

**SENATE***Tuesday, April 30, 1991*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to the hon. Sen. Dr. Sahadeo Basdeo who will be out of the country during the period April 29 to May 15, 1991.

Sen. Louise Horne indicated she will be a little late today. Sen. Mansoor indicated that he is almost certain he would be absent but he did not seem absolutely sure whether he would be absent or a little late. It looks doubtful that he would attend at all.

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****Foreclosure  
(Homes)**

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Wade Mark:*

17. Could the Minister of Settlements and Public Utilities provide an up-to-date account on the number of homes that have been foreclosed by mortgage and trust companies in both the public and private sectors arising out of householders' inability to sustain their monthly mortgage instalments?

**Driving Standards**

22. Could the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization indicate what measures have been taken to establish proper driving standards, procedures and regulations at the various licensing offices in order to safeguard and promote the interests of learners?

**Traffic Accidents**

23. Could the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization state whether there has been any impact on the traffic accident and road fatality rates since the amended Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance came into effect in 1980?

**Sen. Alloy Lequay:** Mr. President, I have been advised that both the Minister of Settlements and Public Utilities and the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization were reminded that they should have been here to answer these questions. I am not aware as to what has detained them but I am sure that their absence is not an indication of any disrespect for the Senate and I want, on their behalf, to respectfully request that the three questions be deferred until May 7, 1991, the next regular sitting of the Senate. However, except if they do appear before the sitting ends, and it is your wish, then the questions could be answered.

**Sen. Mark:** Mr. President, I think that we are quite aware that it is not possible to really commandeer, or force, Ministers to respond to questions that are placed on the Order Paper. I find it a bit strange that we are into the fourth sitting and we are only getting promises of the Ministers—particularly the first question on the housing issue. I can understand the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization, but I really cannot come to grips with why the Minister of Settlements and Public Utilities is absenting herself continuously whenever she has to answer this question. I am hopeful, as Sen. Lequay said, that she would be here sometime before the end of today's sitting so she can answer the appropriate question that has been put to her.

**Mr. President:** The question before the Senate is that the questions be taken at a later stage of the proceedings, if possible, or otherwise be deferred to the next sitting.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Sen. Alloy Lequay:** Mr. President, may I draw your attention to page 6, where we have "Bills Second Reading" of a private bill, and to respectfully request that, perhaps, we could take that before we start "Government Business".

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SPECIAL OLYMPICS CORPORATION (INC'N) BILL

*Question put and agreed to,* That a bill for the incorporation of the Trinidad and Tobago Special Olympics Corporation and for matters incidental thereto, be now read a second time.

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill referred to a special select committee of the Senate appointed by the President as follows: Sen. Leonard Bradshaw (Chairman), Sen. Neil Bhagan, Sen. Salisha Baksh, Sen. Louise Horne.*

#### **NATIONAL CARNIVAL COMMISSION BILL**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts (Hon. Jennifer Johnson):** Mr. President, I beg to move that a bill for the establishment of a National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago be read a second time.

The intention of this bill before this honourable Senate today, I think is so clearly spelt out in the notes that there seems to be little need for a debate to convince hon. Members that the measures the bill requires this Senate to take, in respect of carnival, its development, organization and industrial exploitation are obviously very long overdue. No one in this House should have any difficulty in agreeing to the passing of this very important legislation. Nonetheless, there are important points connected with the urgency with which the industrial production and organization of carnival must be undertaken by this Government that can bear examination, careful scrutiny and of course, analysis. These matters respecting both the bill and the corporate body which it purports to create, will be raised to give hon. Members the opportunity to engage in their amplification and emphasis in order to further recommend the bill for the full support of this honourable Senate.

**1.40 p.m.**

I intend, therefore, to comment upon the salient points and features pointed out in the explanatory notes and refer them to the relevant sections of the bill proper. Before doing this, however, I wish to raise a point of the urgent need for Government, and the people of this country, to establish ownership of the traditional national festival, which is carnival, to preserve it in its true original form as a positive native art form, before foreign claimants take it over and transform it beyond its indigenous identity, so that it cannot be recognized as an original artistic creation of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Tragic as this may be, however, there is a far more urgent objective that needs to be pursued. This is the recognition of the national cultural value of the almost universal nationwide artistic talent and disposition in all our people, that is a vision, a rare ethnic creativity and the devotion to work, which, if organized properly,

managed and harnessed, can form the base of a very solid and reliable "industrial revolution" which would be capable of making our country into a new productive society, based on a viable progressive and productive work ethic, which slavery and the plantation system have discouraged in our people.

The love of work and the application and exploitation of the creativity endemic in the talents of our people, have an enormous potential for economic, social and, of course, political advance and progress in what we call our global village today.

This bill before this House recognizes, in the annual carnival exercise, this potential for infinite creativity, this pursuit for achievement, this joy of invention and of innovativeness. The need to have this potential of human energy organized and harnessed to the national development plan, which we have been designing since the inception of this present Government, is implicit in the spirit and intention of the bill before this hon. Senate today.

The speed with which carnival, calypso, particularly Trinidad style, have been spread through the migrant nationals to the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States of America and other parts of the Caribbean is a major factor in the decision by this Government to take steps to set up efficient machinery by which our carnival can be converted into a functional machinery, for generating hard currency revenue at the present time, before the outer world produces what we would like to call in the carnival community, an imitation carnival and calypso festival. Of course, this will cancel their demand for Trinidad carnival. Home-made carnivals in the foreign lands, I believe, will depress the price of cruise ships to Trinidad carnival. Who will come here to see our carnival if they can get it in Brixton, Nottinghill, Chicago, Brooklyn, Miami, Los Angeles and other parts of the United States?

Let us now examine the responsibilities of the proposed statutory body, the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. In our explanatory notes—I wish to just read a few—we said at paragraph 2:

"To make Carnival a viable national cultural and commercial..."

Carnival, to some extent, is already national, if only in the very spiritual sense. However, for many reasons it does not directly touch every citizen in reality.

What the bill implies is that we should aim at sensitizing all citizens to the fact that in some way or the other, carnival impinges upon their social, cultural and economic welfare and, of course, development. This is not nationally appreciated.

As a result, the exploitation of carnival as a revenue generator, as a national catalyst for co-operation and for community harmony, as a national exercise with room in it for everyone, irrespective of race, class or creed, is one of the major objectives of the bill. Indeed, people who work and play together stay together.

The second objective of the bill is the preservation and marketing of our cultural products particularly carnival products. All of us know that culture is both spiritual and material and to some extent, I believe more spiritual than material. Carnival produces tangible material commodities. Traditionally, the masqueraders threw their costumes away on Tuesday at midnight, and went home to decide on what they must play the following year. This tragedy of waste is a terrible disease which has been inflicted and has infected all aspects of our national psyche. The bill seeks to arrest this malady and to set up appropriate infrastructure, with power to explore adequate markets with the demand for the marvels of artistry and creativity produced by the genius of the mas camps and to convert them into hard currency.

To the extent that public funds will always subsidize carnival; to that extent will the proposed commission be under obligation to turn every non-perishable carnival product into a saleable item in the foreign markets. To this extent, will the board be expected to treat carnival as a joint, industrial enterprise between the public and the private sectors, in which the maximization of returns on financial investment by the artist, the craftsman, the businessmen and the Government is relentlessly pursued by the experts in finance, production and marketing, sitting on the board of the commission.

The third objective is the researching, preserving and permanent displaying of our carnival products. The traditional custom in Trinidad and Tobago has been to keep carnival and its works under cover for a greater part of the year, perhaps so that it becomes a well-kept secret and held back to increase the cultural shock, until January of each year. One of the objectives of the commission is to give more exposure, not only to future carnivals, but to build up museums and repositories of the ancient carnival art and the renowned carnival artists of the past, so that a national awareness of carnival achievements, historically and contemporarily will pervade the nation and serve as a catalyst, a challenge and an encouragement for the living artists to excel, and perhaps also for the stimulation of the up and coming generation, particularly our very young people, to engage in this very important artistic creativity.

Therefore, the establishment of display centres, carnival cities and exhibitions of carnival art, both inside the country, and in foreign parts, will generate national

artistic pride and serve to integrate the population on the basis of art and creative talents, despite our cultural and racial diversity. Our art will slowly weld us into one spiritually integrated people with a history of creativity memorialized in our carnival costumes.

The fourth objective will be to conduct, regulate and co-ordinate the public carnival activities annually and nationwide. The national dispersal of carnival through the several towns and villages present a tremendous wide variety of events connected with carnival each year. There is need to harmonize, regulate and streamline the associated operations across the entire nation. The commission will therefore undertake this task in order to give some kind of systematic ordering of the operations, which will provide regulated and infrastructural strains of reference within which the population as a whole can play their mas. By organizing certain standard competitions, the commission will function as a provider of standard models for private organizers to follow, by keeping a healthy balance between official enterprises and the popular undertakings, all within the context of the national festival of the annual carnival celebrations.

**1.50 p.m.**

The fifth would be the development, maintenance and the revision of rules, regulations *et cetera* for the conduct of carnival. As a social and cultural institution in a changing society, there is need for the consistent upgrading of arrangements, of regulations, of rules, with respect to the form, the structure and social direction of such an important festival. The commission will serve as a guardian of the rights of the people as much as a custodian of the law, the rules and regulations which will guide organizers.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** I do apologize to the hon. Minister for interrupting the reading of her interesting presentation, but could she tell me under what powers in the bill this regulation will take place? What practical powers will the commission have to regulate carnival?

All I see, for her information in clause 26, is that there are powers to make regulations for the better administration of the Act, which is not achieved there.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mr. President, could the hon. Member hold on a bit and I will answer him at the end of my presentation.

I had come to the fifth objective of the bill, and I was saying, the authority exercised by the commission includes the adjustment of regulations and rules in

accordance with the social norms and new innovations so that internal conflicts, which we are so familiar with—conflicts particularly over points of views and, very important, new perspectives—may be kept at minimum. The commission will, therefore, function as an umpire between the authorities and the carnival organizers. This would help the festival to maintain a balance and social equilibrium in a proper matrix of this great fiesta.

The final objective is related to carnival and its related industries. The commission will be entrusted with the identification, the evaluation and the enhancing of the marketing of carnival. This section of the bill projects carnival as an industry. There would be downstream-associated activities with the potential for small business enterprises. As good organizers and managers of business, the commission will expect not only to carry out research, which we are sorely in need of, but also having identified carnival-associated activities with sale potential, it would have the job of exploring and finding outlets for marketing these products and cultural commodities within the outside of the country.

In light of the foregoing arguments, Mr. President, this seems to be the most significant aspect of the bill. I truly believe that it is significant and it is a challenging and potentially productive function that the commission will be called upon to perform. It deals also with the statutory duties of the commission to develop marketing strategies for carnival artistic products. In this connection, these products will include, of course, the tangible material commodities and, of course, entertainment: performing arts, which will be shows, expositions, concerts, and so on. These two types of cultural products are now in very great demand, particularly in certain parts of the world. I therefore look forward to the contributions related to the various aspects that the bill is intended to deal with, contributions that will guide us in passing the kind of legislation that resulted in the enhancement of carnival.

Could Sen. Furness-Smith ask the question again?

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** Yes. The hon. Minister was speaking rather fast, but I gather that she was saying that one of the main objects, in fact the principal object was to regulate, to develop rules, upgrading and regulating carnival, and I just wanted to know under what provision of the bill will they actually be able to make any rules, let alone upgrade rules, in respect of the organization of carnival.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mr. President, I think clause 9(1) states:

"The Commission may do all such things as are necessary or convenient for the purpose of exercising the powers and performing the duties..."

I think that clause would take care of the question that you asked. Also (a):

"the regulation, co-ordination or conduct of all carnival activities throughout the country held under the aegis of the Government;"

This would fully explain.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** The hon. Minister, I am afraid, does not understand my question. You cannot regulate things by saying that it is one of the purposes of a statutory body you are creating that it is to regulate. In order to regulate, you have to be able to make orders and rules. I am not sure whether the Minister wishes this body to make orders and rules. It has got a limited rule-making power. What effect are those rules going to have? Can it organize the traffic around the Savannah? Can it organize the behaviour in carnival bands or the way they treat passing motorists? All these things which we know are organized at the moment, but not by any commission. Where in this bill will they have the statutory power to control and to make rules and to, if necessary, discipline players?

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mr. President, I am of the view that clause 9(1) takes care of the matter Sen. Furness-Smith is talking about, but of course, he is free to debate the matter that is before this honourable Senate.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** As I explained to her, you cannot give powers to control people by just saying that this commission has the right to regulate, co-ordinate or conduct carnival activities. That does not give it the power to tell me which way around the Savannah I am to march.

**Mr. President:** Sen. Furness-Smith, I am sorry to interrupt at this stage, but I think you are dealing with things in advance of their time. I believe the Minister is finished with her presentation.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Yes, I am.

**Mr. President:** I think what you have to say, Senator, can be well said in your contribution on the second reading and, moreso, it can be rectified during the committee stage by moving the amendments. I do not want a debate to start before the question is proposed by the Chair. So I now propose the question for debate.

*Question proposed.*



**Sen. Dr. Prakash Persad:** Mr. President, first through you, let me welcome the Minister for her first presentation while the new opposition is here. I must say she reads rather well.

Mr. President, I will not pose the question that was posed in the other House, and ask her, why not a national cultural commission? I will not. Mr. President, it is a well-known fact that the manifesto was not written by any one of the Members on the opposite side and, therefore, they have no commitment to follow it. Therefore, I understand fully well that they have no desire to implement it and they will not do so; so I will not ask the question.

Mr. President, the Minister in her presentation put forward some economic arguments for the setting up of this statutory body. Right now carnival operates—and I think it is by admission of the Minister in her winding-up debate in the lower House, where she said that carnival made a lot of money, \$100 million, I think she said, and that there is a fair amount of foreign exchange earned. If you earned this amount and you are talking about doing research, then I would presume that being a responsible Government you have done your feasibility studies. In that case the Minister should indicate clearly to this House the ratio between the foreign exchange earned with that of the foreign exchange that went out in buying the materials for carnival. This is purely an economic consideration, lest anyone on the other side—as they are quick to do, rant and rave—jumps up and say that I am against carnival; I state so clearly, I am not. I am asking a question that is based on economics.

The point is that you want to establish a body. You want this body to employ new people. The bill says you can talk to any committee, the Minister can pay them as she sees fit. So, therefore, it is going to cost money. What is the estimated cost involved in setting up this new statutory body? Would the cost out-weigh the benefits that you are going to get? You should state so clearly. In terms of generating revenue locally, did the Minister consider other festivals?

The Minister responsible for tourism is here and I will come to that issue later on, but Trinidad has been described as a land of festivals. Did this hon. Minister and the advisors and, in fact, the Government, look at the other festivals and say, "Look, how does it compare in terms of generating revenue interally? I ask the hon. Minister, for instance, does she know how many deyas are produced annually? Maybe I can sit and she can tell me so. *[Interruption]* This is the point, Mr. President. They do not even know what a "deya" is. This is the problem here.

Could she indicate to this Senate, the volume of production of coconut oil used in the Divali festival? She is using an economic argument to state that we should set up a statutory body, a National Carnival Commission, based on economic reasons. My question is also based on economic reasons. Did she consider the sort of revenue, the job generating potential of other festivals? I am not asking you to set up a national cultural commission or saying that you must have a commission to deal with everything culturally but you are producing an economic argument, in this instance, and you should say so. You owe it to the people of this country to state clearly and present your economic argument. You have not done so.

**2.05 p.m.**

Mr. President, what she has done is to produce a rather ridiculous argument. This is the first time, and this is a world record, maybe it reflects on her creativity—I do not know. She said that carnival is going to bring about a new industrial base, an industrial revolution. A festival that takes place for two days of the year, she is saying that it will set about an industrial revolution. Maybe she does not understand what the word “revolution” means, nor does she understand what the word “industrial” means. She should state so clearly.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Is the hon. Senator aware, for example, that one bandleader has already announced yesterday that he is producing a major band for next year called "Columbus"?

**Dr. Persad:** I fail to see the relevance of the question, but then the Senators on the other side never make sense.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Can I tell the Senator, the relevance?

**Dr. Persad:** No, you have said it and it makes no sense. You should admit that it makes no sense. It is a joke, he ought to laugh.

The Government of the day recently announced that it wants to retrench 1,000 port workers. It has already retrenched workers in WASA and PTSC. In other words, this Government's direction has been in privatization, moving away from statutory bodies and state corporations. Yet, a festival organized, in the main, by the people of this country, which, by the Minister's own admission, brings in about \$100 million, she wants to privatize it. Is this Government confused? On one hand, you are saying that you want to move away from statutory bodies; on the other hand you want to engage in state control.

**Dr. Rambachan:** What is privatization?

**Dr. Persad:** I use the word “privatization” in the sense of the word as it is normally used. Right now, if you look at carnival, it is comprised of two contents. One may be called, "the street content" in which people go out and play carnival on the streets. In the other part, we have the entertainment value where people go to calypso tents, and those tents are run by private individuals, and they make money. Why does the Government want to take it over now? Why does it want to do all those sorts of things? Why does it want to set up a statutory body?

Mr. President, I am not convinced that there is a serious economic argument why the Government should set up this body. There is none whatsoever, unless the Minister wants to give jobs to some of the party-hacks, but that, I am sure, it would have no opportunity to do.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Would the hon. Senator give way?

**Dr. Persad:** I will graciously do so.

**Mrs. Johnson:** I just wanted to bring to the attention of this honourable Senate that nowhere in my presentation did I say anything about privatizing carnival and nowhere in this bill is there any reference to the privatization of carnival. So I think the hon. Senator has his preconceived ideas and I would not like this honourable Senate to be led astray.

**Dr. Persad:** Maybe I should draw the Minister's attention to clause 9, to which she herself referred, in answer to Sen. Furness-Smith's question. The Minister said:

"All of us know that culture is both spiritual and material, and to some extent more spiritual than material."

She further said:

"What this bill implies is that we should aim at sensitizing all citizens to the fact that, in some way or the other, carnival impinges upon the social, cultural, economic welfare and development."

She further went on to say:

". . . the renowned carnival artists of the past..."

And I presume she means “artistes” not “artists”—

"...so that a national awareness of carnival achievements historically and contemporarily will pervade the nation and serve as a catalyst, a challenge, and an encouragement for the living artists to excel. . ."

What she is saying here, among other things, is that she is going way beyond economic reasons. You are going to set up carnival as this institution and it is going to give the perception, and in fact more than the perception, that carnival is a state culture. The Minister should indicate clearly to this country and this Senate, what is the cultural policy of the Government. In the other House, she stated that they have given money to the steelband festival, Divali and Phagwa.

**Mr. President:** I have warned Senators already that they should not refer to debates in another House. The Senator made reference to something the Minister said in her reply in the other House earlier, and he is quoting now from her speech made in the other House. Please, let us keep the debate confined to what was said in this Senate and omit specific references to the debates and contributions made in the other House.

**Dr. Persad:** I thank you, Mr. President, and I sincerely apologize.

The Minister should also state clearly what is the quantum of funds given to the various organizations that carry out festivals in this country, and maybe that will give a better indication as to the Government's cultural policy. What is the Government's cultural policy? I remember that in early 1987, in the euphoria then, on TTT, we had a few fillers for different ethnic origins and cultural origins. That died out. And lo and behold—and I am sure it has nothing to do with the fact that this is an election year—we are seeing similar type fillers appearing. Of course, the Senators on the other side are honourable people, and they would not do that; they have culture genuinely in their hearts.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Describe the fillers.

**2.15 p.m.**

**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, the hon. Minister said that this is a rainbow country. A rainbow comprises of seven distinct different colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet and none is pre-eminent. If any one is pre-eminent, it is definitely not a rainbow. If this is a rainbow country, then all cultures should be given equal treatment. The Government should state clearly why it wants to give pre-eminence to one. Why do you want to give pre-eminence to one, and to make it worse, based on a flawed economic argument.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Would the hon. Senator permit a question?

**Dr. Persad:** I would give way for the last time.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I would like the hon. Member to tell us whether carnival is the property of any particular culture in this country, or whether carnival is not national in scope and emphasis in the country. If he feels that it belongs to any particular culture or ethnic group, would he please say to which group or culture it belongs?

**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, the Member obviously displays a remarkable ignorance as to the origin of carnival. May I suggest to the hon. Minister that he goes to the library at the university, probably the western section, where he would get excellent references so that he could upgrade his knowledge.

This Government should state clearly what is the difference between a national holiday given for a festival and a national festival. It should state clearly, for instance, that if Eid, Christmas or Easter are national holidays, does it not imply a national festival? The question that the Minister asked, as usual, is ridiculous. This Minister and this Government should answer to this country as to why they are giving pre-eminence to one. For the Minister of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism's edification, carnival is based on the European festival. There is no carnival in Asia or Africa but there is carnival in Spain, Louisiana, Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago. *[Interruption]* Mr. President, do you see what I mean? These fellows are ignorant even of geography. India is part of Asia. But what can you expect from a Government of such? Are they saying that this festival which has its origin in Europe is inherently superior, that you want to make it the national festival? If that is not the issue, say so if you think so.

Divali has been celebrated here for nearly 150 years and carnival about 200 years. Is there a cut-off point? Are you saying that only after 200 years a culture becomes national? Is that the Government's stated policy? You should state so. I hope his question is intelligent.

**Sen. Rampersad:** As intelligent as he is, would he not agree that carnival in Trinidad and Tobago is inherently different to carnival in any other country in the world?

**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, as I was saying, until that unintelligent diversion, the Government must state its policy clearly. The people of this country—

**Mr. President:** I realize that a certain amount of controversy is entering into the contribution made by the Member insofar as Members on the other side are concerned. Would you please abide by the rules? Allow the Senator to make his contribution. Take note of anything he says, and I am sure that at the appropriate time you can adequately answer the questions to the points he has raised without interrupting him and making it difficult for others to follow the debate and for the reporters to record what he is saying. Thank you.

**Dr. Persad:** Thank you, Mr. President. You are a model of decorum. Unfortunately, the other side does not seem to follow that.

I was on the point of the Government's cultural policy. I was trying to find out what criteria were used to decide whether a festival or culture is national or not, because apparently it seems to me, from what the Members are saying from their crosstalk, that carnival is the only truly national culture. Are they saying that it must be more than 200 years old, or it must be of European derivative? Are they saying that it must have more than 50 per cent of the population participating in the festival? State the criteria. Are you saying that a festival in which 30 per cent of the population participates is not a national festival, despite the fact that a national holiday has been given for it? You should state these things. Do not come here and present unsound arguments. What are they trying to do?

Mr. President, the hon. Minister said that carnival is going to fuse us into one nation. This melting-pot theory has been proven to be a failure; it no longer works. People with intelligence, sense and foresight have given it up. They are still here pursuing this melting-pot theory. Do they think that they are new Caribbean gods? They want to create a new set of people, a melting-pot to fuse everything into one. Are they trying to be the new Caribbean gods, or Trinidadian gods, or minister gods, or maybe tin gods?

Mr. President, God in his wisdom and creation, created different creatures. If we do not believe in God and we believe in evolution, in evolution different creatures came about. So it is ridiculous to try to have this melting-pot to fuse everything into one. I think the country deserves an answer.

I come back to culture because it is very important. As I said, it is so important that the United Nations is looking at this decade as one of culture. I think that this House should look seriously at legislation to deal with cultural crimes, because people can use culture to make a person lose his self-esteem and self-worth. It has been done. Is it this Government's intention to do so? When people use culture to

abuse other people—you have people who are culturally abused and legislation must be looked at to prevent that. How else could one interpret what the hon. Minister for External Affairs said? I have to conclude that he is a victim of cultural abuse. He has lost his self-worth and self-esteem. I refer to the *Sunday Guardian* of April 21 in which he said, "First Hindu to high office appointed by the NAR." Mr. President, this Minister who is a victim of cultural abuse—and I am sorry he is not here—who may be, among other things, a political sycophant, must not say such rubbish that the first Hindu to be appointed was by the NAR.

**2.25 p.m.**

Mr. President, does the Minister have no self-worth? One of the leaders of the NAR was a Hindu. This Minister is obviously a victim of cultural abuse. He has lost his self-esteem. In deference to age, I will sit.

**Dr. Sampath:** Age and experience. Thank you very much. Mr. President, I am deeply hurt when he refers to the "NAR". What is this "NAR" that he is talking about? Does he mean the NAR or the National Alliance for Reconstruction? May I ask him to desist from saying "NAR" because it sounds too much like an obscene Indian word.

**Mr. President:** All the proceedings of Parliament are conducted in English.

**Dr. Persad:** Maybe he has a point Mr. President, it has become obscene.

I was on the point of cultural abuse and victims of cultural abuse. Maybe the hon. Minister of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism, the marauding maniac may be a victim of cultural abuse because if you look at the Tourism Development Authority's strategic plan for the year 1990—1994, under culture and festivals it mentions carnival, steelband, limbo and calypso but not other things. I am saying that he is an honourable gentleman and this being election year, he suddenly realizes that Hinduism had no part in the rainbow so far. All of a sudden he realizes, this year—the very same Minister for Tourism who years ago complained bitterly about the cultural bias of TTT, but he is a honourable Minister. Maybe he is a victim of cultural abuse.

This is an important point, that if a government sends a message that if you are to progress in this land, or to rise socially and educationally, to rise in the society in whatever way, you have to subscribe to one particular reference that the Government legislates to be the dominant culture, I insist that such legislation for cultural crimes that the Government is pursuing, perpetuating on this country is—  
*[Interruption]*

Mr. President, I am not suffering from paranoia; they are quick to say that we are suffering from paranoia. What is the highest award that you can obtain in this land? The Trinity Cross. Is Trinidad a secular state, or is it a Christian state? The highest award is the Trinity Cross. We are not asking for the Trinity Home or any of those things, but this is a secular state. Why the Trinity Cross? What have they done about it? It is a connotation. They have a right to bend their heads. They ought to be ashamed of themselves—this regime and the previous regime.

Not one single highway or main road in this country is named after a person of East Indian descent. Are we worthless? They should say so. What I am saying is that I have no problems. If the Government thinks that you must follow carnival, you must go a certain way, then say so. Say, "look, you are here only if you follow my God". Say so and we have no problems, but do not be hypocritical about it. The Government should not be that.

Mr. President, they came in under what they call a rainbow of "one love". It has become an obscene rainbow of deception.

**Sen. Rampersad:** Mr. President, I think the hon. Senator is misleading the House. There are hundreds of roads all over Trinidad and Tobago named after nationals of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Dr. Persad.** Mr. President, if the hon. Senator can tell me a highway named after an Indian national, I would sit. He does not know. He never listens to his history and he does not know what is happening. He should go back to school.

**Mr. President:** I would be very happy if you will read the title of the bill before us once more, because I think, you are having a little difficulty in keeping within the subject matter before the House. I appreciate there are points that you want to make, but there are other times probably, when some of the points you want to make, could be made. I am having a little difficulty being satisfied that you are being entirely relevant to the subject before us which is the establishment of a National Carnival Commission.



**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, I would defer to your ruling. The reason I went this way is, in the explanatory note, it says "to make Carnival a viable national cultural commercial enterprise" and, therefore, I was looking at the cultural aspects. One cannot look at the cultural aspects in isolation, but if you so rule, I would defer.

**Mr. President:** I have allowed you a lot of latitude, you will agree. One can make comparisons and references, but when we start to talk about the naming of roads and highways in the country, I fail to appreciate where the cultural aspect is coming from.

**Dr. Persad:** I would withdraw that, Mr. President.

Mr. President, the point I am making and the point I think the Minister should answer is, exactly what is the cultural policy in Trinidad and Tobago and how does carnival relate to it and the economics of it? They are sending the wrong message by setting up this statutory body to deal exclusively with one cultural festival in a nation.

I would move on specifically to the bill itself. In clause 4 (c) the bill seeks:

"to establish arrangements for ongoing research, the preservation and permanent display of the annual accumulation of Carnival products created each year..."

Whilst this is laudable, again, I am asking the question: How does this relate to other cultures? Is there not a need for ongoing research and for the preservation of other cultures?

The point I am making is that it redounds to the society and the region at large. To further prove my point, I looked at the development plan for the year 2000, of the Faculty of Arts and General Studies at the University of the West Indies, and it talks about specific components in teaching, training and continued education. To validate my point, it states:

"The faculty seeks to improve its capacity to provide university students with varying degrees of competence in the languages of the Caribbean, especially Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch and English."

The development plan's objective is that it will research the history and culture and archaeology of the Caribbean.

We are not asking that Hindi be taught or made a national language. It is indigenous to this country as is French and Spanish.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** I heard the use of the Indian word used by the Senator opposite and now I am hearing about Hindi. Could the hon. Senator tell us whether Hindi is the only language, of what we call East Indians in their original country? Are there not about a dozen different languages? Why Hindi? What about all the other languages?

**2.35 p.m.**

**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, again, it is unfortunate that the Senator is unaware of the history of Trinidad and Tobago. This is the point I am making; that the majority of East Indians who came to Trinidad and Tobago and to Guyana, came from the northern part of India in which Hindi is the language. Therefore, they speak Hindi. It has nothing to do with what the languages of India are presently. To drive the point home further, if you want to have development then people must feel part of the culture.

Singapore got independence about the same time as us. Do you know what the official languages of Singapore are? English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Maybe that is why Singapore is way ahead of us, because everybody in the country feels culturally a part of the country. Government cannot play an active part in legislating or directing culture. Government should be a facilitator for culture, provide the infrastructure, let the various groups develop the culture. This is what it is about.

Mr. President, in clause 5 of the bill, apparently the representatives from the Carnival Judges Association and the Junior Carnival Association have been excluded. Maybe this is something that the Minister should look at if you want to have representation from all bodies impacting on carnival.

By asking this honourable House's permission to make this National Carnival Commission a statutory body and so set up offices abroad, is the Minister admitting that the Tourism Development Authority has failed and that the tourism offices abroad are not doing their jobs? And that there is need for a separate set of offices to market carnival? Is that what she is saying? Then what would be the relationship between this new statutory body and the Ministry of External Affairs, BWIA, the EDC and the IDC? You want to start industrial production; a new industrial revolution, and the IDC is not even mentioned. You want to go about exporting carnival costumes wholesale, but the Export Development Corporation

is not even mentioned. Does the Minister intend to usurp the powers of all these bodies in order to make this National Carnival Commission a creature of awesome power, presided over by the Minister? Is this the intent of this bill? These are some of the questions that must be answered and they have to answer.

It is generally accepted now that culture plays an important part in sustainable development, that all people must feel part of the country. They must feel wanted and appreciated because culture is your food; your way of thinking; your dress; your music; your song; it is your reference point in which you live your life. If you feel that is not wanted and appreciated, how could you contribute to your country? I think it is incumbent on the Government to do something to make sure that it sends the right message to the population. Let the population perceive that this is indeed a rainbow country and a plural society. They have to do that otherwise we will not go anywhere. What we will have again, is a bill will come here, we will argue about it, debate and make amendments and it cannot be implemented. Maybe it goes down as a feather in somebody's cap that, "When I was in office, I passed five or six bills."

I question the very intent, Mr. President. In winding up I ask that the Minister answer, not only to this honourable House, but to the country, the issues that I raised. Thank you.

**Sen. Gerald Furness-Smith:** Mr. President, I really regret that again we seem to be having a debate with interracial implications which seems quite unnecessary, really, this afternoon. Judging from the remarks of Sen. Persad, it would appear that he is preparing an argument for the case of those unfortunate refugees, who, in Canada, are finding difficulty with the Canadian immigration authorities in persuading them that they are oppressed in Trinidad and Tobago. I understand his arguments and his feelings and I entirely agree with his objectives but I do urge him to consider that to raise on every occasion, these issues, he is defeating his own purpose. The objectives which he holds dear, I can assure him, over the last 30 years, have been progressively implemented. It is accumulating, it is like compound interest, and in the last three or four years—

**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, I am sorry to interrupt the Senator, but could he please tell me what is progressively accumulating over 30 years? I am not too sure what he is saying.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** I am afraid I was quite unable to hear what the hon. Senator has interrupted me to say. I do not know what he said. If he could speak into the microphone or perhaps put it on, it would assist.

**Dr. Persad:** I am asking if he could tell me what has accumulated over the past 30 years. You said something has accumulated over the past 30 years; I do not know what. Could you tell me what, please?

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** What I said was, the objectives which he holds dear, which I may even have a note of, that everybody in this land must feel that they are appreciated and wanted and we gather that for some extraordinary reason, he does not feel, I presume, that he is appreciated or wanted, I assure him quite the contrary, we all appreciate him very much but I for one, would appreciate him a little more if he did not introduce these divisive arguments, repeatedly in this House which, in my respectful view, are completely irrelevant to this debate.

To turn to the bill, one would think, from what he said, that what the Opposition would like this afternoon is, instead of the hon. Minister bringing a bill to establish a statutory commission to control carnival, she should also bring bills to establish statutory commissions to control Divali, Phagwa and Hosay. That is the message I am getting. If the Minister was a little more eclectic in this matter, then the Opposition would be satisfied because it is suggested that carnival belongs to just one section of the society.

**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, the hon. Senator is misleading this House. I never said nor implied that. I cannot imply. Implication is done by the person who so judges.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** I am giving way because every time my friend stands to interrupt me, he puts his foot more in his mouth. Because if that was not what the hon. Senator was saying, what was the relevance of his remarks at all?

Now, for my part, to bring this debate down to earth, we are asked to consider a bill to establish yet another statutory corporation. When I see a statutory corporation brought before me, I get suspicious because I am very jealous of the way the Government—I am not speaking about this Government—organizes its business. In the last nine years I have been trying to make remarks to encourage it to run its business more efficiently by better means, with fewer organizations and bodies. Instead, we find—even with this Government, which I know shares my objectives—Ministers coming here seeking to establish more statutory bodies.

**2.45 p.m.**

This is the third time the hon. Minister has come seeking to administer a statutory corporation to establish some part of her portfolio. I respectfully submit that the hon. Minister's approach to statutory corporations is basically flawed. To establish a statutory corporation at all for any purpose is a very serious matter. One is establishing a new person in this country; it is a statutory person; it has a separate personality and position at law; it can sue and be sued; it has a whole organizational structure of its own. We are asked to authorize that expressedly or impliedly in this bill. The next thing that will happen when we pass this bill will be the Organization and Management office will make a study of what is required; so many secretaries, messengers, clerks and offices.

We are establishing a new body and in my mind, at once a little red light goes on. Do we really want it? Is it the right way to organize, assuming for a moment that for what the objectives are, they need organizing at all? Here, there are all sorts of clauses making it clear that there will be considerable expenses for this organization. Unless the hon. Minister can satisfy me that this statutory body is really needed, and can perform a useful function, not only in theory and in fancy language, but in practice; that it is actually going to do something of use for the people of this country; I must vote against it.

My worries are multiplied when I look at the purported objectives of this bill. The hon. Minister told us, this is a bill to establish a statutory body for five objectives—I could not take down all of them in full—in connection with carnival; carnival of all things. We already have a body since 1956 which interferes with carnival, on behalf of Government. I think it is called the National Carnival Committee. It is not a statutory body, but over those 30 years it certainly has behaved as if it were. It has spent millions of dollars of taxpayers money. I have never seen any proper accounts of what it has spent or what it has collected. Somebody told me that its expense for printing tickets alone, is about one quarter of a million dollars. Every year one sees all those bleachers and the stands in the Savannah packed with people and yet this committee costs the people of this country, about \$20 million a year; that is after the money which was supposed to have been received. That to my mind is a standing national scandal, that our great national fete should be the subject of endless *bobol*. People greasing their palms out of entrance fees to the Savannah stands, the bleachers and so on, without any proper accountability.

If the Ministry which is responsible for the National Carnival Committee could not control the *bobol* how is this commission going to control it any better? The hon. Minister did not say. There is nothing in the bill which tells us that, except we see that the Central Tenders Board is not to apply. What benefits does a statutory board have over a ministerial committee in respect of accountability? The accounts, when they are produced, if at all, may be 10 years late, are audited by the Auditor General in each case, and eventually submitted to the Public Accounts Committee, which we all know, and which has recorded the fact, is a waste of time. So there is no accountability and there will be no accountability. We are being asked to establish this new unaccountable body.

What are the objectives? The hon. Minister has to look at its explanatory note which repeats the new clause 4. I note that the bill, originally circulated, has been substantially amended, I presume by the hon. Minister, before she presented her bill in the lower House. It is nice to know that somebody has been looking at the bill critically, but I am sorry to say not sufficiently critically; because clause 4 states:

“The objects of the Commission are as follows:

- (a) to make Carnival a viable national, cultural and commercial enterprise;”

Can anybody deny that carnival is a national enterprise or that it is viable and I presume it is cultural? It is a really genuine cultural enterprise by all the people of all classes, races and creeds who take part in it, who put something into it and which we have all enjoyed, to play and participate over the years. It is already a viable national and cultural enterprise, so what are we adding? What we are adding is an expensive body to make carnival a commercial enterprise.

**2.55 p.m.**

Carnival, of all things, this wonderful expression of the people’s creativity, the joy, the racial integration, the example to the world, this wonderful demonstration of what Trinidad and Tobago stands for, it is to be transmogrified into a commercial enterprise, and we are asked to join in that enterprise of making it so this afternoon. Mr. President, the person who comes before us with that objective is none other than the Minister who, under our democratic system, has been entrusted with the portfolio of culture. I find it very sad.

Now, to go on, (b):

“to provide the necessary managerial...”

**Mrs. Johnson:** I missed the final two lines of the Senator’s contribution. Could he just repeat it for me? I think that is a very important point that he has made and I would like to take it up.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** I thought I said it was sad. Mr. President, I am not sure what it was, but the last sentence I said was that I found it was sad, and I think it is sad. But if she wants the argument again about subclause (a).

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mr. President, I need a clarification because I think the hon. Senator was saying that the bottom line will be that if something is cultural, perhaps it should not be commercial. I do not know if I was mistaking what he was saying. You should not commercialize carnival because it is a cultural expression. I wanted to be sure that is what he said.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** What I said was that the object apparently under (a)—the only object which it can be because we already have a viable national, cultural enterprise—is to make it a commercial enterprise, and that is what I find sad.

Mr. President, for 30 years, we have had Government interfering in this national fete, in the people’s fete, through the PNM’s National Carnival Commission—National Carnival Development Committee. I think it must have changed its name over the years, Mr. President; they all do, from one thing to the other, and it is very good, the changing of names, because it means that some printer gets a little “bread” from changing all the letterheads of all the ministries and presumably the National Carnival Development Committee.

Even since 30 years ago when Government first interfered with carnival, at the time it was a real people’s fete. All sorts of little people saved up their money and they played mas. They made wonderful costumes; they went on the streets, and there were all sorts of people playing mas of one traditional kind or another. Look how many there are today. A couple of years ago, I went to the Savannah and watched. During the whole afternoon, there was one miserable family of bats. That was all that the people’s carnival had left. That was all: one miserable family of bats. They were nice bats, all right, but that was all. No midnight robbers, no fancy sailors, nothing like that, and in fact carnival, because of the interference by Government with fancy prizes, and so forth, has already been commercialized, so that it is a business. And a few enterprising and ingenious fellows have these

enormous bands for which they make the cheapest possible costumes and they charge the highest possible prices, many of them paid by tourists, and they do very nicely, I would think. But the standards of the costumes have gone way down.

Let us face it, if you look at carnival now and you take 4 or 5 of the main bands, you would have a real job to know, unless you saw them with their banners, which band they belong to because the costumes are all more or less the same.

**Sen. Horne:** Cheapest and briefest.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** They are brief. Each band vies with itself in showing the nicest possible legs, and whatever, arms, and the girls are great, but the costumes, insofar as they are there at all, are all the same whether they are portraying Assyrians, or whatever it is. The hon. Minister should attend these functions sometimes and observe because, mark you, she was not there in the era of which I am speaking. But let me assure her that since the advent of Government's interference in carnival, to my mind, it has gone downhill, costume-wise.

But Mr. President, carnival is still wonderful. What is left of it is the spirit, the enjoyment, the mingling of people, the goodwill, the racial harmony. That is what we still have, and that is what beats to a frazzle all these people in Louisiana or Rio de Janeiro; they do not have that. That is still the glory of Trinidad carnival. But if you are going to put a National Carnival Commission to boss everybody around, that too will quickly go because little people, the people joining the mas, they are not going to be in the least bit interested in some National Carnival Commission pretending to make a profit from them and, in fact, having all kinds of *bobol* going on behind the scenes. That will really turn people off.

The hon. Minister's bill, quite apart from the principle of it, is equally unfortunate when one comes to the details. Perhaps I should just deal with (c) of clause 4 which is the third object:

“to establish arrangements for ongoing research, the preservation and permanent display of the annual accumulation of Carnival products created each year by the craftsmen, musicians, composers and designers of Carnival.”

Mr. President, this is already provided for by the National Museum, who I understand are doing considerable work in that respect. Maintaining a museum, which is what we are talking about here, is not something that you put into the hands of a bunch of amateurs. You put it into the hands of the specialists, and we



are fortunate to have a National Museum and I think a statutory body in charge of it, which has developed considerable expertise. It is staffed by energetic people and they know their business. If you want to expand the carnival side of the National Museum, well certainly find the odd half million dollars or \$1 million and expand it, but do not set up a new body to do the same thing that you have already got another body spending government's money doing.

Then let us look at clause 5, which deals with who is to be on this board with all these powers. Well, this is a clause that was amended in the Lower House and one must pay great respect to it, but I strongly suggest that this is a real prescription for confusion. Subclause 1(a) states:

“one nominee from the organization that is most representative of the steelband movement;”

every year bacchanal. Which is the steelband organization most representative of the steelband movement? The hon. Minister will be asked to rule on that. “He will have all hell to pay”, because we know that every year at carnival time, confusion reigns in these matters. Subclause (b) states:

“one nominee from the organization that is most representative of carnival bands;”

Well, first of all, there will have to be an organization of carnival bandleaders, and there is no obligation on them to have such an organization. Of course, there is one at the moment, but there is no obligation on them to have one. Why should they take you on? Why should they take on this commission? They are totally fed-up, for the last 30 years, with the arrangements that have been made, and the mas players are even more fed up.

“(c) one nominee from the organization that is most representative of calypsonians;

(d) such other persons as the Minister may appoint.”

with experience in training and finance. And these people are to be let loose as a separate corporate person in charge of God knows how many millions of dollars to try to work out all these airy-fairy ideas which the hon. Minister so eloquently expressed.

**3.10 p.m.**

The hon. Minister drew my attention to clause 9 in answer to my query. Insofar as this commission organizes its own carnival shows at the Savannah, the Oval, or wherever, it is quite entitled to make regulations for the conduct of people and competitors in those shows. That is a private matter. That is a matter of the law of contract. If I buy a ticket for a show and it says, "this ticket is issued subject to the regulations of the authority running the show", I am obliged, by contract, to comply with those regulations. We do not need an Act of Parliament to decide that. We do not need to give private people running shows, the power to make regulations for their shows.

I did not gather, from the hon. Minister's remarks, that this was the intention. The intention is to regulate carnival in some way. But to give power to a statutory body, in this way, to regulate, co-ordinate or conduct carnival activities, does not mean that they can, by one iota, interfere with the ordinary rights of citizens carrying on their lawful business, whether in the streets or in a carnival band or jumping up anywhere. The commission cannot interfere. I really do not know how that objective, which the hon. Minister indicated was important, can be achieved by this bill.

I draw attention to the fact that there is a rule-making power at the end of clause 26. Let us look at it for a moment.

"The Commission may, with the approval of the Minister, make regulations for—

- (a) the operation and qualification of the Pension Scheme established under section 14,"

All these bodies have to have a pension plan, and quite rightly too, if they are going to have permanent employees. Certainly, if you have a pension plan you should have power to make regulations.

- "(b) the Constitution, powers and function of committees..."

Any body which has the power to appoint committees can make rules for governing the sittings of the committee.

- "(c) controlling its financial operations;"

Indeed, but will the regulations be enough to prevent the moneys seeping away underneath?

- "(d) the better administration of the Act."

It may be suggested by the hon. Minister, or she may be advised, that that gives this commission the power to make any regulations governing any matters within clause 9. I feel I must assure her that this would be very strictly construed because when you make regulations with the authority of an Act of Parliament, you are exercising a law-making power, and our Constitution provides that such power must come directly from Parliament. So that they could not invoke "(d) the better administration of the Act," to regulate, co-ordinate or conduct carnival activities run by somebody else anywhere.

Let us look at clause 9 (1) (b) which says:

"(b) the development, maintenance and review of rules, regulations and procedures for the conduct of carnival festivities throughout the country;"

It seems very much the same as (a). Are there rules already? If there are, they could be maintained. I am not aware of any rules and regulations relating to carnival or its festivities throughout this country. The Commissioner of Police publishes traffic rules every year. Is this commission to have anything to do with that? Is it going to be able, for instance, to organize the judging of carnival bands in some rational way so that the miserable mas-players are not sentenced to standing up for five hours on end to get into the Savannah? Is it going to have the power to organize a one-way street around the Savannah with judges every so often at random, so that the people can play their mas and enjoy it?

"(c) the identification, evaluation and promotion of all Carnival related industries with a view to the enhancing and marketing . . ."

My understanding is that at the end of the fete, a number of tourists buy costumes and they take them back to the United States of America or wherever. That is private enterprise. It is my costume and I sell it. I seriously ask them: Is a Government-appointed body of this kind going to be able to promote that kind of entrepreneurial activity? The answer is clearly, no. You do not put a government statutory corporation in charge of entrepreneurial activity of any kind if you do not wish to have a financial disaster. We have had too much of that already, which the hon. Minister and her colleagues in the Cabinet have now spent four years trying to clean up, and we are putting more financial disasters of this kind.

**Mrs. Johnson:** We have cleaned up some of them.

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** As for the rest of this marketing business, I go back to my previous remark. We are turning a wonderful national fete into a business enterprise.

Clause 16 (2) says:

"The Commission may establish branches in or outside of Trinidad and Tobago."

Nothing is said about getting the approval of the respective Minister or the Minister of Finance. So the miserable taxpayers of this country, in addition to all these embassies with trade departments and so on, are to have an additional department, the National Carnival Commission, costing us umpteen thousand dollars in expensive premises in London and New York.

Clause 18 (1) says:

"There is hereby established the National Carnival Commission Fund..."

In the absence of explanation, I should like to know what kind of fund this is. Is this a special fund under the Exchequer and Audit Act, like the Petroleum Fund and all those other funds of blessed memory which were eventually consigned to limbo by this Government? Is it that kind of fund, subject to that Act?

**Sen. H. Charles:** Which Government?

**Sen. Furness-Smith:** I cannot give you the section of the Exchequer and Audit Act but I know that all those funds were, of course, quite illegal because the purpose of the funds was not stated. If this is intended like that, then of course, the further question arises as to how this miserable commission will be able to get out its money when it is in a fund established under the Exchequer and Audit Act. I wonder whether the hon. Minister's advisors have considered that aspect of the matter carefully.

Mr. President, all I can do is to express my profound regret that the hon. Minister should have presented this bill at all, to try and nationalize carnival, and if she has to come with a bill of this kind, that it should be brought in this form. I ask Senators to vote firmly and unanimously against it. Thank you.

**3.20 p.m.**

**Sen. Dr. Krishna Bahadoorsingh:** Mr. President, like Sen. Furness-Smith, I too would like to express my chagrin on any occasion when insinuations, either

advertently or inadvertently, are made with respect to ethnicity. I cannot help but feel that such implications were present when the Leader of the Opposition made his presentation in this House. I am not saying there may have been any malice in it, but I would like to warn that to delve into this arena is extremely dangerous, and we should be very cautious when we are alluding to matters of this kind in Trinidad and Tobago.

I share Sen. Furness-Smith's view that in the last 30 years we have come a long way in this country and I think we could be a paradigm example to the world when it comes to our racial harmony and the equality that we enjoy in this country. Mr. President, I am not saying that things are 100 per cent perfect, but then I would like to ask you the question: where are they 100 per cent perfect? We have come a long way here and these insinuations which have been creeping into our social fabric over the last two years or so, are highly unfortunate and I wish that an end could be placed to them.

I have to share Sen. Furness-Smith's view with respect to the effect that this bill could have in our country and as it would relate to carnival, in particular. As a small example, a few weeks ago I made a few harmless comments about calypso and it is a good thing I left the country the next day. However, that was purely coincidental, it was not by design.

Any time carnival comes around in Trinidad and Tobago, the one thing that we are always deluged with is controversy of one kind or another. Who can gainsay that fact. I think it is well-known. There are controversies about everything. I do not have to give any examples otherwise I may take up all my time and not make the few brief points I wish to make. But controversies about calypsoes, prizes, bands, which way they go, how long people wait, no toilet facilities, the judges, the queens and everything. Carnival perhaps is an old Awarak word which means "controversy", I do not know. Perhaps this could also be researched to see whether I am correct. Nevertheless, controversy is endemic in this beautiful national festival we have in our country.

If this bill were to pass, if the Government in its wisdom does not withdraw this bill, I can guarantee you that the sort of controversies that we have known thus far, would be only a small percentage of the controversies that this bill would inadvertently further create. This bill, to me, is like sticking your hand in a jack-spaniard's nest. Or if you want to remove a huge jack-spaniard's nest, it is like

going and removing it with your hand and say this is the right way to do it. Because this is what is going to happen. My good friend Sen. Furness-Smith summarized it very succinctly when he indicated that the effect of this is that carnival will be nationalized.

We know the effect in the country over the last 15 or 18 years with respect to state enterprises. They have been, by and large, with one or two exceptions maybe, a complete and absolute disaster. I have said that on innumerable occasions. This is one of my pet subjects, that the word "state" and the word "enterprise" do not go together. They are incongruous. State enterprises do not exist. I have made the analogy that if you want to marry a state with an enterprise, it is like marrying a dog with a cat. You get no issue whatsoever. They cannot reproduce because they are incongruous. I hate to say that the PNM created state enterprises and what this Government is doing is to, in effect, create a carnival state enterprise which, unfortunately, would not work. Besides, I think it is highly politically unwise to pursue this course of action.

I would like to identify with the laudable objectives stated in this bill. Sen. Furness-Smith went through so many of them and I would not waste our time to go through all of them in detail. But if you were to only look at the Explanatory Note, you would see so many objectives there which are highly laudable. "The propagation of carnival both nationally and internationally." I do not really know whether we need in Trinidad and Tobago a further propagation of carnival nationally. I do not know what this bill or what any government can do to further propagate carnival at the national level. However, I do take the point that carnival can be propagated internationally. There is no doubt about it. I will give you some examples.

This year, if anyone looked at the international news, or CNN, I was distressed not to have seen anything about Trinidad carnival. If something had appeared, perhaps I was not looking at it at that particular time. Mr. President, they had long excerpts about carnival in New Orleans, Louisiana. Okay, well that is an American festival trying to imitate Trinidad and Tobago, but coming up a poor fifth, not even a second. There was no comparison whatsoever.

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

Internationally you hear a lot about the carnival celebrations or *mardi gras* celebrations in Brazil, but that is supposed to be a good festival. Again they do not

have the sort of sting which we have in this country, but the world knows about these two festivals. What about the five or six or seven other carnival festivals which were mentioned on the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday? Some remote places in France, Spain, insignificant festivals with which one would not even bother. It would be equivalent to having mas in Toco. I am saying there is nothing wrong with mas in Toco, but what I am saying is, what they were showing as a festival worthy of being in international news, was no larger, no more colourful, than mas in Toco. Mas in Toco is perhaps one tenth of one per cent of the whole Trinidad festival. I trust I have been careful.

Mr. President, the Government does have a role to play in some way, shape or form to ensure that we get coverage internationally. I have no qualms about that. However, I do not believe that this is the mechanism to do it; as Sen. Furness-Smith mentioned, to formulate another statutory body.

I was the Chairman of a statutory body for five years and I must tell you, I failed in my objectives. Perhaps it is the only objective in my life in which I have failed, but I can tell you authoritatively, if you want to get something achieved, if you want to get something done, the statutory way is not the way to go. That is a sure method to failure and disaster. You may have one or two exceptions and I would not take the time here to indicate all the reasons. It is not the place, but I believe we all know the reasons.

Mr. President, if we wish to promote carnival internationally, I am sure we have a plethora of other agencies to do this. We have a Tourism Development Board; we have a Ministry of External Affairs and International Marketing and perhaps two, three or four other agencies through which this particular aspect of carnival could be promoted and objectives achieved. So I do not think it is really necessary for that one purpose to think in terms of another commission.

Another objective is to make carnival a viable national cultural and commercial enterprise—Sen. Furness-Smith has covered these points. I wish to reiterate what he has mentioned, when I see that the making of a viable commercial enterprise is the province of a statutory board. I wish if the lady Minister whom I welcome here once more, and it is always good to see her because I know she means well and deep in her heart I am sure she really feels that this is the way to go—if this is the way the objectives would have been achieved, I would have been the first, as I had in the past, to have supported her. It is very unfortunate that with the laudable objectives contained in this bill, the instrument is not the correct one.

It is highly regrettable. But to expect a statutory organization to be involved in an attempt to make a viable commercial enterprise, is once more trying what the previous Government and this country tried to do over the last 15 or 18 years and it has cost the country billions and billions of dollars. I contend that had it not been that methodology which had been used to develop Trinidad and Tobago via state enterprises, if those funds had been used differently, we ought not to have been any longer a Third World country. We should be approaching the First World level, not a Third World country.

Things like reducing the remunerations of the civil servants and all the measures which have been taken because of our financial stringencies, these may not have been necessary. I blame the state enterprises to a large extent. Here, in 1991, we are in a way trying to create another state enterprise and I think that is highly unfortunate.

One other objective refers to arrangements for research. I ask the Minister, if you wish, through a statutory body, to have somebody do research, is it that you are going to have a full-time paid researcher, or are you going to hire somebody outside on a job-to-job basis? Again, I believe that within the various institutions existing in the country you already have access to people who can be hired to do this research and I refer to the University of the West Indies. If you wish to have research done on carnival, I am sure there may be one, two, three or half a dozen lecturers at the University who may have some spare time—I do not know whether any are sitting here today—who may be happy, because we are all underpaid anyway, to have the extra remuneration to do research on some aspect of carnival. I know they are underpaid because I was one of them at one time so I am not trying to insult them; I am sympathizing with them. They should be all paid higher salaries, so as far as the research is concerned, we do have a good agency, meaning the University of the West Indies which can conduct this research at a little increment—moneywise—without having to create a body or hire a new person, *et cetera*.

Mr. President, one other area in which I think the Government could assist carnival is to preserve the Trinidad aspect of what carnival is all about, to preserve the Trinidad identity or idiosyncrasy of carnival. Already, we are getting competition and it is going to continue. I notice that there is a sort of a carnival in Jamaica and they are trying to propagate carnival there, maybe to enhance their tourism thrust. Of course, they have tourism and no carnival and we have carnival



and no tourism. So they are trying to borrow—if the word, borrow, is appropriate—the Trinidad type of carnival, to enhance their tourism.

Now we have to guard against this and this is a role for the Government to play, but I am sure this is not the vehicle to do it. When it comes to our steelband—and most of us have travelled to other Caribbean territories—I am usually deeply hurt when I am in Barbados, or on occasions I have been in Puerto Rico; long ago in my university days in Jamaica, and you hear a steelband and you hear the nationals of those countries telling foreign visitors that the steelband came from either Jamaica, Puerto Rico or Barbados or what have you. On those occasions I did not care to be an obnoxious national of Trinidad and Tobago, going around correcting everybody. But we are losing, if we have not lost, that identity with respect to where the steelband came from. This is an area where the Government, in whatever way, could assist in preserving the Trinidad identity of our carnival.

#### **3.40 p.m.**

Mr. President, I firmly believe that the Government can play a major role in making carnival assist in our tourism thrust. We do not really have a tourism industry *per se*. It is very, very small. We have a long way to go. I think we should have at least 15,000 to 20,000 hotel rooms between Trinidad and Tobago; or I would say between Tobago and Trinidad, Tobago in my opinion, being better suited to the tourism industry. That is not to say we do not have things in Trinidad to offer also, and carnival could be one of the main instruments so to do.

In addition to that, we have other festivals and each of these festivals can play a significant role in that tourism thrust. I do not think any one of them would be able to play a role as large as maybe carnival, which is a big important national festival in our country. Perhaps all of them together may play a role half as much as carnival, or less, but nevertheless they all have a role to play. The sooner we encourage tourists to come to Trinidad on the basis of the fact that we have the celebration of Phagwa, Eid, Divali, Emancipation Day or an Indian Arrival Day, however, it may be done, if we get 500 tourists coming to see what Indian Arrival Day or Emancipation Day, Trinidad style, is all about, it is a beginning.

In addition to that, we could also create in this country, additional national days. I did not say “holidays”, I said “national days,” because I am a firm believer that we have too many holidays in this country. If I had my way, I will cut it down by at least two, three or four and make some other arrangements to recognize

certain events. But we could have, for example—and I am not being facetious, I am thinking about tourism and the tourist dollar and foreign exchange—“National Birdwatchers' Day”.

I have met so many people coming to Trinidad and Tobago to go birdwatching, travelling all the way from Europe and North America and when they speak of our birds in Trinidad, the praise is only enhanced when they go to Tobago. They come back raving about the beauty of the country, the pristine state the birds are living in, *etc.* That alone can bring in thousands of people in this country, on a yearly basis. We can have other such days, I am merely giving one example. What I am saying, the reason for these examples, is that this is the sort of role the Government could play, not necessarily through the creation of another statutory body, however.

Mr. President, like Sen. Furness-Smith, I would like to ask the Minister to seriously consider the withdrawal of this bill. I reiterate, it would not work. You are going to create another psuedo state enterprise which will not work. As I said also, it is politically unwise. So I ask her to give this serious consideration and then make a decision.

Now, the last point I want to make is connected with the first point I made. This is with respect to the references to ethnicity which we tend to make more and more in this country. The point I want to make is that I do not know whether there are enclaves in the NAR that may have a proclivity to one ethnic set of thinking or attitude or another. I do not know that. But any—

**Sen. Atwell:** Mr. President, I just wish, on behalf of the party, to categorically tell him that there is no such enclave in this party.

**Dr. Bahadoorsingh:** Mr. President, if Sen. Atwell says that, I would believe him and I do believe him and I thank him for the information. But what I was going to say is that any charges of ethnicity must, in some way, relate to the political leader. As an independent person, I will tell you that I happen to know—I am not aligned with him—the political leader of the NAR, Mr. A. N. R. Robinson is incapable of thinking in racial terms. Thank you.

**Sen. Trevor Belmosa:** Mr. President, hon. Minister, I would like to make a brief contribution on this bill that seems to be the Government's carnival policy as opposed to a cohesive national cultural policy. I hope that I will be around to see the day when this Parliament could bring all the different groups and their

particular festivities together under a cohesive cultural policy so that we can end the long overdue, colonial divide and conquer technique of rule in this society.

This statutory body that the Government wishes to implement will have the responsibility for the propagation of carnival, both nationally and internationally. I want to briefly discuss clause 4, particularly the phrase—

"...marketing of the cultural products of Carnival;"

The specific cultural product that I want to speak about is the steelpan. The steelpan, as it is currently exhibited, is very costly and can run into hundreds and thousands of dollars. As you know, this specific cultural product, the pan, had its genesis many years ago. It is very interesting to note that the good Senator mentioned that when he was abroad somewhere in Jamaica, other people were claiming ownership of the pan and he did not bother to clarify where pan came from. That story lingers on within our own society, that we are afraid somehow to put a claim to our own invention and contribution to world civilization. In fact, Ministers and businessmen tend to run across the world bragging and boasting about this latest twentieth century musical invention, the pan. That is a very good boast to encourage the tourists, but within our own society our children, and our great grandchildren do not even know where the pan came from or who invented it, and there is no policy to make sure that ownership is from Trinidad and Tobago.

As far as my research has taken me, pan and carnival *per se* started among the poor and the grassroots, and particularly "Behind the Bridge" in John John. In fact, just two weeks ago, on April 18, 1991 at the Trinity Cathedral, the residents of John John and the Carib Tokyo Steel Orchestra celebrated the Fifteenth Memorial Anniversary of the father of steelpan, the late Winston Spree Simon who, as it was documented, 53 years ago invented four notes on the pan. I have several books that indicate that he was the person recognized by the then Governor for playing full tunes and yet the society does not claim ownership to this great invention. Even on May 8, 1991, an Afro-American group in New York called upon our representative at the United Nations to receive an award for Winston Spree Simon.

**3.50 p.m.**

So far, the history has shown that the ownership of the pan came from the poor, grassroots people from "Behind the Bridge" particularly in John John. This is where the cultural product, the pan, has its genesis, and I hope that the Minister and this new commission would be able to market that particular ownership to the

rest of the world, so that the good Senator would be able to at least say where it came from. It is interesting to note that we need to be reminded of the history of the development of the steelpan.

In the book entitled "*Steel Pan*" by Anthony Mark Jennings he discussed briefly the history of pan and he goes on to give us a litany of stories and stating that:

"There were at least three major periods that pan developed. One was the post-emancipation period between 1830—1880 when we had various instruments like the chac-chac, the salt box, which was used as the base and the tin kettle.

Another period was between 1880—1910 where the development of music..."

As I say, development of music, it was basically noisy music at that time, and many people in the residential areas never really accepted that innovative period of pan; yet today these same people are the ones moving around the world trying to profit, as this NCC that wants to regulate, control and profit from these cultural products. I hope as a profit, at least some revenue goes back to the source and origin of these cultural products because today they are still existing. Many panmen and panwomen are unemployed, starting from generation to generation, they have been unemployed and the only prize they may get is if they come first or second in Panorama.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Would the hon. Member give way? While I think all of us are quite grateful for a bit of history on the steelpan, which is an integral part of carnival, I would wish for my edification if the hon. Senator would relate it to the bill, because somehow I am not seeing the relation to the bill. Perhaps if that could be done I would be edified.

**Sen. Belmosa:** The bill purports to regulate, control and to profit from cultural products. One of the products is pan and, therefore, I am trying to give the significance, the struggle and the history of pan so that when this commission meets and discusses it, they do not tax these cultural products or put VAT and, therefore, allow these poor grassroots people to have an additional burden in trying to make a living.

Just recently I was introduced to one of the great pioneers and innovators of pan, Mr. Bertie Marshall. He was employed with the former Government, and

together with some members and representatives of Pan Trinbago they visited Sweden to buy a machine that would sink, shape and form pan. That Government did not purchase that machine. Mr. Marshall told me that the machine was capable of mass producing pan, making it much cheaper so that they can be sold both locally and internationally at a cheaper price. It would have also facilitated the school children who are now going to different pan tents to borrow discarded pans. If that machine was bought we would have eliminated that sort of inefficiency, and we would have been able to provide these children with pans. There was also a suggestion that maybe, this Government can purchase that machine and subsidize a factory to employ some of these pan players throughout the year. These are just some suggestions for the commission.

I am concerned about propagating carnival internationally and allowing local bodies to run carnival without this country having any direct link in the revenues that are raised. I hope that issue would be looked into and that the Government would establish a sort of tripartite partnership, so that when they market this cultural product internationally, the Government, the sponsors and maybe the host country can assist in financing some of these steelbands, at least the 12 finalists, to make tours so that their players can be employed. It is one way of marketing the product. That does not take place now, so we may have carnival in Nottinghill, in Miami and Toronto but there is no assistance to these bands to go across to play and earn a living. I think the Government can look into that as well.

Today, the way carnival is structured, it tends to push the panmen out of business and the only time that we hear of pan is during Panorama. Therefore, I feel some arrangement should be made to encourage pan to have a longer existence throughout the year. I think that goes well for calypso as well as for mas.

I just want to reiterate that the father of steelpan, Winston Spree Simon, created his new invention in John John, "Behind the Bridge" and when this commission is marketing this cultural product, they should not be afraid to invite tourists to that area, an area that is considered under-developed. This country should feel proud to take tourists to the birthplace of pan, and at least create some institution in that community, so that the tourists can come and benefit from the birthplace of pan.

Just yesterday, the Prime Minister visited the John John community. He alluded to some projects and the unemployed youths there felt that the 10-days' project that they get is insufficient, that they rather work 365 days per year instead of 10

days. He also mentioned that he had some projects in the pipeline that are forthcoming and to me, from my history, it seems as though these projects have been forthcoming for over 34 years and they have not come as yet. I hope that the good Minister operating this NCC will take into consideration the significance of our invention to the birthplace of pan and to the pioneer and inventor of pan.

Thank you.

**Sen. Fr. Winston Joseph:** Mr. President, it is always a joy and privilege to have the lady Minister. I am convinced that she means well, her heart is in the right place, that she loves the culture, especially the carnival, but I would like to remind the dear hon. Minister that when this Government first came into power with all the good intentions, it made changes and people were saying you do not change things for change sake. It used the kiddies carnival and decided quite honourably that it would use the steelbands and got rid of the DJs. It was a fiasco. It was bad. It was mass confusion.

#### **4.00 p.m.**

Now, Mr. President, I just want, as a preamble, to deal with two myths here. The first one is the thing about carnival being commercialized; carnival is commercialized. When people can leave their lucrative jobs and buy prime property around the Savannah all year round and can afford to pay for that prime property, where are they getting the money? When you look at the bank statements of those who are involved in producing bands, you will see the kind of money they make.

Sen. Bahadoorsingh asked: Why all this controversy every carnival? The reason is that you take the people's street theatre—and I know of what I speak because I participate in the festival; I have always been an active participant, both in pan and in the mas—and you regulate it, you set up competition, you set up judges and you kill the spontaneity, the spirit of the people to participate by setting up a structure where you can say, carnival is colour, or no, it is street theatre. So you create the controversy by setting up the structure. My fear is that because you want to set up a statutory corporation, you create more confusion because the steelbandmen would ask for more money because they feel you have more money now; the bandleaders are going to ask for more money and they are going to set you up two or three weeks before carnival because they feel you are in charge; you have all these tourists to manage at a centralized position, and they will say to you, “You either run the ‘bread’ or we do not participate.”

In addition, I got a letter in the mail from a group called "Poison", and the bandleaders have already decided that next year they are not going to the Savannah anymore. The people have decided they are going back to the streets and they are not going into competition because for too long they have waited for 9 hours to get on stage. So you are spending a lot of money in terms of trying to set up the infrastructure, and yet there will be no participants where you are.

Now, there were some things in this bill that I like and the clause that I particularly like is the one about marketing. There is someone sitting in this august Chamber today whom I would recommend for the job, but you have to work it through the Tourist Board. What you need to do, like Sen. Furness-Smith suggested, is use the Museum authority. They have the skill, they have the personnel, they are already structured to deal with that, to deal with the research.

The Minister talked about costumes. The days of costumes ended with George Bailey and Harold Saldena when the masses of the people played mas. When the elite of the society took it over, they started wearing clothes that you would wear to the beach. It was flesh; it was no longer costume. So there is nothing to market on Ash Wednesday or Carnival Tuesday because there are no costumes anymore. What you need to market are the kings and queens of the band. You take those costumes; you put them in miniature forms, and you put them as plaques, and that is what the tourists would go for. You take the best of the kings and queens of the bands. There are no costumes to market. You do not need a corporation to do that.

Then we have this myth about the steelband. I would like to know, and I was proud when I heard that people in Jamaica left the Reggae which is integral to the people, and 20,000 people went to a Kaiseo festival. I would like to see steelbands being played at the Vienna Hall. I do not want to put a fence around my culture. I would be proud to know that every single living country in this universe is beating pan. Why do we want to hold it and create this fence? Why should it not be played in all the concert halls of the world? Why do we want to own it? What we need to do, as our brother said here, is to give credit where credit is due. Talk about Spree Simon. Take them to John John, the birthplace. Let us use the commission, Mr. President. Let us get the best marketing experts in the field. Let us use the television and the media. The medium is not the message; the medium is the message where you massage people in what you want. Let us link it to tourism and let us bring it here.

Now, I am not convinced that this Government is 100 per cent behind this bill. Listen to a speech by the honourable Prime Minister at the presentation of carnival awards on Friday, March 22, 1991. Someone was kind enough to send me a copy. Listen to what he said on page 5:

“Pan Trinbago is even now poised to take a quantum leap into self-sufficiency as it seeks to address the market, both locally and internationally.”

Not to regulate, not to control. What we do in terms of pan, is we take a steelband—it costs a lot of money—and we send it to New York for two weeks. What we need to do is to market them so that they could go to every state in North America over a period of 6 to 8 months, because there are many unemployed youths and it would create employment over a protracted period as well as expose them.

So what we need is a commission that would help to enable and equip the people's participation. If I am convinced that this bill will not have me wait 9 hours to get on stage, that when I take my guests to a carnival show and I see the ticket marked No. 450, the seat will be there marked 450 which will be my property and my guests'. If I go and I see the corporation not giving free drinks to the boys or Uncle Chester and Aunt Minerva, and if this bill will facilitate some of the ills and the evils, then I will say “Amen! Allelujah!” But I very much doubt it, Mr. President, and I doubt that you can regulate and control a people's natural expression. Let the people control their thing and deal with some of the issues that we need to deal with in terms of making it marketable. Thank you very much.

**Sen. Salisha Baksh:** Mr. President, when this bill to establish a National Carnival Commission was first introduced, I did not understand then and I still do not understand now, why the need to establish a National Carnival Commission. Despite all that the Minister said here today, she still did not tell us how this bill will solve or alleviate the numerous problems and failures associated with carnival. Apart from the oppressive hand of political interference, the Minister still has not, in our opinion, justified the need for this bill. One would be inclined to think, in the interest of human and cultural development in this country, that the hon. Minister, instead of introducing a bill in respect of the establishment of a National Carnival Commission, it would have really been a tremendous effort if she had come here and instead proposed to establish a National Commission on Culture, which would have obviously incorporated carnival as well.



I would go on to deal with culture a bit to clarify to this honourable Senate why I feel so strongly about this. The presence and contribution of people of various origins have made our society a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and a multi-cultural society. And to be blessed with this, it is a real replica of God's earth which shines in heterogeneity. One wonders then, in the absence of a policy on culture in this country, are we then to assume that there is going to be an Act to establish a National Parang Commission or a National Commission for Best Village, or Phagwa or Divali or Eid or any other major festival celebrated here, most of which are observed by public holidays? With this in mind, the bill certainly gives an impression that perhaps carnival is the only cultural expression the Government intends to recognize in any official capacity.

Culture constitutes a fundamental part of the life of each individual and each community and, consequently development, whose ultimate aim should be focused on man, must have a cultural dimension. This administration, Mr. President, should know that efforts to promote cultural development would form part of the people's aspirations to achieve political liberation and socio-economic development. Contact with hard realities would lead to the emergence of a very simple idea: That is, well-being, progress and happiness cannot be imported in accordance with a pre-established plan and a standard pattern. No development programme or policy worthy of the name can ignore the essential characteristics of the natural and cultural environment, the needs, aspirations and the values of the population concerned. Once the notion of development is firmly situated within the context of cultural life, it would take account, not only of the population's working capacities, but also of its cultural identity in which any vision of the world is rooted.

Mr. President, without neglecting the importance of creativity as expressed in intellectual and artistic activity, it is important to broaden the notion of culture to include behaviour patterns, the individual's view of himself, of society and the outside world. In this perspective, the cultural life of a society may be seen to express itself through its way of living and being, through its perceptions, and self-perceptions, its behaviour patterns, value systems and beliefs. Where development action is concerned, the implications of such a conception of culture are evident. Any bill or legislation which fails to take into account both the natural and the cultural environment of a given population, runs the risk of failure.

**4.15 p.m.**

Government's main thrust, Mr. President, at this time should be a plan of action which should centre on four major objectives:

- (a) acknowledging the cultural dimension in development;
- (b) asserting and enhancing cultural identities;
- (c) broadening participation in cultural life;
- (d) promoting international cultural co-operation.

Failure to do this, obviously indicates that what constitutes the very basis of the cultural life of peoples is threatened. If the principle is respected, there is no reason to suppose that receptiveness to other cultures and other values could be other than a positive factor in the assertion and renewal of cultural identity.

Participation in cultural life is equivalent on another level—that of values—to participation in public life and social development. Consequently, without the effective exercise of cultural rights there can be no true cultural democracy and even perhaps in the long run, no genuine political democracy. Access to cultural goods and services and participation in cultural life—complementary aspects of the same reality—can reinforce each other. But technological progress and changes in lifestyles have, to a certain extent, broadened access to works of art and cultural values. Much remains to be done to enable a wider range of people to participate effectively in cultural life.

Culture has always been the privileged instrument of communication between peoples, for it can make a powerful contribution to the strengthening of international understanding by recognizing the specificity of each society's forms of expression and cultural values. For this reason, cultural co-operation in its different forms can become a factor of prime importance in combating ignorance, intolerance and all forms of prejudice—in particular racial prejudice—which persists throughout this country and which generates mistrust and hatred, giving rise to tensions, and inhibiting attempts to secure disarmament and establish peace.

Mr. President, we often boast that carnival is the greatest show on earth. This implies that foreigners should want to be a part of this acclaimed national festival. One can only wonder then, why there is this need to market a national festival which already attracts a great number of foreigners to our shores. If it is truly the

greatest show on earth, why, after all the festivity is there always talk of accumulated losses, gross mismanagement and the absence of proper organization?

**Sen. H. Charles:** Because of the absence of this particular commission.

**Sen. Baksh:** Let us examine the facts. Carnival is not really the greatest show on earth, and if it is to become such, it needs our immediate attention. We have to provide the proper infrastructure that will cater for the potential of this festival. The greatest defect in the bill before us today is that it fails miserably to acknowledge the already existing machinery which needs to be put into proper working condition to effectively and efficiently perform the function of really making carnival the greatest show on earth.

In order to achieve the stated objectives of the bill before us, the proposed National Carnival Commission has been given a wide ambit of power. This designated power has to be controlled because, as we all know, "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." This is clearly demonstrated upon further examination of various clauses of the bill which reflect the oppressive political control and manifest subjectivity in the decision-making process of the proposed National Carnival Commission.

At this point, Mr. President, I refer to clause 5 which clearly reflects that one of the primary objectives of this bill is political interference and control. This clause provides for the establishment of a commission comprising nine persons, six of whom are direct political appointees chosen by the respective Minister. These commissioners have the responsibility for the management and development of carnival, but for decisions to be valid, based on the provisions of clause 6 (4), only a quorum of five persons is required. It is interesting to note, that if for some reason the three non-political nominees as provided for in clause 5 (1) (a), (b) and (c) are absent at a board meeting of this proposed new National Carnival Commission, major decisions affecting carnival can be made by five of the chosen six without any input from the three most important groups representing carnival activities in this country. What is even more alarming, is that even if the three non-political nominees are present, they can be out-voted very easily. Their presence therefore, Mr. President, on this board just seems to be an orchestrated plan for the purpose of making up numbers. At this stage, I am inclined to think, because of the numbers involved, that this Government is giving this nation a "six for a nine".

Then there is clause 9 (2) which gives the commission, among other things, the power to establish companies engaged in activities related to the performance of

the commission's stated functions. Such a wide power in a piece of legislation is very worrying, especially in light of the notorious reputation of state-owned companies for operating at a loss.

There are other dangerous provisions relating to financial matters in the proposed legislation. For instance, clause 8 (4), provides *inter alia* for the establishment of a Tenders Committee which, based on clause 25, will be independent of the Central Tenders Board.

Clause 18 (2) (c) gives the National Carnival Commission power to keep gate receipts, sales, donations, grants and royalties in the National Carnival Commission's Fund. These powers given to the National Carnival Commission by these aforementioned clauses, pose a definite threat for mismanagement and corruption, because we are all very aware of the unaccountable disappearance of public funds which are placed in the hands of national organizations. This is no news to us. And the Minister and this nation will undoubtedly remember the added trauma of November 19, 1989, of the controversy surrounding the sale of football tickets. These clauses, which deal with the financial control of funds pertaining to carnival, open up the floodgate for corruption in the running of carnival.

At present, we believe that all moneys collected by the National Carnival Commission go into the Consolidated Fund and, therefore, is within some form of control. Further, the Central Tenders Board oversees all tenders and contracts for the facilities and services provided at carnival. Thus, there is already a measure of protection from interference. But this new bill seeks to eliminate this existing security. There is now going to be too much temptation for manipulation of financial matters in the hands of the National Carnival Commission.

The gravity of this situation is further highlighted when one considers that the majority of the National Carnival Commission Board will be political appointees. Carnival has the capacity of being a great source of revenue in our country, but bearing in mind that an unfortunate repercussion of political control is corruption, there is undoubtedly the potential for substantial fraud under the provisions of this bill.

It is amazing that after this bill gives such extensive powers to the commissioners of the board, clause 12 seeks to exempt any commissioner or officer from any action in respect of any act done *bona fide* in the execution of his duties. It is noted, however, that clause 2 makes the commission vicariously liable for the actions of a commissioner who is exempt from liability as aforesaid, but

nowhere in the bill can we find a provision for an independent decision-making body or tribunal which will determine whether the commissioner has acted in good faith.

**4.25 p.m.**

Once again, this indicates the lack of proper accountability for the actions of persons supposedly acting in the best interest of carnival. It is tantamount to making a commissioner almost beyond any form of disciplinary action whatsoever. These Commissioners stand on the fiduciary position and based on clause 5, ought to be very qualified. Suffice it to say that they should be fully liable for any action in respect of any act performed in the execution of their duties.

Clause 16 provides for the establishment of the principal office and branches of the commission and subclause (4) clearly states the objectives of these offices, but I am having problems with this. How do we reconcile the overlap of duties between these offices and those of the Tourist Board and the High Commission offices, bearing in mind, of course, that one of the primary objectives of these latter offices is the promotion of the culture of Trinidad and Tobago of which carnival is a part?

Subclause (4) clearly states that the branches of the commission shall be fully responsible for the management of their affairs and shall have exclusive authority within the region under their purview to carry out the functions listed from subparagraphs (a) to (d) of the said subclause. In other words, Mr. President, money will be wasted in establishing branches of the commission because these branches will be performing duties that are presently under the ambit of the Tourist Board and High Commission offices.

The real problem that must be addressed is the reason for the failure of the already existing offices in the execution of their functions. That is what we must address. A bill which seeks to establish more offices and branches to perform the same functions already catered for, is not solving the problem at hand, and that problem is the lack of proper management and organization in the form of a cultural package for the promotion and growth of carnival. Mr. President, it is very simple. We have to use the resources at hand to ensure that the machinery that is already in place is used to its maximum potential.

Our constitution, which is the supreme law of the land, expressly provides in section 4(i) for freedom of thought and expression. This fundamental human right and freedom has always existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination

by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex. No law should abrogate, abridge or infringe the enjoyment of this right and freedom. But unfortunately, this bill before us today will have the effect of suppressing the freedom of our cultural expression.

The bill only provides for one aspect of our culture, thereby paving the way for cries of ethnic and racial prejudice. The bill threatens the independence of carnival because it is wrought with direct and indirect political interference. The bill provides no assurance whatsoever that carnival will be properly organized and managed. Thus the cancer of carnival, the symptoms of which are the increasing obstacles, limitations and impediments associated with carnival, will continue to spread.

The bill also poses the danger of censorship in the execution of carnival activities. This is evidenced by the fact that judges, for instance, for major events will be chosen not necessarily for their ability or skill, but solely for their political affiliation for the government of the day. There is no doubt that there is a crisis on hand of which the Minister is fully aware. Year after year bandleaders, calypsonians and steelbandmen complain that they are treated with utter contempt by the National Carnival Commission. This has resulted in a drastic reduction in their participation and enthusiasm for the art form.

There is imminent stagnation. Mr. President, I can simply produce many newspaper clippings, perhaps of which the Minister is not aware, of complaints made by these people of whom I speak. *[Interruption]* It is amazing that we can have the Minister responsible for culture sitting in this honourable Senate and advising that we should ignore newspaper clippings of articles written by the people whom carnival affects directly.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mr. President, I am thankful to the hon. Senator for giving way. What I am saying is that one does not draw conclusions from newspaper clippings. The kind of conclusions that the hon. Senator drew must come from statistics. She was saying categorically, that participation in carnival has diminished because of the lack of respect for the participants by the National Carnival Commission. I am saying that if you say so you cannot use newspaper clippings or headlines, you have to use statistics. I would be happy to give you the statistics in my winding up.

**Sen. Baksh:** Mr. President, the hon. Minister is entitled to her views and so am I. There is imminent stagnation and if this legislation becomes law, we can rest

assured that carnival will suffer a premature death. Carnival represents colour and gaiety, and its life depends upon the freedom of expression.

Any bill which has even the slightest hint of political control or interference, such as the one before us today, will act as a catalyst in the destruction of carnival. Trinidad and Tobago is credited with a rich and varied cultural heritage. Carnival is but only one part of the mosaic of our culture. There are many other cultural expressions in our country that have the potential of becoming "great shows on earth," and if properly promoted and developed, they too can become substantial revenue earners. What we need, therefore, is to acknowledge and appreciate our many cultural expressions. And this can be done by formulating a comprehensive and efficient policy on culture which, when applied to the given tradition, will ensure the latter's maintenance, growth and promotion both on the national and international scene.

Mr. President, the National Carnival Commission Bill of today paves the way for the Parang bill of tomorrow, the Divali bill of next week and the Phagwa bill of next month.

The laborious hours that will be spent in analyzing voluminous pieces of legislation can be curtailed by formulating one comprehensive document which will stand to the test of time by ensuring cultural harmony and equity. Why must we fight to ensure that our culture remains alive? All I can say at this point, in winding up, according to the great twentieth century poet, T. S. Elliot, "culture is what makes life worth living." I thank you.

**Mr. President:** The sitting will be suspended for approximately 30 minutes. We will resume at 5.05 p.m.

**4.35 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

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

**The Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism (Sen. Dr. the Hon. Surujrattan Rambachan):** Mr. President, I was highly amused this afternoon by some of the contributions made by the Opposition Bench, in particular, with respect to this bill that is before us. Many of the contributors in the Opposition Benches, not the Independent Benches, showed a great lack of knowledge about what is happening in Trinidad and Tobago with respect to carnival and cultural development, especially with respect to the role of the Government as the Government sees itself and its role in cultural activities.

Perhaps I got the impression—I hope that I am wrong—that my friend the hon. Sen. Prakash Persad may not have even in his life visited a pan-yard or even stood on the corners of one of the streets of Trinidad to view a carnival band, because he spoke with such inexperience and such a lack of knowledge about carnival. He seems to think that carnival was simply something that happened on a Sunday night and finished at midnight on a Tuesday night, not realizing that there is a term in Trinidad which is used to describe carnival which says, that carnival starts the morning after Ash Wednesday, it is a year round activity. This is why, perhaps, the hon. Senator could not understand why carnival can be the base of industry and can be part of the industrial revolution. It has been part of industry and it continues to be part of industrial activity in this country. One only has to look at the organization, the production, the operations and the management which have to take place in the production of a carnival band, to understand the industry that is carnival.

Mr. President, carnival as an industry is important to many people in this country. It provides substantial employment to people and anything which can be done to enhance the employment opportunities of people in this country, must be encouraged. The way the Opposition Members spoke, it seems as if they are paying very little attention to the importance of carnival as an economic and employment-generating opportunity in this country.

In fact, for a moment I got the impression that Sen. Baksh was saying stop the carnival; that if you had this bill, what you will have is a situation where every other culture is excluded in the country and only carnival would exist in the country. Such was the determination with which her final closing statements came across. So too did Sen. Persad, who really does not seem to understand that all of Trinidad, all ethnic groups involve themselves in carnival as an activity in this country.

**Sen. Baksh:** Mr. President, I would just like to make it very clear, that in no way in my presentation did I say, stop the carnival, or insinuate such. I would like the Minister, if he misunderstood me, to say so, but do not misquote me.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Mr. President, I did not quote the hon. Senator, I inferred from what she said, that I got the impression that what it amounted to was, stop the carnival.



Many attacks were made by the Leader of the Opposition, Sen. Persad, on the NAR—the National Alliance for Reconstruction. It is incumbent upon me to deal with them. The birth of the National Alliance for Reconstruction saw for the first time in this country, a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic party holding the reins of government. While every other political entity, especially the political entity from which he comes, represented in the House, attempts to hold on to one colour of the rainbow, this party holds on to every colour of the rainbow. This is the substratum; it is the foundation upon which the National Alliance for Reconstruction has been built. It is a cardinal rule that every colour of the rainbow would find equality, justice and morality in the National Alliance for Reconstruction.

Mr. President, you would understand, therefore, why the majority of citizens numbering 360,000-odd put us to hold the reins of government. It is because they had faith in us. While we stand stable, fulfilling those dreams, those who have absconded and are dealing in the realms of instability—this Government continues to be a stable entity serving the interest of every group in this country.

Mr. President, we are conscious as a Government of the ethnic and cultural diversity in Trinidad and Tobago. Do not for a moment think that the Government its Ministers, and its Members of Parliament are not conscious of our ethnic and cultural diversity in Trinidad and Tobago. Do not for a moment think that we are not acting in a responsible way in order to develop all sectors of the country in terms of cultural diversity. If the former Government paid lip-service to the diversity which existed and if the former Government wants to window-dress now in view of an upcoming election, do not blame us, because we have done more in four years to create an environment for the freer expression of culture and cultural diversity than any other entity before us in Trinidad and Tobago.

What hurts the hon. Senator, is that he has lost the opportunity for a political point and this is why he attacked me this afternoon, because this Minister and the Government of which I am proud to be a Minister, saw it fit to begin to approach the many religions and the cultures in this country in order to bring them into the mainstream of the tourism effort in this country. Had it not been done, then they would have had cause to say, "You see, alienation, discrimination; let us continue the struggle; the struggle must continue."

What I rather enjoy and have a good laugh about, is that they are living in a self-perpetuated psychology of exclusion. That is what they are living in, a psychology of exclusion that is not only self-perpetuated, but as history has begun

to show, it is becoming self-destructive. What has happened is that they go around the country telling people—the people they claim to represent—that they are not entitled to facilities, to services from this Government. Why? So that they will have the opportunity to tell the people, "the struggle must continue, my brothers and the Government does not care." This is what they have expressed here this afternoon in terms of the debate on this National Carnival Commission. This is what they have expressed.

**5.15 p.m.**

Mr. President, people are beginning to see that what they are engaging in is pure rhetoric as perhaps was so amply demonstrated on the national television only last night on *Issues Live*. The people have outgrown that rhetoric and those sentiments that are being expressed. They have discarded the ideologies that are being preached, the venom that is being spewed and the ethnic slurs that continue from that side.

You cannot treat Divali, Eid and Hosay like you treat carnival. You are talking about religious festivals. What I am doing as a responsible Minister, with responsibility for tourism with the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha, where we held a tourism conference, was in fact preparing the base for bringing within a reasonable time span and in accordance with the wishes of the Hindu population and other communities, their festivals into the mainstream of the tourism thrust.

The hon. Senator will do well to tell this House whether he wishes to commercialize Divali tomorrow. He will, for example, have to tell me if as a person, he celebrated Divali with any other ethnic group in this country in the last five years.

**Dr. Persad:** Mr. President, the answer is, yes. An unqualified yes!

**Sen. Hosein:** "Unequivocal", that is the word, not "unqualified".

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am glad to hear that Mr. President because the hon. Senator seems to be growing and that is very important. Although it is a very minuscule type of growth but it is important that he is growing out of the cocoon which he has woven around him in terms of what he can and cannot see.

Mr. President, I am making a very serious point. You see, Sen. Baksh seems to say in a very nice delicate way that attention was not being paid to Divali, Eid or other cultural festivals and so on, but I am saying that you cannot commercialize Divali and Eid. These festivals are people's religious festivals and this Government respects people's religion and the right to religion.

**Dr. Persad:** Except people who play carnival.

**Dr. Rambachan:** What do you have Senator, against people playing carnival? Are you saying that people should not play carnival? Are you saying that the carnival should be stopped in the country?

This Government is a facilitator. This Government has started the process of giving formal substance to Divali. The schools of Trinidad and Tobago celebrate Divali. If you ask the people who make and sell deyas in the country, they will tell you how many people of non-Indian origin buy deyas to celebrate Divali in the country and it has taken on the air of a national festival that goes beyond the bounds of Hinduism. I can tell you that where Divali is celebrated in non-Indians homes, it is celebrated, at times perhaps, with more fervour and greater respect, than you might find, sometimes, in traditional communities.

I was mentioning that the Government has given formal substance to Divali. Divali Nagar as an institution which started at Mid Center Mall, Chaguanas—perhaps even in India you would not see Divali Nagar and this has been expressed by visitors from all over the world who have come to see it—this Government saw what was being done was good, that it will be good for the national psyche and the country as a whole and has leased 15 acres of land next to the 610 Transmitting Station in Chaguanas for the purpose of the permanent construction of a “heritage village” which will also accommodate Divali Nagar.

Which other Government has done this in the country? And they talk about alienation, discrimination and marginalization. Fifteen acres of land was given last year which was applied for, I think, in 1987. But who gave it? This NAR Government brought it to a reality. A heritage village is a very important thing. You see, my friend might be thinking of a heritage village as simply something Hindu in concept. Would it not be beautiful to go to one place in Chaguanas, the central heartland as it is called, and see a Hindu Temple, a Mosque and a Christian church and inside a cultural hall where all of these streams of culture are finding their expression? Would it not be beautiful? That is the vision. We are not into narrow thinking and we are facilitating that heritage village.

It is very easy to criticize but in criticism, one must also be careful what one does. Now, many things have been said about the Ministry of Culture, all kinds of innuendoes have been made on that side about exclusion. If you go to the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs, you will see that there are three cultural officers there who deal with matters of East Indian culture. Mr. Narsaloo

Ramayan, who is perhaps a moving library and researcher into aspects of East Indian life in Trinidad, and who has written in several well-recognized international journals; Mr. Rajkumar Krishna Persad, who has been trained in Indian dance in India on scholarship and he is there to service the needs of people who wish to start and have classes in Indian dance and so on across the country. Very recently, the Minister herself made tremendous steps to have the foremost musician in the Caribbean, in sitar, trained for five years, on a Government of India Scholarship, come to work in that Ministry to develop East Indian music across the country, Mr. Mungal Patassar. So we have the people in place but the problem is the psychology of exclusion, the refusal to use the facilities. It is very sad that I have to stand here and say this, because the gentlemen are working very hard in the communities.

We have a Sports and Culture Fund in this country but let the Minister tell you how many applications have been made by the groups that they purport to represent. So you cannot say that others are being excluded if you yourself fail to use the facilities. We see and recognize that they will not wish to use the facilities because the struggle must continue and go on.

It is very sad, but when you are dying a political death, when it only remains for the nail to be nailed on the coffin, race is the first refuge of a political scoundrel. This is what the Opposition Bench engaged in today. I was happy to hear the statement made by Sen. Bahadoorsingh, who has had political experience in this country and who has been in the political scene for a long time, about the hon. Prime Minister of this country, in terms of his vision and of equality and justice in this country.

Carnival is an industry and I want to stress that. I want to look at the importance of this bill from another point of view, the point of view of tourism and visitors to carnival. You see, they are very myopic in what they are looking at. Suddenly the world has discovered carnival. You have Nottinghill Carnival, Caribana, New York on the Eastern Parkway, St. Vincent Carnival, Grenada Carnival, Jamaica Carnival and Barbados Crop Over and we are all competing for carnival dollars. What do you do? Jamaica is very close to the United States so it is cheaper to go and enjoy the Carnival in Jamaica. Therefore, we have now to do something to preserve the unique nature that is carnival.

We have to take steps, not to formalize carnival like they are saying; you can never formalize carnival. Carnival will forever be free and creative expression. Let me say very clearly that there is not going to be any other country in the world that

will have the creativity that this country has. No other country in the world has the creativity we have in our carnival. We have to do the things that are necessary to preserve the economic benefits that we are going to get from carnival. To do this we have to put the effort, money and resources—manpower or human—in order to make sure that our carnival is even greater and more attractive. This means organization, management, motivation, decision-making, planning and that is the context of this bill. That is the context in which this bill should be seen. Planning, motivating, putting greater dynamism so that our carnival remains unique and continues to be a carnival from which others merely mirror what is the reality in Trinidad and Tobago.

One has to see carnival in its proper perspective. Why are you so against the National Carnival Commission Bill? Something in which, as the Minister said so profoundly, every piece that is produced for carnival can really become a piece to be sold in an overseas market. In an overseas market you need to market and export it. When the hon. Senator talked about people making too much money from calypso tents—[*Interruption*] let the hon. Senator deny that he did not say that, go back to the *Hansard* and see what you said, that people have these big calypso tents and they make a lot of money. What is wrong with the people making the money in the carnival tents? The calypso tent is for one particular season but the calypsonians have to sustain themselves for 12 months.

**5.25 p.m.**

**Dr. Persad:** On a point of order, what I said was that the private individuals ran calypso tents and it was a profitable business and, therefore, the Government has no right to try to get into that area. He can read the *Hansard*.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Nobody said that we were going to take over calypso tents. In fact, this Government has created a tent for the new calypsonians, so that they can express themselves well, and give effect to their talents. They may not always get into the bigger tents, but that is the birth; the ground where they are born; where they are bred; where they develop. The Government continues to support the effort of those calypsonians.

We are not talking about privatization. In fact, I got the distinct impression that the hon. Senator did not understand what this term privatization meant at all. He should stick to dabbling in engineering and not in the domain of economics and management. I am very serious about that. This Government is giving formal substance. It is acting as a facilitator to many of the things that are happening in

the country. This afternoon, it seemed to hurt the hon. Senator when he quoted from a newspaper article and I am only referring to what he said. He quoted and he abused Sen. Basdeo who is not here to defend himself. It is the opportune time he took in the absence of an individual to abuse him, but I hope when Sen. Basdeo is here he would also take the equal opportunity to quote a headline from the *Sunday Guardian* of whatever date "First Hindu Minister To Be Appointed By The NAR". That is a fact of life and it is not only one Hindu Minister. There are Hon. Dookeran, Dr. Tewarie and myself as Hindu Ministers and more than that, this is the Government—if you really want to deal in that kind of thing, I will tell you—that for the first time placed a Hindu woman as the Attorney General in this country. Do not deal in that at all because that will crush your point about alienation and discrimination which you try to continue to make in this country. Do you understand? I do not want to deal with all that but it is necessary because this is what has been spread and is polluting the environment of equality in this country, where people are trying to live together in unity.

**Sen. Belmosa:** The terms of alienation and discrimination also take place in the East West Corridor. The rainbow which you spoke about, maybe, it is the upper crust which seems to benefit, because after the Jamaat uprising it was clear that in Beetham, Morvant, Laventille and John John, the unemployment rate is about 22 per cent or more, so alienation and discrimination do exist.

**Dr. Rambachan:** The first point I would like to make to the hon. Senator is that the unemployment rate is not 22 per cent. The last official statistic was 20.9 per cent.

I read in an issue of the *Trinidad Guardian* that the very hon. Senator—and this is what I cannot understand about their bench and I would like the hon. Senator to deal with this hon. Senator and to explain to me why that hon. Senator, Sen. Belmosa, said that in his campaign in Diego Martin, there were too many Indians. I would like to know if he has anything against Indians.

**Sen. Belmosa:** That was not a quote from me. Someone else quoted it. If you have evidence produce it.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am not getting into that. That is their bacchanal. Sorry Mr. President. I want to make the point that Trinidad and Tobago is a secular state and we are here as a Government to encourage diversity and the expression of the diversity as it exists, whether it is culturally or otherwise, to allow expression because we believe that in diversity there is strength. That is the foundation

principle of this Government. The benches on this side reflect the diversity and strength that I talk about.

This afternoon, I would simply like to close by just saying that carnival embraces every single facet of life in Trinidad and Tobago. There is no facet of life that is not untouched by carnival: whether it is the little vendor selling around the Savannah; or the wirebender; or the taxi-driver who drives people to the carnival celebrations, or carries tourists around; or the calypsonians whom we export in terms of their talent to the Jamaican carnival. It embraces every facet of economic activity and life in Trinidad.

Let us look at it this way. Carnival perhaps was born—if I am to take the European connotation that my hon. friend used—out of the womb of our French forefathers; it has been infused with the rhythm of Laventille in terms of the pan and Spree Simon and with the first injection of the pulsating beat of the tassa. What we have is the creation of the soca sound. We saw it yesterday when we visited with the hon. Prime Minister at Laventille; we saw the rhythm of the people as they walked along with the Prime Minister; we saw the enthusiasm with which they greeted the new cultural thrust which we announced in the areas. That is carnival, the true pot-pourri of expression in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Sen. Belmosa:** Hon. Senator, I too was in John John and I did not see the enthusiasm greeting that cultural thrust. As a matter of fact, I saw soldiers, I did not see people.

**5.35 p.m.**

#### **BUSINESS OF THE SENATE**

**Sen. Alloy Lequay:** Mr. President, I want to take the adjournment at this stage, and in doing so, I want to announce, having alerted hon. Members last week, that we are adjourning to Monday, May 6, 1991. We will attempt to use that day as Private Members' Day to compensate for the three days we have already lost this year. On May 17, if you will permit me to give this advice, we hope to continue the debate on the National Carnival Commission Bill and to conclude that debate.

Hon. Members might be aware that we will not be meeting on May 14 because of the CPA conference that will be taking place from May 13. I am sure that all hon. Members will want to support that conference. As a consequence, the honourable President himself will be very much involved and we will not be

meeting on May 14. So that we will then continue on May 21, and May 28 will hopefully be Private Members' Day again.

I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Monday, May 6, 1991 at 1.30 p.m.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5:37 p.m.*