

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received requests from the following Members for leave of absence: the hon. Kennedy Swaratsingh, Member of Parliament for St. Joseph, for the period July 22 to July 24 2008; the hon. Penelope Beckles, Member of Parliament for Arima, for the period July 20 to August 06, 2008; the hon. Kelvin Ramnath, Member of Parliament for Couva South, for today's sitting of the House and the hon. Mikela Panday, Member of Parliament for Oropouche West, from today's sitting of the House. The leave which these Members seek is granted.

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

*The following questions were asked by Dr. Tim Gopeesingh (Caroni East):*

**National Insurance Property****Development Company Limited (NIPDEC)****(Details of)**

- 165.** With regard to the National Insurance Property Development Company Limited (NIPDEC) for the period 2006 to date, could the Minister of Finance state:
- (a) the developmental projects undertaken;
  - (b) the cost of each project and the company awarded the contract;
  - (c) the percentage completed, the cost overruns so far, if any and the estimated cost at completion; and
  - (d) the internal audit findings on these projects?

**National Infrastructure Development Company Limited****(NIDCO)**

- 167.** With regard to the National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO) for the period 2006 to date, could the Minister of Works and Transport state:
- (a) the developmental projects undertaken;
  - (b) the cost of each project and the company awarded the contract;
  - (c) the percentage completed, the cost overruns so far, if any and the estimated cost at completion; and

(d) the internal audit findings on these projects?

*Vide end of sitting for written replies.*

**COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY  
(PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION SECTOR AND UDeCOTT)**

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, within recent weeks there has been uniformed speculation on the status of the Commission of Enquiry into the Public Construction Sector and UDeCOTT, which if left unchecked, will lead to further misinformation in the public domain. It is necessary, therefore, to bring the House and the national population by extension, up to date on this matter.

You will recall that the Government's initial choice of chairman for the enquiry, Mr. Gordon Deane did not find favour with hon. Members opposite or with other interested parties. Mr. Deane eventually withdrew from the process and after consideration of other potential chairmen in the domestic environment, it soon became apparent that because of the comprehensive nature of the enquiry and the interlocking interests in the local construction sector, it would be difficult to find a chairman in Trinidad and Tobago who would not be deemed to be unacceptable by local interest groups, for one reason or another.

Accordingly, the Government commenced a search for a chairman in a number of foreign countries within the region and the Commonwealth. It was felt that to be effective, the selected person should be familiar with our legal system and potential candidates were therefore considered from the Caribbean, Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada, among other countries. In identifying suitable candidates to chair the Enquiry, in order to ensure that the person had the requisite skill and competence, it was thought appropriate to find persons with qualifications in construction and law; preferably someone with experience of participation in similar commissions of enquiry. It goes without saying that availability was also a determining factor, since persons at this level would naturally all have personal and professional commitments.

Regrettably, there were some disappointments along the way. The Government's initial choice was an international expert in construction contracts, with judicial experience and outstanding qualifications in engineering and law. However, although he was initially quite willing to undertake the assignment, because of the demands of his current job, he was unable to get the necessary permission from his employer to be out of the country for extended periods, and eventually had to decline the appointment. The search, therefore, continued. A number of other potentially suitable candidates were identified, and the necessary due diligence was conducted, which of necessity included confirmation of availability.

As you will appreciate, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the process of identification and selection of a suitable chairman for this enquiry has taken some time, simply because the Government wished to ensure that the person who was eventually selected had the ability to conduct this important task in the proper manner. Further, because of the nature of the enquiry, the chairman's credentials had to be impeccable and beyond reproach. Ironically, it is axiomatic that if we had not approached this assignment properly, the same people who are criticizing us for taking too long to commence the enquiry would have condemned us for making a poor selection. Axiomatic means it goes without saying.

Accordingly, I am authorized to advise this honourable House that a suitable person has been located and has now agreed to chair the Commission of Enquiry into the Public Construction Sector and UDeCOTT. The person in question is Professor John Uff, CBE, QC, a world-renowned expert in construction practice, engineering and law. Allow me to give some brief details about Professor Uff. He was originally trained as a civil engineer, and then became a specialist in geotechnics, eventually switching careers to become a barrister.

While developing an extensive practice in many areas of engineering, construction and law, he has maintained close interests in writing, lecturing and academia. In 1987, he became the founding Director of the Centre of Construction Law and Management at King's College, London, and was appointed to the Nash Chair of Engineering Law at the University of London in 1992. In addition, since 2003, he has been Emeritus Professor of Engineering Law at King's College. John Uff's international and national reputation has led to many appointments as arbitrator in substantial disputes in most parts of the world, as well as being appointed to chair public enquiries in the United Kingdom.

He has maintained close contact with the engineering world, through the Institution of Civil Engineers in the United Kingdom and the Royal Academy of Engineering. He has also been closely involved in many developments in the construction industry over the past twenty years and most recently, spearheaded the engineering profession's drive in the United Kingdom to establish a code of ethical principles. In 1996, he served as chairman of a public enquiry in the United Kingdom in the water industry and over the period 1998—2001, he chaired two public enquiries into railway accidents in the United Kingdom. He has served as a Vice President of the London Court of Arbitration and as President of the Society of Construction Arbitrators.

He has worked on many substantial arbitrations, as sole arbitrator, chairman or tribunal member, throughout the world, from Australia; the Far East to the Middle East; Europe and North America, He has acted for the Treasury Solicitor in the

*Commission Of Enquiry*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

United Kingdom in a number of construction matters and has been involved in several landmark cases before the Court of Appeal, House of Lords and Privy Council.

His publications include the following:

Contributor, *Keating on Construction Contracts* - Eighth Edition (2006);

Author, *Construction Law*, 9th edition (2005);

Contributor, *Keating on Building Contracts*, 7th edition;

Joint author, Chapter on Construction Contracts in 28th edition of *Chitty on Contracts* (1999);

I know that my honourable friends opposite will know of these well recognized text books. Mr. Speaker will know as well.

Principal author: *Construction Industry Model Arbitration Rules*;

Editor for a series of Construction Law publications and various other papers and books with respect to the responsibility of being an engineer; ethics in construction law; engineering ethics; dispute resolution and so on.

His professional CV is as follows:

BSc Engineering, King's College, London;

PhD, Geotechnics, King's College, London;

Called to the Bar (Gray's Inn), 1970;

Fellow, Institution of Civil Engineers;

Queen's Counsel, 1983;

Director, Centre of Construction Law and Management;

Prof. of Engineering Law, King's College, London;

Head of Keating Chambers;

Fellow, Royal Academy of Engineering;

Fellow, King's College, London;

Recorder and Deputy Judge of the Technology and Construction Court, 1998;

President's Medal, Society of Construction Law;

Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE);

Gold Medal, Institute of Civil Engineers.

As I said previously, he has been Chairman of the Public Enquiry into the Southall Train Crash and also joint Chairman with Lord Cullen of the Public Enquiry in the United Kingdom in the Train Protection System, as well as being Chairman of the Independent Commission of Enquiry into Yorkshire Water and Vice President of the London Court of Arbitration and so on.

I am sure that you will agree that Professor Uff's vast experience in arbitration and construction matters; his extensive qualifications in engineering and law and the fact that he has already chaired three public inquiries in the United Kingdom, make him eminently suitable to serve as Chairman of the Commission of Enquiry into the Public Construction Sector and UDeCott. I am sure that my honourable friends opposite on the face it would agree also.

Further, even though some critics may not wish to concede this fact, it should now be apparent that the Government has approached this serious matter in a responsible and professional manner.

I also wish to advise that the appointments of the other three Members of the Commission of Enquiry, who will all be citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, are currently being finalized and it is anticipated that this exercise can be completed within the next two weeks.

Further, based on the proposed time schedule that has been developed with Professor Uff over the last month that we were in discussion with him, it is expected that barring unforeseen circumstances, the commission can do its preliminary work; attend to procedural matters and administrative arrangements, such as interlocutory orders; acquisition of suitable accommodation; staffing; engagement of legal counsel and the holding of a preliminary hearing, within the next three to four months. That is by October/November 2008.

Finally, it is expected that following the preliminary work of the commission, including the preliminary, the detailed hearings of the enquiry will take place over the period January 2009 to July 2009, with submission of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry approximately three months thereafter. This is based on discussion with the Chairman, Prof. Uff.

Thank you.

#### **PENSIONS (AMDT.) BILL**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister of Information (Hon. Neil Parsanlal):** I beg to move,

That a Bill to amend the Pensions Act Chap. 23:52 be now read a second time.

**RELATED BILLS**

**The Minister of Information (Hon. Neil Parsanlal):** In moving the second reading of this Bill, I seek the leave of the House to debate together, the other two Bills before this House which relate to this subject of debate. These Bills are the Teachers' Pensions (Amdt.) Bill, 2008 and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions (Amdt.) Bill, 2008.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj SC (Tabaquite):** Mr. Speaker, I did draw the attention of the Leader of Government Business to the learning on May's. I think that you are familiar with it. We looked at this and we believe that it is in the public's interest for the matter to be heard together. We know that according to the learning, one Member can say no. I do not know whether the Leader of Government Business spoke to Dr. Rowley, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West. Subject to that, we are quite prepared for the debate.

**PENSIONS (AMDT.) BILL**

**Hon. N. Parsanlal:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chief Whip for his graciousness and the Members of the House. I beg to move that the proposed amendments to the Pensions Act, Chap. 23:52; the Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:02 and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:03 be now read a second time.

**1.45 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, following the successful completion of negotiations for new terms and conditions between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and firstly, the Public Services Association (PSA) and secondly, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA) in 2003 and 2005, agreement was reached to amend the Pensions Act and Regulations, Chap. 23:52 and the relevant Teachers' Pensions Acts and Regulations.

Hon. Members will recall that these are the regulations which govern the superannuation benefits to members of the civil and teaching services who, at the date of their compulsory retirement, were acting in a higher position than their substantive office. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments are to provide for the following:

- (1) where an officer or a teacher has acted continuously in a higher office for a period of at least three years immediately prior to the date of his

compulsory retirement, his superannuation benefits shall be calculated as if he had been appointed substantively to that office during the period; and

- (2) where an officer or a teacher has acted continuously in a higher office for a period of at least one year immediately prior to his compulsory retirement, the averaging principles shall be observed in the computation of his superannuation benefits.

Mr. Speaker, hon. Members, it was agreed that the amendments to the Pensions Act and Regulations, Chap. 23:53 would take effect from January 01, 2004 while the amendments to the relevant Teachers' Pensions Act and Regulations were to take effect from January 01, 2005. These agreements were ratified by Cabinet on November 13, 2003 and June 20, 2005 respectively.

Prior to these arrangements, the superannuation benefits of a person who acted in a higher office immediately prior to compulsory retirement were calculated on the salary of his substantive office, notwithstanding that he may have been performing the duties of the higher office continuously for several years.

The intention of the amendment, therefore, Mr. Speaker, is to provide for a person who served continuously in an acting capacity for a substantial period and could not be appointed on promotion prior to compulsory retirement, a benefit no less favourable than that applicable to the substantive holder of the position.

Under the existing pension laws for officers of the civil and teaching services, an officer who is appointed to a position substantively must serve in that position for at least three years in order to enjoy the full benefits of the salary of that position in the computation of any superannuation benefits.

However, Mr. Speaker, after agreement was reached with PSA and TTUTA, it was recognized that if the amendments were implemented as agreed, an anomaly would be created, in that a person who acted in the higher office and is promoted to such higher office within the three-year period immediately prior to his compulsory retirement would be treated less favourably than one who was not promoted, but who continued acting in the higher office for the entire three-year period.

This is so, Mr. Speaker, because at this time, no account is taken of emoluments earned during a period of acting in a higher position and there were no discussions or agreements with the relevant associations on the treatment of persons who were promoted subsequent to their acting for a continuous period.

Anomalies, such as those referred to before, can arise when attempts are made to amend provisions, in pension legislation, on an ad hoc basis mainly because the

provisions of the various pension Acts are very tightly linked. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, it was necessary to review the agreement and to thoroughly re-examine its possible impact on other provisions contained in the legislation. The preparation of the Bills on the original amendments was therefore postponed in order to treat with the anomalies as identified.

Subsequently, and following further discussions with PSA and TTUTA, Cabinet, on June 14, 2007, agreed that the relevant Pensions Acts and regulations be amended further to provide for the payment of superannuation benefits to officers of the public service and the teaching service as follows:

- (1) where, immediately prior to compulsory retirement, an officer or teacher is promoted to higher office, having acted in that higher office and the continuous period of acting, together with his service in the office to which he has been promoted, amounts to a period of not less than three years, his superannuation benefits shall be calculated as if he had been substantively appointed to that office during the entire period; and
- (2) where immediately prior to compulsory retirement, an officer or teacher is promoted to a higher office, having acted in that higher office, and the continuous period of acting, together with his service in the office to which he has been promoted, amounts to a period of not less than one year, but less than three years, the averaging principle will be observed in the computation of his superannuation benefits.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, consequential amendments have been made to treat with the impact of vacation leave on the service of an individual who acts in a higher office. In this regard, service in an acting capacity does not include periods of vacation leave, since during such leave the acting appointment is broken.

Since it is mandatory that a person proceed on all vacation leave for which he may be eligible so that such leave expires on the date immediately preceding his compulsory retirement, it is necessary to ensure that an officer or teacher who meets the stated requirements with respect to periods of acting as well as promotion, and who is required to proceed on annual leave prior to the date of compulsory retirement, would also benefit from the agreement reached.

Mr. Speaker, for the edification of Members of this honourable House, similar agreements were reached with the relevant associations representing First and Second Division Officers of the police and prison services in 2004 and 2007 respectively.



These agreements for the protective services allowed for officers, who acted in a higher position for at least three years' continuous service and who retired compulsorily, to have their superannuation benefits calculated as though they were appointed to that higher position.

However, since the superannuation benefits of officers in the protective services are calculated on the basis of the final salary received and the averaging principle does not apply where an officer has served for less than three years, no provisions needed to be made for officers who would have acted for a period of less than three years.

With your leave therefore, Mr. Speaker, I wish to seize this opportunity to further update Members of the House on other appropriate legislative amendments, namely the Finance (No. 2) Act, No. 30 of 2007, which was assented to on September 28, 2007, in respect of officers of the First Division of the prison service in 2004 and 2007 respectively. This would also allow for officers of the First Division of the prison service who have acted in a higher position for at least three continuous years and who have retired compulsorily to have their superannuation benefits calculated as though they were appointed to that higher position.

With respect to Second Division Officers of the prison service, legislative amendments are currently under way to allow such officers to benefit from the agreement reached with the Prison Officers' Association of Trinidad and Tobago. With respect to the police service, the identified anomalies have been resolved and the preparation of relevant legislation is in progress. In the case of the fire service, this matter was not raised in their representations and therefore has not been the subject of discussion with the two representative associations thus far.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to highlight that, in accordance with the agreements reached, the amendments to the relevant legislation are to be enacted retroactively, so that persons will not suffer any loss when the Acts are promulgated.

To complete the holistic view of the pension plans and legislation surrounding the subject of retirement benefits for members of the public service, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has embarked on a comprehensive programme of pension reform in the public service. The provision of superannuation benefits in the public service is governed by several pieces of legislation containing varying benefits. Hon. Members will note that such benefits are currently provided on the basis of the nature of the service to which the office holders belong.

The pension reform initiative, which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Finance, covers disparate offices. These include:

- for the members of the police service—the Police Service Act, Chap. 15:01, which has reached the stage of agreement and for which new legislation is currently being prepared;
- for the members of the public service—the Pensions Act, Chap. 23:52, which is being presented today;
- for members of the teaching service—the Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:02 and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:03—to which I am referring today as well;
- for the members of the fire service—the Fire Service Act, Chap. 35:05—discussions with respect to its amendment are currently taking place;
- for the members of the prison service—the Prison Service Act, Chap. 13:02;
- for the Office of the Prime Minister—the Prime Minister's Pension Act, Chap. 2:51;
- for Members of Parliament—the Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service) Act, Chap. 2:03;
- for members of the Judiciary—the Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act, Chap. 6:02;
- for Ambassadors or High Commissioners—the Retiring Allowances (Diplomatic Service) Act, Chap. 17:04;
- for members of the Industrial Court—the Industrial Relations Act (Industrial Court Pensions and Gratuities of Members Regulations), Chap. 88:01;
- for the members of the defence force—the Defence Act, Chap. 14:01;
- for the officers of specified statutory authorities and bodies—the Pensions Extension Act, Chap. 23:53; and
- for the officers of the municipal corporations—the Municipal Corporations (Pensions) Act, Chap. 25:05.

As previously stated, Mr. Speaker, the examination of all these form part of the pension reform exercise being undertaken by the Ministry of Finance.

With respect to the pension plan for daily-rated workers of Government, an agreement was reached with the National Union of Government and Federated Workers in 2000 for the introduction of a pension plan for daily-rated workers of

the Government. Some of these government offices include the central government, the regional corporations, the Tobago House of Assembly and the statutory authorities. The union has sought amendments to the terms of the agreement previously signed and the matter is currently being pursued.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the background information provided today, the amendments to the Pensions Act and regulations, Chap. 23:52, the Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:02 and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:03 are both fitting and in keeping with the current developments in pension reforms across Trinidad and Tobago.

These Bills are simple pieces of legislation consisting of three clauses each, which are as follows:

Clause 1 of the Bills provides a short title of the Bills;

Clause 2 provides for the interpretation of the term “regulations”; and

Under clause 3 of the Bills provisions are made to include the amendments proposed today, providing for the computation of pension in acting capacity, prior to compulsory retirement of a public service officer with respect to the Pensions Act or a teacher with respect to the Teachers' Pensions Act and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pension Act, when the officer or teacher has acted in a higher office for a period of three continuous years or for a period of one continuous year but less than three.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments must be viewed in light of larger reform initiatives currently being undertaken in the public service sector. Among the specific objectives of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the reform of the public service include the modernization of human resources management and a new focus on customer service.

This focus on customer service, Mr. Speaker, is predicated on the belief that a customer is the most important visitor to our Ministries. They are not dependent on us, we are dependent on them. They are not interruptions in our work; they are the purpose of our work. They are not outsiders to our business; they are integral to it. We are not doing them a favour by serving them; rather, they are doing us a favour by giving us the opportunity to serve them.

It is our belief, Mr. Speaker, that if we are to develop our staff to be more customer-service oriented, then it follows that we must lead by example. Our workers are our customers. We on this side believe, therefore, that if we treat our workers well, provide them with proper terms and conditions, inclusive of pension benefits, they will in turn, be minded to treat their customers well.

Mr. Speaker, according to the report on the public service compiled by Adam Smith International in March 2008, the public service comprises of 4.5 per cent of the population of Trinidad and Tobago, with over a third of that staff in the Ministry of National Security and slightly less than a third in the Ministry of Education.

**2.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago aims to ensure that, upon retirement, our protective services officers and teachers are appropriately compensated for the duties they undertook while in office; substantively or not. We on this side are optimistic therefore that through the reform of the public service, we would be able to inculcate, as common behaviour among public service officers, a culture of reward for work and work for reward. It is a culture that all of us in this honourable House as public servants ourselves might be minded to emulate. It is a culture which reminds us that we are not here merely to make a living; we are here to enable citizens of this country to live more productively with greater vision and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement.

We are here to enrich this country and we impoverish ourselves when we forget that errand. There are those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and there are those who wonder what happened. With the best of those affected in mind and in a bid to move forward towards a more compassionate and caring society, based on a culture of accountability and reward, let us be the ones who make this happen.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Let me remind Members that we are on the Pensions Act, the Teachers' Pensions Act and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions Act. You can debate the three Bills together.

**Dr. Roodal Moonilal** (*Oropouche East*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Do I have to put on the mike? Yes. I rise to contribute on this matter of the Bills seeking to amend parent legislation dealing with pensions for specific categories of public officers.

Today we are dealing with three items, the Teachers' Pensions (Amdt.) Bill 2008, the Pensions (Amdt.) (No. 2) Bill, 2008 and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions (Amdt.) Bill, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that the light will not go off again. I have just asked for a torchlight if anyone would lend me to look at my notes. I found it most instructive

that the gentleman, the Minister of Information, found it so easy to operate under the cover of darkness. Without any thought of inconvenience, he continued marching on, as if all was well. I think it is really an appropriate and adequate testimony that there will be a power outage during the sitting of the House of Representatives in Trinidad and Tobago as we move forward towards Vision 2020 developed country status on or before 2020. I think it is appropriate that there should be a power cut.

It is also instructive because these measures, we have said time and again, are really piecemeal measures that the Government is adopting and seeking to pass in ways in which they are, in a way preventing themselves from bringing comprehensive legislation to deal with retirement and pension reform. The issue here is really a new retirement regime for public officers. It is a reform of the pension system. That is the fundamental issue. These measures seek to assist specific categories of workers to provide some benefit, given circumstances that they may not have been responsible for.

The first introductory issue I want to raise is that the Minister in his presentation, at no time indicated to us the total number of persons who are affected by one or any of these measures. We do not know if we are dealing with 100, 200 or 500. We do not know exactly who we are dealing with. The Minister also sought to assure us that this was part and parcel of a wider slipshod approach of treating with all workers, specifically, vis-à-vis their own conditions and their own legislation. I will speak a bit about these categories of workers, in the context of pension reform.

I want to begin by reminding the Government that this Government, as is their custom, presents to the national community an assortment of coloured papers. You have a Green Paper and a White Paper. In May 2003, there was a report of a committee appointed by Cabinet to review the financial sector of Trinidad and Tobago. In this report, there were policy recommendations for the pension system. These recommendations suggested that the Government was thinking, in May 2003, about establishing a separate Pensions Act that integrates and consolidates the fragments of regulations that exist under various sections of legislation in Trinidad and Tobago. They were thinking of executing the regulation and supervision of pensions within an integrated regulatory framework. They were also thinking of codifying the portability of benefits in pension schemes in law, so that it is not left up to the discretion of the individual fund rules, et cetera; worthy ideas and policy recommendations in May 2003.

Those recommendations found themselves in the reform of the financial system of Trinidad and Tobago, moving from a Green Paper to a White Paper of June 2004.

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

In this document they repeated the recommendations along the same line as the Green Paper, dealing with portability of pensions, integrating the industry, strengthening the pension systems; both at the old age pension system, which is no more; the National Insurance Scheme and the public service pension arrangements.

I raise this matter because, since May 2003 to July 2008, nothing has happened; absolutely nothing has happened, nothing of substance that lends itself to the belief that this Government is serious about pension reform and introducing a new retirement regime in Trinidad and Tobago that will cater to the needs of all public officers. Green Paper to White Paper, five years ago. I am almost tempted to say that it has reached to toilet paper. I would not say that. Nothing has happened, absolutely nothing, with this approach to dealing in a comprehensive and holistic way with pension reform. To hear Ministers of Government—really it is not my intent to unnecessarily pick or target the Minister of Information. He is relatively new to the Government, the PNM and the scene. Really it is not his fault. He is a good reader of speeches, so I understand well his concern with customer service orientation. It reads volumes of the lack of commitment of the Government, led by the Member for San Fernando East. In five years, they could not present to this House any comprehensive proposal on pension reform in a holistic and general way.

As I proceed, I would explain the detrimental effect of that lack of vision in treating with a new retirement regime and where it has led us; the inequality in the system of pension in Trinidad and Tobago that does not augur well for the development of this country and really discriminates against specific workers.

Mr. Speaker, while the leader of their party could speak about reforming the public service to eradicate and do away with Permanent Secretaries, they are very clear on that; to get rid of the Permanent Secretaries, we do not have the same political will to deal with the issue of pension and reform.

I wanted to respond to a few issues the Minister raised. I would do that, incidentally, in the fullness of my presentation, rather than look at it now. There is a need for a new comprehensive and coherent national pension regime. The Government needs to look at these measures in a more holistic context, to suggest what the purpose of retirement benefits is today. I do not want to take Members too much into employment history, but pension is really a creature of 20<sup>th</sup> Century industrial organization. Pension payments were not in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It emerged in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in relation to industrial organization, expansion, employment levels, mass production and the need to regulate internal labour markets, so that persons can demit employment. It is really a strategy to, in a way, get people out of employment and ensure that they have a comfortable

retirement. It is part of industrial organization. There are certain fundamental principles when one deals with pensions, in that apart from clearing the in-house or internal labour market, what a pension seeks to do is provide some type of comfort zone for workers where, upon completing their employment life, they can retire, pursue other activities and relax in some comfort that is resembling the level of comfort they enjoy when they were employed. That is a fundamental principle; that the comfort you enjoy in retirement should be akin to the comfort you enjoy when you are working.

There is also another fundamental principle, the principle of intergenerational fairness, that underpins pensions. This means that the generation, the working generation, will pay for a generation that has retired, but there must be a certain equity about it, in that a current generation should not be asked to extend itself beyond the last generation. That is called the intergenerational fairness principle in pension systems.

Notwithstanding that, as we proceed and as other factors external to a discussion on pension reform take hold, such as life expectancy, prices, wages and so on, there may be a need to re-look issues such as the normal retirement age/statutory retirement age and so on. The principle here is fairness in dealing with pension arrangements. Pensions must be inflation-proof. It must be part of a strategy of poverty prevention. It must be inflation-proof.

I want to remind Members that it was not too long ago, I believe in January 2008, that the Governor of the Central Bank had to point out in a presentation he did at the National Financial Literacy Programme launch, that that they had done research and that the research suggests, this is from the Governor of the Central Bank, that one in three persons over the age of 60 continue to work because they need additional income. The Central Bank research also tells us, on this matter of retirement planning, that 50 per cent of retirees do not have an occupational or personal pension. Only 13 per cent ever considered taking out a personal pension plan.

Almost half of the retirees surveyed report that their current household income was insufficient to give them the standard of living they hope to have in retirement. That is 50 per cent, almost half of all persons retired, indicated to a survey of the Central Bank that they had insufficient household income to give them the standard of living they hope to have in retirement.

**2.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I say that in the context of the Bills and the coverage of these Bills, because we are yet to hear from the Government the number of retirees who

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

are likely to benefit from these measures. While they may appear to be laudable and commendable by the Government, we need to have a sense of how many persons are affected, because it may well be a drop in the bucket, a valuable drop, and you would need to provide for other retirees.

There are fundamental problems associated with this approach. As the Minister said, they have dealt before with the fire services, the prison service and police officers and so on, but what is required is an umbrella, comprehensive pension system that caters for all and provides for all public officers in the service of Trinidad and Tobago.

As we are dealing with teachers, I just want to make a reference to a current situation. Notwithstanding this, a teacher who retired in 1988 was allowed 50 per cent of his or her final salary. Let me say at the beginning that pensions cannot be linked to final salary in the context of rapidly increasing inflation rates. It must be linked to prices and not final salary. [*Desk thumping*] To me, that is fundamental as well.

A teacher who has retired in 1988 and is receiving \$2,400 which is 50 per cent of his salary, is expected to live on that salary from 1988 to 2008. That is 20 years later and he is receiving the same pension. Now, I am just going to give you one example of the hardship of this category of workers. A teacher is disqualified from receiving other social benefits by virtue of having this pension. When he applies for self-help from the National Self-Help Programme, they would look at his pension, NIS and his house, and then say to him that he could fix his own house, because he has pension money.

I just want to make the point. In 1998, for example, when the changes took place in the National Self-Help Programme that allowed for the \$1,650 ceiling, between 1998 to 2008, the prices of building materials have increased by over 200 per cent, and a teacher, in 2008, must go and repair his home where the roof, the ceiling and the floor are in a state of disrepair at 2008 prices, and not at 1988 prices. When you have to take money to do all this work, you still have to buy medicine. The Member for Caroni East would tell you that although they have the CDAP, many of the critical medications cannot be had through that programme and you need to go to the private pharmacies to purchase them. So, when a pensioner gets \$2,800, he has to buy important medication and food. In fact, that \$2,800 might be food alone. What is the price of caraili? It is \$8 per pound. What is the price of tomatoes? It is \$10 per pound and zaboca is \$25 for one. [*Interruption*] I do not want to disturb the Member for Princes Town South/Tableland. He will give us a lecture on the Prices Commission if I continue in this way. The \$2,800 is for food alone. You cannot buy building materials and medication.



Almost every week the maxi-taxi cost is going up, from Princes Town to San Fernando; from San Fernando to Penal and also in the East-West Corridor. When you put all of these things together, that \$2,800 boils down to nothing for a teacher who has retired and is receiving that pension. They have to pay for electricity and water. You may not have water, but you still have to pay for it. That money is inadequate for a pensioner to survive on. The Government needs to look at this matter.

The first proposal—I was coming to the proposals at the end, but the Member for Diego Martin Central would like to know now—is to ensure that the policies of the National Self-Help Programme and others are revised to ensure that persons who are on government pensions, like teachers and so on, can also access these programmes where they have satisfied other requirements. *[Interruption]* You could say income level from now until thy kingdom come, but it is not enough income. Even the \$10,000 that they are giving under the National Self-Help Programme would have been okay in 1998, but what is \$10,000 today by way of building materials? Nothing! You can probably get a three-ton truck half full—

**Mr. Dumas:** Are you suggesting that we increase it?

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** You have to increase it, and you have to ensure that public officers who are on these pensions are also—given their circumstances—allowed to access it, otherwise all of their pension will go toward fixing the house, medication and transport, et cetera. That is the first call.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Information also spoke about this holistic vision of the Government, and I want to turn to that now. Part of that holistic proposal that the Minister of Information is signalling to the House involves treating pensioners across the board, regardless of whether they are fire officers, police officers, teachers or other civil service officers, in an equitable manner. To me, that is a very critical issue.

You see, there is a certain inequality built into the current pension system which I would like to raise. This Government introduced the famous sliding scale where under the guise of equity, they have ruled out thousands of persons from pension. Equity meant not giving, but taking away. That is a fundamental issue. Equity did not mean giving. For the PNM, equity means taking away.

As you know, in 2006 the Prime Minister abolished old age pension and introduced the Senior Citizens Grant. When they put the ceiling of \$30,000 per year, effective \$2,500 per month, it meant that certain categories of pensioners that the Minister is concerned with and who have been in their own pension

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

arrangement—workers in manufacturing companies and I believe some workers at the port as well—because of this unfair ceiling would get, at this time, \$2,000 NIS. If for example you are a pensioner and you are receiving \$650 like the Caroni (1975) Limited pensioner, plus \$2,000, it goes to \$2,650, but the ceiling is \$2,500. So, they have taken away any opportunity for these workers to get any Senior Citizens Grant, because in their equitable system, they do not deserve that. [Interruption] A fundamental principle of this pension system is fairness. You cannot punish people for working.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the Minister's point. I understand the Minister is very concerned with productivity, building the morale of public officers and modernizing of HRM. He said that we must treat our workers well and so on. Part of that approach of treating workers well is rewarding persons for working hard. We cannot adopt a principle of punishing persons for working. That is an important point.

In this current system, if you work hard for 30 or 35 years, you are denied your old age pension which is now called Senior Citizens Grant, because presumably you are getting NIS which you have contributed to and, in some cases, a pension plan which you have contributed to. Now, everything that you have contributed to you would get it back, but the Government itself would not give you a Senior Citizens Grant to help you. That is akin to punishing hard-working citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and it is unfair. The UNC has long proposed that we should have a universal pension for every citizen at the age of 60 years. [Desk thumping] If you are as rich and blessed as the Member for Diego Martin Central, you can give to charity and an NGO of your choice and so on, but that is your business. Nothing is wrong with that. In fact, I am sure that distinguished Members on the other side who are well endowed in wealth and so on would want to assist NGOs and so on, but allow persons to make that choice and give our senior citizens that right.

**Mr. Parsanlal:** Do you mind giving way? It is just on a point of clarification. Is the Member asking the Government to pay a grant to a person retiring from the private sector with a pension of \$50,000, perhaps the same figure as a public service officer who retires on \$2,000?

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, let me repeat my repetition. [Laughter] We are saying that every citizen in Trinidad and Tobago at the age of 60 years deserves a pension and should be paid a pension. I say no more on that matter.

I am making the point on how we treat senior citizens, and there is a related point. Do you know that over 500 citizens of this country have received medals

over the years at the President's House, like the Chaconia Medal, the Humming Bird Medal and the Public Service Medal and so forth? I have spoken to a few of these persons. Firstly, you cannot wear those medals today because somebody is going to rob, beat and kill you. So, you have to put it away somewhere in a bank vault. Do you know that these awardees, the recipients of national awards, are called national heroes? Independence Day is coming in a few days and we would then line up the usual suspects of senior officials and pin on everybody these medals, and the day after these people are treated like dogs on the streets. They have no benefit of that. Now, you have received all these awards and so on, but what does it entitle you to? You walk the street and say: "I got a Humming Bird Medal Gold." That is very nice, but what do you get? Do you get some benefit? *[Interruption]* That picture would be the day after and that is it.

Mr. Speaker, that same recipient has to apply for a grant for his or her house to fix, because it is falling down; public assistance and disability benefit. When they go to the airport, depending on the recipient's age, they would pay departure tax. It is time we have a comprehensive approach to providing some service to persons who have received national awards, apart from "pappy-showing" them on Independence Day, pinning something on their blouse or jacket and leaving them. I have spoken to a few of them and they are coming to people like us and asking for donations to fix their houses; to send their children or grandchildren to school and to buy essential items. These people were clean shaven and in the President's House collecting the Chaconia Medal Gold.

### **2.30 p.m.**

That is an important point I want to register now, that we must have a package of benefits—it is not award, really; reward now—for recipients of national awards, so that you do not only call them heroes, you treat them like heroes. *[Interruption]* Again, you are concerned with UNC. Nobody remembers the UNC. "You concern with you." *[Laughter]* *[Desk thumping]* Nobody bothering about UNC. You are in Government. When the UNC was in power, we introduced minimum wage; we introduced maternity protection; we introduced a medical plan for daily-paid workers.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** When the UNC was in power, we built an international airport, second to none and ranked in the world as one of the best airports. You all sleep in the VIP room. Some of you fall asleep there.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** They are making it now a pathway to the Americas.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Pathway to the Americas. We are proud of our service to the working people. Look at a mirror and as difficult as it seems, look at yourself and ask, what have you done, not what the UNC did. We have a proud record of service and on another occasion, I would tell you about that.

I raised the issue of the pension for Caroni workers, \$650 and you are denied old age pension—Senior Citizens Grant. The All Trinidad General Workers Union now has made a proposal that this Government look at increasing that pension from \$650 a month to \$1,000 a month. It is something that we support given the circumstances that we face today. We have also looked at proposals by the All Trinidad General Workers Union to lower the pensionable age for those former workers, to 55 years for male and 50 years for female workers who took their VSEP, because many of them are today unemployed.

They boasted about training for all of these Caroni workers; teach them to make "toolum" and sweetbread and so on. Today, 80 per cent of them are unemployed and struggling. They cannot even buy the piece of land that they are offering. They offer the land and tell you in 14 days pay for it or else.

The Government should look at the pensions to Caroni workers to increase from \$650 to \$1,000 and to lower the pensionable age. It is something that the Government should look at. The UNC has a track record of speaking on behalf of the working people, the poor, the underprivileged and acting, passing legislation. Which Government introduced the first ever minimum wage in the history of Trinidad and Tobago? Anyone could guess? It would have to be the UNC.

There is another inequality that arose and I want to draw attention to it. As you know, the Government has butchered and savaged the sugar industry. I just want to put the context here, that this Government has spent \$12 billion closing down the sugar industry—\$12 billion closing down the sugar industry. Between 1975 to 2008, the sugar industry took in subventions, \$4 billion. So, they have spent \$12 billion closing down the industry. Today, they do not know what to do with the office, the bungalow, the house, the rolling stock, nothing, just have it wasted.

While they treat the daily-paid workers with contempt and scorn, vis-à-vis pension arrangements, very interesting, they have now transferred pension arrangement to Clico as at June 2008. In a correspondence I have in my hand dated July 03, 2007, what they have done is to enhance pension benefits for members of staff, formerly at Caroni (1975) Limited. So, Mr. Speaker, the inequality is what I want to point out here. Where you had almost 7,000 daily-paid workers getting \$650 a month, a small handful of staff, 588, enhanced their pension in an interesting way.

I will make it simple so people could try to understand. If you are a daily-paid worker, let us say, for 20 years, then you graduate; you got promoted and so on, and you became a member of staff, your pension arrangement is calculated at 1 per cent of your final monthly salary. Let us say you were getting \$6,000 a month, you get \$600?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Sixty.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Sixty? And you take that \$60 and you multiply it by your years of service as a daily-paid worker and a member of staff. So, \$60 multiplied by 20 or 22, as the case may be. You see what has happened there? Their pension for this small group of staff members, in some cases, is about 300 per cent more than daily-paid pensioners, because they were able to cut a deal for 588 persons who get 1 per cent of their final monthly salary, multiplied by their length of service as a daily-paid worker, whereas the daily-paid worker, who would have been working for the same 22 years, received the same old \$650. [*Interruption*] The old scheme was not contributory; there is a new scheme that is contributory.

That is in the inequality in the pension arrangements that we need to address. A person cannot live on \$650 per month. That is how much money per day? Twenty one dollars or more or less? Which Member on the other side can live on \$21 per day? Clearly, none! Because they will not be able to buy a half glass of whiskey and coconut water with \$21. They are now having champagne at the mansion and so on. \$21 per day could buy you what? How many "doubles" with that? Two?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Four.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Four "doubles" and a coke. That is it, Mr. Speaker, on a day, and they expect workers to survive on this meagre income. This inequality is what we are speaking about. When you take the \$650 per month and pay your electricity bill—well, there is no electricity—pay your water bill; your telephone in some cases, what is \$650?

To this day, people are paying for their water rates and they are not receiving water. The Minister of Public Utilities and CEO of WASA acknowledged yesterday or the day before, that a huge majority of people in Trinidad and Tobago cannot receive a regular 24/7 supply of water. What is this in the context of Vision 2020? Quite recently, they had their annual convention; I think it was July 13. They loaded all their supporters on the buses and they went to the Chagaramas Convention Centre.

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

In my neighbourhood, I really saw some villagers getting on this bus to go to the Convention Centre. Their political leader made a big speech about the great strides towards Vision 2020. When they came back to that polling division, they discovered that there was no water and no electricity, because there was a power outage and in this country every single house has a water tank. There is no tankless house. So every house has a pump and a tank, so when you have no electricity, effectively, you have no water. *[Interruption]*

The PNM masses discovered a very important lesson in the PNM development policy: You do not need water; you do not need electricity to get to developed country status. That is the lesson that they have taught. This is why we face this crisis, not only with utilities, but with pensions as well, and with the lack of means to go about taking care of yourself.

I have raised the matter of the Caroni issue; the wider issue of the old age, well, what they call Senior Citizens Grant now. I just want to draw attention to Members on the other side, there was a book—well, what is this, a massive publication—the name is *Fulfilling the Promise, Caroni (1975) Limited*. This was done by Image Works Consultants for millions of dollars. They gave all the Caroni pensioners this document, a very big document; colour and so on. Under “Pensions” they told the retirees at page 15:

"As a pensioner of Caroni would you be able to receive NIS pension as well as Senior Citizens Grant?"

The big answer: Yes! They gave the workers this:

"Yes, you will be able to receive your NIS and your Senior Citizens Grant."

Today, after publishing this lie; this deception upon workers of Caroni (1975) Limited, they now come to the table to discover that they do not get any senior citizens grant or any national pension, old age pension, as the case may be. This is the lie that was published at page 15 to all Caroni pensioners. It says:

"Be assured you will receive NIS pension as well as the Senior Citizens Grant."

This is deception. This really is a shame. It is obscene for the Government to deal with this. I want to encourage the Government, because there was in the past, in January 2006, when Cabinet agreed to enhance the pension payments for retirees of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. They did this through Cabinet to pay an ex gratia payout of \$32 million to retirees. This is the same approach we are recommending that they take towards the Caroni pensioners, who they conned, deceived and fooled with these rather extravagant publications over the years.

Another matter that concerns pensioners deals with the issue of working conditions and employment exit patterns. In this country a new development is taking place and it is taking place really at a quicker pace. It may not be new in its entirety but the pace is different.

There is a new employment exit pattern. Before, someone would work full-time and then you retire and you are home, in the community, in recreation, whatever. Today, we are moving increasingly from full employment to part-time employment to full retirement. The Governor of the Central Bank raised the point. Today, almost seven out of 10 retirees are looking for work to make ends meet. If you talk to anyone who recently retired they will tell you, "I want to get something because I cannot make ends meet. I need to get something to enhance my pension." This has many implications for the society because the persons you thought were out of the labour market are still in the labour market. In a way, it poses a certain strain on social systems, on transport, traffic, health facilities and so on.

So, more and more retirees are seeking work because of their inability to buy goods and services, because of inflation. It may not be healthy, because ideally you would like the retirees to relax, to enjoy their retirement days and so on; they have worked long, but many work out of necessity and this is also unfair. Do you know that many teachers, upon retirement, set up a little shop under their house or somewhere and they start giving, what you call, extra lessons? They are in a business. That is business and many of them are telling you that as much as they would like not to work; as much as they would like to relax, to enjoy retirement, they have to do that because their pension is not enough. *[Interruption]* Do you want to say something or you just want to mutter when I am talking? Mr. Speaker, I will not be stalled by the Minister of Education.

We need to look at that pattern. I just want to draw to the attention of the Members of the House to that pattern, because I do not think it is all positive to have retirees straining when they have reached 65 years and beyond, to work to make ends meet. Even to drive taxi and maxi-taxi, there are retirees out there driving on the highways, where it is so dangerous.

**2.45 p.m.**

Everything the Government tells us is a global phenomena but the PNM is not a global phenomena, it is a national disaster. *[Desk thumping and laughter]* There is nothing global about you! It is a national disaster. *[Interruption]* Serving their country, that is what they call it. When you have to work and slave in your retirement years, they call it serving their country.

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

I want to turn to a point raised by the Minister of Information in piloting this Bill now. He placed the Bill within the context of human resource management and the modernization of institutions in the public service; the focus on customer service orientation and—an interesting point I think—seeing workers as customers, which to me is a very critical principle because there was a tendency in the old-school management to see your external group as your customer and not your internal group. So, seeing workers as customers, and that leads us to the issue of how we treat workers to create a culture of productivity, I think the Member said.

I want to indicate that the low morale, the lack of productivity that we face in the public service today—if you will accept that—is not a result only of discriminatory measures dealing with acting in a position and not having your pension calculated towards it. Developing human resource quality has to do with fairness, has to do with transparency and has to do with equality promotion policy. Many public officers do not feel that they are treated fairly and equally; they do not feel that they have value in the organization and I will get to the physical conditions that the Minister raised, but you have to give public officers a sense of value, of worth, of increasing their morale, their likeliness. If you do a survey in this country and ask public officers how many looked forward to coming to work on Monday morning, what would you get? None!

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

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was raising this issue of how you treat workers will determine the value that they have in themselves. The Minister raised the critical sector of the police, and it goes without saying that that is a critical sector today. How do you think police officers feel when they look at the newspaper and they see the Special Anti-Crime Unit take out a full-page add to say, “This is what we do.” They pay \$15,000 for an ad to say, “This is what we do.” Now you would think that that is the A team. You know in the “ol” days there was a TV show called the *A Team* and if you have trouble you call them, but this is a Government operation. They are there to serve the public, they are not there to advertise what they do—looking for clients—

**Hon. Member:** With a picture.



**Dr. R. Moonilal:**—with a picture, and police officers who work hard look at this Special Anti-Crime Unit; they get all the cars; they get all the facilities; they get all the benefits, all the workplace benefits—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Larger salaries.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:**—larger salaries, bonus, enhanced working conditions, and hardworking police officers are not given equal treatment. You think you can increase the morale of police officers? They will work hard and give their best? I will give one example before I move on and it is in the security sector. There are MTS guards at the courts in Trinidad and Tobago. I am informed that there is an arrangement between the administration in the Judiciary and the MTS to increase the wage of MTS guards at the courts and that has been ongoing since October 2007. They have made an agreement. To this day the MTS guards cannot get the proper allotment—their proper wage—and then they look and see MTS guards at the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) getting three times their salary and better conditions of work. In fact, at the CCJ, they do nothing there. You have to wake them up if you get a case, and at the Arima Magistrates' Court you have MTS guards called into action to constrain serious criminals. At the CCJ they are sleeping there until they get a case, but their salary is three times.

I want to get back to this point, you cannot treat workers unfairly. It breed a certain amount of lack of enthusiasm, a lack of morale, a lack of worth. If you want public officers to increase productivity you have to treat all fairly. That is a critical condition. And your customer service orientation that you speak about will reach nowhere if you cannot extend similar treatment for workers doing similar work. In fact, that might be a violation of other international arrangements.

I was talking about morale and productivity which the Minister raised in his opening remarks, but that is also linked to your physical conditions. Among public officers, I will say—and I challenge anyone, including the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development to rebut—that the biggest violator, the most significant culprit that undermines health and safety at the workplace today is the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The Government is the most significant culprit. Not a day goes by that you do not read or hear about ceilings falling in the Government office, rats infesting somewhere, poor working conditions, furniture, air condition—well, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to use the Parliament as an example—but, lack of electricity, power outage, no water. Just a few days ago Government ministries in Port of Spain had to close, send workers home because they had no electricity, and when you do not have electricity in Trinidad and Tobago you cannot get water, because you must get water from a tank and a pump.

If there are the conditions that we expect public officers to function in, could we question why we would arrive at a situation where workers do not have the zeal and enthusiasm to perform in the interest of Trinidad and Tobago? It begins with the Government taking a look at itself, asking each Minister to do an inventory of their ministry and their departments and indicate clearly what are the weaknesses in terms of conditions of workers and try and let workers operate and work within some humane conditions and facilities. When you say new facilities, we are not talking about the tall buildings, the concrete and the glass buildings that they are putting up all over the place. A simple thing like fixing the air condition unit; a simple thing like providing proper arrangements for lunch, they do not have in many ministries. You look at ministries and their departments and offices throughout Trinidad and Tobago, simple issues.

You do not have to build a billion-dollar concrete and glass structure to say we treat workers well. You have to provide them with drinking water. Police officers in this country will tell you, in San Fernando, in particular, sometimes they ask departments of Government nearby and private citizens to donate water; they do not have drinking water, and then we talk about working conditions of public officers, customer orientation, service orientation and all of that.

In managing the human resources, I want to say that in the public service we have some of the most dedicated, committed and trained individuals. What we do not have in the public service is proper working conditions and what we have is inequality that undermines morale, enthusiasm and zeal. This is why you look at this country over the years and do you know the same people who are in the hierarchy of the public service, they go to work in the private sector and do very well, they achieve a lot. They are achievers, but their systems of work in the public service undermine in many cases their capacity to deliver and to produce.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to add, when we talk about morale, service and so on, recent announcements by the Prime Minister about eradicating and taking away the role of permanent secretaries, the Prime Minister went to Belize, met a young lady and then decided to come back to Trinidad and say, “we are abolishing permanent secretaries”. That is it! That is government by “vaps” and nothing is thought out. There are persons in the civil service who would have joined the ranks as clerical officers and after years they will work hard and sacrifice, they get promotion and they look forward to heading their departments, becoming a director, becoming eventually a permanent secretary and the Prime Minister announced at Chaguaramas, “look, we are ridding the system of permanent secretaries”. How do you think workers beneath the permanent secretary who have had their eyes

cast on those types of office, how do you think they feel to know that any government could come and just move and say, “Look, I am bringing my own permanent secretary”? At no time the Prime Minister is telling us why he intends to abolish the role of the permanent secretary. What did the permanent secretary do you?

**Mr. Bharath:** The process is flawed.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** The process is flawed. That sounds like the Williams’ scenario. The process is flawed, and they are process—driven and not outcome—driven, you know. They do not consider outcome, they consider process.

That is why that UDeCott commission is now what, mid-2009? That may be 2010/2011 before you have any report on UDeCott, because it took four months to find someone. Whatever are the credentials of the person—I do not want to cast aspersions on that—it took four months to find and that will come to naught because of that delay and undermining the process.

I want to get back to the administration and public service administration, because you cannot undermine it and hope that you will develop the human resource capacity that the Minister is calling for. The Prime Minister also announced that he wants to—what?—undermine, water down and neuter the role of the DPP in criminal matters, a most dangerous assumption. How do you think the DPP and other legal officers in the public service feel about that, that in criminal matters the Attorney General, a politician in our system, will have to approve decisions of the DPP that is so far protected by the Constitution? And you hope to develop human resource capacity and service orientation.

I am pointing to a serious policy contradiction within the Government in what they aim to do and what they are doing. They announce and declare all of these laudable ideals and then their policy prescriptions undermine the ideal and objectives that they outline.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Confusion.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Confusion reigns supreme.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Mental confusion reigns supreme.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Caroni East is a man trained in another science, but he was indicating to me that it was interesting that there was a power outage. He says that happens in his field when something goes brain-dead they pull the plug. Is it Schilling’s Test?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Schilling’s Test to see that they are brain-dead.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** So when you reach a certain incapacity you pull the plug. I cast no aspersions on the Minister of Information [*Interruption*] but the Member for Caroni East was indicating that that may be related here.

So, I want to indicate to the hon. Minister of Information that these ideals are nice. I do not want to sound overly pessimistic, but we heard it all before. They will come to nothing. Your pension proposals for May 2003, this is July 2008, and nothing has happened, and we accept that nothing has happened. That is how it is and in a couple of years we will meet with another piece or two pieces of legislation dealing with enhancing pensions of another category or groups of workers and we will come to the same conclusion, that nothing happens with this Government as it relates to serious reform of pension law. I want to point the Government in a direction. In 2007, the government in the United Kingdom introduced a comprehensive pensions act called the Pensions Act, 2007, which made radical reforms to their pension system.

It was based on a Pension Commission Report of 2002 by Lord Turner.

**3.00 p.m.**

There was a Pension Commission Report 2002 that led to several consultations, papers and so on, but unlike the Trinidad and Tobago Government, in the United Kingdom they move with dispatch. They moved from White Paper to legislation, and they have legislation in place now. In that legislation that the Minister may want to look at, they have dealt with a comprehensive and holistic approach to pensions throughout the public service. They have brought it under one umbrella parent piece of legislation that invariably connects to other pieces of legislation, so when you are reading this 2007 Act, you necessarily need to be reading other pieces of legislation. They have put everything into one and they have gone so far as to meet and treat with this issue of linking pensions to prices, as opposed to final salary because they also recognized the impact of inflation. Although the United Kingdom has an inflation rate of 4 per cent, I think—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** 3.3 per cent.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** 3.3 per cent. So imagine in the United Kingdom, 3.3 per cent and they are concerned with pensions and prices. Trinidad and Tobago, 10 per cent inflation and we are not concerned with that. If you retired in 1995, the same amount of money you get then, you can use now. If you got sick and have to raise money, you can write a letter to the Commissioner of Police for permission to sell Bar-B-Que tickets. That cannot be the order of business. So the Pensions Act, 2007 is an important piece of legislation that the Minister may want to look at.

There is also an interesting paper that I saw on this matter called, "Security in Retirement Towards A New Pension System, 2006", dated May 2006, published by the Department of Work and Pensions in the United Kingdom and this also deals with the new pension settlement and the challenges facing pensions in the 21st Century, as opposed to challenges facing pension halfway through the 20th Century. It is time that this Government also embark upon some wider programme of reviewing the longer term challenges faced by the pension system. There are longer term challenges. Their own Minister, Sen. Conrad Enill, I believe, alluded to that fact. Speaking in the other place, Sen. Enill had an interesting point to make on this some time ago, when he pointed us in a direction to suggest that all was not well with the current pension system, and if we are not careful, we could reach a point where we cannot fund that pension system.

**Miss Le Gendre:** If we link it to prices.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** If we link it to prices. Sen. Enill said in the other place that:

"We are projecting a situation in which if we do not start planning for pension reform, we could see as much as 5 per cent of GDP having to be set aside for pensions. Some restructuring is necessary."

Again, all we get is talk, but there is another route that the Government is taking.

Mr. Speaker, policy on that side comes from one person and one person alone—I think he was born in a manger in Jerusalem—the Member of San Fernando East. With great respect to my other friends across there, their job is jacket and tie, and cut ribbon and so on, but policy comes from one person on that side. I want to remind Members in this debate in the House that the great one has spoken on this matter. It was in the budget of 2005 that the Prime Minister and the then Minister of Finance said—and it is very instructive in 2005—"The responsibility on the State to provide for one's welfare in retirement must be reduced and eventually removed." That was the Prime Minister who determines the role of the DPP and the abolition of Permanent Secretaries. That is the gentleman, so you need to take him seriously. The only thing you cannot take seriously, is when he makes a promise to appoint commission of enquiry and so on. You need to look a second time when he makes a statement to the effect of: "That responsibility on the State to provide for one's welfare in retirement must be reduced and eventually removed."

He has spoken because they are on the road towards removing all pension coverage and getting the State out of pensions completely. If that is the case, we should discuss that in a certain policy framework; discuss what is the advantage or the disadvantage of that approach. But the Prime Minister said this and there is

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

a real risk to this. The Member for St. Augustine, brilliant economist and trade expert he is, will speak to us on this matter as to the impact of removing from the public domain, pensions to the private domain where there are other external factors that impinge on that. Whether it is the equities market or other issues that deal with all those programmes in the private sector, funding pension-like systems, and whether or not Trinidad and Tobago wants to go into that direction is a serious issue, but the Prime Minister has spoken and has indicated that as far as he was concerned, we are going in that direction.

The Minister of Information can say whatever he wants, but a few things he is sure about, that his role would be chairing those post-Cabinet meetings, but he will not have any role in determining the policy and recommendations as they relate to the pension systems. While this is happening, Mr. Speaker, they waste money. They are wasting money. They cannot account for billions of dollars in UDeCott; at the Brian Lara Stadium. They cannot account for millions of dollars with the Performing Arts Centre, the Tobago Scarborough Hospital project, UTT, and you cannot provide decent pension arrangements for thousands and thousands of workers while you squander billions and billions of dollars. [*Desk thumping*] It is a shame; it is a mockery. Do you know what is even more obscene? The Prime Minister himself on retirement gets 100 per cent of his salary as a pension. I am sure he would not have to buy vegetables and all of that.

**Dr. Rafeeq:** He will turn to preaching.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Well, he will be getting more money if he turns to preaching, I am sure. He will be making much more.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would not have to bother about pension and so on for himself, but ordinary citizens to this day are denied their basic requirements. I want to ask the Members opposite—I mean forget Opposition and Government politics—talk to your conscience; can someone live on \$650 per month? Ask your conscience that. Do not reply to me; confront your conscience, whether people can live on that. Not whether you can; you cannot. And what will you do to assist these thousands of people who cannot get by? It is not too late for the Government, given their spending habits and their addiction to spending, to revise upward the pension arrangements for the teachers who are still receiving a paltry sum from decades ago. They are still receiving that and it is not too late to revise that upward to ensure that people have some type of income protection.

Mr. Speaker, other Members on this side will outline in due course some of the hardships facing persons receiving this fixed income; other Members on this side will deal with some of the related issues as they relate to assisted teachers.

In closing, I want to say that retirees and pensioners are part of our society, a very important part. The measure of your governance is determined by how you treat elderly people. How you treat elderly people measures your governance, and senior citizens in some cases are really deserving of the same consideration that we give to treating with children in a way, because as they get older their needs are different. They must be cared for in a particular way and this Government lacks care.

A few days ago I received in my mail box, an item from the Minister of Social Development, Member for Diego Martin Central; he is now caught up with putting pictures on everything. They have senior citizens' homes and when I looked at these senior citizens homes—all of five—they have absolutely none in Oropouche East or in Oropouche West. So I do not know if in Oropouche East or in Oropouche West we do not have senior citizens. They have none; absolutely none. I am happy that they have five senior citizens' homes somewhere, very happy with that and I do not want you to close them down. In our philosophy we do not close down and take away to give, we give. So consider as well the establishment of centres to assist the elderly people in communities—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Abdul-Hamid:** Why did you close down OJT?

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, the Member for Chaguanas East will mutter whatever he wants, but—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Abdul-Hamid:** Why did you close down John D and—*[Interruption]*

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Why did we close down the bombing of the airport? Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get involved in this type of discussion, he is well qualified to deal with these matters himself. We are acknowledging 1990 and I am sure he has much to say about that.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, how we treat the elderly folks through the senior citizens programmes. In our constituencies—and it is incumbent upon Members such as myself, when we speak in this House to make representation for our communities; make representation on behalf of the people who elected us. All of us would have that duty at some time or another. There is no senior citizen home or centre in the constituencies of Oropouche East and Oropouche West and I know both. There are no programmes to support the elderly persons, and I will give you a simple need. Elderly persons would come to see me in my office—and do you know today, because of the increased participation rate of males and females, more people are working, in fact, a lot of females are working. Many elderly people do not have a simple basic facility: a taxi or a car to pick them up to go to the doctor, to go to the health centre, to go to the shopping mall or the supermarket.

Sometimes the elderly people come to the office of a Member of Parliament—I am sure others would have a similar experience—and do you know what they ask you to do? They ask if you can take them to the market; if you can take them to see the doctor because they cannot travel; they are too infirm and so on and they need transportation. Sometimes some of us would ask drivers or office messenger/driver and so on to assist the elderly people, but it is time we think of more comprehensive programmes where we can provide that type of assistance, personal assistance to the elderly to take them to the doctor.

I have seen something like this in Europe, Holland and Germany where at the community level, they arrange a sort of transportation hub where you get young volunteers to drive mini buses and so on to take elderly people to the medical centres, shopping malls, supermarkets and so on as a programme. And you do two things, you not only help the elderly, but you develop a consciousness among young people to provide for the elderly, to give value back to the community and help the older persons and the elderly. These are programmes that some of us are willing to embark upon, but we will not get the support of the Government. We will not get the support whether in human resources or in financial resources from a Government that squanders a whole lot of money, but that money is not filtering down.

In fact, it would be fair to ask this Government, where is the wealth of the nation? What have you done with the wealth, apart from Sunway, Sun Jet and all of these companies? Where is the wealth? It is not reaching the community.

**3.15 p.m.**

While we talk about programmes for the elderly; assisting them with transport, medical assistance and so forth, do not forget within recent times, there has been another feature taking place in the society, criminal activity, crime committed against the elderly. Samdaye Mootilal in Tabaquite sometime earlier this year; the gentleman, Sookoo I believe, from Point Fortin, the elderly gentleman who fought with Butler for our rights in the labour movement was brutally murdered.

Pensioners are becoming the targets of the criminal element and they are unprotected because on many occasions they do not have family members around, they have limited means with which to burglar proof their homes and provide security for themselves and this is another big challenge for the elderly today in several communities—protecting themselves from criminal elements: drug users, drug pushers and so forth, and it is a matter I am sure that other Members on this side would want to add their voice too.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.



**The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Transport (Mr. Nileung Hypolite):** I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and on that same note permit me to also thank the many of my constituents who supported my election as Member of Parliament for the constituency of Laventille West to this honourable House of Representatives in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, my short contribution today is to give full support to the proposed amendments to the Pensions Act, Chap. 23:52. The Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:02 and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:03 which have been introduced to this House by the Minister of Information and a Member of Parliament for the constituency of Lopinot/Bon Air.

Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of great pride and one of duty that I make my contribution to this debate. As the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Laventille West, and as a citizen of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I applaud the strategic, comprehensive review of the Public Administration and Teaching Service done by this PNM administration.

As I sat and listened to the Member for Oropouche East, I heard him make mention of reward for working hard. I want to believe that one of the reasons we are here today is to do just that, to reward the teachers and public servants for working hard, and for acting in positions and being paid for the work they do. [*Desk thumping*]

I also listened to the hon. Member for Oropouche East make mention of people upon retirement going and "working taxi". By all means, I am certain the Members who are medical practitioners in the House will agree that after someone works for 35 years and retires, he/she needs to continue to keep his body active and as such, some of them will agree on "working" taxis, some may agree on sailing the ocean, that is their choice. It is not a government's choice, it is their choice. You can choose what you want to do upon retirement. [*Desk thumping*]

I also listened to the Member for Oropouche East make mention of linking your retirement income to that of increased prices, but I am certain that the responsibility of an individual's retirement income is not the sole responsibility of the Government, but also the responsibility of an individual. An individual on attaining the age of 20, 21 or 25 years who opens a deferred annuity pension plan and makes a contribution of 10 per cent of his or her income, I am certain upon attaining the age of 60 or 65 will receive a very healthy retirement income. Therefore, an individual does not necessarily have to depend wholly and solely on the Government, he or she can also choose the kind of retirement income that he/she deserves by simply putting aside a portion of his salary. You are working

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. N. HYPOLITE]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

for \$3,000, you put aside \$300, at age 20 or 22, upon retirement, I am certain that you can receive about \$9,000—\$10,000. Anyone on that side who works in the insurance industry will share with you that that is another source of earning income.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes it is good to look back as we move forward, and I ask myself in the year 1999 what did the government of the day do. They tried to delink the teachers' pension plan from the civil service plan which failed; they failed to unify the teaching and the education service. Not only did they fail there, but they did not address the compensation for the teaching and the education service, the results ended up with some 39 officers and 239 office holders being affected.

In 2000, these allowances were paid to a selected group of workers and 34 officers were ignored. Further problems occurred, recruitment became a problem and the government then did not act responsibly. When the PNM Government came into office thereafter in 2002, within three months the PNM administration provided interim allowances to those who were not paid. [*Desk thumping*] We embarked as a responsible Government and addressed those issues then as we continue to be a responsible Government now and look at increasing or amending this Pensions Act. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the challenges that face our public servants and teachers. We are quite aware that these teachers not only serve to come out and educate our children, but they also deliver a service to this nation. The review of the existing system was an extensive one in dealing with the payment of our retirees is one that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago looked at in a very extensive manner. Quality consultation was undertaken by the Government in 2003 and 2005, both with the Public Services Association and the Trinidad and Tobago Teaching Service Association. The resulting amendments which are being proposed therefore reflect a true democratic governance in the consultative approach with the unions which was used.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment is specific; it clearly identifies the employees who are receiving an interim allowance acting in a higher post. As a consequence, this PNM administration is ensuring that on retirement, the higher salary will be used to calculate the pension which these employees will receive.

When you look at some statistics coming from the Department of Ageing at the Ministry of Social Development, it shows that 11 per cent of our population is over 60 years. It is estimated that by the year 2025 this percentage will move to 20 per cent. This increase shows that the elderly in Trinidad and Tobago is one of the fastest growing groups in this nation.

Mr. Speaker, the financial security of our retired teachers and public servants is in keeping with the PNM's vision for developed nation by 2020. My colleague, the Minister of Information, mentioned the philosophy which supported the negotiation between the two unions and today our teachers and public servants can look forward to a retirement income which includes all their service to this nation.

Mr. Speaker, specifically for those persons who are following this debate today, the effect of these amendments is evidence that this Government's high regard for our public servants and teachers is well afoot. If a teacher or one of the officers acted in a higher post continuously for a period of three years, immediately prior to the date of his/her compulsory retirement, his superannuation benefits shall be calculated as if he had been appointed substantively to that office during the period.

The amendment is also very specific in ensuring the same financial security and national support for these public officers in specific words:

“Where an officer or a teacher has acted continuously in a higher office for a period of at least one year immediately prior to his compulsory retirement, the averaging principles shall be observed in the computation of his superannuation benefits.”

The agreement reached with the Government and the unions would take effect from January 01, 2004. This will see retroactive benefits for those who will be affected by the Pensions Act and Regulations, Chap. 23:53 and the amendment with the Teachers' Pensions Act and Regulations from January 01, 2005.

### **3.30 p.m.**

In other words, the agreement is respected by the Government and the benefits will accrue accordingly. In addition, this PNM Government has ensured further, that consequential amendments have been made to treat with the impact of vacation leave, to ensure that even if the employee has to proceed on leave, he or she will not lose the benefit of the amendments. I wish to add that the in-depth process which was undertaken when these amendments were developed also includes the members of the protective services.

This is the time for us to unite as parliamentarians and support these amendments. [*Desk thumping*] As Members, we know that this is an area for professionals to contribute and assist in the national development, knowing that a visionary PNM administration and the Opposition came together to ensure financial protection in the retirement for our public servants and teachers. We know that the Government is the largest employer and as such, we must show the responsibility of a responsible

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. N. HYPOLITE]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

government. Employees will benefit from their service and we appreciate the teachers and public servants who go out there and act. As such, we intend to ensure that they are well compensated on their retirement. The Government is still working on bettering our public sector reform, as well as, we are still working on the challenges in all aspects of public sector reform, as we continue to move towards developing our plan and vision on or before 2020.

Before I end, I must make one other comment which is that of the homes for the elderly and not having transport to carry our elderly from one location to another or from home to the hospital or nursing homes. This is a point that the Member for Oropouche East made. It seems as if the Member for Oropouche East sits on this side at times. I say so because I am certain that he was part of that meeting when the Members on this side discussed our dial-a-ride. The Ministry of Social Development discussed the issue of dial-a-ride. We on this side, as a responsible government, look after our young and elderly. We will continue to look after those who work for us in the teaching service, as well as in the public service. As they continue to work we do intend to ensure that upon their retirement, they will be well paid.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, let me take the opportunity to congratulate the hon. Member for Laventille West on his maiden contribution.

**Dr. Tim Gopeesingh** (*Caroni East*): Mr. Speaker, today we have been asked to look at three pieces of legislation as one whole consideration. Our Chief Whip mentioned that we have the consideration of the people who are involved and affected by these pieces of legislation, because they would be deprived of their pensions, if this piece of legislation is not passed. We have no difficulty with the pieces of legislation.

My colleague, the Chief Whip, mentioned that the Government seems to want to railroad itself into wanting to pass pieces of legislation and commanding the Opposition that they have three pieces of legislation and want to finish it before Parliament ends and we want to take them together. If you did not do your work properly all the time and you want to rush the three pieces of legislation down to the end of the recess, that is unacceptable. Any one of us from this side could have said, according to *May's Parliamentary Practice*, that each piece of legislation should have been discussed separately. Obviously, you heard our Chief Whip indicate that we have the hearts and minds of the people who are affected by this, so we do not want to delay it because it would have taken another month.

This whole idea of legislation and reform of the pension system has a long embryonic type of development. I heard the Member for Laventille West mention the issue of not delinking the teaching service from the public service. When we were there in 1999 we did a tremendous amount of work in the education service. In 2001, we were forcibly removed from government on the question of morality and spirituality and now, the same person who spoke about morality and spirituality is telling us that we should unite as a people.

**Dr. Moonilal:** To get out the PNM.

**Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** I believe that was what he was thinking about because he is probably fed up with what you are doing at the moment and he sees that there is definite need for you to be removed.

The whole question of delinking the teaching service from the public service was done by the United National Congress. That took a significant piece of legislation to bring it around. You will remember that recently there was a piece of legislation where the school supervisors who were supposed to be receiving a larger salary than the teachers found themselves in the enviable position of receiving small salaries because the teachers' salaries had been increased. The teachers have been delinked from the public service so they got larger salaries by the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association (TTUTA) and the government working together.

The school supervisors who were linked to the public service did not have this increase in salary. We accepted that fact and the United National Congress ensured that the teachers were delinked from the public service, so they could have had their increased salaries and improve the teaching service. The school supervisors were left behind and we worked with the government to ensure that their salaries were increased and the whole aspect of pension would be commensurate with what the teachers would get or even higher.

Today, we are being asked to debate three pieces of legislation. Those pieces of legislation are the Pensions Act, Chap. 23:52; the Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:02 and the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:03. All three of them speak of people who have been acting in positions for more than one year but less than three years and more than three years.

The hon. Minister of Information spoke about the human resource development within the public service. He said that they were looking at the reform of the public service; the human resource management reform and it was predicated on customer service; it was not the outsiders to do their business; they were giving them an opportunity to serve them; they must lead by example in Parliament and

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. GOPEESINGH]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

the workers must be their customers. If the workers in the public service have to be acting for three years in a public service post, is this good human resource management practice? If they have to pass legislation to say that the pension must be looked at for people who have been acting in positions for more than three years or between one and three years, this is a sad state.

Could you imagine someone acting in a position for three years? What would be happening to the mind of that particular worker? He or she would be demoralized. This Government should be ashamed of having to bring legislation saying that it wants to ensure that pensions are looked after carefully for people who have been acting for more than three years and one to three years. That is a shameful and disgraceful piece of thing. They are speaking about reform of the public service and human resource management. If they have proper human resource management in the public service, nobody would be acting for three years or one to three years or more than three years. This piece of legislation would not have been necessary.

It comes back to the fact about this Government talking about White Paper and Green Paper. They have a Green Paper on local government and then they came with a White Paper. They said that the White Paper on local government is not good because they did a consultancy service with somebody in Jamaica. They now have five volumes and we have to look at it again. They had a Green Paper on procurement. Up to today, we have not seen anything on the procurement regime where they are bypassing the Central Tenders Board and making 13 special purpose companies. They promised to bring a White Paper on procurement and we have not even seen the light of the day on that. This piece of pensions legislation is embodied in a statement made by the former Minister of Trade and Industry, Kenneth Valley, in 2004. Here we are asking to bring together these three pieces of legislation on pensions.

Do you know how many different Bills have been brought relating to pensions for workers in Trinidad and Tobago? I will enumerate a few of them. They are: Old Age Pensions and Widows and Orphans Act; the National Insurance Act which is related to pensions; the Pensions Act which takes care of the civil service for people in the civil service; the Pensions Extension Act which takes care of the people in the statutory authorities; the Assisted Secondary School Teachers Act which we are debating today; the Municipal Corporations Act; an Act for the Defence Force pensions; an Act for the police service pensions; the Fire Service Pensions Act; an Act for the parliamentarians' pensions and one for the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice.

**3.45 p.m.**

This reform of the whole pension system was spoken about by Mr. Kenneth Valley in 2004. I want to quote what he said. They are saying they are going to reform the whole issue of the Pensions Act by virtue of an omnibus piece of legislation and five years later we are finding ourselves in the same position with desperate pieces of legislation, all airy-fairy, scattered and divergent and not one comprehensive piece to deal with the whole pension system.

The same thing occurs in the insurance industry and the finance sector where the hon. Minister of Finance has been talking about an omnibus piece of legislation to deal with the financial sector, but year after year we have different pieces of legislation dealing with finance and insurance coming here. Today we are perpetuating another wrong thing by speaking about individual pieces of legislation for pensions dealing with different sectors.

Why must that be so? Why does the Government not see the necessity for bringing one piece of legislation that would deal with the whole insurance business; that would be incorporated in the Financial Institutions Act? Here today, we see the Minister of Finance talking about Trinidad and Tobago being an international financial centre and Dubai coming and investing \$100 billion when they do not have our individual pension system working correctly. Who wants to invest in Trinidad and Tobago when our financial system is so chaotic that we do not know the difference between an insurance company and a finance company and whether a credit union is doing the business of an insurance company or a bank? It is confusing and chaotic and we are talking about bringing Trinidad and Tobago to be an international financial centre.

Minister Ken Valley said, and I quote:

“I am pleased to lay on the Table the White Paper on Reform of the Financial System of Trinidad and Tobago.”—This was on Wednesday, June 30, 2004. He said:—“This is only one of the reform projects which are currently being undertaken by Government.”

I want to make the point that a substantial portion of this White Paper deals with the pension industry in the country and with reform of that pension industry. This is what Minister Ken Valley was saying in June 2004. It is now four years later and they have done not one thing about that pension reform system. He said:

“In 2002, the Government identified the need for reform of the financial system”—He understood that since 2002, six years ago—“which is necessary

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. GOPEESINGH]

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

in light of the development of the system in terms of both the institutional mix and range of financial instruments...”

I just gave you the various types of institutions and the categories of workers who are affected by the various pensions. The Government understood in 2002 that it was necessary to bring out a comprehensive reform programme for pensions. Nothing has been done six years later. I continue to quote from the *Hansard*.

“Out of this activity, the Green Paper on the review of the financial sector was developed and...laid in Parliament in this House in May 2003 as the first step in Government’s policy towards the reform of the financial system. Based on the comments received on the Green Paper, Cabinet appointed a White Paper committee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and strengthening the Green Paper and converting it into a White Paper.”

So between October 2003 and 2004, they completed the task on the Green Paper and the White Paper on the reform of the financial system in Trinidad and Tobago is the end product of that exercise and this is Government's policy on the financial sector. Where is the White Paper? There is no White Paper on the reform of the pension system or the financial sector.

He said:

“Our implementation schedule projects a completion date of December 2006.”

So they were supposed to complete this whole reform of the pension and financial institution by December 2006.

**Mr. Dumas:** Do you support the three Bills?

**Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** You will listen to our discussions. You were not hearing me. Were you sleeping? I said that we have no difficulty with the support of these Bills. I think he was asleep at the time. It is not unusual.

Minister Valley at that time said:

“To ensure achievement of this schedule we have established an implementation committee to manage the process.”

Where is the committee? Nothing has happened from 2000—2008. This issue of pension reform has been going on for six years and today they are coming back with the same thing.

Do you know what is supposed to be part of that reform which touches on a number of core elements as far as pensions are concerned? The first issue is one



of fund managers. The money for the Government's pension system for the public service comes from the Consolidated Fund. No particular group or committee looks at the whole question of managing a pension for the thousands of workers within the public service. There are a number of private sector companies whose funds have to be managed and because there is no appropriate piece of legislation governing the issue of pension reform, there is nothing to indicate who manages the fund, how and where.

In this book from the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, *Report on the Insurance and Pensions, 2006*, there are hundreds of insurance companies and pension fund plans, but today is not the opportunity to go into detail. This will show how many pension plans in the private sector can go amiss because of bad management of pension funds. I am aware of one large bank which has been managing its funds and, in 1999, they stopped contributing to the pension fund and the workers of that bank are now contemplating going to the courts because this bank only restarted the fund a few years ago and nothing happened between the intervening period 1999—2004. So people are doing things with impunity in terms of management of pension funds. This piece of reform should have been brought and incorporated in the whole aspect of fund management.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister at that time said that the proposed new pension legislation was intended to modernize the pension industry by developing and implementing a comprehensive pension regime for Trinidad and Tobago. The core principles of that, we should have been discussing today and enacting legislation to bring about the whole aspect of pension reform on one Bill, rather than piecemeal bills.

The proposed new legislation, which will accompany the reform pension regime, will address core issues in the industry. The PNM Government knows and understands that a number of core principles are involved but was incapable of doing anything for six years. The first is consolidation and modernization. Most developed countries are about 20 years behind in modernization of their pension reforms. Developed countries are finding difficulty in that. The Trinidad and Tobago Government does not have a clue what they are doing for reform of the pension. The pension for the public service comes out of the Consolidation Fund.

We know the gas reserves are dwindling in Trinidad and Tobago and yesterday one of the authors of the Ryder Scott Report said that the resources are dwindling. He said that instead of 12 years, we have 13 years of gas. This is 2008. In 2021, 13 years from now, when all the gas would have been taken out and there is no money, the Consolidated Fund will be short of funds. What will happen to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago a few years from now? It will not be long.

They talk about 2020 vision, but by then there will be no more gas. They would begin to lay off people and they would then start to contract the public service, but there would be thousands of persons waiting for pension still because those persons would have been retired. So what are they going to do with the people? They would devalue the dollar and print dollars to pay the people and Trinidad and Tobago would be a chaotic society financially and economically. This is the lack of foresight by this Government and the inability to conduct its business in a proper manner that would bring about results for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

They cannot implement and we are passing legislation on a daily basis. It is sad and unforgivable for the people to accept this Government. My colleagues have spoken ad infinitum on the various issues of non-governance and failure to implement all the promises that they have made over time.

I have just touched on the first point of consolidation and modernization. If developed countries are having difficulty and they are 20 years behind the time on pension reform, Trinidad and Tobago is 40 to 50 years behind as far as pension reform is concerned. Where is the integrated regulation? So many of the different employers in the private sectors have different pension plans and what we need is one integrated regulation mechanism to take in, in an omnibus way, all the pension plans.

Administrative integration of the national insurance scheme and old age pension. Our social security system in Trinidad and Tobago providing for the aged, the disabled and those less fortunate are taken care of by a number of means—pension, the National Insurance Scheme, Senior Citizens Grant, public assistance and disability allowance. There are a number of different areas and there is so much confusion, nepotism, corruption and discriminatory practices in this whole social security system that the people in Trinidad and Tobago feel aggrieved about their inability and they come to all the Members of Parliament, particularly Opposition Members. It is only in our constituencies that people have to go to their Members trying to get a disability grant, public assistance or something else. It is not so in the PNM constituencies. They are able to get it immediately. We have to write letters, beseech our colleagues on the other side—this is a new group of colleagues and some of them are very accommodating. They understand what is needed. It is a new group and when we speak with them, they tend to give us whatever help we need sometimes. *[Interruption]* Not all the time. The essential point is that we should not have to ask. It should be a benefit to the people and should be given in a non-discriminatory fashion and in equitable distribution of the social services in Trinidad and Tobago.

**4.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the next point is the portability and transferability. That is an important point. Within the public service people move from one Ministry to another, so that does not affect the whole issue of portability of the pensions within the Ministry and the public service. If somebody works in the public service for 15—20 years and is not eligible to any major pension benefit and they move into the private sector, there should be some system whereby they would have been able to take the pension benefits they have from within the public service and move to the private sector with it. There is no portability of any of these pensions from one sector to another. There is nothing whatsoever in their legislation which will ensure that there is portability of these pension issues and pension plans. The other criteria are fit and proper entry and exit, corporate governance, reporting requirements, information disclosure and financial reporting standards.

This Central Bank report is dated 2006. This was laid in Parliament last week. According to the Central Bank Act, all these insurance companies and pension schemes are supposed to have been completed and submitted to the Central Bank and Central Bank should have submitted it to the Parliament within six months after the financial year ends. This report is dated 2006. Six months after the financial year ends would have been July 2007. We are getting the 2006 report of the Central Bank on insurance and pension in 2008; one year later. Do you know what could happen to some insurance companies within that one year and what could happen to some of these pension plans within that one year? Why are they so late in reporting? Why is the Central Bank not doing the supervision of all these insurance companies and pension schemes throughout Trinidad and Tobago? You are one year behind time and a lot could have happened.

We saw the closure of one of the insurance companies last year. People who had insurance plans had to rush to get new coverage and had to pay extra money to get a new plan when that insurance company went broke. This is not acceptable.

The other issue on pension, which we have been speaking about and on which many of our colleagues spoke about—my colleagues on the other side knows—is the question of indexation of pensions. My colleague from St. Augustine and I were discussing a while ago, the question of net present value. A number of my colleagues on that side who had done some financial accounting and management accounting in the MBA programmes, those who have done finance, would tell you that what was \$1, 10 years ago is probably valued at about \$5 or \$7 now; based on the net present value, which would have been calculated a few years ago.

Let us take an example of food. My colleague mentioned in his presentation one week ago that a basket of food with 10 basic items, which would have cost \$146 in 2002, now costs \$304, six years later. Could you imagine somebody receiving a pension that starts from 1990 or 1995? Their pension would have been calculated on their salary in 1990 or 1995. Salaries were not high then; they were \$2,000 or \$3,000. Two-thirds of that salary is \$2,000. What can that \$2,000 do now for somebody who has worked all their life in the public service, because of the inflation; 200 per cent inflation on food alone, within the last five or six years? Headline or core inflation averages at 10 per cent. That money that they are receiving as a pension is decimated. We are now trying to calculate something to give them, even though they were acting in a particular position. A new pension is supposed to be given to them. That is minuscule. We are talking about a small amount of money.

There are judges, senior judges throughout Trinidad and Tobago, who are bastions of democracy in Trinidad. Ten years ago they worked for salaries like \$8,000 and \$10,000. Some of them have asked this Government—they have formed a committee to ask this Government time and again, over the last six or seven years. They asked former Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie to do some work on their behalf, because a number of those judges are finding difficulty. If the judges are finding difficulty to live with the type of pension that they are receiving, how is the poor man going to live? The judges whose salaries were higher than the average poor person are finding difficulty and they are asking this Government to look at the question of their pensions and review it. They are finding difficulty. This Government has done nothing for them. The poor person has nobody to talk to. We as the alternate government have to speak on their behalf. If the judges are finding difficulty, what is happening to the poor people? They are starving.

All this thing about Green Paper and White Paper is a real waste of time. There is no harmonization on this whole pension plan issue. I can go on to speak on a few more issues, but we would stop at that point. There is the need for one comprehensive piece of legislation to deal with the whole pension plan industry.

Mr. Speaker, the Government's type of business enterprise that looks after pensions, is it not the National Insurance Board? The NIB probably has assets worth over \$18 billion. With prudent investment of money in the NIB, you are supposed to be receiving some degree of possibly close to \$2 billion a year in interest or receipts. What is happening to the National Insurance Board? What is happening to the investment portfolio of the National Insurance Board? There is nothing in any finance regulation to tell this National Insurance Board how they must invest this money; \$18 billion in assets.

We know who is the Chairman of the National Insurance Board. It is Calder Hart. He is Chairman of Nipdec; Nipdec is a subsidiary of the NIB. Nipdec is now the company, just like UDeCott, that is doing construction business. The Government now, because of what is happening to UDeCott, is taking away some of the business that was given to UDeCott and giving it to Nipdec, because of the amount of noise we are making. The same Government closed down Nipdec at one point in time, but they are now resurfacing it, because Calder Hart is there. Calder Hart is with UDeCott, Nipdec and NIB; one man in this country with \$18 billion in NIB and another \$20 billion or \$25 billion in 37 projects of UDeCott.

They are coming to tell us about a Commission of Enquiry, they are getting Professor Uff to come and they are going to start work. They would come in November. We would probably see the end of it in November next year. The commission would meet for six months and we would probably get the report by September next year. This Government has never been able to deliver on their promises. Promises are nothing to them. They could say things day in and day out.

Did the Prime Minister not say that they are going to appoint a chairman pretty shortly? It took them two months to even name the person. Right here in Trinidad, there are people who could have been the chairperson of that commission. All right, you looked and you got Professor Uff or whoever it is. His credentials are extremely competent and internationally recognized. That is fine, but you do not need that degree of professionalism at that level. Okay, even though you bring Professor Uff now, why is it that you have to wait for quite January next year to start your proceedings to take six months and wait for three months? All that time UDeCott is doing whatever and Calder Hart is doing whatever he wants with the books; manipulating the books. By the time the Speaker comes—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** You are off the topic.

**Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** I am speaking about the NIB. I went off a little bit because this is the same gentleman whom we want to get off NIB, not Professor Uff.

I was speaking about investment by the NIB. NIB should have been managing the resources so well, almost \$18 billion in assets, we should have been getting a dividend of approximately \$2 billion, which would take care of the pension.

In 2005, I remember there were approximately 86,000 persons in Trinidad and Tobago who were considered old age; above 65. That is from the Central Statistical Office. In 2007, that increased to 93,000. In two years there was an increase of approximately 8,000.

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. GOPEESINGH]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

If the NIB decides to give a pension of \$2,000 per month and we round it off to 90,000 citizens, at \$2,000 per month that is \$180 million. That \$180 million multiplied by 12 months is \$2.16 billion. NIB should be taking care of that and easily managing \$2,000 per month in pension to all citizens above age 65, without any difficulty and without having to go into the Consolidated Fund whatsoever. The investment portfolio—nobody is telling him what to do.

Do you know what he has done? The 2007 NIB report shows that NIB is investing in real estate. River Woods is a major investment of middle-income housing undertaken by the National Insurance Board. It is a \$167 million project and is a gated community of 275 housing units on approximately 50 acres of land adjacent to Cleaver Woods Park in D'Abadie. Here it is that the NIB is supposed to be investing in corporate bonds and Government Bonds, with secured earnings and income and the National Insurance Board, with Calder Hart, is investing in real estate; \$167 million in River Woods. We do not know who owns River Woods. Who is the insurance company?

There is another one. He is not satisfied with River Woods alone. He goes on to invest in Savannah East Development. What is going on with our money in Trinidad and Tobago; all the National Insurance Board's money that people have contributed to? Savannah East Development Project in Port of Spain has been advanced by the appointment of Genivar Construction as development manager in Trinidad and Tobago. Genivar Construction is the company that is bringing the steel from China and has sub-standard steel constructing buildings. Genivar Construction is the company for the Savannah East Development Project. Mr. Speaker, do you see the relevance of the National Insurance Board and the investment?

**Hon. Members:** No!

**Mr. Bharath:** Tell them again.

**Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** I would tell you. Calder Hart has taken NIB's money, \$167 million, to go to River Woods and he has taken another—we do not know what the amount of money is. I think my young colleague does not understand or does not have a clue whatsoever about finance. I would like him to stay in the medical field and do what he is doing in his little community. He does not have a clue about anything in finance. It is not nice that a teacher must speak down to his student, but obviously he did not learn very much in medicine and he seems to know nothing whatsoever about finance. I would ask him to please keep quiet.  
[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, it is getting close to tea time. All you need to do is wait 16 more minutes. Let the Member continue, please.

**Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** I care for him. Amery is my friend. In parliamentary language, if he is heckling me I have to defend myself. When we walk outside it is different. He does not understand the whole aspect of financial management by the National Insurance Board.

**4.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, there is a Seventh Actuarial Report which was done by the International Labour Organization (ILO) which speaks to investment portfolios like the National Insurance Board (NIB). The ILO brought out this Seventh Actuarial Report on investments and the limitations on investments. They speak specifically about investments by the NIB, in terms of corporate bonds investment, debentures, Treasury Bonds and developing a strong portfolio for the National Insurance Board. Obviously, nobody has taken any heed of that.

We have a number of private companies in Trinidad and Tobago that have pension funds. There are a number of contributions to pension funds, and some of these funds go into surpluses. We do not know what is the legal aspect of dealing with surpluses in pension funds. Do you know who has to suffer as a result of deficit in pension funds? It is the worker and the employee. There is no legislative regulatory mechanism to deal with surpluses for pension funds. What do we do with surpluses in pension funds? Who benefits from the surpluses in pension funds? That is something that the hon. Minister of Finance would have to tell us.

I just want to go on to a few other areas. This Bill that we have been asked to give consent to, particularly the Teachers' Pensions (Amdt.) Bill, 2008, under clause 3:

“...he shall be deemed to be a teacher to whom regulation 19(c) of the regulations applies”—through the entire paragraph.

Mr. Speaker, if I get the original Teachers' Pensions Act, which is behind there—I forgot to bring it—do you know who has to give that money? It is the President who “may” calculate. I do not have it with me here, but we can find it. Do you know who does the calculation for that? It is the President. Something like pension for a teacher, the President has to become involved in the calculation. It says that the President “may” and not “shall”. I am sorry I do not have it here with me, but I want to refer Members to it. It is section 19(c), and it speaks about the President calculating the pensions. In today's day and age, you have a President looking after pensions. The whole matter with respect to pensions is so archaic. They are bringing little pieces of legislation here and there, and the whole matter needs to be looked at altogether.

They talked about the human resource management within the public service and the public service reform. They seem to be unable to decide for themselves what they really want in the public service. What is this reform about? Do they want meritocracy or seniority? On one hand, you have Permanent Secretaries talking about promotion on meritocracy and, on the other hand, you have people within the public service talking about promotion based on seniority. It goes on even to the higher levels where the Member for San Fernando East does not understand the difference between seniority and meritocracy.

This goes back to when Justice Sat Sharma and Justice Ibrahim were senior members of the Judiciary, and either one of them was in line to become the Chief Justice. They brought somebody from outside and imposed that person—Justice Michael de la Bastide—in the Judiciary, and put Justice Sat Sharma and Justice Ibrahim out to graze. These two persons had worked all their life in the Judiciary and were awaiting appointment, but they were thrown out by the imposition of this Government. They brought in Justice Michael de la Bastide. It is true that he is competent, and we do not have any difficulty with that, but do not do that to people. They have worked all their lives and they have gone their career pathway to become the Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago, and you brought in somebody else, but they did not do that this time. Probably, Justice Sat Sharma was too young at that time.

Justice Ibrahim had to leave Trinidad because he was so hurt. [*Desk thumping*] He went and practised in the Bahamas as an Appeal Court Judge with distinction, and here competent people are being pushed aside by this Government. They knew who they wanted. They did not want Justice Sat Sharma or Justice Ibrahim, but they wanted somebody from outside.

The present Chief Justice is going to be the Chief Justice for the next 16 years because he is 49 years. They have no difficulty with youth now. So, it pleases them now to bring a young person who is the Chief Justice. We have tremendous respect for the Chief Justice, but it is the principle that we are debating. This person is going to be the Chief Justice for 16 years.

I saw a beautiful picture yesterday that my niece brought for me. At that time, the Judiciary was strong. On the front part of the picture were Justice de la Bastide, Justice Sharma and Justice Ibrahim, and at the back of the picture were Justice Hamel Smith, Justice Gopeesingh, Justice Zainool Hosein and Justice Permanand.

We have a Judiciary that is quite competent, but the whole issue is that you have somebody who is going to be the Chief Justice for 16 years, and at the time when Justice Sat Sharma was supposed to be the Chief Justice, he was pushed aside.



**Dr. Moonilal:** Double standards!

**Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** You have the question now about the appointment of the Commissioner of Police. They are saying that he is too young. He is ranked No. 23, in terms of seniority. Why do you not bring in somebody who is ranked No. 23 and make that person the Commissioner of Police?

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

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** I am seeing the smiles on the other side. I am sure they are enjoying my contribution. Thank you for not wanting to extend my time, but I have a few minutes again. The last area I want to touch on before we close is the ability of our senior citizens to have a decent standard of living. It is very unforgivable, that in a society where we have spent almost \$200 billion, there are almost 200,000 citizens receiving a salary of less than \$3,000 per month, as was certified by the now President of the Senate, when he was talking in the other place. He gave that information there. He said that there were almost 200,000 citizens receiving a salary of less than \$3,000 per month. What is going to happen to those 200,000 citizens, many of whom are going to be retiring shortly? Their salaries are less than \$3,000. Their pensions would have to be calculated based on a maximum of \$3,000. They cannot live now on \$3,000 so would they be able to live on \$2,000?

They said that the average salary for an individual to survive on is \$2,500 per month, so here it is an individual is finding it difficult to live on \$3,000 a month, and when that person is retired he will have to survive on less than \$2,000 per month. What is going to happen? The Government has abolished the pension and put it in the form of a grant. A pension was a compulsory entitlement. This Government has changed it to a grant, which could be stopped at any time.

So, all these citizens in Trinidad and Tobago who believe that they are receiving a pension, it is not a pension, but it is a grant which this Government is capable of removing at any time, and the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago would be left out in the middle without any pension. [*Desk thumping*] So, \$1,350 in pension plus the National Insurance Board \$1,000, some people are going to receive a maximum of \$2,350 or \$2,500. People cannot survive on that. The price of food has gone up by 200 per cent within the last four to five years.

Mr. Speaker, people are deprived of health care. When they go to the hospitals, many of the pharmaceuticals that the people need they cannot get, and

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[DR. GOPEESINGH]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

they have to purchase them. They are given a prescription to go and buy them outside, and they are not on the CDAP list.

Mr. Speaker, I had the unfortunate experience of seeing a bill in a private nursing home where one antibiotic regime for a day cost that poor person \$3,500. If that antibiotic was not given that person would have died. How could a poor person live in this country? They are doomed to death, because the hospitals do not have the medicine that they need; they do not get the care that they need; they have to suffer and buy the medicine outside; and they cannot buy the medicine outside because they do not have the money and, therefore, they are left to die. That is a fact. That is unforgivable.

There are persons who are unable to buy medicine and other necessities for their children. They cannot send their children to school and it worsens the social and economic situation in Trinidad. There are parents who cannot even buy milk for their children. They are left with their grandparents, and their grandparents cannot afford anything, because they themselves cannot even survive.

In terms of living standards and a decent standard of living, we feel that almost a quarter of the population—about 250,000 to 300,000—are living below substandard, and it is even worse when they retire. This Government has to do something very substantial.

The UNC had promised that when it got into power it was going to raise the pension to \$3,000 and ensure that National Insurance Board did its business properly so that the Consolidated Fund would not have been cheated of any finance.

These three pieces of legislation are important, in terms of giving the worker their money and their pension which they rightly deserve, but this Government must take full responsibility and blame for not bringing an omnibus piece of legislation, in terms of the whole financial reform and pension reform system in Trinidad and Tobago. They are just way behind time and we just cannot support them on these types of issues, but we have to support the Bill in whatever way we can.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members it is 4.29 p.m. and with your indulgence, I think we will break for tea now. The sitting of the House is suspended for tea and we will resume at 5.00 p.m.

**4.29 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Esther Le Gendre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to contribute to the discussion on the amendments to the Pensions Bills as described by the hon. Minister of Information.

Mr. Speaker, we have been able to confirm two things during the course of this discussion or the discussions that went earlier. The first of this is that the Opposition Members intend to support this Bill. In essence, they have no problem with this Bill. The second thing that we have been able to confirm is that there is some vain hope that nobody remembers the UNC, but we remember; we have the memory of elephants. It is necessary from time to time to bring some of our memories back, if only for the edification of those who look on, along with this Parliament, at our discussions and would hear some of the points being raised by the Members on the other side. So we need to keep a constant reminder, a constant counter to the issues as they are raised.

The Member for Oropouche East, as well as the Member for Princes Town— or is it Oropouche West? The Member for Caroni East raised the point that the amendments were piecemeal and what was required was comprehensive approach to the drafting of new legislation. That is a reasoned position; no one can disagree with that and for this reason I am sure that the Members on the other side are well aware that this comprehensive approach to the legislation is currently being undertaken. Therefore, as we speak, committees are meeting to draft the legislation that is being proposed.

Mr. Speaker, while the grass is growing the horse is starving. What we need to do is to create these amendments so as not to deny benefits now, even as we await the outcome of the reform of pension legislation. The Members on the other side sought to give the impression that one can simply wave a wand and you can bring together a lot of legislation, which would prevent these amendments.

We have to remind the Members on the other side that certainly, with respect to the legislation 23:52, that particular piece of legislation was amended 15 times, up to 1997. The last two occasions on record that I have, would be 1995 and 1997. The Pensions Act, 39:02 was amended six times between 1952 and 1956, the last of these occasions being in 1997. The Teachers' Pensions Act was also amended in 1997. So, it must mean that while successive governments have been in power, they all would have realized that comprehensive legislation would have been necessary. I hope they were working towards it in a way that this Government is working towards it, but the end of the day, there are people in jobs and there is legislation that needs to be created to facilitate their well-being.

We should also be aware that while there is talk about this comprehensive change to legislation, we are not dealing with a homogenous public service where everyone works at the same job and where everyone is under the aegis of the same union. There are a number of different unions involved and these unions have over time, moved to create benefits and remuneration for their varying publics and all of these arrangements are different.

What is unifying and synchronized nevertheless, is the principle that encompasses these varying approaches to compensation and remuneration within the public service and that is what will facilitate what we all hope will be a speedy outcome to pension reform, which I wish to assure both this House and all others that is under way.

There has been a discussion, somehow we meandered into the purpose of retirement benefits. The Members on the other side sought to give the impression that there is a principle in pension arrangements or in the organization of pensions, which seeks to provide the same level of comfort during pension years. The same level of comfort that one would have during working years. That is not realistic. I think everyone knows and understands that a pension is earned and is linked to contributions that one would have made during one's working life.

There is a distinct difference between the pensions that the Members on the other side spoke about and social grants. We all appreciate that when we discuss pensions, it is a sensitive issue because pensions are earned or I should say, are a mainstay of those who are older; those who have completed their working lives. It is a time for rest for some; action for others; reflection for others, and we all want to ensure that those persons who are in receipt of a pension have a decent standard of living.

Mr. Speaker, link pensions to prices? I do not know where the Member for Oropouche East undertook his study of pensions, but the idea of linking pension to prices or inflation for that matter, is one sure way to bring about the demise of pension funds, as we know it, which was referred to by the Member for Caroni East. Pensions are linked to earnings, social support, which the Member for Caroni East kept confusing with pensions, is linked to something else. It is linked to a means test.

The Member for Caroni East went into a discussion, which suggested that somehow the Caroni pensioners were duped; that they were promised a number of benefits only to find that those benefits are not now available. There is nothing further from the truth. The fact is that not all persons receive pensions from the NIB at the \$2,000 level that the Member for Oropouche East mentioned.

The \$2,000 payment represents the highest level of payments. If my memory serves me, it is a class 8 payment and pension amounts slide all the way down to a class 1 payment. It is possible that someone earning a pension at the level of class 1, will pass the necessary means test on that same sliding scale so scorned by the Member for Oropouche East. On the application of that test, the pensioner can earn a higher amount of the social welfare grant that may also be paid.

We need to keep in mind that one, pensions are earned; pensions are linked to contributions and that social support is a grant and that is linked to certain tests of one's means. I say again that pensions are a sensitive issue because the comfort, which one would eventually enjoy, is really linked to the choices you make as a younger person. At the same time, I do recognize that certain persons perhaps do not have that choice. This is why we have the intervention of the State through the social welfare grants.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, you save during the course of your working career and there is a pension, but there are other instruments available to us all, depending on our means, to build upon this base of a pension. Some of us may be able to access private life insurance. It is a fact that despite our means during the course of our working career, that we are all entitled at the end of the day to the National Insurance Board's pension on the basis of the contributions we have made throughout our working career. This contribution, it is well known, can be enhanced by the provision or one's choosing to make extra contributions. It is not a provision that is highly exercised by Members of the public, for one reason or another. But one can enhance one's national insurance contributions by making extra contributions if one wishes to do so.

The Members on the other side raised a question as to where does the responsibility lie for creating that pool of funds that will support the life of a pensioner. I suggest that the individual is first of all, responsible, but in recognition of the fact that the individual's circumstances may not always support their later years, then the State has a moral authority to intervene with support.

But in all of these cases the role of the State is to ensure that there is a floor of social support below which no Member can fall.

### **5.15 p.m.**

A pension is not a salary in later years. It assumes that together with the pension which you have earned from your employment; that one can add a national insurance pension payable from age 60; that one can add the personal provisions you have made through your own savings; that one can add the possibility of the

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. E. LE GENDRE]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

Senior Citizens Grant; that one can add relief from certain taxes; that one can benefit from the lower tax levels that are enjoyed by persons who are in receipt of pensions, that one can add different kinds of private sector support: breaks at the bank, allowances, et cetera, and so, then one can build a sufficient bank of funds to support one's retirement.

It is assumed that in retirement many of us will be empty nesters, we will have no more children, those who have homes might have paid for them; we assume that the entire level of expense that the pensioner would have had in his earlier years that time has passed so it is a time for stepping back, and I suppose, for enjoying your retirement in whatever way you want to. So to suggest that pension should afford one the ability to live as you lived during the height of your working life when you had a whole different set of expenses relating to children, relating to mortgages, relating to a different standard of living, perhaps you travelled, perhaps you were making investments, perhaps you were trying to save; to suggest that pensions should somehow exist and allow for the same level of comfort as you enjoyed during work hours is to give a false hope and a false expectation to would-be pensioners.

The point was also made that retirees are being forced to work. I do hope to work in my retirement. I think the whole concept of work and retirement has changed as time goes by, that because of improved standards of living and improved levels of health, people can and do work into their retirement. [*Desk thumping*] I see a lot of working retirees thumping the desk, yes. [*Interruption*] [*Laughter*] So I will be joining you. So, to create a picture of doom and gloom, that there are a number of people out there who should be resting who are forced to work, again, I do acknowledge that there are some people who cannot afford to retire, but the choices we make in our working years often reflect the reality of our pension years. Much was made of the fact that the State needs to support our pensioners more. I have no idea where the Members on the other side are.

**Ms. Kangaloo:** They have retired.

**Hon. E. Le Gendre:** They have retired. Oh, I understand. Perhaps the business of this House is not their business. It would have been good for the Member for Oropouche East and the Member for Caroni East to hear that the National Insurance Board alone registers some 62,710 pensioners to whom a total of \$722.1 million was paid in 2007.

The same Government through its social grant programmes has on register 67,200 persons receiving the Senior Citizens Grant and the grants paid between 2006 and 2007 amounted to \$934,599,000. That is the kind of performance we are

talking about, that is the kind of support this Government gives to pensioners. There is also a question as to whether the State should be responsible for pensions and some fear that the Members on this side have suggested that the Government should get out of the pension business. We do not want any panic to arise in the ranks of the population because that is not the Government's position, and we do not want people to confuse pension with the term Senior Citizens Grant which is a social security measure as distinct from a pension which is an earned amount of money set aside for retirement years, earned during your course of work, or earned through contributions to the National Insurance System. We want to separate that definition of pension from the definition of the Senior Citizens Grant, the Social Welfare Grant which is given out on the basis of a means test.

Even as the Members on the other side agree that the pieces of legislation brought on this day, they have no problem with it, somehow there is a problem with the three pieces being put together. I thought that was clear. The three pieces of legislation, while they number three, are essentially the same thing. One would have thought that the Members on the other side in agreeing not to disagree with us to debate the three pieces together understood this clearly from the front. Perhaps they forgot to tell the Member for Oropouche East, he certainly did not get it that all three pieces of legislation—

**Ms. Kangaloo:** He never does.

**Hon. E. Le Gendre:** He never does. Yes, I agree with you. Mr. Speaker, he never gets it. All these three pieces of legislation seek to do is to ensure that persons who have acted continuously in a higher position in their jobs for more than three years, the amendments will ensure that this period of acting is taken into consideration when computing their pensions. It is only fair and all we are here to do is to do the right thing.

The second aspect of the legislation is to ensure that those persons promoted to higher office and having acted in that office and the continued period of acting, together with service in the office to which one was promoted, if it amounts to periods of not less than three years, to have superannuation benefits calculated as if that person was substantively appointed to that office during the entire period. It makes sense. We need to do this thing. There are people out there who are depending on this Government because 55,000 public officers and 14,000 teachers will be affected by this legislation.

The Member for Oropouche East said he did not know how many people will be affected by it, maybe it is a lot, he really did not object to supporting them, but perhaps he needs to know exactly how many people are probably sitting at home

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. E. LE GENDRE]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

now looking at this discussion and realizing that, thank God I have not been forgotten, thank God this Government remembers me, thank God this Government has brought this piece of legislation to the Parliament [*Desk thumping*] because my pension is affected. The beauty of this piece of legislation is that payments are to be retroactive, so that people need not fear that they would lose anything as a result of the legislation coming forward at this time. [*Laughter*]

One final thing, I must address a statement made by the Member for Caroni East, when he claimed certain achievements of his government with respect to the teaching service and the delinking of the teaching service and the public service. Again, not only does the Member not get it, the Member's memory is somewhat porous, because the facts are that in 1999 a committee reported on issues with regard to the unification of the teaching and education services and the delinking of the public service. And the intent of that committee's meeting was to unify the teaching and education service, their administration, their technical personnel and all involved in education and to develop the legislative framework to accommodate that delinking.

It is a matter of record that no legislation for achieving that unification was ever developed by the same government that instituted a committee which made recommendations which they accepted by Cabinet in 1999 and then they turned around and did nothing and that is a set of people who constantly accuse the Members on this side of taking no action. If ever there was action never taken it was in 1999 and perhaps this has led to where we are today. So they did not produce the legislation; that gave rise to a number of problems; that the teaching and education were not legally unified; issues of compensation for the teaching service and the education service were not addressed; teachers and principals unionized by TTUTA began to receive the higher wages negotiated and of course this House has its own memory, we understand where all of that is. Perhaps all of that is being discussed as we discuss the Teachers Compensation Bill, but this is for the benefit of the Member for Caroni East. It is for his benefit to note that after the inaction of his government in 1999, in 2002, three months into office this PNM Government took action and all 34 offices were provided with interim allowances to correct the effect of the inaction of his government. That is just to correct another erroneous position put forward by the Member for Caroni East.

I want to wind up at this time. I apologize on behalf of the Members on the other side for taking so long and for really wasting the time of this House, because the Members on the other side are in agreement with the Bill. They are not absent, they are not even here to see it through. The position is clear; the amendments



make sense and perhaps I have again a small regret that some of this contention really is unnecessary, that when the Members agree that they can be big men and women and stand up and say we agree and work together with the foresight of the Members on this side to effect good legislation for the benefit of the good people of the public service of Trinidad and Tobago.

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

**5.30 p.m.**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I listened to the speakers on the other side, I ask myself if they are all living in Lu-Lu land and if they are all dreamers. I call it Lu-Lu land; I call my land, Lu-Lu land. If they are living in Lu-Lu land, if they are all dreamers—today you all would not get me sidetracked—I ask myself if they do not have mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers who worked and slaved for this country at a time when this country had no money; at a time of need. These people worked to put this country where it is today.

Today, in many ways what this country is experiencing, we are the beneficiaries of the hard work of our parents and grandparents. Why today are we so ungrateful? Why today we speak as if we shall never get old and as if we shall never become pensioners? We speak and we behave as if old age discriminates, and therefore, some people will get old while others shall remain forever young. That is not so. I wish it was so, but it is not so.

My emphasis today is not so much on the money, the finances and so on, because far too often we get the impression that the belief on that side is that everything can be cured with money. Traffic jam, throw money at it; crime, throw money; whatever it is, throw money at it and I am coming to sport just now. Therefore, I say, Mr. Speaker, what is more important for me and for the pensioners is the care, the love, the attention, the understanding, the empathy that you guys demonstrate to them, and that I find lacking.

Mr. Speaker, pensions deal with the condition of the elderly and the way we treat them as a society and we should look at the way the elderly and the disabled are treated. Today, I have a few reports just to refer to, to give you some examples of how the elderly are treated in this country by the Government. I go back as far as September 18, 2005. There is an article in the *Guardian*, dated Sunday, September 18, 2005 written by Reshma Ragoonath. The headline is, "Fear grips

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. WARNER]

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

villagers as pensioner killed". I would not read the whole article, but just one line that would summarize what the article says:

"Residents of Caratal Road in Gasparillo, are living in fear, after the murder of retired bus inspector...whose bloodied body was discovered in his house yesterday morning."

His name is Le Gendre.

Mr. Speaker, the article described in detail the suffering of Anthony Le Gendre and the numbers of complaints he made for help. His cry was for help, not for money, for help, for care, for understanding, for love, for compassion and he did not get it. On July 21, 2008—in fact, before I go so far, I better go to July 21. On July 21, there is an article in the *Newsday* entitled, "Pensions, more to come." They talked about Kelvin Baptiste, a 68-year-old pensioner who is visually impaired—Member for Tunapuna—and confined to a wheelchair after losing one of his legs. He lives alone on the third floor of an apartment complex on Jacobin Avenue in Maloney. Because of his ailment, he is appealing to the Housing Development Corporation which manages the complex to relocate him to an apartment on the ground floor, so he can easier move around. All he is asking for is to be relocated on the ground floor, so he can easier move around. He is saying he can only leave his apartment with the assistance of friends, and to leave is a task in itself.

He lives on the 32<sup>nd</sup> floor, one leg and blind. They put him on the 32<sup>nd</sup> floor. He says and I quote: [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Abdul-Hamid:** Where?

**Mr. J. Warner:** You know, I expected to get some old talk on the other side, but I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that artificial intelligence is no substitute for stupidity. [*Laughter*] Natural stupidity. So as I was saying—artificial intelligence is no substitute for natural stupidity.

**Mr. Abdul-Hamid:** Where in Trinidad have 32 floors?

**Mr. J. Warner:** He says: "I have one leg and I am blind. They have me living on the third floor." [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Mr. J. Warner:** "Every time I need to do anything outside my home, I have to crawl down 32 steps." [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Members:** Oh, steps.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Not 32 floors, 32 steps. So he is on the third floor—Mr. Speaker, my apologies—and has 32 steps to come down and he is asking to bring him down to the ground floor.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Mr. Maharaj SC:** Imagine they are laughing at the blind man.

**Mr. J. Warner:** I said to myself, the dead is talking—

**Mr. Speaker:** Now, do not let this get out of hand. I am appealing to Members. This has the potential of getting out of hand; we have been enjoying a good day so far. Please, hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. J. Warner:** The dead is talking. Brain-dead. I continue:

"By the time I am done, I am so tired I can barely push the wheels of the chair to move."

He continues:

"I have to wear an old pants to go down the stairs and when I reach the ground floor, I have to change into my regular pants. If I don't do this, I will soil my pants by crawling down the...stairs. It is too much for me to bear,..."

He is asking for help and Members behave as if money is everything. I repeat: compassion, love, understanding, empathy for the pensioners. Put yourself in their shoes and believe that one day too, all of us shall be like them. It is a road we all have to travel. I go to another article in the *Newsday*, July 04, 2008, the diabetic association. A "fella" call Carlton Phillip, president of the association and he is saying that they get the brunt of the attacks of the pensioners. He said that the pensioners abuse them because nobody is taking care of them.

There is another article in the *Newsday* dated May 10, 2008 on another pensioner and the headline is, "Adina goes without pension for nine months". This lady called Adina Olliver is 91 years old. Members behave as if they will never get old because today they are young, but I want to tell them that my grandmother has told me that the ripe mango falls and leaves the green one. Today, you are green, but you could fall before the ripe mango and, therefore, you have to take care of the pensioners. Listen to what 91-year-old Adina Olliver says:

"...as a pensioner it has been even harder over these last nine months since she has not received her old age pension cheques."

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. WARNER]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

Her daughter, Ms. Jeanette De Couteau, wants to know why. Ms. De Couteau lives in England, so she came home to see what can be done. They asked De Couteau to fill out a form because a form was not filled out. De Couteau filled out the form and went back to England. De Couteau waited for two more months, no pension. She calls to say that the forms have been misplaced. De Couteau comes back to Trinidad and fills out the forms again, still no pension. Then she says—this one shocked me—she was in a meeting in London where she met Alicia Hospedales from the Ministry of Social Development who promised she would take care of the problem. She told Alicia Hospedales and I quote:

"my mother was born here"—in Trinidad—"and she has spent nearly all her life on these shores. It is not fair that someone of her age should be treated in this manner".

She told you that she said.

Where is the love; where is the understanding? *Newsday* contacted the Ministry of Social Development and told them about the incident and they said to them, "It has been noted." Today, we can walk, and move, and talk, and we believe that we are ministers, when some of us cannot even be ministers of religion, far more, of course, in Government and we behave as if our first duty is not to serve our people. Our first duty is to serve the people; at least this is what we on this side came here for, to serve the people and throughout you have reports.

There is an article by Darcel Choy in the *Newsday* on July 20, states:

"A Trincity woman has celebrated an historic milestone".

She says she is 100 years young. Here what she says:

"She considers life now too hard as food prices continue to rise."

I listened to the Member for Tunapuna as if she does not know that at all, as if she is living—and I say again, Member for Diego Martin North/East—in Lu-Lu land. She does not know that at all, and she is saying that does not exist. People do not have to work. No problems, but I will come back to that just now. One hundred years old, she says, and I continue:

"It is difficult to live now, condensed milk then was six cents a tin, now it costs too much."

And now she drinks tea without milk.

When you are 100 years old, must you drink tea without milk in a land of plenty, in Trincity? And so the list continues throughout. "Cobra found dead" by

Cecelie Ashoon. More again about pensioners in the article on “Cobra” and so on. The point I want to make therefore is, we have lost the milk of human kindness. We seem to be intolerant of old age and pensioners.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Minister of Information and I would not be too hard on him because he opened the debate by saying, “We are not here to make a living”—I agree with him fully well—“we are here to enrich this country.” Then do it. Let us not enrich ourselves, but let us enrich the country and I will come to it just now to show you how we are enriching ourselves.

The Member of Laventille West, I believe—in his maiden speech, so I have to be very delicate and very kind to him, said that you can choose to do what you want, it is not the Government fault’s. He does not understand. There are some people who just simply cannot afford it, if even they choose. They do not have the means and, therefore, it is difficult for him to understand—he is 30 or 40 years old I imagine—or to put himself in the other person’s shoes, the pensioner’s shoes. But I repeat, he is bound to have parents and grandparents. And he was talking about they can become insurance salesmen.

You can see he does not live in today’s world, insurance salesmen? And they are quick to argue and ask what the UNC did in 1999.

**5.45 p.m.**

Dr. Moonilal, the Member for Oropouche East, listed a host of things the UNC did. But why do you always have to say what the UNC did or did not do? You have been elected to serve in a time of plenty and I know that power in this Government brings a Minister many luxuries, but I want to feel, I want to hope, I want to believe that a clean pair of hands must also be one of that, also a soft heart and understanding because at the end of the day, if even by chance the UNC did nothing for whatever reason, they now have the means to do something. That is all we ask, and I repeat that it does not always have to be money.

Then the Member for Tunapuna spoke and, therefore, I say that one of the problems we face is, as I said earlier on, there are too many different kinds of legislation for pensions, as the Member for Caroni also said, which makes it, of course, a kind of jigsaw puzzle. There is a Pensions Act for those in the Diplomatic Service; a Pension Act for judges; one for teachers; a Pensions Act for municipal corporations; one for the fire service and the list goes on and on. All we are saying is that there must be now, as it was said before, one comprehensive Pensions Act.

They talk about the National Insurance Scheme; that has tremendous flaws which I would not go into this afternoon, but one of the main flaws is that those at

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. WARNER]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

the lowest end of the financial ladder are paying the highest percentage in their salaries. Check and see for yourself. It is wrong. What you should do is remove the ranges and simply charge a percentage—3 per cent across the board— and, therefore, whatever happens, you do not have to go into any level of bureaucracy to give people their money when the time comes.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is painful? When you retire you have to go to get your gratuity and pension. The most hurtful, the most dehumanizing, the most painful thing is to try to get your pension and gratuity after retirement. I have cried for people who, for sometimes over a year, sit on a bench outside as if they are begging people for help, as if they are begging for what is their entitlement. They have no concern for the pensioners. Sometimes for a year these guys have no income. Why do you not make it easy for them?

I say too that not only the pension is a jigsaw puzzle, but it is also discriminatory. The Prime Minister, the Chief Justice and the President receive 100 per cent of their salary as pension.

**Hon. Member:** The Speaker.

**Mr. J. Warner:** I did not see his name here, but I hope the Speaker too, because I have told my sons do not ever become a Speaker. To sit for all those hours, there is no way in the world anybody can pay me for that, far more you. Your pension should be mentioned here also, but I see the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice and the President. As pension, they are getting a full salary, 100 per cent; the army gets 87 per cent and the police 85 per cent. In fact, I have the pension given to ex-Commissioner Trevor Paul. “Ah better doh read it eh, before he get kidnapped.” But it is hefty, Mr. Speaker, hefty. Why the variance? [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is funny? As I was going through this Act, I wanted to see what is the pension being paid to the immediate past President. I wanted to compare it with the pension paid to the late Noor Hassanali who was not even given a car, he was not even given a bus pass. I wanted to compare that with the pension being paid to Sir Ellis Clarke who is still alive and has served this country in ways unimaginable; he is 91 years old. I would like to know what he is being paid and compare it with what is now being paid to the immediate past President; SUV, BMW and so forth. No problem, but I ask the question: Why discrimination? But I will raise that another time. All I am saying to you is that it is discriminatory because you have one percentage for the police, one for the army, one for the Prime Minister and while the other Prime Ministers may or should get the full pension—but that is for another time. I am saying that confusion can be corrected.

Mr. Speaker, what is most important is that the pensions can be paid, can be increased if, of course, we try to curb corruption at all levels. I have been doing a study in some ministries and the level of corruption in them. I have begun with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs to see, of course, if we cannot have savings in these ministries which could help to make people's lives better. I will not go into all now because today I gave you 14 questions for the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, I have another six or eight to give you still but I will give you two examples why pensions cannot be raised, why things are as they are, and why these young "turks" we have now as Ministers do not understand the suffering of the past.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a copy of the Infrastructure Development Fund and there are two payments made here, one for \$8 million for design works of the Yolande Pompeii Ground; this has been in this Government's manifesto for about 15 years. The deceased Pompeii is probably turning in his grave as a rotisserie chicken because his name has been called so often, and then \$8 million for works of the ground.

I sent my man to take a photograph—

**Miss Le Gendre:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order No. 36(1).

**Mr. Speaker:** No, Standing Order 36(1) deals with relevance. I think the Member is making a point.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Can you imagine the Minister of Education does not understand the meaning of relevance?

Mr. Speaker, if he had cut cost, we would have had that money to raise people's pension, pay them promptly and give them a better sense of living. I have pictures with no work being done. On May 08 they paid \$15 million for the construction of five regional recreational grounds. So far I have gone to four regions and I have not seen any work yet. Where is the work?

If this is bad, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs has a July camp for which Cabinet in its Note of May 29, approved \$6.9 million.

**Hon. Member:** What is the number of the Note?

**Mr. J. Warner:** The number is 1239—2008/05/23. Note No. SYA2002823, File No. SYA4/1/13 Vol. 1. It is marked confidential, but it is all right.

Mr. Speaker, \$6.9 million for July work which was given to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. I am saying that there are no checks and balances on this expenditure and when I come with my 14 questions you will see why.

*Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[MR. WARNER]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

Mr. Speaker, worse of all, they are having now an August camp for which the Board of the Company approved \$20 million for the camp yesterday, and the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs said no money for basketball, and I said another black sport bites the dust; football, no money but you could send people to see the football game in Bermuda.

The August camp for which they passed \$20 million yesterday was for 10,000 size 4 footballs; 15,000 size 5 footballs; 10,000 size 4 basketballs; 10,000 size 3 mini basketballs; 10,000 volleyballs; 10,000 3-pack wind balls; 10,000 cricket gloves; 10,000 bicycles, and hear the kinds: BMX bicycles; sizes 12, 16 and 20 and mountain bicycles, size 26. Where is the mountain? Which mountain? [Laughter] This was passed yesterday for \$20 million.

Mr. Speaker, I then went to find out, of course, how many persons were in the camp. There are 150 camps, before there were 258 so I asked to see how many persons in the camps and from where they have been drawn. I asked to see where all these bicycles would be stored after they have been used and those are the questions I gave you this morning to be answered in Parliament.

I am only showing here how money is wasted because it is a free for all and the people who need the money most do not get it. And who are the three purchasers?

**Hon. Member:** Sports and Games.

**Mr. J. Warner:** “That is one, if you call two more ah going to whistle.”

Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to even raise the issue, I was just showing you how money is badly spent and those who need the money the most are being denied it at every turn. It is because in many ways we here are heartless, or being “Johnny-come-lately”, we come with an air that we do not seem to understand what is happening on the ground.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Mayaro, my good friend, I call him “Gypsy”, but Mr. Winston Peters, passed me his magazine for Mayaro; “Mayaro Info”. I was proud, because I said Mayaro has come of age and I asked if there was anything about pensioners and he said no. I told him to put a column for pensioners the next time to let them feel wanted too. While I was saying so, I recalled I came to this Parliament on Friday, July 11, 2008 I had asked your permission to come late from overseas. When I came my staff had circulated my Chaguanas magazine to all the Members as always.

**6.00 p.m.**

I told them to circulate the magazine to 14 Members and not 41 Members. They think better of me and they gave all Members. No problem. When I came to



Parliament I sat on this chair and the Member for Diego Martin North/East, the most senior Member in this Parliament did it so. [*Member demonstrates by tearing up envelope*] [*Interruption*] I know that it is true. I do not lie. The Member for Port of Spain South gave a big grin. She could not even tell him that what he was doing was wrong. I sat here stunned because I said that if you can treat a parliamentarian so, how will you treat a pensioner?

What saved the day for me is that on Monday I went to see Sen. the Hon. Martin Joseph because the Football Federation asked me to see him—since they do not want any money from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs for World Cup 2010—about security for visas and work permits. I called him in the morning and he was not there. He came at 12.20 p.m. and called for me at 12.20 p.m. I was shocked. I said, “Minister, I want to see yuh.” He said, “Jack, what yuh want?” I said, “Minister, I want to see yuh.” He said, “Jack, hold on. Come at 3 o’clock.” I went to see him at 3 o’clock. He allowed me to park downstairs with no parking. I was escorted upstairs to his office. In four minutes that Minister met me; he treated me civilly; greeted me; he gave everything the Federation asked for and more for World Cup 2010. He said to me, “Mr. Warner, in sport, we are in this together, because sport fights crime and whatever I can do for you, please feel free.”

That gave me hope in mankind once more, after that experience. When I came down the steps, I met the Member for Laventille East/Morvant. Miss Donna Cox and I were on the same elevator. We hugged and embraced. [*Crosstalk and sighs*] I am telling you. Of course, there were other persons on the elevator. I told her, “Miss Cox, that Minister of yours is the greatest. I am sorry I ever showed him two red cards and I will apologize to him publicly whenever I see him.” I will. I am saying that you must treat people civilly. If you do not treat a Member of Parliament civilly, you would not treat a pensioner civilly.

The following day, I went to see my friend, the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara at her office. I called her about 11.45 a.m. She said, “Jack, come.” I said, “Madam Minister, we do not want any money again from the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs. Nothing from him. Nothing at all. We will play football in the Oval, Marvin Lee Stadium, Guaracara Park and in Tobago.”

**Mr. Imbert:** The Member is stretching the limits of Standing Order 36(1).

**Mr. Speaker:** The comparison the Member is making is that he was treated differently from your good self and the Minister of National Security. Basically, he is saying that if Members treat each other better we might get money for pensioners.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Mr. Speaker, I am winding up. I went to see the Minister of Finance who treated me civilly. I told her that I was shocked yesterday at Mr. Martin Joseph. She said that is the way he is.

The Minister of Finance promised to give us what we asked for, for the football tournament. In life you have to put yourself in the other person's shoes and empathize with them. It is not always about money. If a pensioner is given care, love and attention, it would mean more to him or her than gold and in turn, you would be blessed. I ask my friends on the other side to forget the red tape and the bureaucracy and who get what. Treat our pensioners with love, understanding and care.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Information (Hon Neil Parsanlal):** Mr. Speaker, as we come to the end of not only this debate, but also what has been a rather interesting eight or nine months for us on this side since we entered this House, I want your permission to reminisce for just a minute. When we entered this House we were greeted with the term neophytes. I do not know if it is a compliment as yet, but today, we have moved from being neophytes to young turks. I wondered whether it was a sleight of hand compliment or an acknowledgement that what perhaps those on the other side anticipated from us, they did not get. We have been able to rise to the occasion on every opportunity that we got and to deliver quality debate and certainly, to hold our own against those seniors who have been here long before us. [*Desk thumping*]

As I reminisce, I remember when I entered politics and certainly, in this House I was told to listen to two persons in particular and observe how they exercise authority in this House. The first of those was the Leader of Government Business and the second was the Chief Whip. Today, as we wrap up this debate and the first part of our time in this five-year term, I thank the Chief Whip particularly today, for exercising his authority in allowing the three Bills to be debated together. I also compliment him in his new role as Leader of the Opposition in moving the Member for Oropouche East to the newly created constituency of Oropouche West. Perhaps, it speaks wonders of his plans for the party in which he continues to have such an illustrious career.

The Member for Oropouche East—I do not want to arrogate any authority unto myself for that side—in his contribution asked the question about how many persons would have been affected by this particular legislation. The Member for Tunapuna provided the answer but I do not think that he was in the House at the

time. I will remind him that this simple bit of legislation will affect 55,000 public officers and 14,000 teachers. It is not an insignificant amount of the working population of Trinidad and Tobago. When we present these three Bills for amendment and ask that they be debated together so that we can advance the cause and status of these 69,000 officers who contribute daily to the progress of this country, we take that very seriously.

That is why as I listened to the Member for Oropouche East, I could not help but be a little taken aback by the manner in which in a number of cases, he trivialized the legislation in front of us. There were many jokes and other irrelevancies. Nothing serious came from his contribution. That is why, to quote him, no one remembers the UNC. In a serious time with this bit of legislation, we have before us the clowning antics of a Member who has nothing else to contribute to the Bill, but to say that we support it. He asked what about the \$12 billion that was spent in closing down Caroni (1975) Limited.

It is one of the sad things about the debates that take place in this House. This is something that I have observed in the last few months. Whenever there is nothing else to say, ultimate resort is Caroni (1975) Limited. Whenever there is nothing else to say about the PNM and the legislation, with unerring regularity, the favourite hobby horse Caroni (1975) Limited comes back into play. That is why, to quote the hon. Member for Oropouche East, no one remembers the UNC.

He spoke about the \$12 billion spent in closing down Caroni (1975) Limited and in the same breath, he asked us to increase the amount being paid to the pension of the former workers. He castigated us on one hand for the \$12 billion, and in the same breath, he asked us to increase the amount being paid. Not knowing; ignorant of the fact; forgetful perhaps, that for a number of the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited, the sum of \$650 is a substantial increase from what they were entitled to. We need to say that. Even the \$650 per month that these former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited are today entitled to or getting, that represents a significant increase based on what they were supposed to get. It is not that this Government was unmindful of the hardships being incurred or about to be incurred by those who would have gotten less than \$650. That is far from the truth.

The Member spoke about the need for preparing for retirement and exit plans. In true human resource strategy that is what we did. We prepare people to exit the working world as it were or where they have been accustomed to working and prepare them for other careers. To use their favourite hobby horse Caroni (1975) Limited, what happened? Millions of dollars were allocated for training, re-

training and redeployment for the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited. I think it was \$18 million. Yet, those on the other side for reasons known only to them, rather than encourage the former workers of Caroni (1975) Limited to engage in and embrace these opportunities for retraining and redeployment, those former workers were told do not accept the training.

The former workers were told, “Do not let them fool you. Do not accept this training.” That is why, to quote the Member for Oropouche East, no one remembers the UNC. That is why. The only relevant point made in this debate so far and we acknowledge the contribution of the Member for Chaguanas West and those who say to us that there is need for all of us to look at how we treat the elderly. From where I sit, the poor and vulnerable are those to whom we should be paying attention in this society. When the Member for Oropouche East makes the assertion or suggests that there should be one size fit-all pension across the country, it makes absolutely no sense. [*Desk thumping*]

**6.15 p.m.**

What it means, Mr. Speaker, is that, having done his degrees and having earned himself a salary of \$50,000 per month, then the Government should give him, who earned \$50,000 per month, a pension of \$3,000, the same as the former Caroni (1975) Limited worker, who was only getting \$650 per month. In any language, that cannot be equitable and that is why that argument falls on its own sword. It makes absolutely no sense.

The one point that has been made in this debate is the need for the omnibus-type legislation in terms of pension reform. I want to put on the record today that this Government, since March 2002, has been engaged in that exercise. Let me just bring the nation up-to-date on where we are.

The objective of the reform is to modernize the pension industry by developing and implementing a comprehensive pension regime for Trinidad and Tobago, which would include consolidation and modernization of the various pieces of dated legislation. It will provide for integrated regulation and supervision of the industry and for the implementation of a modern occupational pension plan for the public service.

The pension reform exercise is divided into four components:

- the establishment of the legal and regulatory framework, which is being managed by the Central Bank;
- the harmonization and administrative integration of the National Insurance Scheme and the Senior Citizens Grant;

- the development and introduction of a contributory occupational pension plan for the public service; and
- the upgrade and modernization of the National Insurance Scheme.

I am advised that the Central Bank is in the process currently of reviewing and upgrading this legislation governing the pension industry. I am further advised that a consultant, Mercer & Company, a Canadian firm, very well-known in the industry for its work on pension reform, has presented the Government, only a week and a half ago, with the final options on the way forward with respect to the reform of the pension exercise. I want to advise this honourable House as well that all these matters will be addressed by the Minister of Finance when she presents the budget in the months to come.

What we have before us is an attempt to make good on collective agreements; the effort on the part of the Government to harmonize the legislation to ensure that those who deserve this increase—the 69,000 employees of the public service—will get their due. It is in that regard and in the spirit of all that we have done this evening—and we thank the Members Opposite for their support of this legislation—that I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.*

*House in committee.*

*Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

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

*House resumed.*

*Bill reported, without amendment, read the third time and passed.*

#### **TEACHERS' PENSIONS (AMDT.) BILL**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister of Information (Hon. Neil Parsanlal):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to amend the Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:02, be now read a second time.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Teachers' Pensions (Amdt.) Bill*  
[HON. N. PARSANLAL]

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.*

*House in committee.*

*Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

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

*House resumed.*

*Bill reported, without amendment, read the third time and passed.*

**ASSISTED SECONDARY SCHOOL  
TEACHERS' PENSIONS (AMDT) BILL**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister of Information (Hon. Neil Parsanlal):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move,

That a Bill to amend the Assisted Secondary School Teachers' Pensions Act, Chap. 39:03, be now read a second time.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.*

*House in committee.*

*Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

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

*House resumed.*

*Bill reported, without amendment, read the third time and passed.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House be now adjourned to a date to be fixed.

**Housing Development Corporation  
(Failure to Visit Constituency Offices)**

**Dr. Roodal Moonilal (Oropouche East):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to raise a matter on the adjournment. The matter relates to the failure of the

Managing Director of the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) and/or other agents of the HDC to visit the constituency offices of Opposition Members and consult with them with respect to the housing needs of constituents in Opposition areas.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that a couple weeks ago, around June 09, I raised a matter on the adjournment dealing with the allocation process as it entails the distribution of housing. On that occasion, the Minister responded and indicated that the Government was in charge and that it alone determined housing needs and the requirements of the country and the allocation process which the Minister upon entering office declared was flawed, suddenly became adequate, correct and without problem.

I want to persist on this matter because the Minister gave the House and the national community the impression that it was left to the Housing Development Corporation and the Minister—in fact there was a statement made by the Minister specifically that the Minister alone has a residual right and authority to determine needy cases for housing.

On that occasion, I indicated that when the Government began the construction programme in the constituency of Oropouche, I was given the assurance that community members, constituents in the constituency of Oropouche—once they were deserving and fulfilled the requirements of the HDC—would be given some measure of preference for the allocation of housing.

Apart from that, it has been the practice for Members in Opposition, such as myself, to write letters to the HDC, copied to the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment, in which we recommend members of our constituency, whom we believe to be needy, for housing units.

**6.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, a Member of Parliament cannot and does not have the authority, the equipment or resources to investigate, in any detailed way, constituents who come to his/her office asking for housing. We refer such constituents to the Housing Development Corporation (HDC). They have the legal authority to investigate, interview and decide whether or not that person; the needy constituent, can meet whatever requirements they have.

In my constituency, over the past two or three months, the HDC has been giving out to persons, keys, envelopes and papers for housing units. I only hear of these functions. As a Member of Parliament, I am not invited to these functions. I do not know who are getting the houses, where the people are from, whether they

*Housing Development Corporation*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

are persons from the Oropouche East or West constituencies, or whether they are the needy persons whom we have recommended. That is the level of contempt I want to report.

I want to tell the Members on the opposite side that, in this battle we will fight and we will raise uncomfortable issues; issues that you would not like; by definition you cannot like them. You would be most uncomfortable when we raise these issues. We are speaking on behalf of our constituents. It is a level of contempt, which I want to report. It is a common culture of the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment.

Recently, in the Spring Village area, the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment and other officials treated the Member of Parliament, the Member for St. Augustine and other officials representing persons, with a level of contempt, by failing to invite such persons to discuss matters affecting their constituents. When they should have met the constituents as they have promised, at the Spring Village Community Centre, they chose to invite constituents to meet them in a back room; a windowless office at the Ministry Housing.

The problem is that Members of the Government and Ministers must understand when we are in the House, that we represent people. We received a certificate from the returning officer, indicating that we have been duly elected to represent people. It is our duty to take their issues and bring to the Minister, whether in the Parliament, at the Minister's office, in Woodford Square, wherever. This is one such issue.

I want to make a point, it is not on crime really, but it is quite instructive. I told the former administration, led by the Member for San Fernando East once and I want to say to the new Members, if you are in Government there is something called a National Security Council which the Prime Minister chairs and deals with crime. When we asked the Prime Minister to include Members of the Opposition, because of the nature of crime, or he should have a Parliamentary Select Committee to deal with crime, the Prime Minister said: "No, this system does not allow for that because we are in Government. We cannot trust you." You know, if the situation is reversed and the Opposition party gets in government, we would then say that we cannot trust you, you out.

**Mr. Imbert:** Who is Government?

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** We do not talk about you. You have no credibility and no reputation to lose. We are not talking about you. The problem with the Government is that it does not understand the role of Members of Parliament. They do not understand the role we play in representing persons. That is a critical point.



The housing need in Oropouche and Penal/Debe is a serious need. I will continue to raise this matter until forever, until the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment and the HDC assist the people of Penal/Debe, Oropouche East, Chaguanas West, St. Augustine and elsewhere.

The former, I understand he is now former, Managing Director, Mr. Noel Garcia was a frequent visitor to several offices of Members, including Pointe-a-Pierre. Tell us whether or not Noel Garcia goes to Marabella to the office, including Mrs. Hazel Manning's in Princes Town North and others. He goes there with his bag and briefcase and other officials to transact business; to listen to the needs of the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre and Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning. I have invited him. I have written a letter to this same Noel Garcia inviting him to come to Oropouche in my office to discuss the needs of the constituents. I have not even received the courtesy of a reply. [*Interruption*]

I am not talking your rubbish! This Member for Chaguanas East is a persistent nuisance. If you cannot deal with him tell me.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, you have to ignore whatever commentary is coming from the other side and address me. I think you will go better.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Let me return to the matter at hand. The issue does not concern the UNC. I want to raise a matter in a few minutes. It is not a UNC issue alone.

I have in my hand a photocopy of page 123. This is taken from a book produced at the Annual Convention of the PNM of July 13, quite recently. I want to read into the record a resolution passed at the PNM Convention. Hear this resolution that was passed.

“Whereas in the past houses were being built in the constituency by our Government;

And whereas residents of such constituencies are having great difficulty in receiving housing units, even though they have met the stipulated criteria:

Be it resolved that constituencies where the State is constructing houses that residents of such constituencies who met all the requirements should acquire a percentage of said constructed houses.”

This is a resolution passed at the PNM Convention on July 13, from the constituency of Oropouche East of the People's National Movement. I speak on behalf of the good people of Oropouche East UNC and Oropouche East PNM. They are saying the same thing.

*Housing Development Corporation*  
[DR. MOONILAL]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

I call on the Government today. This is the Oropouche East constituency's resolution at the PNM Annual Convention of July 13, 2008. It is not Dr. Roodal Moonilal's. It is not the UNC; it is your own members of our own party crying discrimination against your own Government. Today I ask the Minister; you are duty-bound as a Member of Government and as a leading Member of your party. If you do not want to take the advice and heed the call of the Member of Parliament for Oropouche East, this is a resolution from your party calling upon you to ensure that constituents in the constituency of Oropouche East get a percentage of the houses constructed. It is a phenomenal resolution. I am calling on the Minister to make a statement. Are you going to respect the will of your party now or are you going to reject the will, the call of your own members in your party? You have dismissed clearly the Opposition and the Member for Oropouche East, but this is your party.

The real point is that what I am saying in the Parliament is not in regard only of the Opposition, but there is a pattern. When PNM members can go to their convention and complain that houses are being built and persons in constituencies are not getting any houses where they are qualified—it came from Oropouche East. I believe that is incidental, but may be relevant for other constituencies as well. I think that it is incidental that it came from Oropouche East. I cannot be so influential to pass a resolution at Dr. Williams party. I cannot pass a resolution in the party Williams formed.

Hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment, I put it to you clearly, you now have a national consensus, a cross-party consensus, that you are discriminating against all and you are discriminating against members in the constituency of Oropouche East. You are discriminating against persons in Oropouche East. The UNC tells you this, the PNM tells you this. This is the will of your party. This resolution was passed. I do not know if you want me to write the political leader of your party and complain that you are violating a resolution of your party. It is a serious matter. I have never, so far, in my political career, found this commonality between the members of the party; that they all look to you and see you are building houses in Oropouche East, Golconda, Wellington Road and Retrench and the people of Oropouche East, whether they are UNC or PNM, are getting none. Somebody else is getting it under some other ground. This is really discrimination of the highest order. It is voter padding. Jump high, jump low, this is voter padding. When the UNC and PNM can tell you in a constituency that they are not getting houses and they qualify, this is voter padding, "francoment", as we say.

I will not stop, so do not think that I would stop this campaign. I will continue this campaign to ensure that persons who are qualified; who meet the requirements, Madam Minister, and are in the Penal/Debe constituency of Oropouche East, get some measure of relief by way of the provision of housing units which they deserve, were promised and which you admitted early into your term of office; that the allocation process is flawed.

If you believe that you can conduct a campaign of voter padding and moving around people throughout the country, because you have a wider political and electoral objective, that is fine, but societies throughout the world, whether it is the Palestinian problem, Zimbabwe or wherever, have demonstrated that these things do not work. Eventually, you think that you would stay in power because of playing draughts—that is the game where they move with king and eat—with the electoral board, but that will help you, eventually.

Have a conscience; there are people who are deserving. If people are not deserving and they do not meet your criteria, that is fine, but at least meet and treat with the needy people of Oropouche East for me please. Thank you.

**The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Emily Dick-Forde):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Member for Oropouche East for giving me an opportunity to come and restate the housing policy and the facts of how you run a housing Ministry. I want to address—before I take my time and read through what I have here—a few things. The first is failure to invite the MP for Spring Village to consult. The three times that we have met with the villagers we never sent any formal invitation. We called the councillor and the councillor brought the villagers. The Member for Oropouche West, I think, also came without any formal invitation. As I said in the news, there was no precedence for any formal invitation being issued or for any formal invitation being required. They came without any the first and second times. We could not understand what the big deal was about. Because the MP was not invited, they did not allow the people to come to hear good news.

**Sen. Annisette-George:** Sour grapes.

**Sen. The Hon. E. Dick-Forde:** Failure to invite the Members to Spring Village to consult—what was the other thing? Secondly, meet the villagers instead in a windowless office. That, again, is a misrepresentation of the facts. After the villagers found out the decision that the Ministry took, they were very happy. In fact, they were on the news saying how happy they were about the decision. [*Desk thumping*] They called the Land Settlements Agency (LSA) and requested a meeting.

**Sen. Annisette-George:** So, it is sour grapes then?

**Sen. The Hon. E. Dick-Forde:** It is most likely that the small office that they talked about is where the villagers asked to meet with the Land Settlements Agency, CEO, who then outlined to them how he was going to proceed with the decision.

What I want to know is if the Member for Oropouche is trying to get the Government to do his work for him? Has he ever written to the Ministry with these needy cases? We attend to all needy cases sent by MPs from anywhere. In fact, we get needy cases from the Mayor of Chaguanas and we address them.

**Mr. Warner:** The Mayor?

**Sen. The Hon. E. Dick-Forde:** Yes, the Mayor. Up to today, apparently people go to the Mayor to get help.

**Hon. Members:** Why?

**Sen. The Hon. E. Dick-Forde:** I do not know.

**Sen. Annisette-George:** Maybe the Mayor is a better representative.

**Sen. The Hon. E. Dick-Forde:** I do not know. I am going to say. I am visiting this House. I am not going to get into any bacchanal. The mayor sends information and we address every emergency. We call the people in and we do—I think the Member for Oropouche East is trying to get the Government to do his work. You have to do your work. You have to find out who your emergency cases are and send it to us.

**Sen. Annisette-George:** He is lazy!

**6.45 p.m.**

**Sen. The Hon. E. Dick-Forde:** With respect to the PNM's housing resolution, I think the Member misunderstood what it says. That tells you that there may not be as many houses in Oropouche East as you think. Both PNM and UNC people cannot get and everybody else in-between. We need to look at the housing needs in Oropouche East. The last time I was here, I did read some figures for you. Perhaps, the housing needs in Oropouche East are greater than the actual application numbers, and we need to go there and look to see where we can find space to put more houses. I think he misunderstood the point he was trying to make by reading that resolution. It actually shows non-discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take my few minutes to just quickly outline some basic things. I think there is a misunderstanding of what is really the issue. If the

Member keeps calling me back, I am just going to keep coming. That is the rule. [*Desk thumping*] I do not have a problem with that. [*Desk thumping*]

The Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment is entrusted with the mandate of providing adequate and affordable housing for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. The Housing Development Corporation is the agency of the ministry responsible for facilitating the provision of these housing units.

Act No. 24 of 2005 establishes the Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation and it states that the corporation's functions include, among other things:

- do all things necessary and convenient for or in connection with the provision of affordable shelter and associated community facilities for low and middle income persons;
- carry on any business activity that is incidental to or which may be performed conveniently by the corporation or which may assist the corporation in connection with its delivery of the services referred to in paragraph (a); and
- implement the broad policy of the Government in relation to housing as may be directed by the Minister from time to time.

To facilitate the implementation of the HDC's mandate, given through legislation and policy, the managing director of the HDC provides leadership and guidance to the organization through the performance of the following functions:

- plans, organizes, directs and administers the programmes of the organization;
- provides guidance and direction to managers and staff of the organization;
- serves as an advisor to the board of directors of the organization, to the Minister responsible for housing on, operation, policies and regulations and attends such meetings as may be required;
- ensures the implementation of board and Cabinet decisions;
- approves operating expenditure within defined limits;
- liaises with other governmental agencies involved in the regulation of construction activities;
- maintains liaison with other organizations in the field of housing; and
- liaises with local and international organizations to facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives.

*Housing Development Corporation*  
[SEN. THE HON. E. DICK-FORDE]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

Apart from facilitating the construction of houses, the HDC also performs the operational and administrative functions related to the allocation of state housing. The allocation is governed by a Cabinet approved policy which indicates that State housing be allocated on the following percentage distribution basis: This is what I think the Member keeps wanting me to come here and repeat all the time.

- 75 per cent selected via the random computer draw;
- 10 per cent to the joint protective services;
- 5 per cent for senior citizens and physically challenged persons; and
- 10 per cent on the recommendation of the Minister to deal with special cases/emergencies.

The allocation process for housing begins with an application either through the submission of the appropriate application form to the Housing Development Corporation or online. Applicants' information is entered on the database, and the applicants receive a unique identifying reference number, through which their information could be updated and status tracked.

Members of Parliament can submit a request to the Managing Director, HDC for the staff of the corporation to visit their constituency offices to discuss the State housing programme and associated housing needs of their constituents. During these visits, application forms may be distributed, but citizens are encouraged to submit filled out forms to the HDC in person. This is to ensure all the required information is given and the application is complete and accepted. This safeguards the applicants' interest. Request for state housing deemed to be of a critical nature may be forwarded to the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment for consideration in keeping with the approved allocation policy.

Additionally, as part of its mandate, the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment places emphasis on the maintenance of the existing housing stock in the context of the Vision 2020 goals. The Ministry implemented two programmes as follows:

- the Home Improvement Grant—households earning an annual income of up to \$60,000 can access a grant to the value of \$15,000 to effect home improvement works; and
- the Home Improvement Subsidy—household earning an annual income of up to \$84,000 can access a matching subsidy of up to \$20,000 to carry out necessary home improvements.

The delivery of services offered through the above-mentioned grant and subsidy programmes are facilitated by:

- dissemination of information via publications and electronic media;
- location of application forms and information brochures in various public offices; and
- the conduct of community caravans throughout Trinidad and Tobago to allow for information sharing; receipt of applications on site and conduct of interviews for the relevant programmes.

In this regard, the Ministry was the recipient this year of the Prime Minister's Innovation for Excellence Award categories namely; customer care and delivery, information and communication technology. [*Desk thumping*] The Government and the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment continue to seek ways to continuously improve the delivery of services to all our citizens with care and excellence as guiding core values.

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

### **Occupation of State Lands (Government's Insensitivity)**

**Mr. Harry Partap** (*Cumuto/Manzanilla*): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. The Motion for the adjournment of the House reads: "The insensitivity of the Government in its dealing with persons occupying state lands without the necessary leases". Within recent weeks, the Land Settlement Agency, an arm of the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment, demolished a number of houses of persons living on State lands without leases. They have been displaying a most callous approach in that exercise.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to families affected in Spring Village in Carapichaima, Carlsen Field, Picton Extension in Oropouche; Williamsville, Esperanze and other areas across the country. You may call these people by all kinds of names, but these people are human beings first, they are citizens second and then if you want to call them squatters they are third.

We are not disputing that they may be living on lands and do not have leases. We are not disputing that. What we are saying is that the Land Settlement Agency is sending their demolition crews and they are treating people without respect. They are treating them in the most cruel fashion. Their only sin is that they are occupying State lands without permission. That is no reason for the Government to ignore compassion in dealing with these people.

*Occupation of State Lands*  
[MR. PARTAP]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

I just want to read a few lines from a *Newsday* editorial dated May 26, 2008 and it says:

“...if people in authority want to do their jobs better and improve life for themselves and everyone else, they must learn to treat with the citizens of the country. But that isn’t going to be accomplished through PR and the heavy-handed exercise of power.

Instead, officials must learn, first of all, the value of courtesy. By this, we do not mean mere manners. It means that, if a State agency is going to enter a small village and start clearing the land, it should let the villagers know ahead of time. And, if said land is being used, the agency must make every attempt to find out why the land is so occupied.”

Mr. Speaker, the Government, through the LSA, had been using brute force and callous disregard for life and limb of occupants. The crews with their sledgehammers began to demolish homes even before these people had the opportunity to retrieve their possessions. They left these unfortunate people with small children with their bed and baggage open to the rain and sun.

I just want to quote for a minute a *Newsday* story dated June 28, 2008. This woman from Williamsville—there were 22 of them in Williamsville—and this is what one of the affected persons said. Her name is Julie Sooklal, age 32. She said:

“My mattress, chest of drawers and everything else is wetting in the rain while they break down my home.”

This is what is creating problems in this land. When my friend, the Member for Oropouche East talks about discrimination in housing, and the manner in which the HDC does its work, the people in the country are also recognizing it. Hear what this lady says:

“There are about 300 new squatters at Stanleyville in Ste. Madeline. Why no one going there and demolish those homes?”

Do you know why? Stanleyville in Ste. Madeline is in the constituency of San Fernando East and maybe that is the reason.

Mr. Speaker, the HDC had placed an ad in the newspapers, television and on the radio to discourage squatting. They called on squatters to contact the HDC at a published number, but when you call this number you do not get a response and people are frustrated. Something should be done about that, because people would not be frustrated for long, and they will want to take their own action, and we have to avoid that.



I am told that at present—I stand to be corrected—there are about 4,000 houses of the 30,000 houses that the HDC said that it built unoccupied. As I said, I stand corrected, but my information is that there are about 4,000 that are unoccupied. Why is this? Why can these people not be relocated? They ought to be treated as emergency cases.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to read three letters that I have in my possession. They are short. I am not going to read the three of them. Here is a man from Brickfield Village in Waterloo, Carapichaima. He is saying that he lived on a piece of land for a number of years, and recently he received a notice from the LSA asking him to quit the land.

He said that they have occupied this land for several years. This parcel of land is situated on the Main Road to the end of the village. Currently, the structure on the land is a two-room board house with a little shed, and my house has electricity. He is self-employed. Currently he catches oysters to sell. His house is close to the mangrove, and this makes it easy for him to get the oysters. He said that he would like to get a house, but he cannot, and he has applied.

**7.00 p.m.**

There is another one that I want to read from Vijay Balroop and he said the same. He said he also lives in the same area; he has been living there for eight years; he has a galvanize structure and so on. He said one year and a half ago he rebuilt the galvanized-structured house that was on the land into a wooden structure. However, in doing so, he wrote to the Sen. the Hon. Dr. Emily Gaynor Dick-Forde—and I guess it is our dear Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment. He put the address and so on, and that document was dated April 16, 2008.

He said since then, he has been eagerly waiting for a response from the Ministry, but has not gotten any formal reply as to whether or not his request was accepted or rejected. However, on Friday, July 04, 2008, he was presented with an eviction letter from the Land Settlement Agency of the Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment, in which he was given 30 days' notice to evacuate the land.

So, here you have one again, applied; asked for help. Let me read this letter; I thought I should read this letter. I have about 10 minutes again?

**Mr. Speaker:** Seven minutes.

**Mr. H. Partap:** Seven minutes; I will finish it in seven minutes. This is from Shirika Mahase. She said she grew up with her sick dad and younger sister. They were deprived of the finer things in life since her dad had no source of income. He

*Occupation of State Lands*  
[MR. PARTAP]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

received public assistance for himself, as well as his two children. Shirika had to frequently miss school in order to take care of her sick dad and younger sister. They had no pipe borne water and electricity; however, that did not deter her from excelling academically. She studied, using the traditional method of the flambeau and the candlelight and as a result has developed eye problems. This did not prove to be an obstacle to her path, because she went on to receive eight O' level passes, while attending Couva Government Secondary School and three A' level passes at the Upper Level Institute. She attended the Upper Level Institute for free and other expenses such as library fees were paid by her primary school teacher, Mrs. Marla Maraj. She also received free transportation and lunch.

She applied for electricity but was unsuccessful because she did not obtain the Certificate of Comfort. Other houses in Brickfield have electricity. Shirika was working as an OJT trainee but she was receiving only \$1,600 a month and that was not enough to take care of her dad and sister. She said that with that money she helped her dad fix their house, because the money he receives goes towards groceries. She currently sells crabs at the Chaguanas market, since she has no other source of income.

On Friday, July 04, 2008, the Land Settlement Agency gave Shirika 30 days' notice to vacate the premises, where failure to comply will result in them coming to break down the home. They do not have anywhere else to go and need some sort of assistance urgently. There are other people in Brickfield who are experiencing the same kind of problem, such as Adesh Ramsundar and Vijay Balroop.

Mr. Speaker, these letters are sometimes heartbreaking, but they tell a story, that you have poor people in this country, people who cannot afford to build a house and, therefore, they will need the assistance of the Housing Development Corporation. However, when they seek the assistance, they do not get it. This is why they have to resort to other ways. That is, they have to resort to squatting.

We on this side do not really encourage squatting and we do not feel it is the best way to go. The point is, people have to live somewhere and if they cannot get the assistance of the Government, for which they are citizens of this country, then where will they turn?

In fact, Madam Minister, people are getting the negative view of your Land Settlement Agency (LSA). They feel that the Land Settlement Agency is really a home wrecker. They think it is a tool of the ruling party to brutalize, intimidate and destroy poor, landless people. We ask for your help.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Emily Dick-Forde):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where does one begin? That letter that you read, I saw it as well. I would like to address some of the issues that you raised before I read my treatise that I came with.

You said over 4,000 houses unoccupied; why can squatters not be relocated; they ought to be treated as emergencies. Now think about the 109,000 plus applicants who are waiting on houses. If we give, as you say, some squatters priority, then everybody would go and squat so they could get priority, and then we have no control over the allocation process. You said for seven years, there is a man squatting, which means that was after your administration passed the Act in 1998 and said that after that particular date, anybody squatting would have to be removed. That is what the Act says. I am going to go into that in detail in a bit. Let me just go into it now and explain.

My explanation would show that the LSA operates under Act No. 25 of 1998, passed by the UNC administration with very clear mandates. The reason that you have laws—I mean I do not have to tell you, I know less about law than you do—is so that they put some order in society. Therefore, the LSA has a very difficult mandate and the Government is very, very sensitive to the needs of the public, especially as it relates to the demand for housing and residential lands. That is why the Government and particularly, the hon. Prime Minister pays so much attention to the housing programme. The UNC did not pay a lot of attention to housing and housing did not become a major challenge for citizens only in 2001—it is 2001 that the PNM came into power?—it was a problem long time. They did not focus on housing when they were in power and now every Friday I have to come in here and answer a question about housing. [*Interruption*] I do not mind; I do not mind.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order!

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. E. Dick-Forde:** One of the pillars identified in Vision 2020 is that ours must be a nurturing and caring society. The provision of adequate and affordable housing and residential land is one of the cornerstones on which this pillar is based. In its attempt to provide for the housing needs of citizens, this Government has implemented several measures aimed at increasing and improving the current housing stock. These measures are implemented through the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment and its agencies. We have spent billions of dollars over the last seven years and even before, to provide adequate housing.

*Occupation of State Lands*  
[SEN. THE HON. E. DICK-FORDE]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

To achieve its mandate the Ministry implements several programmes, which includes the provision of adequate and affordable housing units; the provision of home improvement grants and subsidies and the regularization and containment of squatting.

In its approach to squatting, the Government recognizes that a genuine need may exist for housing and residential land. Therefore, the mandate of the Land Settlement Agency (LSA), the agency of the Ministry entrusted with the responsibility to address squatting on state lands, reflects the Government's intent to act in a humane manner with squatters while at the same time not condoning illegal action.

The State Lands (Regularization of Tenure) Act, No. 25 of 1998 states that the Land Settlement Agency is to bring some measure of protection to squatters in occupation of state land prior to January 01, 1998, through regularization, which involves the provision of security of tenure and the upgrade of infrastructure. Secondly, to prevent and contain further squatting on state lands. This is an Act that was passed by the UNC administration.

Pursuant to section 11 of the Act, squatters were invited in January 2000, under the UNC administration, to submit applications to the LSA for the issue of a Certificate of Comfort. A Certificate of Comfort is a document which conveys to the squatter, protection from ejection from the parcel of land, which he or she occupies. The LSA received more than 25,000 applications by the deadline date of October 27, 2000—27,000 people were squatting at that point. The UNC-passed Act made no provision for late applications for a Certificate of Comfort and for persons attempting to occupy state lands after January 01, 1998.

The regularization process is a two-stage process involving two things: The regularization of physical infrastructure and the regularization of tenure. In fulfilling the underlying theme of a nurturing and caring society, the emphasis in regularization is to upgrade the physical conditions, so that citizens could live in acceptable conditions; far better than the living environments they experience before the LSA goes in to bring order and healthy living conditions in these areas.

Prior to the physical improvements at the squatter sites, the following conditions would exist. These are in large part the typical characteristics: primary dirt roads; informal electrical connections; public standpipes; pit latrines; simple wooden structures; waste disposal, that includes burning, burying and dumping in the nearby rivers and open land space; spontaneous, haphazard and unplanned settlements; poor or no drainage.

Upgrades to designated squatter sites are designed to provide to eligible squatters a fully-serviced residential lot and the following amenities: proper roads,

drains, water reticulation, sewage disposal facilities and electricity. To date physical upgrades have been completed on nine sites, which have yielded 1,564 serviced lots at: Rice Mill, Arouca; La Paille, Caroni; Harmony Hall, Gasparillo; Southern Gardens, Point Fortin; La Platta (KP Lands) Valencia; Picton Road Extension, Sangre Grande; Jacob's Hill, Wallerfield; Samaroo Village, Arima, and soon to come, Spring Village in St. Augustine or wherever that is.

**Mr. Bharat:** Wherever that is! Wherever that is!

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. E. Dick-Forde:** The Government of Trinidad and Tobago—I do not know the geography too good—has expended over \$200 million in its squatter regularization drive. I want to repeat this, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has expended over \$200 million in its squatter regularization drive. I would emphasize that this is the work of a caring, sensitive government.

In order to ensure that squatters are afforded some relief with regard to security of tenure, Certificates of Comfort are given to eligible squatters. The Certificate of Comfort grants the squatter: license to occupy the land; protection from ejection. To qualify for a Certificate of Comfort a squatter must ensure that: He or she is in occupation of state land on which there was a dwelling house prior to the appointed date January 01, 1998; he or she applied for the Certificate of Comfort before the deadline date, October 27, 2000, as stated in the Act.

To date, 4,570 Certificates of Comfort have been issued throughout the country to squatters who met the requirements under the provisions of the Act. Mr. Speaker, I will have to say that it is quite a tedious process to do this. It is to be stressed that should the State require the site upon which the squatter resides, the Act provides for the relocation of the affected squatter.

The issue of squatter containment is the area where Government stands accused of being insensitive, but the Government has to be sensitive to the needs of all its citizens, including those in a containment exercise and must take steps to ensure that the rule of law prevails.

Through collaboration with the general public, state and private entities, the Land Settlement Agency has developed a streamlined process to ensure that squatting on state lands is contained. The process is a humane one and follows strict guidelines as laid down in the law: officers patrol all state lands and identify all illegal structures built after January 01, 1998; an investigation is conducted to determine if the structure is occupied or not. Based on the findings, if the person is in contravention of the Act under reference, a report is then submitted by the investigating officer. If it is confirmed that the occupant is in contravention of the Act, a 30-day quit notice is served.

*Occupation of State Lands*  
[SEN. THE HON. E. DICK-FORDE]

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

**7.15 p.m.**

The purpose of the notice is to inform the occupant that he or she is in violation of Act 25 of 1998 and is required to vacate the lands within 30 days. So that notice is given so that people can remove their belongings before the LSA comes to do the containment exercise which the law requires them to do. On expiration of the 30-day notice to quit, if the occupant has not complied with the notice, the agency serves a final warning, a 14-day quit notice and this subsequent notice allows the occupant further time to vacate an illegal structure.

On expiration of the 14-day quit notice, if the occupant has not dismantled the structure, the agency schedules a demolition and the structure is removed in accordance with the Act. In other words, agents of the State do not arbitrarily enter a squatter settlement and demolish. Adequate notice is given before demolition takes place. It should be noted that if a structure is unoccupied the relevant checks are made to verify its status and the structure is demolished.

The Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment is committed in its effort to regularize eligible squatters without fear or favour and to curb the problem of squatting in Trinidad and Tobago in line with Government's vision of a developed nation by the year 2020. I wish to add that the recent advertisement by the LSA is to seek to bring a change in culture, because what we have noticed in some studies that we have done is that people squat through generations and we have begun a communications campaign to address the matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question put.*

**Mr. Maharaj SC:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Motion on the adjournment, that is the one dealing with UDeCott, will be taken at the next sitting of the Parliament.

Hon. Members, before you demit the Chamber, let me wish all of you happy holidays.

**Mr. Imbert:** And same to you, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you.

*Question agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 7.17 p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

*The following question was asked by Mr. Tim Gopeesingh (Caroni East):*

**National Insurance Property  
Development Company Limited (NIPDEC)  
(Details of)**

- 165.** With regard to the National Insurance Property Development Company Limited (NIPDEC) for the period 2006 to date, could the Minister of Finance state:
- (a) the developmental projects undertaken;
  - (b) the cost of each project and the company awarded the contract;
  - (c) the percentage completed, the cost overruns so far, if any and the estimated cost at completion; and
  - (d) the internal audit findings on these projects?

**The Minister of Finance (Hon. Karen Nunez-Tesheira):** In response to Question No. 165, I now lay the following documents before this Honourable House:

- a) In response to parts (a) and (c) of the Question, the developmental projects undertaken by NIPDEC, the percentage completed and the estimated cost at completion are listed at the Appendix titled Developmental Projects Undertaken by the National Insurance Property Development Company Limited 2006 and onwards;
- b) In response to part (b) the cost of each project and the company awarded are listed at the Appendix titled Programme for Upgrading Road Efficiency 2006 – 2007 and Programme for Upgrading Road Efficiency 2007 – 2008.

**Developmental Projects Undertaken by the National Insurance Property Development Company Limited  
2006 and Onwards**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Budget (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Company Awarded Contract (Contractor)</b>	<b>Percentage Completion</b>	<b>Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Projected Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>
<b>Coast Guard</b>					
Hangar Refurbishment, Piarco Airwing	\$1,085,000.00	Structural and Mechanical Agencies Ltd.	100%	\$838,264.29	N/A
Operations Building, Staubles Bay	\$15,295,000.00	Kee Chanona Limited	100%	\$12,938,686.20	N/A
<b>Police Stations</b>					
Mayaro Police Station	\$11,925,165.99	Saiscon Limited	100%		\$11,925,165.99
Gasparillo Police Station	\$8,869,845.26	Hookmally Ali Ltd.	100%	\$9,805,058.72	N/A
Belmont Police Station	\$11,800,000.00	Civstruct Associates	100%		\$13,300,000.00
Tunapuna Police Station	\$7,779,000.00	Civstruct Associates	100%		\$8,500,000.00
Toco Police Station	\$8,150,505.02	West & Associates	100%		\$8,500,000.00

Construction of the above-mentioned projects either commenced or were in progress as at the year 2006



<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Budget (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Company Awarded Contract (Contractor)</b>	<b>Percentage Completion</b>	<b>Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Projected Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>
<b>Community Centres</b>					
Beetham Community Centre	\$8,216,097.20	L.J.. Construction Ltd.	40%	N/A	\$8,216,097.20
Pelican Extension Community Centre	\$8,951,644.53	R2K Engineering Co. Ltd.	29%	N/A	\$1,919,628.00
Maracas Bay Community Centre	\$9,423,022.41	Moosai Development Construction	90%	N/A	\$9,423,022.41
Thick Village Community Centre	\$7,811,347.11	Sharoz Enterprises	98%	N/A	\$7,811,347.11
Preysal Community Centre	\$8,281,097.41	R2K Engineering Co. Ltd.	65%	N/A	\$8,281,097.41
St. James Youth Centre	\$15,213,207.00	China Jiangsu International Corporation	80%		\$18,694,647.12
<b>Tobago Projects</b>					
<i>Bloody Bay Beach Facility</i>	\$4,766,884.50	Campbell Construction & Maintenance	62%		\$4,766,984.50

Construction of the above-mentioned projects either commenced or were in progress as at the year 2006

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Budget (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Company Awarded Contract (Contractor)</b>	<b>Percentage Completion</b>	<b>Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Projected Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>
<b>Tobago Projects</b>					
<i>Shaw Park Cultural Facility:</i>					
Foundation	\$13,536,377.00	Alpha Engineering Ltd.	85%		\$17,000,000.00
<i>Scarborough Hosptial:</i>					
Construction	\$118,185,069.15	NH International (NHIC)	55%		\$327,349,904.00
<b>St. Michael's School for Boys</b>					
Refurbishment of Kitchen	\$770,440.00	Parks General Contractors Ltd.	100%		\$700,000.00
<b>Programme for Upgrading Road Efficiency</b>					
PURE Phase IV 2006/2007	\$393,223,711.10	Various	All Contractors Procured To Date		\$393,223,711.10
PURE Phase IV 2007/2008	\$497,345,471.38	Various	All Contractors Procured To Date		\$497,345,471.38

Construction of the above-mentioned projects either commenced or were in progress as at the year 2006

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Budget (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Company Awarded Contract (Contractor)</b>	<b>Percentage Completion</b>	<b>Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>	<b>Projected Final Account (VAT ex.)</b>
<b>Programme for Upgrading Road Efficiency</b>					
<b>School Repair Programme</b>					
School Repair Programme 2006	\$29,955,197.80	Various	86%		\$29,955,197.80
School Repair Programme 2007	\$63,680,720.00	Miscellaneous contractors	80%		\$56,000,000.00
<b>Health Sector Reform Programme</b>					
St. James District Health Facility	\$17,278,866.23	Adams PMCL	80%		\$17,578,866.23
Oxford Street Enhanced Health Centre	\$13,546,203.14	Adams PMCL	100%	Final Account Pending	\$13,846,203.14
St. Joseph Enhanced Health Centre	\$16,295,653.00	Asta Engineers	60%		\$16,595,653.00
Port of Spain General Hospital - Incinerator	\$1,090,513.95	The Rees Company	75%		\$1,090,513.95
EWMSC: Elevators (Phase I and II)	\$8,973,769.57	RBP Lifts	99%		\$8,973,769.51

Construction of the above-mentioned projects either commenced or were in progress as at the year 2006

Project Name	Budget (VAT ex.)	Company Awarded Contract (Contractor)	Percentage Completion	Final Account (VAT ex.)	Projected Final Account (VAT ex.)
<b>Health Sector Reform Programme</b>					
EWMSC: Telephone System	\$2,496,955.00	Illuminat	99%		\$2,496,955.00
EWMSC: Nurse Call System	\$2,051,240.00	Servtec	5%		\$2,051,240.00
EWMSC: Air Conditioning System	\$9,083,000.00	Comfort Engineering	92%		\$9,083,000.00
EWMSC: VFD's and Control Valves	\$1,293,154.78	Syscontrol C.A. Bolt	5%		\$1,293,154.78
EWMSC: Incinerator	\$7,665,217.39	TOSL Engineering Ltd.	5%		\$7,665,217.39
EWMSC: Pediatric Relocation	\$3,103,923.08	Atlas Engineering	75%		\$3,103,923.08
EWMSC: Fire Detection	\$2,131,302.61	Syscontrol C.A. Bolt	5%		\$2,131,302.61
San Fernando General Hospital - New Wing Upgrade Phase II	\$74,782,608.70	-	-		\$74,782,608.70

Construction of the above-mentioned projects either commenced or were in progress as at the year 2006

**Programme For Upgrading Road Efficiency 2007-2008**

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GW 65 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	16,206,137.99	3,721,295.75	558,194.36	4,279,490.11	To be determined	11,926,647.88
GW 91- 05/07	W.B.I. Construction	5,728,581.26	4,925,695.00	738,854.25	5,664,549.25	To be determined	64,032.01
GW 92- 05/07	Unisure Limited	321,693.30	279,733.30	41,960.00	321,693.30	To be determined	0.01
GW 93- 05/07	Ben Con Construction Limited	290,297.26	226,591.20	33,988.68	260,579.88	To be determined	29,717.38
GW 94- 05/07	Seereeram Brothers Limited	6,148,017.29	4,989,713.71	748,457.06	5,738,170.77	To be determined	409,846.52
GW 95- 05/07	LCB Contractors	2,943,240.08	1,750,021.20	262,503.18	2,012,524.38	To be determined	930,715.70
GW 96- 05/07	Construction and Technical Services	1,307,085.40	1,136,596.00	170,489.40	1,307,085.40	FA	
GW 97- 05/07	Lutchmeesingh's Transport Contractors Limited	1,266,158.29	990,906.49	148,635.97	1,139,542.46	To be determined	126,615.83
GW 98- 05/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	6,179,968.16	5,373,639.05	806,045.86	6,179,684.91	FA	283.25
GW 99- 05/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	4,996,035.29	2,900,069.50	435,010.43	3,335,079.93	FA	1,660,955.37

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GW 100- 05/07	Dipcon Engineering	3,358,208.17	1,743,944.79	261,591.72	2,005,536.51	To be determined	1,352,671.66
GW 101- 05/07	Seereeram Brothers Limited	317,578.00	275,914.00	41,387.10	317,301.10	FA	276.90
GW 102- 05/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	318,768.26	231,176.00	34,676.40	265,852.40	FA	52,915.86
GW 103- 05/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	3,628,677.56	2,026,960.60	304,044.09	2,331,004.69	FA	1,297,672.87
GW 104- 05/07	LCB Contractors	1,214,319.04	544,288.12	81,643.22	625,931.34	To be determined	588,387.70
GW 105- 05/07	LCB Contractors	1,975,352.65	970,709.31	145,606.40	1,116,315.71	To be determined	859,036.94
GW 106- 05/07	LCB Contractors	1,162,863.90	556,710.75	83,506.61	640,217.36	To be determined	522,646.54
GW 107- 05/07	W.B.I. Construction	670,995.22	518,517.90	77,777.69	596,295.59	To be determined	74,699.64
GW 108- 05/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	4,157,293.86	2,185,257.31	327,788.60	2,513,045.91	To be determined	1,644,247.95
GW 109- 05/07	LCB Contractors	708,596.33	389,776.90	58,466.54	448,243.44	To be determined	260,352.90
GW 110- 05/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	2,445,131.15	1,321,575.00	198,236.25	1,519,811.25	To be determined	925,319.90
GW 111- 05/07	E. Williams and Supplies	351,267.74	118,223.32	17,733.50	135,956.82	FA	215,310.92

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GW 112- 05/07	Whoopi's	912,748.10	465,991.60	69,898.74	535,890.34	FA	376,857.76
GW 113- 06/07	Low Cost Paving	954,086.96	512,417.50	76,862.63	589,280.13	FA	364,806.84
GW 114- 05/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	2,753,050.18	938,228.44	140,734.27	1,078,962.71	To be determined	1,674,087.47
GW 115- 05/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	2,397,666.83	1,748,560.70	262,284.11	2,010,844.81	fA	386,822.03
GW 116- 05/07	Ben Con Construction Limited	626,529.38	440,762.94	66,114.44	506,877.38	To be determined	119,652.00
GW 117- 05/07	Ben Con Construction Limited	2,106,316.71	1,457,986.05	218,697.91	1,676,683.96	To be determined	429,632.75
GW 118- 06/07	JCM Construction	206,474.57	130,150.20	19,522.53	149,672.73	FA	56,801.84
GW 119- 06/07	Low Cost Paving	537,182.25	460,248.75	69,037.31	529,286.06	FA	7,896.19
GW 120- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	2,505,857.48	1,716,229.25	257,434.39	1,973,663.64	To be determined	532,193.84
GW 121- 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	1,036,728.22	692,701.80	103,905.27	796,607.07	FA	240,121.15
GW 122- 06/07	Aztec Asphalt Pavers	835,277.29	347,857.38	52,178.61	400,035.99	FA	435,241.30
GW 123- 06/07	Aztec Asphalt Pavers	1,588,184.73	825,748.75	123,862.31	949,611.06	FA	638,573.67
GW 124- 06/07	Aztec Asphalt Pavers	697,533.65	573,824.50	86,073.68	659,898.18	FA	37,635.48
GW 125- 06/07						To be determined	

*Written Answers to Questions*

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GW 126- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	319,104.41	277,205.46	41,580.82	318,786.28	FA	318.13
GW 127- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	9,376,559.50	7,738,310.43	1,160,746.56	8,899,056.99	To be determined	477,502.51
GW 128- 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	262,892.30	151,625.70	22,743.86	174,369.56	To be determined	88,522.75
GW 129- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	262,158.60	139,518.00	20,927.70	160,445.70	FA	101,712.90
GW 130- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	652,411.10	330,000.90	49,500.14	379,501.04	FA	272,910.07
GW 131- 06/07	Danny's Enterprises Company Ltd	159,131.25	138,375.00	20,756.25	159,131.25	To be determined	
GW 132- 06/07	LCB Contractors	102,249.95	58,937.40	8,840.61	67,778.01	To be determined	34,471.94
GW 133- 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	34,362.46	29,880.40	4,482.06	34,362.46	FA	
GW 134- 06/07	WBI Construction	1,540,643.50	826,677.00	124,001.55	950,678.55	To be determined	589,964.95
GW 135- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	3,074,827.61	1,374,753.96	206,213.09	1,580,967.05	To be determined	1,493,860.56
GW 136- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	1,389,066.14	870,412.20	130,561.83	1,000,974.03	FA	388,092.11



*Written Answers to Questions*

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GW137-6-7	Opus Corporation Dev.	931,291.92	426,208.26	63,931.24	490,139.50	To be determined	441,152.42
GW138-6-7	Low Cost Paving Ltd	344,712.50	221,883.00	33,282.45	255,165.45	FA	89,547.05
GW139-6-7	E. Williams Supplies	1,300,444.67	216,534.42	32,480.16	249,014.58	To be determined	1,051,430.09
GW140-6-7	Berkeley Civil Cont.	4,445,931.05	1,457,055.69	218,558.35	1,675,614.04	To be determined	2,770,317.01
GW141-6-7	Whoopi's Agriculture	1,017,168.80	649,331.63	97,399.74	746,731.37	To be determined	270,437.43
GW 142- 06/07	T&T Builders & Mtce	383,801.00	313,969.95	47,095.49	361,065.44	To be determined	22,735.56
GW 143- 06/07	LCB Contractors	285,384.00	178,560.00	26,784.00	205,344.00	To be determined	80,040.00
GW 144- 06/07	LCB Contractors	1,897,547.51	872,867.15	130,930.07	1,003,797.22	To be determined	893,750.29
GW 145- 06/07	HC Caraibes	2,242,419.09	2,101,404.84		2,101,404.84	To be determined	141,014.25
GW 146- 06/07	HC Caraibes	10,750,119.64	7,620,391.16		7,620,391.16	To be determined	3,129,728.48
GW 147- 06/07	LCB Contractors	1,031,401.94	716,010.90	107,401.64	823,412.54	To be determined	207,989.41

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GW 148- 06/07	LCB Contractors	168,611.85	125,703.00	18,855.45	144,558.45	To be determined	24,053.40
GW 149- 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	2,280,927.84	1,590,950.70	238,642.61	1,829,593.31	To be determined	451,334.54
GW 150 - 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	1,236,494.49	660,514.00	99,077.10	759,591.10	FA	476,903.39
GW 151 - 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	4,588,009.76	2,875,714.31	431,357.15	3,307,071.46	To be determined	1,280,938.30
GW 152 - 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	8,687,958.65	5,140,544.52	771,081.68	5,911,626.20	To be determined	2,776,332.45
GW 153 - 06/07	Ben Con Construction Limited	1,008,749.21	774,108.34	116,116.25	890,224.59	To be determined	118,524.62
GW 154 - 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	1,930,086.40	1,152,222.00	172,833.30	1,325,055.30	To be determined	605,031.10
GW 155 - 06/07	LCB Contractors	651,901.31	386,005.86	57,900.88	443,906.74	To be determined	207,994.57
GW 156 - 06/07	Dream Team Engineering and Maintenance	267,149.03	218,934.35	32,840.15	251,774.50	To be determined	15,374.53
GW 157 - 06/07	LCB Contractors	287,860.87				To be determined	287,860.87
GW 158 - 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	295,706.40	257,136.00	38,570.40	295,706.40	FA	

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GW 159 - 06/07	Dipcon Engineering	3,311,694.11	1,428,125.58	214,218.84	1,642,344.42	To be determined	1,669,349.69
GW 160 - 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	45,641.20	39,688.00	5,953.20	45,641.20	FA	
GW 161 - 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	26,734.05	23,247.00	3,487.05	26,734.05	FA	
GW 162 - 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	2,936,641.84	1,135,609.56	170,341.43	1,305,950.99	To be determined	1,630,690.85
GW 163 - 06/07	Carice General Contractors	49,113.63	36,369.32	5,455.40	41,824.72	To be determined	7,288.91
GW 164 - 06/07	Carice General Contractors	303,741.43	157,090.93	23,563.64	180,654.57	To be determined	123,086.86
GW 165 - 06/07	Harry Persad	240,476.50	179,376.62	26,906.49	206,283.11	To be determined	34,193.39
GW 166 - 06/07	L.C.B Contractors	936,074.19	592,942.86	88,941.43	681,884.29	To be determined	254,189.90
GW 167 - 06/07	Coosal's Construction	1,223,194.28	834,662.29	125,199.34	959,861.63	To be determined	263,332.65
GW 168 - 06/08	L.C.B Contractors	970,870	539,316.98	80,897.55	620,214.53	To be determined	350,655.89
CR 47 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	2,967,658.38	2,527,064.45	379,059.67	2,906,124.12	To be determined	61,534.26

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
CR 48 - 05/06	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	1,996,393.91	1,701,552.00	255,232.80	1,956,784.80	FA	39,609.11
CR 49 - 05/06	Unisure Limited	602,140.00	523,600.00	78,540.00	602,140.00	FA	
CR 50 - 05/06	Premier Road Maintenance	602,140.00	365,925.00	54,888.75	420,813.75	To be determined	181,326.25
CR 51 - 05/06	Harry Persad and Sons	278,137.13	199,468.50	29,920.28	229,388.78	FA	8,748.36
CR 52 - 05/06	Danny's Enterprises Company Ltd	138,378.35				To be determined	138,378.35
CR 53 - 05/06	Low Cost Paving Limited	189,149.13	106,997.20	16,049.58	123,046.78	To be determined	66,102.35
CR 54 - 05/06	Premier Road Maintenance	16,895,000.00	16,029,900.00	33,000.00	16,062,900.00	To be determined	832,100.00
CR 55 - 05/06	WBI Construction	3,729,125.93	2,231,493.30	334,724.00	2,566,217.30	To be determined	1,162,908.64
CR 56 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	16,742,151.66	13,671,494.41	2,050,724.16	15,722,218.57	To be determined	1,019,933.09
CR 57 - 05/06	Coosal's Construction Company Limited					To be determined	
CR 58 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	4,529,383.13	2,792,097.49	418,814.62	3,210,912.11	To be determined	1,318,471.02
CR 59 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	4,457,954.91	3,339,348.35	500,902.25	3,840,250.60	To be determined	617,704.31

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
CR 60 - 05/06	Dipcon Engineering	1,143,672.83	932,730.11	139,909.52	1,072,639.63	To be determined	71,033.20
CR 61 - 05/06	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	759,721.05	633,061.00	94,959.15	728,020.15	FA	31,700.90
CR 62 - 05/06	LCB Contractors	123,776.45	105,507.00	15,826.05	121,333.05	FA	2,443.40
CR 63 - 05/06	Raghunath Singh and Co. Ltd	82,863.83	63,162.00	9,474.30	72,636.30	To be determined	10,227.53
CR 64 - 05/06	Raghunath Singh and Co. Ltd	243,892.00	191,979.72	28,796.96	220,776.68	To be determined	23,115.32
CR 65 - 05/06	JCM Construction	124,147.10				To be determined	124,147.10
GE 15- 06/07	Seereeram Brothers Limited	3,738,639.74	2,693,937.89	404,090.68	3,098,028.57	FA	640,611.17
GE 16- 06/07	Super Industrial Services Limited	1,197,255.47	845,859.69	126,878.95	972,738.64	To be determined	224,516.83
GE 17- 06/07	Dipcon Engineering	1,049,460.19	378,236.16	56,735.42	434,971.58	To be determined	614,488.61
GE 18- 06/07	Seereeram Brothers Limited	2,907,729.00	2,528,459.20	379,268.88	2,907,728.08	FA	0.92
GE 19- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	3,514,893.58	2,606,575.54	390,986.33	2,997,561.87	To be determined	517,331.71
GE 20- 06/07	Seereeram Brothers Limited	393,269.53	341,108.75	51,166.31	392,275.06	FA	994.47

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GE 21- 06/07	LF Systems	738,380.50	578,852.00	86,827.80	665,679.80	To be determined	72,700.70
GE 22- 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	1,153,993.00	1,003,173.00	150,475.95	1,153,648.95	FA	344.05
GE 23- 06/07	Seereeram Brothers Limited	10,615,490.38	9,230,492.80	1,384,573.92	10,615,066.72	FA	423.66
GE 24- 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	13,048,538.00	9,353,830.77	1,403,074.62	10,756,905.39	To be determined	2,291,632.61
GE 25- 06/07	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	4,987,473.76	3,774,240.43	566,136.06	4,340,376.49	To be determined	647,097.27
GE 26- 06/07	Dipcon Engineering	746,925.58	178,957.80	26,843.67	205,801.47	To be determined	541,124.11
GE 27- 06/07	Raghunath Singh and Co. Ltd	378,383.64	274,539.87	41,180.98	315,720.85	To be determined	62,662.79
GE 28- 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	289,027.20	251,328.00	37,699.20	289,027.20	FA	
GE 29- 06/07	Unisure Limited	752,675.00	572,662.05	85,899.31	658,561.36	To be determined	94,113.64
GE 30- 06/07	Ben Con Construction Limited	536,654.12	147,493.46	22,124.02	169,617.48	To be determined	367,036.64
GE 31- 06/07	LCB Contractors	1,408,710.19	466,176.37	69,926.46	536,102.83	To be determined	872,607.36

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
GE 32- 06/07	Dipcon Engineering	1,744,042.85	1,037,940.30	155,691.05	1,193,631.35	To be determined	550,411.51
GE 33- 06/07	Dipcon Engineering	414,678.20			-	To be determined	414,678.20
GE 34- 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	1,348,711.38				To be determined	1,348,711.38
GE 35- 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	632,999.68	550,375.00	82,556.25	632,931.25	FA	68.43
GE 36- 06/07	3M Interamerica	28,690.20	-		-	To be determined	28,690.20
GE 37 - 06/07	LF Systems	46,939.32	40,816.80			To be determined	46,939.32
VW 41- 06/07	Danny's Enterprises Company Ltd	5,063,514.17	4,402,703.00	660,405.45	5,063,108.45	FA	405.72
VW 43- 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	3,832,894.34	2,889,287.89	433,393.18	3,322,681.07	To be determined	510,213.27
VW 44- 06/07	Sunco Engineering Limited	2,465,908.79	1,354,825.80	203,223.87	1,558,049.67	To be determined	907,859.12
VW 45- 06/07	Patrick Gordon Construction	595,821.33	320,377.50	48,056.63	368,434.13	To be determined	227,387.21
VW 46- 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	1,518,018.98	635,439.60	95,315.94	730,755.54	To be determined	787,263.44

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
VW 47- 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	4,334,201.19	3,551,038.10	532,655.72	4,083,693.82	FA	250,507.38
VW 48- 06/07	Danny's Enterprises Company Ltd	1,229,959.51	906,355.21	135,953.28	1,042,308.49	To be determined	187,651.02
VW 49- 06/07	JCM Construction	211,330.90	167,060.00	25,059.00	192,119.00	FA	19,211.90
VW 50- 06/07	Unisure Limited	312,360.13	238,267.75	35,740.16	274,007.91	To be determined	38,352.22
VW 51- 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	225,802.50	196,350.00	29,452.50	225,802.50	FA	-
VW 52- 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	578,699.55	312,387.84	46,858.18	359,246.02	To be determined	219,453.53
VW 53- 06/07	Danny's Enterprises Company Ltd	1,034,390.50	354,500.00	53,175.00	407,675.00	FA	626,715.50
VW 54- 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	4,532,602.53	2,485,468.80	372,820.32	2,858,289.12	To be determined	1,674,313.41
VW 55- 06/07	Raghunath Singh and Co. Ltd	385,652.96	274,377.60	41,156.64	315,534.24	To be determined	70,118.72
VW 56- 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	3,203,876.89	1,991,751.30	298,762.70	2,290,514.00	To be determined	913,362.90
VW 57 - 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	3,368,453.39	2,227,919.00	334,187.85	2,562,106.85	To be determined	806,346.54
VW 58 - 06/07	Sunco Engineering	1,058,956.63	740,332.80	111,049.92	851,382.72	To be determined	207,573.91



Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
VW 59 - 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	3,343,598.67	2,227,437.90	334,115.69	2,561,553.59	To be determined	782,045.09
VW 60 - 06/07	Aztec Asphalt Pavers	455,191.28	-		-	To be determined	455,191.28
VW 61 - 06/07	Raghunath Singh and Co. Ltd	1,532,610.75	993,654.00	149,048.10	1,142,702.10	To be determined	389,908.65
VW 62 - 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	8,293,910.63	6,164,874.97	924,731.25	7,089,606.22	To be determined	1,204,304.41
VW 63 - 06/07	LF Systems	285,240.48	236,224.00	35,433.60	271,657.60	To be determined	13,582.88
VW 64 - 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	1,350,767.00	-		-	To be determined	1,350,767.00
VW 65 - 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	1,432,776.95	1,045,850.40	156,877.56	1,202,727.96	To be determined	230,048.99
VW 66 - 06/07	Raghunath Singh and Co. Ltd	3,467,232.18	807,651.00	121,147.65	928,798.65	To be determined	2,538,433.53
VW 67 - 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	1,427,619.55	1,052,795.02	157,919.25	1,210,714.27	To be determined	216,905.28
VW 68 - 06/07	Jusamco Pavers	6,804,004.90	2,830,101.20	424,515.18	3,254,616.38	To be determined	3,549,388.52
STAD 19 - 05/06	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	782,276.00	538,776.00	80,816.40	619,592.40	FA	162,683.60

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
STAD 20 - 05/06	Coosal's Construction Company Limited	4,505,322.80	3,220,969.90	483,145.49	3,704,115.39	FA	801,207.42
STAD 21 - 05/06	Dipcon Engineering	1,645,132.50	1,027,656.00	154,148.40	1,181,804.40	To be determined	463,328.10
STAD 22 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	3,567,377.17	1,510,903.98	226,635.60	1,737,539.58	To be determined	1,829,837.59
STAD 23 - 05/06	Dipcon Engineering	359,418.13	202,602.60	30,390.39	232,992.99	To be determined	126,425.14
STAD 24 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	5,316,731.75	4,357,403.28	653,610.49	5,011,013.77	To be determined	305,717.98
STAD 25 - 05/06	Super Industrial Services Limited	4,601,405.24	3,629,202.30	544,380.35	4,173,582.65	To be determined	427,822.60
STAD 26 - 05/06	South M Construction Services Limited	5,329,533.55	3,106,775.97	466,016.40	3,572,792.37	To be determined	1,756,741.18
STAD 27 - 05/06	Harry Persad and Sons	150,206.10	112,591.60	16,888.74	129,480.34	FA	20,725.76
STAD 29 - 05/06	Seereeram Brothers Limited	116,462.23	98,332.13	14,749.82	113,081.95	FA	3,380.28
STAD 30 - 05/06	Premier Road Maintenance	120,428.00	104,720.00	15,708.00	120,428.00	To be determined	
STAD 31 - 05/06	Premier Road Maintenance	500,940.00	431,280.00	64,692.00	495,972.00	FA	4,968.00
STP 11 - 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	1,727,978.87	1,317,064.00	197,559.60	1,514,623.60	FA	213,355.27

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
STP 12 - 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	1,862,016.75	1,003,309.92	150,496.49	1,153,806.41	To be determined	708,210.34
STP 13 - 06/07	Jusamco Pavers Limited	2,609,796.20	1,171,944.00			To be determined	2,609,796.20
STP 14 - 06/07	Carib Asphalt Pavers	1,235,835.44	567,780.30	85,167.05	652,947.35	To be determined	582,888.10
NM 3 - 06/07	Lutchmeesingh's Transport Contractors Limited	12,813,622.69	8,507,591.00	1,276,138.65	9,783,729.65	FA	3,029,893.04
NM 4 - 06/07	Lutchmeesingh's Transport Contractors Limited	2,100,747.55	1,110,082.49	166,512.37	1,276,594.86	To be determined	824,152.69
NM 5 - 06/07	Lutchmeesingh's Transport Contractors Limited	5,032,992.25	2,942,505.00	441,375.75	3,383,880.75	To be determined	1,649,111.50
NM 6 - 06/07	JCM Construction	69,840.65	49,689.00	7,453.35	57,142.35	To be determined	12,698.30
NM 7 - 06/07	Premier Road Maintenance	1,418,957.40	1,195,032.00	179,254.80	1,374,286.80	To be determined	44,670.60
VE 6 - 06/07	Lutchmeesingh's Transport Contractors Limited	601,229.20	230,568.30	34,585.25	265,153.55	To be determined	336,075.66
VE7-6-7	Raghunath Singh and Co. Ltd	354,864.13	242,158.50	36,323.78	278,482.28	To be determined	76,381.86

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Cost To Complete</b>
VE8-6-7	Lutchmeesingh's	9,999,671.94	7,679,755.84	1,151,963.38	8,831,719.22	To be determined	1,167,952.72
VE9-6-7	Lutchmeesingh's	299,994.75			-	To be determined	299,994.75
VE 10 -6-7	LF Systems	371,117.88	307,344.00	46,101.60	353,445.60	To be determined	17,672.28
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>393,223,711.10</b>	<b>257,689,703.93</b>	<b>34,641,787.07</b>	<b>291,118,730.20</b>		<b>102,104,980.90</b>

**Programme For Upgrading Road Efficiency 2007-2008**

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
GW169-7-8	Coosal's Construction	23,934,760.39	17,260,144.01	2,589,021.60	19,849,165.61	FA	4,085,594.78
GW170-7-8	Coosal's Construction	427,728.13	305,698.59	45,854.79	351,553.38	To be determined	76,174.75
GW171-7-8	Coosal's Construction	6,842,359.73	2,976,869.62	446,530.44	3,423,400.06	To be determined	3,418,959.67
GW172-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	255,833.60	199,784.70	29,967.71	229,752.41	To be determined	26,081.20
GW173-7-8	Coosal's Construction	1,459,207.61	667,028.42	100,054.26	767,082.68	To be determined	692,124.93

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
GW174-7-8	Coosal's Construction	2,286,566.20	623,897.10	93,584.57	717,481.67	To be determined	1,569,084.54
GW175-7-8	Unisure	451,605.00	392,700.00	58,905.00	451,605.00	To be determined	
GW176-7-8	Coosal's Construction	392,782.50	197,425.00	29,613.75	227,038.75	To be determined	165,743.75
GW177-7-8	Coosal's Construction	4,491,531.78	2,273,191.34	340,978.70	2,614,170.04	To be determined	1,877,361.74
GW178-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	1,688,395.50	2,088,317.72	313,247.66	2,401,565.38	To be determined	(713,169.88)
GW179-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	88,758.73	62,645.26	9,396.79	72,042.05	To be determined	16,716.68
GW180-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,894,142.70	1,537,837.96	230,675.69	1,768,513.65	To be determined	125,629.05
GW181-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	1,637,674.06	1,333,579.30	200,036.90	1,533,616.20	To be determined	104,057.87
GW182-7-8	WBI Construction Services	464,463.47	-			To be determined	464,463.47
GW183-7-8	Ben Con Construction	996,075.67	713,604.22	107,040.63	820,644.85	To be determined	175,430.82
GW184-7-8	Ben Con Construction	2,896,849.47	1,138,125.37	170,718.81	1,308,844.18	To be determined	1,588,005.29

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
GW185-7-8	Premier Road Mtce	75,267.50				To be determined	75,267.50
GW186-7-8	Unisure Limited	150,535.00	-			To be determined	150,535.00
GW187-7-8	Tricia's General Hardware Enterprises Limited	236,091.25	192,958.24	28,943.74	221,901.98	To be determined	14,189.27
GW188-7-8	WBI Construction	720,794.22	537,143.09	80,571.46	617,714.55	To be determined	103,079.67
GW189-7-8	Premier Road Mtce	160,358.42	139,365.55	20,904.83	160,270.38	To be determined	88.04
GW190-7-8	L.F. Systems Limited	139,605.40	94,280.00	14,142.00	108,422.00	To be determined	31,183.40
GW191-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,147,826.90	734,931.42	110,239.71	845,171.13	To be determined	302,655.77
GW192-7-8	Premier Road Mtce	86,557.63	68,425.00	10,263.75	78,688.75	To be determined	7,868.88
GW193-7-8	Electrical Trading	1,205,977.25	117,000.00	17,550.00	134,550.00	To be determined	1,071,427.25
GW194-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	612,826.72	399,074.66	59,861.20	458,935.86	To be determined	153,890.86

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
GW195-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	90,029.86	-		-	To be determined	90,029.86
GW196-7-8	Jusamco Pavers Limited	4,119,329.56	-		-	To be determined	4,119,329.56
GW197-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	11,760,209.44	711,607.17	106,741.08	818,348.25	To be determined	10,941,861.19
GW198-7-8	Danny's Enterprise	3,294,945.50	-		-	To be determined	3,294,945.50
GW199-7-8	WBI Construction	1,429,031.29				To be determined	1,429,031.29
GW200-7-8	WBI Construction	1,164,404.63				To be determined	1,164,404.63
GW201-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	3,177,275.20	-	-	-	To be determined	3,177,275.20
GW202-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	118,521.26	96,766.64	14,515.00	111,281.64	To be determined	7,239.62
GW203-7-8	Moonan Engineering	1,169,460.63	289,646.42	43,446.96	333,093.38	To be determined	836,367.25
GW204-7-8	L.C.B Contractors	229,775.99	-		-	To be determined	229,775.99
CR66-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	1,132,597.63	984,867.50	147,730.13	1,132,597.63	To be determined	0.00
CR67-7-8	Coosal's Construction	4,004,600.38	1,709,049.96	256,357.49	1,965,407.45	To be determined	2,039,192.93
CR68-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	2,432,720.24	1,688,254.29	253,238.14	1,941,492.43	To be determined	491,227.81

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
CR69-7-8	Coosal's Construction	6,668,261.04	3,993,747.27	599,062.09	4,592,809.36	To be determined	2,075,451.68
CR70-7-8	Dipcon Engineering	1,235,373.70	932,730.11	139,909.52	1,072,639.63	To be determined	162,734.07
CR71-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	4,342,492.00	2,838,287.04	425,743.06	3,264,030.10	To be determined	1,078,461.90
CR72-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	2,406,547.39	1,065,537.00	159,830.55	1,225,367.55	To be determined	1,181,179.84
CR73-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	3,762,155.54	3,044,635.22	456,695.28	3,501,330.50	To be determined	260,825.04
CR74-7-8	Raghunath Singh & Co.	889,909.79	664,608.66	99,691.30	764,299.96	To be determined	125,609.83
CR75-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,338,285.75	331,987.50	49,798.13	381,785.63	To be determined	956,500.13
CR76-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	7,363,318.78	6,034,180.42	905,127.06	6,939,307.48	To be determined	424,011.30
CR77-7-8	Gopeesingh Contractors	2,593,250.00	-	-	-	To be determined	2,593,250.00
CR78-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	999,996.42	712,926.40	106,938.96	819,865.36	To be determined	180,131.06
CR79-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	2,040,128.75	1,671,996.56	250,799.48	1,922,796.04	To be determined	117,332.71



<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
CR80-7-8	Coosal's Construction	12,304,142.68	7,316,206.33	1,097,430.95	8,413,637.28	To be determined	3,890,505.40
CR81-7-8	Aztec Asphalt Pavers	409,354.00	-		-	To be determined	409,354.00
CR82-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	5,290,310.50	4,335,754.47	650,363.17	4,986,117.64	To be determined	304,192.86
CR83-7-8	Pres-T-Con	5,109,651.25	-		-	To be determined	5,109,651.25
CR84-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	5,599,914.27	2,942,509.03	441,376.35	3,383,885.38	To be determined	2,216,028.89
CR85-7-8	Raghunath Singh & Co.	1,571,165.42	-		-	To be determined	1,571,165.42
CR86-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	10,116,761.60	-		-	To be determined	10,116,761.60
CR87-7-8	API Pipeline Construction	5,173,550.19				To be determined	5,173,550.19
CR88-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	40,593,860.07				To be determined	40,593,860.07
GE38-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,942,401.18	1,591,919.94	238,787.99	1,830,707.93	To be determined	111,693.25
GE39-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	3,665,360.27	1,941,844.56	291,276.68	2,233,121.24	To be determined	1,432,239.03
GE40-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,347,490.67	811,011.46	121,651.72	932,663.18	To be determined	414,827.49
GE41-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	327,750.00	285,000.00	42,750.00	327,750.00	FA	

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
GE42-7-8	Jusamcom Pavers	211,456.14	134,535.79	20,180.37	154,716.16	To be determined	56,739.98
GE43-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	2,806,120.41	2,391,452.00	358,717.80	2,750,169.80	FA	55,950.61
GE44-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	1,444,183.96	1,081,467.30	162,220.10	1,243,687.40	To be determined	200,496.57
GE45-7-8	Dipcon Engineering	3,378,630.31	2,617,401.58	392,610.24	3,010,011.82	To be determined	368,618.49
GE46-7-8	Coosal's Construction	12,752,212.00	8,705,502.66	1,305,825.40	10,011,328.06	To be determined	2,740,883.94
GE47-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	6,160,417.18	4,806,043.25	720,906.49	5,526,949.74	To be determined	633,467.44
GE48-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,660,848.86	1,097,727.56	164,659.13	1,262,386.69	To be determined	398,462.17
GE49-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	87,358.37	45,469.28	6,820.39	52,289.67	To be determined	35,068.70
GE50-7-8	Bencon Construction	558,911.16	154,040.00	23,106.00	177,146.00	To be determined	381,765.16
GE51-7-8	Coosal's Construction	2,789,906.90	1,824,255.63	273,638.34	2,097,893.97	To be determined	692,012.93
GE52-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	327,750.00	285,000.00	42,750.00	327,750.00	To be determined	

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
GE53-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	295,091.61	-			To be determined	295,091.61
GE54-7-8	ASTA Engineers Limited	1,419,475.48	1,234,255.00	185,138.25	1,419,393.25	FA	82.23
GE55-7-8	Aztec Asphalt Pavers	105,298.60	-			To be determined	105,298.60
GE56-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	4,485,678.63	2,338,005.98	350,700.90	2,688,706.88	To be determined	1,796,971.75
GE57-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	3,593,009.91	986,104.78	147,915.72	1,134,020.50	To be determined	2,458,989.41
GE58-7-8	Aztec Asphalt Pavers	2,164,995.64	-			To be determined	2,164,995.64
GE59-7-8	Dipcon Engineering	1,459,515.26	902,182.24	135,327.34	1,037,509.58	To be determined	422,005.68
GE60-7-8	Carl Company Limited	2,557,152.94	1,272,780.00	190,917.00	1,463,697.00	To be determined	1,093,455.94
GE61-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	519,343.22	434,005.04	65,100.76	499,105.80	To be determined	20,237.42
GE63-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	7,520,943.65	5,741,094.06	861,164.11	6,602,258.17	To be determined	918,685.48
GE64-7-8	Seereeram Brothers	2,479,126.76	-			To be determined	2,479,126.76

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
GE66-7-8	Premier Road Mtce	116,380.00	-			To be determined	116,380.00
GE67-7-8	Leah Construction	1,076,933.46	-			To be determined	1,076,933.46
GE68-7-8	GeoServices Contractor	986,700.00	-			To be determined	986,700.00
GE69-7-8	Tricia's General	986,700.00	-			To be determined	986,700.00
GE70-7-8	Lobax & Associates	986,700.00	-			To be determined	986,700.00
GE71-7-8	Howell & Ramdeen	986,700.00	-			To be determined	986,700.00
GE72-7-8	Coosal's Construction	13,162,371.05	-		-	To be determined	13,162,371.05
GE75-7-8	Super Industrial Services	4,843,154.49				To be determined	4,843,154.49
VW69-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	4,978,431.54	2,496,417.70	374,462.66	2,870,880.36	To be determined	2,107,551.19
VW70-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,464,262.05	207,183.59	31,077.54	238,261.13	To be determined	1,226,000.92
VW71-7-8	Powertech Env. Service	78,853.78	64,010.55	9,601.58	73,612.13	To be determined	5,241.65

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
VW72-7-8	Carib Asphalt	1,917,755.19	1,306,855.80	196,028.37	1,502,884.17	To be determined	414,871.02
VW73-7-8	Danny's Enterprise	478,827.80	365,178.60	54,776.79	419,955.39	To be determined	58,872.41
VW74-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	2,667,885.00	-		-	To be determined	2,667,885.00
VW75-7-8	Sunco Engineering	1,057,257.25	370,891.06	55,633.66	426,524.72	To be determined	630,732.53
VW76-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	7,141,968.63	5,610,814.54	841,622.18	6,452,436.72	To be determined	689,531.91
VW77-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	3,666,892.44	1,715,506.20	257,325.93	1,972,832.13	To be determined	1,694,060.31
VW78-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	494,889.51	-		-	To be determined	494,889.51
VW79-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	3,594,064.87	2,686,485.47	402,972.82	3,089,458.29	To be determined	504,606.58
VW80-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	453,954.48	312,259.00	46,838.85	359,097.85	To be determined	94,856.63
VW81-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	5,038,479.82	2,070,756.00	310,613.40	2,381,369.40	To be determined	2,657,110.42
VW82-7-8	Trinco Underground	3,362,218.20				To be determined	3,362,218.20

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
VW83-7-8	Trinco Underground	1,524,483.10				To be determined	1,524,483.10
VW84-7-8	Trinco Underground	1,344,725.30				To be determined	1,344,725.30
VW85-7-8	Danny's Enterprise	13,001,417.00	-	-	-	To be determined	13,001,417.00
STAD 32 - 07/08	Seereeram Brothers	12,654,174.50	7,047,081.91	1,057,062.29	8,104,144.20	To be determined	4,550,030.30
STAD33-7-8	Premier Road Mtce	523,244.25	-		-	To be determined	523,244.25
STP15-7-8	Raghunath Singh & Co.	2,198,715.48	1,230,278.23	184,541.73	1,414,819.96	To be determined	783,895.52
STP16-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	2,940,075.05	1,591,851.25	238,777.69	1,830,628.94	To be determined	1,109,446.11
STP17-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	9,482,591.80	7,065,176.30	1,059,776.45	8,124,952.75	To be determined	1,357,639.06
STP18-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	1,563,059.30	596,107.75	89,416.16	685,523.91	To be determined	877,535.39
STP19-7-8	Sunco Engineering	999,909.13	267,267.60	40,090.14	307,357.74	To be determined	692,551.39
STP20-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	358,912.23	207,915.89	31,187.38	239,103.27	To be determined	119,808.96

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
STP21-7-8	General Earth Movers	4,367,033.00	2,229,048.00	334,357.20	2,563,405.20	To be determined	1,803,627.80
NM8-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	13,895,013.00	9,411,904.35	1,411,785.65	10,823,690.00	To be determined	3,071,323.00
NM9-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	3,131,407.57	1,924,189.12	288,628.37	2,212,817.49	To be determined	918,590.08
NM10-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	9,919,168.60	6,736,329.57	1,010,449.44	7,746,779.01	To be determined	2,172,389.59
NM11-7-8	Jusamco Pavers	1,975,833.86	1,575,665.31	236,349.80	1,812,015.11	To be determined	163,818.75
NM 12 - 07/08	Jusamco Pavers	11,164,890.00	8,980,025.50	1,347,003.83	10,327,029.33	To be determined	837,860.68
NM13-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	14,109,557.00	-	-	-	To be determined	14,109,557.00
NM14-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	17,846,797.10	-	-	-	To be determined	17,846,797.10
NM15-7-8	Raghunath Singh & Co.	4,591,853.05	-	-	-	To be determined	4,591,853.05
VE11-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	12,935,510.50	4,930,470.00	739,570.50	5,670,040.50	To be determined	7,265,470.00
VE12-7-8	Carib Asphalt Pavers	7,859,766.31	5,955,933.68	893,390.05	6,849,323.73	To be determined	1,010,442.58

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

<b>Contract No</b>	<b>Name Of Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Expenditure To Date</b>	<b>Vat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Account Status</b>	<b>Projected Expenditure To Complete</b>
VE13-7-8	Raghunath Singh & Co.	3,832,418.70	2,984,389.76	447,658.46	3,432,048.22	To be determined	400,370.48
VE14-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	184,449.65	-		-	To be determined	184,449.65
VE15-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	1,288,784.33	1,012,582.62	151,887.39	1,164,470.01	To be determined	124,314.32
VE16-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	3,497,795.84	2,858,216.21	428,732.43	3,286,948.64	To be determined	210,847.20
VE17-7-8	Lutchmeesingh's	5,528,234.06	3,930,771.42	589,615.71	4,520,387.13	To be determined	1,007,846.93
	WASA	347,937.42	302,554.28	45,383.14	347,937.42	To be determined	(0.00)
			-		-	To be determined	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>497,345,471.38</b>	<b>204,144,539.93</b>	<b>30,621,680.99</b>	<b>234,766,220.92</b>	-	<b>262,579,250.46</b>



*The following question was asked by Mr. Tim Gopeesingh (Caroni East):*

**National Infrastructure Development  
Company Limited**

**167.** With regard to the National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO) for the period 2006 to date, could the Minister of Works and Transport state:

- (a) the development projects undertaken;
- (b) the cost of each project and the company awarded the contract;
- (c) the percentage completed, the cost overruns so far, if any and the estimated cost at completion; and
- (d) the internal audit findings on these projects?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. C. Imbert):** The following development Projects/Programmes are currently being implemented by NIDCO:-

1. Comprehensive National Drainage Development Study
2. National Programme for the Upgrade of Drainage Channels
3. Comprehensive Drainage Development Programme
4. Flood Mitigation – Erosion Control Programme
5. POS-East West Corridor Transportation Project
6. Ferry Service from Port of Spain to Point Fortin
7. Trinidad Rapid Rail

In respect of the Comprehensive National Drainage Development Study, this programme is estimated to cost approximately \$84 million. To date, NIDCO has awarded a contract to the consulting firm, the IBI Group in the sum of \$9,697,882.00 (VAT exclusive) to undertake the North Oropouche River Basin Study.

The National Programme for the Upgrade of Drainage Channels is estimated to cost \$288 million. This honourable House is advised that this programme is a comprehensive and national programme and the Government intends to rehabilitate approximately 36 individual drainage channels throughout the country.

To date NIDCO has awarded six (6) contracts for the upgrade of the following drainage channels:

<b>Name Of Channel</b>	<b>Contract Awarded To</b>	<b>Contract Sums (Vat Exclusive)</b>
Blackman Ravine	Millennium Holdings Limited	\$16,702,472.60
Matura River	Land & Marine Contracting Services Ltd	\$4,185,500.00
Tunapuna River	Millennium Holdings Limited	\$12,495,153.00
Tacarigua River	Millennium Holdings Limited	\$11,521,807.00
Alleys Creek	R. Mahabir & Sons	\$16,053,950.00

Under the Comprehensive Drainage Development Programme, the programme of works involves two (2) packages; Package 1 entails the construction of the Mamoral Dam, confinement dykes, inlet channel and bottom outlets and this is estimated to cost \$172 million; Package 2 involves the construction of bridges and the relocation and rehabilitation of eight (8) roads and adjacent culverts all at a cost of \$120 million. These works are in the final stages of tendering. Accordingly, there has been no award of contract in respect of construction services. NIDCO did award a contract to Haskoning Enterprises Limited for TT\$313,028.00 plus Euros 97,096.00 for the conduct of an environmental impact assessment of the Mamoral Dam project.

The Flood Mitigation – Erosion Control Programme is estimated to cost approximately \$48.986 million. So far NIDCO has awarded a contract to Land and Marine Contracting Services Limited for construction of the Caroni River Improvement Works – Phase II. The contract was awarded in the sum of \$16,468,928.00 (Vat exclusive).

POS-East West Corridor Transportation Project involves the construction of the CHR/UBH Interchange. This Phase (Package B) is estimated to cost \$404.70 million. NIDCO has awarded a contract to Vinci Construction Grand Projects in the sum of \$321,531,305.72 in respect of these works.

*Written Answers to Questions*

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

As regards to the Water Taxi Service from Port of Spain to Point Fortin, the estimated total cost of Phase I and II is \$252.127 million. Projects awarded are as follows:

<b>Contract Awarded To</b>	<b>Contract Sum (Vat Exclusive)</b>	<b>Description Of Works</b>
General Earth Movers Ltd.	\$5,229,866.25	On-Shore Works – Design and Construction for Temporary Terminal Facilities at Flat Rock, San Fernando
Capital Signal Company Ltd.	\$5,335,822.00	Off-Shore Facility – Supply, Delivery and Operations of Barge and Facilities for Temporary Terminal for Water Taxi, Flat Rock, San Fernando
Lee Young & Partners, Consulting Engineers and Project Managers	\$63,109.75	Construction Supervision for Onshore and Offshore Works Temporary Facilities at Flat Rock, San Fernando for the West Coast Water Taxi Service
Pres-T-Con Limited	\$4,434,600.00	Design, Supply and Delivery of Prestressed Products to Flat Rock San Fernando or to Dock in Claxton Bay
Marine Construction Services	\$2,500.00 per day (as and when needed)	Construction Oversight Services (Marine Construction Services)

<b>Contract Awarded To</b>	<b>Contract Sum (Vat Exclusive)</b>	<b>Description Of Works</b>
Capital Signal Company Ltd.	\$2,200,416.00	Prepare, Collect, Transport, Install and Pile Driver 86, 20 inch line piles for the Water Taxi Service
Boskalis Westminster Overseas	US\$3,643,498.00	Dredging Works at Flat Rock, San Fernando
Pegasus Services Limited	\$23,856.00/Month	Security Services at Jetty at Flat Rock, San Fernando
Environmental Sciences Limited in association with Applied Marine Sciences Limited	\$1,600,200.00	Provision of an Oceanographic Study at identified berthing locations for the Water Taxi Project
Maritime Technical Services	\$2,000.00/day as and when needed	Maritime Support Services
Project Engineering Limited	\$1,634,350.00	Engineering Design Services for the San Fernando Terminal Facility
BIS H Construction Limited	\$1,500,000.00	Installation of Piles for the San Fernando Terminal Facility
QES and Associated Ltd.	\$2,5000.00/day as and when needed	Quantity Surveying Services – Trestle and Main Dock Extension

In respect of the Trinidad Rapid Rail Project, this planning and design phase is estimated to cost \$563 million. To date, NIDCO has awarded the following contracts: TriniTrain Consortium in the amount of US\$69 million for the DBOM contractor

and WSP International Sweden AB in the sum of TT\$79.510 million equivalent for Project Management Services.

Details of the progress of completion on the projects are:

1. Comprehensive National Drainage Development Study – 5% overall
2. National Programme for the upgrade of Drainage Channels – 5% overall.

Individually, the picture is quite different. For those projects under this programme which has started, and it should be pointed out here that all these works only began in 2008, the following progress has been achieved:

- a. Blackman Ravine – 22%
- b. Matura River – 60%
- c. Tunapuna River – 15%
- d. Tacarigua River – 18%
- e. Alley's Creek – 5%
3. Comprehensive Drainage Development Programme – 5%
4. Flood Mitigation – Erosion Control Programme – 35%
5. POS-East West Corridor Transportation Project – 60%
6. Fast Ferry service from Port of Spain to Point Fortin – 60%
7. Trinidad Rapid Rail – 5%

Many of the projects/programmes handed over to NIDCO for implementation are for the most part in early stages of implementation. As such, there are no cost overruns on any of the NIDCO projects. Information on project cost changes, if any, will materialise as the projects progress.

In June 2007, NIDCO conducted an internal audit on project/programmes handed over by the Ministry of Works and Transport for implementation.

The scope of the Audit entailed the gathering of information on each project and reviewing the various Tendering, Evaluation Selection and Negotiation Processes as well as to provide verification of the expenditure to date on the projects.

The objectives of the audit included:

- Review of expenditure to date on each project
- The amount expended to date on consultancy services for each project

- The project management system in place for each project and the assessment and management of risks of each project
- Funds received to date from the Ministry of Works and Transport for each project
- How the funds received have been allocated by NIDCO
- Internal Audits have not, so far, reported any adverse or high risk practices.