of the Member for Siparia, we are about to open the Siparia Administrative Complex. Is it opened as yet?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: That was a UNC project.

Hon. P. Manning: That is not the point. We had the option, Mr. Speaker, when we came—[*Interruption and crosstalk*] Leave them. When we came into

office—[*Interruption and crosstalk*] I will talk about that, too. When we came into office we found the Siparia Administrative Complex on the cards. No contract had been awarded and we had the option of not awarding it, as they did with some of the contracts they met when the PNM went out of office. Mr. Speaker, it is to the credit and good sense of the PNM Government of Trinidad and Tobago that we proceeded to award the contract with whatever imperfections the design may have had. [*Desk thumping*] Because it was conceived by them, it could never have been perfect. We proceeded to award the contract and today, following calls by them for a commission of enquiry into the award of a contract, they are now trying to claim the project as though it was their very own. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, the reality is that they, too, are proud of it, but you see the cut and thrust of politics prevents them from publicly acknowledging the good work that the PNM Government has done in this regard. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, what do you want to talk about? I see something about the Parliament building. I think you all have seen the report of the Canadian consultants on that matter. It is UDeCott again. That is one state enterprise. What I am talking about is the use of state enterprise to execute the development programme of the country. The Canadian consultants made it clear that this Chamber, very nice as it is, historic as it was and is, does not meet the requirements of a modern Parliament for the country of Trinidad and Tobago. It cannot meet it. [*Desk thumping*] For a start, all of the technology that now forms an essential part of the institution of Parliament is absent here and to put it into this Chamber, will involve disturbing the architecture of this Chamber, which they have made quite clear ought to be preserved in its design stage. “Doh” disturb it!

In a debate earlier this week, it was the distinguished Member for Diego Martin East who was talking about a Parliament of 51 seats.

Mr. Partap: Do not rely on him. The wall fell down.

Hon. P. Manning: On this matter he is very reliable.

Mr. Imbert: As at all times.

Hon. P. Manning: As he generally is.

Mr. Imbert: “Uh huh”

Hon. P. Manning: As he generally is—51 seats. I have been giving that some thought. The Minister gave all the examples of what happened to the rest of the

Caribbean, parliamentary representatives representing 7,500 constituents and 10,000 at the most. In Trinidad and Tobago we have 25,000 and 30,000 and all kinds of numbers. If we want to make that 15,000 so that we can get a better representational function, we are looking at 61 seats. Where in this Chamber can we hold 61 seats and maintain a public gallery and press gallery. Can it be done properly? Good sense must be allowed to prevail in this matter. We need a new Parliament building. There is no question about it. It has absolutely nothing to do with the use to which the Red House will be put. It has nothing to do with that. Is the building adequate for the task, or is it not adequate? The consultants have made it clear that it is not adequate.

If UDeCott is asked to do the work for the new Parliament building what is wrong with that? It is yet another attempt by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to modernize the State. I will go into details on that.

What distinguishes UDeCott from the public sector, in terms of the execution of government policy, is the speed at which it is operating. It does not have the constraints. Many of the things I have talked about—and I have by no means given you an exhaustive listing of the programmes of UDeCott—and many of these facilities will be ready by 2007 or early 2008. The public service arrangements could not achieve that.

Therefore, replicating that—the Minister of Housing, which government in the past has talked about 100,000 houses in 10 years? Which government in Trinidad and Tobago has said that? None! Mr. Speaker, they may very well argue on the other side that it was not necessary before and we will argue on this side that if it is necessary now it is because of what they did not do. There is a proliferation of squatting all over the country. What they did was regularize squatting. I have made it clear already that it is my own personal view that squatting must only be regularized in certain special circumstances, because when you regularize squatting you create slums. In my constituency, we are not regularizing any squatting, we are relocating squatters and putting them in proper facilities. [*Desk thumping*]

We and other governments understand that if you put people to work in a proper environment, it affects the way they think and the way they act. It affects their outlook. Therefore, it is the same thing with the public service. You put them in proper facilities to work and the levels of productivity are generally high. We are building public sector buildings. In housing, there will be 100,000 houses in 10 years. When we said it, everybody laughed. We said it in Opposition and

everybody laughed. We said that we know that it would take some time to build that and we know that we may not be able to reach the average of 10,000 a year, depending on the capacity of the State, but we put it out so that the private sector could know and begin to tone up for it. Today, in fiscal 2005, our housing starts in the public sector are approximately 6,500. When you add to that the housing starts in the private sector, another 1,500 we are up to 8,000 per year when the target we set for ourselves is 10,000. Mr. Speaker, we are getting close. [*Desk thumping*] No matter Members opposite would say that we said 10,000 and so far we have only made 8,000, they can say what they want. It is 8,000 more people; 8,000 more satisfied homeowners in Trinidad and Tobago as a consequence of the PNM Government being in office. That is what you get. [*Desk thumping*]—and their dependents. Minister of Health, their dependents. People depend on them.

Mr. Speaker, they condemn the Government's programmes. When the Government decided to set up the National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO), it is because we wanted to put arrangements outside of the constraints of the public service for highway construction. When we set up the community improvement services company with a mandate to go into communities and see everything that they need—drains, roads, streetlights, water and community centres; whatever they need, with a mandate to go in and fix everything and come out—what we are doing is committing ourselves to a better standard of living, environmental circumstances of our people, better conditions under which they live and doing it in a short time frame.

One thing that bothers them the most is when we set up the Rural Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago (RUDeCott) and we give it a mandate, as we have done, to deal exclusively with rural Trinidad and Tobago, they begin to quake in their boots [*Desk thumping*]

Talking about quaking in their boots, it reminds me of “fellas” on Death Row. [*Interruption*] I am sorry. It reminds me of “fellas” on Death Row; “fellas” in jail quaking in their boots. I am sure that is why my hon. friend opposite beat such a hasty retreat in extricating himself with the connivance of the hon. Member for Caroni East and a friend, whom I shall not name, in finding much more comfortable surroundings in which to spend some of his time. In other words, Mr. Speaker, he has learnt one lesson.

Dr. Rowley: “Jail eh nice.”

Hon. P. Manning: “Jail eh nice.” I hope it is a lesson that all of you across there have learnt. “Jail eh nice.”

Mr. Speaker, housing, 10,000 per year. Right now we are up to 8,000 all over the country. By the time we get to 2007, we would have completed over 20,000 houses. The Member opposite can say what he wants. [*Interruption*] Sir, nothing you say will change the reality. The reality will not change. By the time we get to 2007, we would have completed 20,000. We have 80,000 to go and we will do it because we are committed to ensuring that the people of Trinidad and Tobago live under better circumstances. [*Desk thumping*] When we outlined a programme of that nature, they are not hearing it for the first time. How, in the face of a programme like that, could the Member for St. Joseph come to this House in this debate and accuse the Government of doing nothing in three years? There is the National Infrastructure Development Company for highway construction.

The first mandate is the extension of the Solomon Hochoy Highway from Golconda to Debe, Penal and it turns right to La Brea and goes to Point Fortin. I could go into the details of that and the skullduggery they tried on that, but we decided to service the area. It goes to Debe, Penal and then it turns right at Fyzabad and goes to La Brea and Point Fortin.

The second priority for NIDCO is the construction of a highway from San Fernando to Princes Town to Rio Claro to Mayaro.

The third priority for NIDCO is the extension of the Churchill Roosevelt Highway into Wallerfield, Sangre Grande and down the east coast in Manzanilla.

The fourth priority, which is in fact priority number one is the mass transit system from Arima to Diego Martin and from Port of Spain to San Fernando [*Desk thumping*]. The National Transportation Plan is now being done and it will be in place by the end of 2010. That is our expectation.

The Member for St. Joseph, knowing all of this, because none of this is being said for the first time, comes to the Parliament and accuses the Government of doing nothing over the last three years. What it demonstrates above anything else, and regrettably so, is that my honourable friend opposite is a stranger to the truth.

In education, when we formed the Education Facilities Management Company— [*Interruption and crosstalk*] What do you think?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the sitting is suspended until 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Prime Minister

has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I am grateful to hon. Members for their very kind consideration. Mr. Speaker, when we took the tea break, I was responding to the contribution of the hon. Member for St. Joseph and, in particular, two allegations that he made: firstly, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the current Government, had done nothing in our three-year tenure of office; and, secondly, he condemned, in very severe terms, our approach to the execution of our development programmes utilizing state enterprises.

Mr. Speaker, I was using UDeCott as an example to show how it is possible to use this approach and where Trinidad and Tobago was heading as a result of it. Just before I conclude my discourse on UDeCott, I think it is appropriate to revisit it briefly and to say two things.

Firstly, recently, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago approved, in principle, for UDeCott to execute the relocation of the Port in Port of Spain. We propose to build a new port somewhere in the Sea Lots area. When that contract is awarded, it would take about 30 months from the award of the contract to the final completion of the port. What that would do is open up the entire waterfront area now for development and, above all, in the context of the acute traffic problems that we are experiencing, it poses a solution to the traffic problem by opening up Dock Road into a four-lane highway and giving us a parallel arterial to Wrightson Road going from east to west. At the same time, in the conceptual designs that we have seen, there is also arrangement for bringing in the light rail system into that area with the appropriate terminals and so forth; very forward looking and very ambitious.

There are two more projects that I should make reference to in passing. The first is—and it would be before the Cabinet very shortly—a cultural centre to replace the Grand Stand of the Queen's Park Savannah. That is very interesting.

Presently, UDeCott is designing the academy for the performing arts. It is an academy and this means that it has a teaching function. This would be constructed on the grounds of the Princes Building site which would be modelled after that very world-renowned academy for the performing arts that exists in Hong Kong. That is being designed right now. We believe that all designs should be ready towards the end of the year.

Mr. Speaker, when you put all these things together, and so many other projects that I have not yet mentioned, what do you see? You see, UDeCott, a wholly owned state enterprise, acting as an instrument of transformation and circumventing the difficulties that we have experienced in the public sector, particularly, being able to get projects done in a very short time frame.

A similar approach is being taken by a company that has just been formed which is a subsidiary of the Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprises Development Limited (eTeCK). As you know, eTeCK is the company that interfaces with our industrial development programmes. The subsidiary of eTeCK is a joint venture between eTeCK and a foreign project management firm, bringing in expertise that is in short supply in the country. If you go to O'Meara, at this time, you would see a building going up which is the headquarters of the University of Trinidad and Tobago. It is a temporary facility. It is being constructed at such a rate that you cannot believe that it is a public sector building. In fact, it is a public sector building, and it is almost completed. It is being constructed by a wholly owned state enterprise, in circumstances where the public sector has developed a notorious reputation, because of the administration constraints to which we are exposed to of not being able to deliver projects either on time or within cost. That is another example.

The Chairman of eTeCK, Prof. Julien, has written to the Prime Minister saying that the company has spare capacity and, therefore, we have decided in respect of our programmes in the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs, that the company can now do the execution of that programme. This means that the construction of community centres all over the country is about to be the subject of a great fillip, since that company is going to be constructing standard designs that are already approved and bringing these much needed facilities to residents in all parts of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, that is not the full measure of it.

We have agreed, on our policy course, for the establishment of a National Sport Commission. We know that is to be established by legislation but, even before that, we have set up a Memorandum of Articles and Association for the National Sport Company. The company is already established, and it is under the chairmanship of Mr. Gerard Ferreira, who is going to be the chairman of the National Sport Commission—the former mayor of San Fernando. That company has the mandate for the execution of a development programme in the area of sport and youth affairs—sporting facilities all over the country. Now, may I say that the company itself, is not responsible for any policy at this time, but the

Ministry is responsible for that. The company would only execute polices established by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. So it is in education and all the other areas.

Mr. Speaker, the National Insurance Property Development Company (NIPDEC) is not a wholly owned state enterprise, but it is treated as one by law. We got into that situation because of what happened on that side when they were in government. Do you remember hon. John Humphrey? Mr. Speaker, do you know what he did one day? He sat down in a room when there was flooding in some parts of Port of Spain and he called about 22 contractors in and he asked them: How much work you could do? The fellow said: Well, I could do \$5 million. He said: Okay, take \$6 million. He then asked another contractor: How much work you could do? The fellow said: I could do \$3 million. He said: Take \$2 million and so he was going.

Hon. Member: Were you there?

Hon. P. Manning: I was in the Parliament.

Dr. Rowley: And so was I.

Hon. P. Manning: Because we were in here we knew. When they realized what they had done, they had to correct it, and in order to correct it they had to come to the Parliament and then the story came out. That is how we knew. The option of that was that Nipdec, which is not a state enterprise, has been deemed by law to be treated as one and, therefore, we have the same flexibility as it relates to the National Insurance Property Development Company Limited; the same flexibility.

Nipdec is now in the process of being recognized, so it is a recognized Nipdec. Nipdec would be responsible for our development programme in the area of national security like police stations and so forth and also health. It would be responsible for both. This is a project management firm responsible for both. Mr. Speaker, by this mechanism, we are covering the entire range of governmental activities. If there is an area that I left out, let hon. Members know that every area has been covered either by existing state enterprises, or by state enterprises that we are setting up for a specific purpose, for the execution of the development programme. The implication of that is that over a short time, we are going to see an escalation in our construction programme and a concomitant escalation in the levels of employment in Trinidad and Tobago that the construction sector was so disposed to providing. We can provide it. [*Desk thumping*]

You know, they have a way of ignoring and questioning everything that we

say. When we say that the unemployment rate in the country is 7.7 per cent, who doubts it?

Dr. Moonilal: That is not so.

Hon. P. Manning: What do you say? [*Interruption*] You want me to talk for the whole night. I could spend a whole hour talking about that, but we have constraints. Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is this.

Dr. Moonilal: Talk, you are sounding good.

Hon. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate for the second quarter last year was 7.8 per cent; for the third quarter last year it was 7.8 per cent; for the fourth quarter last year it was 7.7 per cent; and for the first quarter this year it was 7.7 per cent. In other words, in three quarters it has come out much the same way—we have reached a plateau and what is now required is a new intervention in employment generation, to bring about a significant further reduction into the full employment levels to which we aspire.

Incidentally, the unemployment rate for males is 4.4 per cent which, effectively, is full employment among the male sector. Those are the statistics, and these statistics came from the Central Statistical Office.

Mr. Speaker, it is not fair, in the face of those statistics, to sit and hear the Member for St. Joseph say that we did nothing for three years. That cannot be true.

Mr. Yetming: That is CEPEP workers.

Hon. P. Manning: Not CEPEP but URP. CEPEP is a different concept.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other point that I want to make. Whatever the UNC puts its hand on it corrupts. [*Desk thumping*] You know, the Member for St. Joseph did his own survey. [*Laughter*] Who am I to doubt him? If the Member for St. Joseph comes here and tells us that he did his own survey then he is an honourable man. I accept it. His question was: “Think of the PNM and tell us what first comes to your mind?” That was the question. What was the answer? “Incompetence, wasteful”—Mr. Speaker, do you understand? That is what he said.

Mr. Speaker, against the possibility that the survey was accurate, I want to say to the hon. Member for St. Joseph that if that is the way people feel about us, we are going to strive to work hard to change that image. [*Desk thumping*]

During the tea break I could not leave here, so I used my telephone and I did my own survey [*Laughter*]. I asked five persons this question: Think of the UNC and tell us what first comes to mind? Mr. Speaker, without any contradiction, without exception, everybody said, “thief”. [*Laughter*] [*Desk thumping*] Now, I am not saying—Mr. Speaker, do you know what is significant? They did not say “t’ief”, they said “thief”. Therefore, I give the assurance to hon. Members opposite that we will work to change our condition, since our condition is a temporary one. Regrettably, it does not matter how hard they work, their condition is permanent. [*Desk thumping*] They cannot change. [*Desk thumping*]

With respect to the construction sector, that is the start. I am not talking yet about the long-term programmes that we are putting in place for economic transformation on a long-term basis.

In the energy sector, what are the decisions we have taken so far? We have taken decisions on three plants: a 5,000 tonne a day methanol plant; a 2,000 tonne a day ammonia plant; and a 800 million cubic feet a day LNG plant. That is the decision that we have taken. One has just been commissioned; there are two more under construction; the ammonia plant would be finished shortly; and the LNG plant would be ready by the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, not only are we expanding our economic base by construction, but we are providing jobs in the construction sector. At peak, for an ammonia plant, there are 1,000 workers. There are 2,000 workers on a 56-inch pipeline right now, which is the biggest in the world. There are others of that same size, but that is the biggest in the world.

The 5,000 tonne methanol plant is the biggest in the world. There are others around the world, not many. It is the biggest in the world at this time. That is what we are doing. Those are the initiatives that we have taken. We are now discussing in the energy sector, which is a very interesting proposal, the first downstream industry for methanol—methanol to polypropylene, which means a plastic base, for the first time, giving us the raw materials for the development of a vibrant petrochemical sector. [*Desk thumping*] We are talking that now.

Mr. Speaker, not to mention the US\$350 million upgrade for the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery that is about to start in four areas; an isomerization plant and associated plants with it; a continuous catalytic reformer and the plants that go with that like the desulphurized plants and so forth; a new alkalization unit and what goes with that; and the completion of the upgrade of the Cat Cracker to improve gasoline quality, but costing US\$350 million. That is part of our very ambitious construction

programme; creating jobs and expanding our base of economic activities.

With respect to Vision 2020, we say that we want to be a developed country by the year 2020. What does this mean in terms of the size of our economy, the GDP? We worked it out in the Ministry of Finance. Presently, our GDP is just below US\$9,000 per capita. We have identified US\$37,000 per capita as developed country status for us, and we must reach that by the year 2020. All the decisions that we are taking now like expanding the economic base; making the raw materials for further new industrial sub-sectors and industrial sectors; as we do all of these things now—all of this is being done through state enterprises—what we are in fact doing is setting the stage for the modern industrial state of Trinidad and Tobago of the future, taking its place among the developed nations of the world. [*Desk thumping*] Exciting!

Mr. Speaker, one of the problems with which we have had to contend in state enterprises is the work of the government that preceded us. I want to name two agencies: MTS and the NWRHA. Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to be uncharitable, suffice it to say that those two agencies have been mismanaged and corrupted to the point where sometimes I wonder if it is possible to retrieve them. Sometimes I wonder about it. I do not know. It might be easier to start from scratch.

Mr. Speaker, in our housing programme, we have had problems with the NHA—the way to develop the historical antecedents and so forth. We have concluded that the best thing to do is to make a fresh start. It is not that we are just destroying, in the mode in which they are suggesting, but it is a recognition by us that if you put new wine in old wineskins then you merely burst the wine skins. That is all you do. But, instead, if you get new wineskins and fill them with new wine, you do not throw them away. That is how it is; that is what we are doing. And, therefore, the Housing Development Corporation which is to come is a carefully thought-out proposal; a carefully thought-out plan.

Mr. Speaker, my contribution on this matter this afternoon is by no means exhausted. I hope that I have said enough to convince hon. Members that many things are happening and are in train. We are doing it by way of a new approach that gives us a better chance of success, as opposed to the way we did things in the past.

The third point I want to make this afternoon—in the context that we did nothing for three years—I have always said to the national community that the Prime Minister should hold one portfolio. He should not hold more than one portfolio but, yet, in an apparent contradiction today, I hold two portfolios. I hold the portfolio of Prime Minister and the portfolio of the Minister of Finance. Why

is that so? Mr. Speaker, that is so because of the Government's social agenda. It was done for one reason and one reason only, to bring about a major shift in the pattern of public expenditure towards the social sector. That is the reason. So the Minister of Finance drives that in the Ministry of Finance itself, ably supported by my three colleagues. That is what we do.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how they operated their government. It is a pleasure to go to the Ministry of Finance on a Wednesday morning where we have a policy committee comprising all the Ministers of Finance, the Minister of Planning and Development; all the permanent secretaries; the Director of Budgets; the Governor of the Central Bank; and the head of the Investment Secretariat. We sit as a policy committee and the meeting is conducted in a very informal manner. The reason for that is we want to create an atmosphere in the meeting where people feel free to express their views, and they are not hamstrung by any distinction between politicians and public servants. Is the word "hamstrung"? Do I have it right?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Hon. P. Manning: We create the atmosphere where we benefit from the best that the public servants can offer. I tell you that it is really a pleasure to sit on that committee. We discuss taxes. As everybody knows, we are reviewing the entire income tax structure. When the budget is presented later this year, we will come with a new system of taxation. Do you want to know now? You said that we are not doing anything. We are coming with a new system of taxation. I would have a lot to say on it at that time but, for the time being, the point I am making is to look at the approach that we are taking. It is an approach where we all sit around a table, and there is no distinction, and we discuss and give Trinidad and Tobago the benefit of our best consideration and advice. That is what we do.

Mr. Speaker, in the social sector, we are very proud. The Minister of Health is the man doing much of the running these days. How many operations?

Mr. Rahael: There were 15,332 operations.

Hon. Members: "Oh Goohh"!

Hon. P. Manning: That is 15,332 operations in six months. [*Desk thumping*] My Speaker, in the face of all that transpired before that, I take the unusual step of complimenting the Minister of Health today on his performance on that issue. [*Desk thumping*] It has to be commended. Whether you like him or you do not like him, or whether you find that he is too tall or too short or too fat, the fact is

that he has performed. That is the point. On that issue he has performed. That is what we are all about.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the OJT programme, we were saying to our young people that we would attach you to a job in a business so that you could learn the job, and when you apply for a job you would apply with experience.

Dr. Moonilal: Why are there so many young criminals?

Hon. P. Manning: We had reached 5,000 or so, prior to demitting office in 1995. Do you know what those hon. gentlemen opposite did when they came into government? They truncated it and, at the same time, murdered the aspirations of 5,000 of our young people in this country.

Mr. Valley: And they want to know how we have so many criminals.

Hon. P. Manning: Do you understand? And as my good friend here says, they are now asking why there are all those criminals in the country. You see, they had nothing to do with it. Today, the OJT is back on stream. What did you do with the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute? The John S. Donaldson Technical had 2,200 students. In the nick of time, by the grace of the Almighty God, when we took over the Government, it went down to 300. They like to talk race, but I could put that in a particular context, but I choose not to do that. I am not going to descend into the gutter, the way you all do it. I am not doing it, but think about it.

Dr. Rowley: Pass by Wrightson Road now and look at it.

Hon. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, you see the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology (TTIT), the less I say about that the better. Suffice it to say, God is with us. We spotted the thing in time and it has been incorporated into the University of Trinidad and Tobago and, today, it is making its contribution to the balanced development of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

They talked about CEPEP. Mr. Speaker, it is a model that is worthy of some study. It is not a make-work scheme; it is not any handout by the Government; but it is a significant attempt to develop entrepreneurship in the country, among a group of persons, who traditionally had been dispossessed—the sons and daughters of slaves and indentured servants. That is what it does. The contractor selects his own labour, because the persons who work with a CEPEP company work in the employ of a company, and they are given a contract to service a particular area. Mr. Speaker, the idea has always been that we would wean them off in due course.

What we are now doing in the second phase of CEPEP is making it mandatory that they work in the morning and go to school in the evening. They are going to be paid for eight hours a day, but they are going to work six hours in the morning and go to school in the evening. They would be learning skills like conflict resolution skills, parenting skills, parenting self-esteem and so forth, but they are also learning whatever technical skills we want to impart to our citizens at this time, in the context of our developmental objectives. So, over time, they would have a choice because they are not going to be young all their lives. They would have a choice to leave CEPEP and go into other areas of development, but even if they stay in the programme, they would be in the employ of a company, and what we are going to do next is to restructure these companies in such a way that the employees would have shares in the company so they would be part of it. It is an attempt at entrepreneurship.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for St. Joseph talked about MTS with such decision, what he does not understand is that the strategy that we are contemplating for MTS is the same thing. There are 5,000 workers in MTS and it is a management nightmare. We set up that company in 1980. I was there. We thought that it should never go above 2,000, but now there are 5,500 workers. What to do about that? We are saying, let us see if we can transform it into a CEPEP-type approach where individuals or groups of individuals would own a company, and they would be given contracts to conduct certain work. We would give them a period of time to ensure that they are on their feet, and then we would wean them off that, if we can. You see, that is what we are doing. It is entrepreneurship all the time with the OJT and CEPEP programmes.

What other programmes do we have? I could name them. There are so many of them. We have the HYPE programme, which is one of the most innovative programmes, teaching persons construction skills and building houses and all kinds of things. There is also the must programme.

Mr. Speaker, I go to the constituency office every Thursday afternoon. Yesterday afternoon, when I went to the constituency office some gentlemen came to see me from Maloney. I saw them earlier in the week when we opened the Maloney economic facilities there. They told me that last year when we walked through Maloney we had started a URP programme and it had helped them considerably. They worked for six months, but it had come to an end, and they were interested in doing something productive. Presently, they are unemployed and they want to do something; and they are not happy with the state that they are in.

Mr. Speaker, I would not tell you the advice that I gave them, but they were the beneficiaries of sound advice from me. The point I am trying to make is that they are going to end up in one of the programmes that the Government has to train persons to put them in a position to be productive citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in the very near future. That is how we are doing it, and the Member for St. Joseph is condemning that approach. We have HYPE and MuST and there are more to come.

There are about 15 or 20 of those programmes in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Housing. We have them all over the place. There is also the GAP programme and the latest one is a programme which uses the services of retired experts. You are taking their expertise and bringing that to bear on the young people in a particular community and supervising them doing homework. Sometimes their parents cannot help them with mathematics, but somebody who is an expert might be able to do so; they may not be able to help them with English and some of these persons might be able to do so. So we are bringing them together in a community to supervise them, especially, in the context of the junior secondary school system, which is disappearing. We are putting that in place to marry the expertise of the old with the enthusiasm of the young to bridge the generation gap. That is all part of the development of an active and vibrant community, which is a prerequisite to developed country status by the year 2020.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thought that I would make a brief intervention in this debate. Had I had the time, I would have spent some time on the statement by the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan when he talked about the road towards Cuba and which we are embarking on. The PNM has a philosophy that is different from all other political parties, and it is a stated philosophy in our Constitution and in our Vision 2020 philosophy. It is there to see. Our lives are open books. What road to Cuba? What do you mean by that? There was a time when those things were catch phrases, but not so again.

The ideological orientation of the PNM Government of Trinidad and Tobago is not in question. Everybody knows it. We are not new. We would be celebrating 50 years next year. There is no other political party in Trinidad and Tobago to do that. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, all that we have learnt between 1991 to 1995; all that we have learnt in observing, as I was part of Mr. Chamber's administration during 1981 to

1986; all that I have learnt in observing Dr. Williams and being part of his administration between 1971 and 1981; all that I have learnt watching Mr. Robinson and his administration between 1986 and 1991; all that I have learnt, and some of us here have learnt, running our own administration during 1991 and 1995; and all that we have learnt and we should not have learnt watching the UNC during the years 1995 to 2001; all of these things are now being brought to bear in shaping our own approaches to the accelerated development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche*): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, we must all be thankful that the PNM has learnt so much in its time. I dread to think what would have happened to this country had they not learnt so much. Where would we have been had the PNM not been planning in Opposition? It is frightful to think where this country could be had the Member for San Fernando East not learnt so much since 1971—the no-vote campaign, you came in, I thought.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by indicating that I would not be too long. After all, this is a Friday afternoon and Members on the other side have their pick-up points to attend to on Friday afternoons and so forth. I would not want to prevent them from going to their different liming spots and pick-up points to collect whatever they have to collect, on this occasion of a Friday evening. I am actually surprised that a particular Member is still in the House, but let me not delay him too much. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, the first point I want to make to the Member for San Fernando East is that—notwithstanding the mutterings from his colleagues, I would like to share some ideas with the Member for San Fernando East. I would like to also make a very short discourse on why I believe—without political rhetoric and political points and in the lifetime of my grandchildren—this country cannot develop under the PNM. That is the point I would like to make.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to tell the Prime Minister that when he chooses to address us on the good work of the PNM—all they have done; all they have planted; and the enormous amount of work being done by the People's National Movement—I want to remind the Member for San Fernando East that it was his own parliamentary colleague and Minister, who had this to say:

“We in the PNM have been in power for the last two and a half years, millions and millions have been allocated and not a single bit of work is being done. Does government work? It seems that it can't.”

These are the words of the Member of Parliament for San Fernando West at a function on May 24, 2005 at the Gulf City Auditorium in San Fernando. So, the Prime Minister really should not, in the first instance, try to convince Members of the UNC of his good work. He should be seeking to convince Members of his own party of any work, at all, that they are doing; not us. Whilst the Prime Minister appears to be convinced that he is on the right path, sadly, he is not convincing. He may be convinced, but he is not convincing. The Prime Minister reminds me of an actor in a theatre delivering well rehearsed lines and well prepared text while the theatre is burning down.

Mr. Speaker, this country has erupted; this country is in a state of pre-collapse, because of the level of an institutional crisis and a political crisis. There are persons in this country who do not have water and electricity. With all the work that they are doing, the hospitals do not have beds; police stations do not have working telephones; police officers are asking for water; and citizens in Trinidad and Tobago are living under a tree, begging the State for assistance.

As the Prime Minister announced to us the current per capita of \$9,000, I think, and the indication to go over \$30,000 by the year 2020, the Prime Minister would not tell us about the poverty line. What is the situation with poverty in this country? It is believed that all the money that we are making is not being filtered down to the people. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: That is not true.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, today, the Prime Minister has shed some light on the governance of the PNM. In fact, the text of the Prime Minister's speech really is a good tool for indoctrination at the party's school in Balisier House. I mean, it is a good tool. I give him that. The indoctrination as set down by the Prime Minister is good for party work at Balisier House, and wherever their cottage meeting is and so forth.

The Prime Minister indicated the philosophical grounding of the PNM—what they are about—and explained to me, kindly, why the PNM cannot develop Trinidad and Tobago. There are many differences, but some are fundamental, between how the UNC and the PNM views development. That is fundamental. We are not talking about food and drink here. I am addressing some of the more fundamental points raised by the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister began by talking about this overriding principle of equity. [*Interruption*] The Member for Diego Martin Central should be wise and he

should listen a bit. These are not the two pundits in Central, who you told to go and spread the gospel of the PNM—and then he boasted that he grew up in Couva. The Prime Minister spoke about equity, and that the PNM has built its platform on equity. This is an overriding concept; a PNM concept of equity. The UNC believes in equality. We have always spoken of equality. We have introduced the Equal Opportunity Commission and so forth. The PNM has an overriding policy and philosophical commitment of equity. There is a fundamental difference between equity and equality. With respect to equity, I would give a simplistic example.

If you have an orange and you have to share that orange between two persons, you would cut it in half. You could measure it scientifically and so forth—another half of the orange—and share it equally between the two persons. If you have to share an orange, on the basis of equity, you would have to do an assessment of the persons as to whether or not one person deserves 70 per cent and the other 30 per cent— [Interruption] You were not made for this. You were made for selling Acker and BWIA and so forth—and “equality” is a universal principle that you cannot divide. You cannot reverse it further by subjective and perceptive interpretations. Equality is equality. Equity requires the intervening arm of the State, to determine conditions; to determine criteria; and to determine factors upon which you would share the orange, on the principle of equity.

The PNM has always supported equity, because that means that they decide who gets what, how much and how. They rationalize distribution by the principle of equity. [Desk thumping] If they had committed their party to equality which is universal, then they would not have had to break that down further, and this is why the PNM—I say this because we are colleagues and they know that I do not mean any harm and so forth—can never support a campaign of equality. They could never do that. In the next generation, they cannot support equality, because with equality, they remove this intervening hand of the State for the principle of equity. [Interruption] That explains the PNM’s philosophical position.

Mr. Speaker, another point I want to make is—I want the Member for San Fernando East to ask himself, in several of his lonely moments and so forth—why the PNM has spent almost 38 years in power—that would be almost 80 per cent of our independence period, they have spent over 75 per cent of the money that came into this country—and today we have these incidents of poverty, neglect and alienation? You said persons who are disposed. Why in 2005, after you have spent 80 per cent of the time in office and 75 per cent of the resources, you have this problem? [Interruption]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Member: Because UNC came into office.

Dr. R. Moonilal: It was not meant for that. The Member for San Fernando East knows that this is a serious point. The others would put in their “picongs” and so forth, but that is fine. That is the extent of their intellect. [*Laughter*] Mr. Speaker, you need to understand that the PNM Government will continue to preside over poverty; they will continue to preside over the same level of dispossession that you talked about. This is an operating principle of the PNM administration.

Mr. Speaker, by expanding the state sector, you would be creating a “state dependency”. Individuals in this country, under a PNM administration, would always get into a dependency relationship with an institution of the State—whether it is increasing state enterprises or whether it is increasing the job programmes. Interestingly, if you look at the record, you would see that the PNM multiplies in the State and creates dependency of citizens on you. You cannot liberate citizens.

When persons are in URP, CEPEP, HYPE, OJT and so forth, they are still within the domain of the State; they are still within the confines of the State; and they are still imprisoned within the State. Particularly, in the context of vulnerability, they are clients of the State. The Member for St. Augustine is fond of referring to that. They are in a position of vulnerability and exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, I also have my office day on a Thursday. I take money from my pocket, because I may have to write a cheque at anytime for Balisier House. Persons come to me and say that the only way that they can get a 10 days is if they pay a young lady in the area—a former PNM candidate—money to join the party to get the 10 days and something for a cook after the 10 days.

Mr. Imbert: What?

Mr. Manning: What is the person’s name?

Dr. R. Moonilal: I am giving you my information.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, I call on the Member for Oropouche to name the person so that we could take appropriate action against the person.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, could I commit myself to mentioning the name to the Prime Minister in the corridor? That has never been my style. I would gladly mention it. Certainly, I would give you the name, Mr. Speaker, to get to the

point, I use money from my pocket and give it to persons to go and join the PNM. This is how they would get a 10 days. They depend on that; they are exploited; and they are vulnerable. If they think by giving persons a 10 days with a party card they would get a vote, well, let them continue to think so. We know that is not so. It is the dependency on the State at every avenue.

5.45 p.m.

The Prime Minister made a point today which I consider to be very, very interesting. I intend to elevate that position the Prime Minister takes, to the national platform and indeed to other fora. The Prime Minister said:

"...we want to put arrangements outside of the constraints of the public service..."

In driving a development programme the PNM Government is attempting to put arrangements outside of the constraints of the public service. Why I find this very interesting is that you are indicating on the one hand that there is a public service reform programme on the way. You are indicating again, that the mood is changing in the public service, that we want people to be comfortable. They have beautiful buildings, they are working hard, and you want that job satisfaction for public officers. Yet, you are putting arrangements outside of the constraints of the public service. Is it a vote of no confidence in the public service? Is it an attempt to downsize the public service?

The new state enterprises, for example, who are going to man, who are going to staff the new public sector enterprises that are coming on stream? Is it not the same public officers that would be transferred and be moved on all types of the arrangements to go to those agencies? What confidence do you have that the same public officers that you believe will not do the job as currently constituted, will somehow deliver with productivity and so on in that institution? Maybe it is because you have political control. You exercise political control through your directors and your senior management as you may not exercise through the mainstream public service.

That is a very dangerous approach, because while the Government will suggest that that will bring delivery, there is also a lot of room for manipulation, undermining, nepotism and indeed for corruption. When you are outside of the public service, strictly speaking, public officers are guided by rules and regulations, where you have trade unions there to protect public officers. What type of creature are you creating that would deliver; that would take arrangements outside the mainstream public service? That, I think, we need to discuss, to understand fully,

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otherwise you may even have another crisis as you do with the Ministry of Health; moving workers from the Ministry of Health to the Regional Health Authority (RHA) and so on. Because when you create the rural development company—whatever they call it—who is staffing that, apart from the political appointees at the director level, and so on? Who is going to staff that and on what basis?

Mr. Imbert: They do not need any staff.

Dr. R. Moonilal: I am not ready for jokes yet, I will come to the Member for Diego Martin East in a few minutes. Mr. Speaker, they have a particular approach to governance and you saw it with the appointment of the Anti-Crime Unit. When they appointed the Anti-Crime Unit we filed a question in this House to tell us the names of the officers. They took a long time to come back and tell us that is a matter of national security, we cannot get the names. We found out two: one was before a magistrate in Siparia and one was before a magistrate in Port of Spain, so we knew of two. They were charged for different criminal offences. We will find them out one by one, I imagine.

Today we learned that the director of this Anti-Crime Unit has a very generous package approved and suggested by the Salaries Review Commission, that may be bigger than that of the Commissioner of Police. So, that the Commissioner of Police who, as far as the public service and the Constitution are concerned, should be leading the drive against the criminal elements, fighting crime—the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago—you have the director being the more highly paid and respected certainly, by way of allowances and salaries and so on, outside of the police service, but this is a political appointment. In the police service, there still may be some semblance of independence, and the Anti-Crime Unit is an example of what will happen with all the state enterprises. What is the record, as the Member for St. Joseph asked? Is it that since we have introduced the Anti-Crime Unit—I remember it was in a budget presentation, the Prime Minister came and announced with fanfare, as of now, as of that moment, somebody was to become a brigadier and move into the office of the Anti-Crime Unit. Since then to now, what are the statistics telling us?

Why can you not just measure pay for performance? Why can PNM culture not allow it? If you are a director in charge of the fight against crime, we pay you, of course, a good salary, and so on, but we measure it by performance. If after one year or any particular time you decide, the murder rate, burglary, kidnapping,

and so on, have not decreased, you “gone”, pay for performance. We believe in that.

The Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West has a “rich” career—I use rich in a difference sense here—in the private sector and he understands the importance of pay for performance, but this is not their culture. It is not a cultural feature of the PNM to get performance for salary. It is a cultural feature of the PNM to get salary with no work, and the Anti-Crime Unit is a particular example of this. The population believes it. In an attempt to get the Leader of the Opposition off the front page of the newspaper, the Attorney General came to the Parliament and announced—another bravado announcement—a grand crime package. Eight pieces of legislation, six need the support of the Opposition. We would resume hanging, nobody would escape, and all on death row will go.

They then read a death warrant to a prisoner, Lester Pitman. He then ordered his last meal, KFC and fruit. Today, we are told—if the news reports are correct—that the State conceded that they made a mistake. They really made a mistake by reading the death warrant. But this is remarkable. How could you make a mistake and read a death warrant to someone?

Mr. Singh: Because you are in politics.

Dr. R. Moonilal: That is remarkable. But the real mistake is the Attorney General. The Attorney General should have come to this House this afternoon and submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister. How could you make a mistake and read a death warrant to a prisoner?

Hon. Member: That is cruel and unusual punishment.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, by doing that and ignoring an appeal this prisoner had to the Privy Council—the prisoner apparently had given notice of an appeal. Incidentally, the State said they could not find the notice, but they accept that there is one. By doing that you may have prevented this person from being hanged in the first place and you may have contributed to a situation where the law can never be effected in the context of this prisoner, because that is cruel and unusual punishment.

Mr. Singh: It is called “sacrifice”.

Dr. R. Moonilal: You cannot go up to somebody and say: “Boo, we hanging yuh Monday morning”, come back two days later; “We make a mistake; we make a mistake.” The Privy Counsellors would laugh at you. They would laugh at this Mickey Mouse administration.

Mr. Singh: Three blind mice.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Three blind mice. That you go to a prisoner and say: "Hello, we hanging yuh Monday morning. Change your clothes. What is your last meal?" Two days later: "Partner we make a mistake. We really make a little mistake, a small mistake. Do not take it seriously, it was just hanging."

What madness is this? I am waiting for some Member to stand up and tell me no, it is not so. I do not know what else to say about that matter, it is mind-boggling. This human being on death row to be told that you are going to be hanged on Monday morning, and then you are not.

Miss Seukeran: He brutally murdered two people.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Of course, I am clear that the person has been found guilty and so on. Are you suggesting that you could do that because the person was found guilty?

Miss Seukeran: He was found guilty.

Dr. R. Moonilal: No, you could read the death warrant wrongly?

Miss Seukeran: Yes.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Okay, yes, the State conceded that. The reorganization of the Government. This Government has to confront a certain reality, and I will tell you why there is government reorganization, I know why. Why did you not have Government reorganization on this scale between 1991 and 1995? Why you did not make up ten ministries during the period? But there is a reason. The reason is that the society has become open. Citizens are now aggressive are far as their rights are concerned. In the public service, if you discriminate against a public officer, the chances are by Monday morning you have a constitutional motion or a judicial review matter before you. There is a limit as to how far you could push the public service around today. That was not so between 1991 and 1995. We did not have this type of legal and political channel available. In fact, the UNC brought that.

We must never forget it was the United National Congress Government that introduced freedom of information, judicial review and gave public servants of all creed, ethnicity and class, the right to go to the court and challenge the Government, if they felt that the Government had acted unlawfully. The UNC gave that right, and you know it might grind you to concede that the UNC gave statutory rights to citizens. It will grind them, as it grinds them to use the airport.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: That airport really grinding us.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Well, we will have a public meeting. In fact, the UNC may consider having a mass public meeting in the car park of the airport to show that the attempt to reorganize the Government now has to do with the fact that the operations of the public service cannot do the bidding of the PNM anymore, and they need to create their own public state sector institutions.

Every government in this country since 1962 or before, worked with a Minister and Ministry of Education. There were gradual, moderate attempts to reform and so on, but governments built schools. How many schools? The UNC built 12 secondary schools, 20 primary schools, and pre-schools and so on. Governments worked with a Minister and Ministry of Education. How come in 2005 we need to have a state enterprise, the size of Petrotrin, to conduct the work of the Ministry of Education?

Mr. Singh: Who is the chairman?

Dr. R. Moonilal: Who is this chairman? Who is the chairman of every single board in this country? Chairman of NHA; Chairman of NEDCO—

Hon. Member: The treasurer.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Oh, yes. The PNM treasurer, chairman as well? Is he the PNM treasurer?

Mr. Singh: Yes.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Oh, well, that explains it. They arrange their business in this way because they want to escape legal and regulatory bounds of the public service. What happened to the Minister of Education and officials of the Ministry? When the Member for Tabaquite was in the Ministry and raised certain issues concerning performance, they wanted to kill him; they wanted to kill him.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: “Oh gosh, doh go there, doh talk about that.”

Dr. R. Moonilal: The Member for Tabaquite never asked the Member for Couva North to give him a state enterprise to do the work. The Member for Siparia never asked for a state enterprise. They built about 25 schools, but, today, we need a state enterprise. The Ministry of Education is now moving—I am told—from St. Clair to Port of Spain in a ten-storey building. That might be quite interesting if the Minister is on the tenth floor, then that means the Prime Minister

would be there. That is a good vantage point to keep an eye on the Prime Minister's office, from the tenth floor of the Ministry of Education. [*Crosstalk*]

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: What is that supposed to do with— What stupidity is that.

Hon. Member: What foolishness are you talking?

Dr. R. Moonilal: That would also be interesting, that the Minister of Education would be on the tenth floor, looking down on a second floor. The need to reorganize the public service is really a need for the PNM to escape the public service, which they could have worked well until 1986. From 1991 to 1995, they could have worked well, but today they cannot. I want to advise Members on the other side, that they should look now to United Arab Emirates, Dubai, Taiwan, and so on for the model. Why can you not look at the very system that created this British Westminster parliamentary model, the United Kingdom?

There are innovations galore in the United Kingdom which will assist us for better delivery and governance, which operates a parliamentary and government model as we do. The United Arab Emirates is not a liberal democracy, it is run by the emir and his children, and they are all Ministers. I had the opportunity to be in Dubai for a short stint at the Ministry of Labour, where I did some consultancy work. That was when the PNM did not want me to do anything in this country.

Mr. Valley: You had two jobs.

Dr. R. Moonilal: I have three now. Those countries are run by a family along Islamic law. Those are not liberal democracies. What you can do there you cannot do here. They do not have this public service liberal, democratic, institutional—

Mr. Singh: Public flogging.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Yes, of course. They do not have the public accountability mechanism. They are driven overwhelmingly by performance, and they can hire and fire at will. They can bring in persons from abroad as consultants and work and there are very few limits. That is a family oligarchy. That is not a liberal democracy. The Member for Diego Martin East should listen.

Hon. Member: There is no crime there.

Dr. R. Moonilal: He reminds me of the wall that he built and it fell down. It is better for the Government to look at developments in the United Kingdom. For example, yesterday we read in the newspaper, about the police service in the United Kingdom. Would you believe in the United Kingdom—where their minority

population is, I think, 8 per cent or so—because of the threat of terror and the terrorism scare, that the police service is now involved in what they call “race relations training”? So that police officers will know how to handle persons of minority groups; how they dress a particular way and how they talk. So, they will not make jokes and mockery on minority groups, whether they be African, Islamic or Asian. Imagine the British police and now training officers and telling them that if you use this word, that is considered an insult, do not use that word. Do not look at people this way and the law as it relates to discrimination, and so on. Their minority population is about 8 per cent.

Here there are two minority populations and in this country we will not consider that. We still have the police officer talking about “Gilbaransingh” in 2005. We still have that—cannot read, cannot write and cannot pronounce. They would be well advised to look at developments, public service reform programmes in the United Kingdom, even the criticisms of the National Health Service; even what is happening in the National Health Service and the health policy that they are thinking of revamping, the health service which we borrowed years ago. They would be wise to look at that. But not the United Arab Emirates, Taiwan, and so on, where you do not have that similarity with democracy.

At any time in these countries, you may be dealing with governments that command barely 50 per cent of a population's support, maybe less. There are some Caribbean islands that are 50/50. So a government in power does not have 80/90 per cent support by definition. On policy matters it might be worse, but in terms of strict support, Governments in the Caribbean now do not have that.

Mr. Singh: Tell Manning "Juba Dubai".

Dr. R. Moonilal: That is why Prime Minister P.J. Patterson of Jamaica is now moving ahead with an initiative to include the opposition parties in the Caribbean within some type of institutional structure in Caricom, because they have discovered that you cannot ignore the opposition throughout the Caribbean anymore. It is much too large and governments do not represent generally, more than 50 per cent of a population, and P.J. Patterson is on that initiative. The opposition in these countries must be heard. You cannot run the Government by creating state enterprises, appointing people, giving out this and that. So we learn that the former PNM mayor has been appointed Chairman of the Sports Authority. They are going to build a sports facility and, Mr. Speaker, let me just say something about this sports facility. The Member for Toco/Manzanilla is very emotional about this, because I think it might be the only thing of size he would have

confronted in his tenure at the ministry. The editorial of the *Guardian* of Thursday, June 02, 2005:

"Scale down that sports complex"

They warned the Government.

"It is fiscally irresponsible, therefore, for the Government to commit the country to expenditure on unnecessary 'prestige' construction projects based on revenue streams that are unsustainable in the long term."

Mr. Imbert: What is long term, 50 years?

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, the editorial of the *Guardian* says:

"Into such a category falls the proposed \$850 million sports complex to be built in south Trinidad, which has been condemned by most of the population..."

Except the poll taken by the Prime Minister.

"as being extravagant and an inappropriate allocation of resources."

Mr. Speaker, they point out:

"...the non-partisan nature of the criticism obviously caught the Government unawares..."

Because the criticism is not coming only from the UNC. Several citizens have written in the newspaper reminding the PNM—but not Members on that side, they were not there—of houses before horses. It is the same experience, anytime they get money they build buildings. They just put up buildings every time they get money. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Dr. R. Moonilal: It leads me to another point. The Prime Minister said it while he was boasting. He said, we would build the tallest building in Trinidad and Tobago. They remind me of when I was in the Students Guild many years ago at UWI, St. Augustine. When you win elections you are called Internal Affairs Officer, but under that portfolio you would be responsible for the students cafeteria and bar, and every year, as soon as any student wins that position, they would paint over the wall, because to win means you need to make some difference; as soon as you win, paint the wall.

So, every year they are painting over this wall. As soon as somebody wins elections, you are sure about one thing, a paint job. You are not sure about quality service, lower prices, better food, lower cost or expansion, but you are sure that as soon as someone becomes the Internal Affairs Officer, they paint over the whole canteen. This is the PNM. As soon as they get money they build the tallest building—that is their pride and joy. It matters not that people do not have water—that is irrelevant. Water is irrelevant. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Electricity, irrelevant; health care, irrelevant; education, irrelevant; criminal, irrelevant. What matters is that we get the tallest building in the Caribbean. That is their mentality.

Hon. Member: What wrong with that?

Dr. R. Moonilal: That is why as they boast about all these projects, citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are migrating. Their own children are leaving them. PNM Ministers cannot keep their children in this country. They have migrated because they say they do not want to live here. The children of our top nationals in the public and private sectors are being educated and are not returning to Trinidad and Tobago. Why are children not returning to Trinidad and Tobago? Is it that the buildings are too small? Maybe they do not have enough floors. Maybe the government complex does not have a cultural centre. That is why children are not returning to Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members opposite the Member for Oropouche, I think the *Hansard* reporter is having a bit of difficulty. Please.

Hon. Members: We are having difficulty, too.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I was coming to behaviour in a while, but I will leave that now. That is PNM behaviour, whether they are on the public streets or in the Parliament. Mr. Speaker, you know I like hearing the Chair.

I want to come to this matter of employment that the Prime Minister is very fond of. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is a smart man, let us agree on that. You know in another world he would do great. He is a smart man, good qualities of conman ship. The Prime Minister would want to indicate to the nation that the unemployment figure is decreasing and his great goal, of course, is to stand at a PNM convention and declare that we have reached full employment, that is what he is about, and he can declare that this evening, incidentally.

I told him two years ago, I said: Mr. Prime Minister, if you increase OJT, URP, CEPEP, HYPE, YAPA, “DAPPA”, you would run unemployment down. I told him how to take care of all the unemployment. He followed the advice, and today, you have the biggest dependency syndrome in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Today, you have young people who are permanently dependent on the State, but for six months, three months, or whatever employed.

So young persons with their O' levels, A' levels, and so on—OJT. You have a three months or six months as the case may be and when that is finished there is a policy that the OJT cannot hire you again, that is just for the period. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Get a job.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Get a job. Get a job where? On Mars? There are no jobs being created in the non-energy private sector of this country [*Crosstalk*] and Mr. Speaker, they are absorbing legions of young people into these OJT, CCC and so on, who will be permanently indebted to the State for education.

You know we always say that our most important resource is our human resource. That is not gas and oil; our human resource is also a limited resource. When young people with the university degrees; the post graduate training; the PhD and so on; when they go abroad, that is your human resource going. So, we in Trinidad and Tobago will end up keeping the OJT, URP, CEPEP, HYPE, YAPA, “DAPPA” and all our university trained persons will leave us.

I teach at the University of the West Indies and when students send me emails after a particular time, I say: “But long time I have not heard of you, where are you?” They say: “Well I am in Atlanta; I am in Toronto; I am in New York; I got a job with a company in Miami.” These are the bright persons who you would think would develop this country. No, this country will remain with that legion. You know what they are doing is very instructive. They are taking care of a group of dependent persons by way of the ten days, the house and, of course, you need shopping mall in the afternoon to come out.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Oh, yes.

Dr. R. Moonilal: A shopping mall and then you have all your different assistance coming your way. From birth to death, they will not liberate their own supporters. [*Desk thumping*] That is the problem, Mr. Speaker. They accused the UNC of closing down CCC and John Donaldson Technical Institute, and so on and creating the criminals, good for us; but, they re-introduced the Civilian Conservation

Corps, they expanded John D, they went back and opened all the programmes. Did crime go down? No, crime did not decrease.

This Government has the most remarkable achievement of having the most social programmes in our history and the worst crime situation in our history in tandem [*Desk thumping*] That is a development paradox that a country would have the most social programmes and the worst crime at the same time and probably increasing poverty. It is not usual in developing countries to have an expansive social programme—which is on paper, social security safety net—and then have crime at this level; delinquency at this level.

6.15 p.m.

They are breeding criminals in the secondary schools. There was a football match at the Mannie Ramjohn Stadium sometime last year. I was there looking on at a Pres/Naps match in the evening.

Mr. Valley: Who win?

Dr. R. Moonilal: When I came out of the stadium I stood surrounded by students there and I could not believe the sort of violent character; I could not believe it. When you go to football in the stadium or in Arima when they are playing the secondary schools' league, the students are volatile, they are aggressive and heated. I want to ask the Prime Minister, tell me, in the four years that you have been returned to office; what have you done to teach young persons to respect elders, to respect the community, to have consideration for others, to respect all religions, cultures and ethnicity and to respect people who work hard? [*Interruption*] What have you done? What have you done to instil in young people that when they see somebody working hard they do not want to rob them; their goal is not to eat two doubles and then rob the doubles man. What have you done, to instil this responsibility in young persons?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: By example.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Example!

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Dr. R. Moonilal: To teach them to eat sweetbread? The only thing they taught them is that sweetbread is good.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Corrupt!

Dr. R. Moonilal: They call bribery sweetbread on that side, you know, and they chase it with beer.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: What would you call it?

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into the example at all, because the examples will not assist them.

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

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: Thank you, colleagues on both sides of the House. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, through you, I want to put this question to the Prime Minister who in due course could answer. Explain to us, outline for us, with all the buildings that the Government is building, what is it doing and where, to teach young people respect, consideration and care.

Mr. Valley: Like somebody has an echo.

Dr. R. Moonilal: What are you doing? Clearly we cannot depend on the education sector to do that.

Mr. Valley: Why not?

Dr. R. Moonilal: Why? Given what we are seeing in the newspapers and elsewhere; this is a country where a school was banned from the library. I do not know if anybody knows of another country where a library banned a school. This is a country where nine teachers are for two years on suspension and are being paid. So it cannot be the education sector, it has to be some public policy intervention.

I think the Prime Minister spoke in a budget sometime ago, of homework centres, if I am not mistaken. Do we have homework centres?

Hon. Member: No.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Are you starting it? Where? How? Who is doing it? You need to take the young people and go back to homework. I agree with the Member for Toco/Manzanilla, we need to invest in sports. In communities throughout this country, if young people would have football, table tennis board, cricket gears, and so on; they would use their time for sport. I am not in support of \$850 million for a sports complex. I am interested in taking much less and farming out throughout the regions to support the clubs that exist, to support groups that are there.

As Members of Parliament, how many of you receive letters from clubs in your constituency, and they want football, cricket gear and table tennis boards? [Interruption] What we should do, is to ensure that the youths in our community have these facilities near their homes. [Interruption] When they go to the community centres, they have three table tennis boards and they have a football for “small goal”. Not many years ago, when some of us were in school, that is what kept us occupied, that we would go in the evening for “small goal”. we played tennis and so on. Today, we have these youths now, walking around—you know with—I do not want to describe the clothes, but with the head-set and so on and they have no access to sporting equipment and centres. You cannot solve that with that \$850 million sports complex. It does not work that way! You have to invest in the community.

In fact every community centre in Trinidad and Tobago could be converted into a sports community centre to provide for districts, so that they develop, but not the \$850 million as the government is proposing, Mr. Speaker. Not that! When you do that, you may then have some impact on crime, if not a lot. Because of the impact of drugs, guns and so on, it is a bigger question, but you will have some impact on crime.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister really opened the debate by enlightening us on his development policy and his approach to government and, indeed, the PNM's approach to deliver before 2020 what they call developed country status. A fundamental problem—and I want to make this point. Another big difference between the UNC and the PNM is this: when you look at a hierarchy of needs—and I am sorry if people cannot understand—and at the bottom of a triangle—Abraham Maslow had this triangle of needs—you would have the physiological needs meaning the first level needs which are really food, shelter, clothes and so on, but as you go up to the apex you have other needs, recreation and emotion, and finally, at the top there is, what you call self-actualization, that is the highest need you have, and that is just one. There are many theories and so on.

In that hierarchy, the PNM believes—and this is my view—that you must satisfy the top, that there must be dignity, there must be worth, there must be self-actualization for persons and so on. This is why they perceive ministries to be cultural institutions and not just administrative institutions. So the PNM's model has always been to cater for the upper tree, but by the same token not spending much emphasis on the lower base. The UNC, on the other hand, worked the other way around, in that, what we needed to do first was to ensure that everybody has water, utilities—

Hon. Member: Water for all!

Dr. R. Moonilal:—housing, we had a different approach to housing; clothes and the means. This is why for example a UNC government introduced a national minimum wage, that the PNM Government has increased twice, I think. This is why the UNC had a minimum wage. We worked from the base of the pyramid so that when persons have their physical needs taken care of, then you lift towards your great sense of self, worth and dignity. The PNM is a different community; they work on worth and dignity, and forget that people may not have food, they will not have housing, they will not have clothes; and poverty will increase. That, I believe, is another fundamental difference between the approach of a PNM Government and a UNC government.

A UNC government was driven really, by this belief that every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago should have education, water, electricity and communication access. [*Interruption*] That is not their emphasis, their emphasis is something else.

The other major point is that, it is only until the PNM Government introduces, at least, six policy and legislative tools to promote equality in this society, will we ever reach developed country status. There is no developed country in the world—take it from me—there is none in the world that has become developed without the equality institutions to protect citizens [*Desk thumping*] There is none! I mean, you could quote Islamic Republics and so on, that is fine, but they operate with a completely different system. United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and so on, they operate different. [*Interruption*] But there is no developed country in the world that has become developed and they do not have equality institutions to deal with their population. It cannot happen, and this is why I said at the beginning that there will be no development, there will be no developed status, if that is really or truly your objectives. I mean, the Prime Minister really believes, look, my legacy to this country—and he spoke about his legacy before. [*Interruption*] In fact his legacy to this country would be a developed country, then, you need to introduce the equality institutions. Because the Prime Minister has served this country for 30—35 years or so, this is the longest serving Member in public life today.

Mr. Imbert: Thirty-four years.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thirty-four years as Member of Parliament, sworn in three times as a Prime Minister, I think. [*Interruption*] He has at least had public service. Why is it you believe that after 34 years in public life you have been

unable to attract intellectual attention? [*Crosstalk*] There is a reason. We were told that at sometime Raffique Shah was writing a book on the hon. Prime Minister. We did not see the book. We did not read the book. I was most interested in any documentation of the Member. [*Interruption*] The Prime Minister must ask himself what is his legacy. [*Interruption*] Is it development? If it is development, there is no development without equality. None! You all, as Ministers, travel frequently all around the world now. Anytime you are looking for a Minister he or she is somewhere else. Look in those developed countries and see what they have—Canada, the United Kingdom, Holland, Germany and so on—not just the political system—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Dr. R. Moonilal: They have the equality institutions that protect citizens. All! And the entire society is lifted. No society in the world develops on the basis of inequality or inequity, no society develops on that basis. I believe that is a reality, and they could check it out, they travel all the time, these Ministers, and in these countries as well; we are into an interesting discussion of the Prime Minister's legacy. The Prime Minister must also note that sooner or later he will demit office.

Mr. Imbert: He will, later. [*Laughter*]

Dr. R. Moonilal: And by the hook or with the—

Hon. Member: Crook. [*Laughter*]

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister must know that, sooner or later, he will demit office. In no country in the world [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, in no country in the world, governments oppress half of the population. They begin by oppressing a group that is outside of their scope, their party, but you know what happens: because you put a system in place where you begin by oppressing half as you go along you start oppressing all, because you have power. And that is another long-term challenge that faces this country. That in the post PNM period, which will come very soon—if they behave, in opposition they may return—another government can behave the same way that they are behaving. [*Interruption*] That is not a good thing for this country. That is not what we want.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw to the attention of Members on the other side that the United National Congress held a rally on Sunday last—freedom rally.

Hon. Member: You hear how he putting it.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Citizens of this country came out in their numbers to exercise their constitutional right [*Interruption*] to support a political party and political views of their choice; that was their right. [*Crosstalk*] And when the PNM had a motorcade to support—He is gone; what time is it? [*Laughter*]

Mr. S. Panday: Pick-up time.

Dr. R. Moonilal: When the PNM had a motorcade to support the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro—who has gone, but I am sorry to keep him back—that was their right. The PNM supporters had a right to join the motorcade and support their political views; our democracy allows that. You had a situation where a police officer at the Arouca/Churchill Roosevelt intersection—police officer—posted to maintain the peace, law and order; posted there, so that he would maintain peace, ensure traffic management, crowd control and what have you, in a show of arrogance and in a deliberate act to provoke and incite citizens in this country to break the law, stood on a poster of the Opposition Leader; and we have the picture here.

Mr. Imbert: So what.

Dr. R. Moonilal: That is the response from the Member for Diego Martin East. Mr. Speaker, this is a banana republic. [*Interruption*] This is not Vision 2020. What was he standing on the picture of the leader for, to ensure that it did not blow away?

Mr. Manning: He was looking at the wrong— [*Inaudible*]

Dr. R. Moonilal: This is the country you lead! These were police officers who were there. That is their job. I feel ashamed and I am in the Opposition; had I been in Government it would have been worse. It is really a shameful day when a police officer could do that. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, my mother used to say “what goes around comes around”. I would object if a police officer stood on a poster of the Member for San Fernando East or, incidentally, of the President. I will object to that. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, this is the conduct of police officers. I have written the Police Commissioner; I have sent a copy of it and have called for an investigation and appropriate and proper action to be taken against this officer for this gross breach of trust and confidence in the police. [*Crosstalk*] And they will have their turn. When their turn comes it might be more than poster. I want to alert them that this is the society that they are presiding over. This is the level of lawlessness and callous disregard for constitutional office holders from, of all people, a police officer.

The Member for Diego Martin Central who, on occasion is straightforward and understands ethics on some occasions—including the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance—he cannot be lumped with the Member for Diego Martin East, who by himself is allergic to the truth. They will understand the gravity of this situation and I hope you will take an appropriate action on this matter as well, because the letter has been copied to the Prime Minister’s office and I am hoping that he will take appropriate action. [*Interruption*] Because this is not the democracy that we want to build. You cannot have—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, hon. Members opposite—the Member who is speaking—I am appealing to you for the second and the last time; you are in fact humbugging the Hansard reporter.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, could you imagine their parents, they dealt with them for a long period of time, not only on a Friday afternoon. We are developing a democracy, you will not have developed country status without democracy, without the rule of law; and this is not Vision 2020, as you will agree.

Mr. Speaker, let me rap up by indicating that I support the Member for St. Joseph. [*Interruption*] I support the position taken, that notwithstanding the enormous number of buildings which will be completed in the next few years, we believe, in terms of the deliverables, in terms of the utilities, in terms of the human needs of the country, in terms of sustainable, well-paid jobs for our young people, this Government has failed miserably.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, The last speaker, the Member for Oropouche, identified a number of ills in the society, and on this side, as the Prime Minister has said; we are aware of them and we would be working more assiduously to ensure that the next time he speaks—somewhere within the next two to three years from that particular position—that he would be of a different view, and he would be able to say to us that: “I was wrong, I did not understand it and, therefore, I am happy to support you in this particular thing.”

The Prime Minister in his intervention, provided a significant amount of additional information and put into context some of the issues that were raised. The Member has a different view and I guess that that is okay, so, Mr. Speaker, there is really nothing much that remains for me to do but to say to you Sir, I beg to move, [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That this House adopt the Third Report 2004/2005 Session of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on proposals for the Supplementation and Variation of the 2005 Appropriation.

FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTATION AND VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) BILL

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

That a Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum of the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 2005, be now read a second time.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be read the third time.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

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 Monday, June 13, 2005 at 1.30 p.m., and I wish to inform hon. Members that on that date the Government plans to debate the Bill which is on the last Supplemental Order Paper: the Corporal Punishment Bill and, secondly, the Offences Against the Person Act, Chap. 11:08 (Harassment) Bill.

Mr. Singh: Hon. Leader, Corporal Punishment and what?

Hon. K. Valley: I am sorry, you were not listening.

Mr. Singh: No, please.

Hon. K. Valley: Offences Against the Person (Harassment) Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.39 p.m.