

SENATE*Tuesday, May 07, 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 Sen. Leonard Bradshaw and Sen. Haji Ralph Khan from today's sitting.

PAPERS LAID

1. The Prison (Amdt.) Rules, 1991. [*Sen. Alloy Lequay*]
2. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Point Lisas Terminals Limited for the year ended December 31, 1990. [*Sen. A. Lequay*]
3. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited for the year ended December 31, 1990. [*Sen. A. Lequay*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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

**Motor Vehicles Ordinance
(Amendments)**

24. (a) Could the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization indicate whether the Government is committed to an amendment of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance which would cater for the establishment of Professional Driving Instructors and the necessary driving safeguards and regulations incidental thereto?
- (b) If the response is in the affirmative, could the Minister also state precisely when such amendments would be brought to the Parliament?

Factories Inspectorate Division

25. Could the Minister of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources indicate what steps are being taken to increase the staff levels as well as upgrade the skills of employees at the Factories Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources?

Factories Ordinance

- 26.** Could the Minister of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources state what concrete steps are being taken to repeal the Factories Ordinance (1948)?

Sen. Alloy Lequay: You will recall, that yesterday, I had indicated that the Minister would like an extra week, not counting today. While I am on my feet, may I also respectfully request that questions 25 and 26 the Minister of Labour be also deferred to the next sitting of the Senate.

Questions, by leave, deferred.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Sen. Alloy Lequay: The Order Paper has only been circulated today for reasons which we are all aware of, and it is not our intention to debate today the motions with respect to the Municipal Corporation (Pensions) Act, and the amendment that was just laid on the Table with the Prison (Amdt.) Rules.

I am respectfully requesting that motions 1 and 2 be deferred to the next sitting of the Senate.

Question put and agreed to.

Motions, by leave, deferred.

NATIONAL CARNIVAL COMMISSION BILL

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [April 30, 1991].

That the bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed.

Sen. Dr. Ramesh Deosaran: Mr. President, first I would like to explain why I had to leave last Tuesday, because I did not take in the contributions made by some Members on this debate. I think what was said as far as the records show was extremely relevant to some of the things I would like to say today.

This is a very important bill as the Minister stated, because it gives us an opportunity to look at the role of the state in the different cultures of the society. It also gives us the chance to examine the implications of having a Government bureaucracy propagate and manage, specifically, carnival. In bringing forward this bill, the Minister has a very difficult job because of the context in which the bill concerning carnival finds itself.

Before I proceed, I take this opportunity to let the Minister know that, as far as I am concerned, her intentions in bringing forward this bill, both in the preamble and in some of the clauses, are very honourable indeed. Furthermore, she has been one of those Ministers who would stand out as being among the most hardworking in the Government. I have no reservations in making that point because her history in public affairs in this country has been both long and deep, as far as I can remember. I will not make any distinction about our ages, but when I was a young man I heard her name being called in Junior Achievement and Chamber of Commerce activities. So it gives me pleasure to respond to a bill that she brings forward; it also helps to diminish any of the possible misunderstandings that might arise in some of the things that I would like to say.

Given what happened last Tuesday, it occurred to me that a bill like this and other bills are brought here for discussion, and I would hate to think that any bill brought by the Government or sent by the Cabinet to this honourable Chamber, must of necessity receive automatic approval. I do not think that is the role of Parliament and I do not think that is the role of a Senate. I think what we expect when we bring bills here is to generate an enlightened discussion so that many sides can give vent to their feelings and their opinions, and in the end the bill itself, quite possibly, would be richer for that experience, or the Minister himself or herself might be more enlightened in the journey towards better government.

1.40 p.m.

Having made those opening remarks, I now ask: why should carnival be selected from the range of other activities that we deem as cultural activities? I think the Minister is on reasonable ground when she selects carnival for special consideration. Carnival, with its lively appendages of calypso, masquerading, has been the most widespread of public festivals. It has been, as you would say, the most secularized—some would also say the most sexualized—but it has some concrete dimensions to it that have gripped the public imagination and which have commanded such widespread participation that, indeed, if there is any one cultural activity that could be properly packaged and possibly managed, it should be the carnival festival. Apart from participation, it attracts the most businessmen, the most artistes, and in such a crosssectional way that if there is any festival that can be called or comes near to being called a national festival, indeed, carnival is such a festival.

Having said that, two sides to the question arise: Should Government be the one to undertake the objective of packaging and marketing the festival? Would

government intervention, through taxpayers' money, and a bureaucracy as stipulated in the bill, provide the kind of effectiveness needed to market and propagate carnival? On the one hand, Mr. President, yes, the Government has the resources to push carnival more robustly, but on the other hand we have to stand back and ask the question: What is the experience of state bureaucracies? Which would we allow to command our fervour, the theory or the practice of things? If we take what you might call an objective examination of this, we begin to see some of the problems in a bill of this kind, because there have been so many complaints against government bureaucracy, and let me say quite frankly that these complaints are not confined to any particular region or ministry. We are quickly learning that there are things inherent in government bureaucracies: they are not only very conservative, but they are resistant to change and innovation. It is all over the world. That has led to stagnation of many cultures. In fact, it is the germ of the great challenge now facing the governments of Eastern Europe.

There is something inherent in government bureaucracies, if you look at it historically, or even in a contemporary sense. The Minister has had experience in public and private enterprise and she would know the difference. As I said initially, with her kind of enthusiasm, sometimes even that is not enough to generate the kind of result that this bill seeks to achieve. Because in such a venture with all these nuances and intangible things pertaining to culture and art, given what is stated in the preamble, we must always recognize in the practice of things that by virtue of being underpinned by the ruling party, governments are not neutral. Governments are not neutral. State neutrality is a myth. That is why we have heard some of the statements made from the Opposition Benches, from perhaps Sen. Persad's contribution in particular.

During the last carnival season, there were several confusing events, Mr. President. What I remember quite well is the one between the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) and the Bandleaders Association. One threatened the other; the bandleaders threatened to pull out; there were exchanges; bluffing; and it caused an upheaval in that area of carnival, up to the very end. This, however, is not an isolated event. Every year, in addition to the two days themselves, carnival seems to attract much untidiness and unruliness because that is in the nature of the occasion. For Government to put its feet so fully into such an event I believe, as my very good Friend suggested, it is like putting your hands in a Jack Spaniard's nest.

Let me say I am no cultural fanatic in the sense that I am strongly against carnival because of its alleged vulgarity, neither am I fanatically for carnival

because I am a bandleader. I like carnival. I like the calypsoes. In fact, I was a manager for a steelband once in San Juan Hill, the Crusaders, so I have had some preliminary experience. I did not last very long because we wanted some drums from Texaco and we got a lot of runaround, and instead of six drums, they gave us two. Two drums do not a steelband make. So the begging, which is an interesting feature of your mission, Madam Minister—how can the Government help? I appreciate that.

In fact, two weeks ago, I expressed my relish for the calypso. I am saying these things because I want to assure my honourable Friends that I am no novice to the matter at hand. I challenged Explainer to an ex-tempo contest at the University of the West Indies. Everybody who was there thought otherwise, but I am sure I won. That is in the nature of the competition. So I have an affinity to the thing, not only as a festival, but for its gaiety, its kaleidoscope of colours, the fervour it brings to the country, the splendour it gives us, once a year at least, and that is maybe part of the fear. Would we lose that? Is this the last frontier for genuine mas' participation, or is it undue fear? Let us see.

I agree with the Prime Minister that governments should stick to certain basic functions. He made the point. That is why Fr. Joseph was correct again in pointing out what the Prime Minister also said with respect to self-reliance, but I am broadening that because the Prime Minister was more specific. Government could see more properly about roads or public utilities generally, education and health, but once it seeks to venture into an intangible area like culture in an organized bureaucratic fashion, I believe as enthusiastic as the bill might be, and as our history should enlighten us, they are entering into an area of inevitable confusion.

Let me give you an example. Since the debate on this bill started, Mr. President, I looked at the newspapers to see, in terms of what is happening, what are the implications for this bill in terms of the bureaucracy the Government seeks to construct, and in terms of the cultural implications of the bill. In the *Trinidad Guardian* of Friday, April 19 at page 4, this was the headline, Mr. President, on that page: "TT a frustrating place, laments US businessmen." That is an allegation.

As I say, I venture to say very quickly, these comments—and I want to convince the Government side—are not related directly to this present Government. The premise of my contribution rests on the problems that are inherent in government bureaucracies, and what compound my concern are the

cultural implications surrounding this particular bill. This businessman wanted to open what he called a non-profit citizens' organization, but be that as it may, the point he was making publicly, and I quote:

"This system is designed to frustrate people. Everything in this society involves politics."

He went on to describe the kinds of problems that he has had. Perhaps some of these problems he looked for himself, because perhaps people want to bypass procedures, which is exactly my point. If you have too many procedures to arrive at a particular point, especially with carnival it gets counter productive. Carnival is opposite to bureaucracy. In fact, carnival seeks to mock bureaucracy. But we will get to that in a little while.

At page 3, Mr. President, the same issue, the same newspaper, the person speaking now is the Principal Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Rawle Edwards. The headline: "Ministry embarrassed at inadequate health service." I am not making any political point. Whether the health service is adequate or inadequate is not my particular point. My point is what Dr. Edwards said. He said a few things.

"According to Dr. Edwards, the present bureaucracy makes it impossible for the Ministry to meet the changing needs of the health system and allow efficiency and proper management of the services."

Now, these are really not isolated comments, Mr. President. If you track down such comments, you will find them more abundant as these two would make it appear.

Carnival is liberation; carnival is protest. In fact, the history of carnival is protest against the establishment. If you want to be more frank, it is anti-government because it is about the only time when people through colour, song and movement, can demonstrate their gut reactions against the system in which they live. Let the people be. I know the concern about organizing all this tremendous outpouring of creativity, and we want to commercialize it, market it, sell it abroad. I understand all those things, but please let us be practical.

1.55 p.m.

Mr. President, carnival, especially through song, brings the establishment into ridicule, reminding the officials of this country that they are still human beings. "Tell Me Something Nice", "In Parliament They Kicksing". Those songs form part of carnival and they are used to remind us, in the midst of the widespread

hypocrisy with which we live, that after all, we are all flesh and blood, from the same mould, with a common sense of humanity; and it keeps us rooted where we ought to be. I would suggest that there is room for re-consideration and perhaps we should go easy on this bill.

The Mighty Shadow once sang a song, "Mr. Controller", this zest to control all dimensions of people's lives. I know the interest in organizing the festival especially, as the Minister said, "other people are apparently taking it over." We would come to that later on. But I believe, as far as this country is concerned, if on balance, we had to choose, I would choose the more authentic alternative; I would choose the side where there is a freer flow amongst the people, of the people and by the people. I would resist any attempt to bureaucratize carnival so as to make it, perhaps, unrecognizable afterwards. It will no longer be carnival, it will be a packaged product. That might be good in a sense, but unbalanced. Could the bureaucracy that the Government proposes really do this job properly, especially in the troublesome, cultural context in which this matter finds itself? Let me again refer to a newspaper report and then I will come to Sen. Dr. Prakash Persad's presentation.

On Wednesday, May 1, 1991, *Trinidad Guardian* there is a headline from my good friend, and I quote: "Rambachan defends Government multi-cultural efforts." You see, this is one of the problematic areas, and it is not the Minister's fault; it is not my fault either; it is not anybody's fault. You might say it is a residue of history; you might say it is a sensitive area, whatever it is; there is a fact of multi-culturalism in this country.

As I told you, I am no fanatic. In fact, the music I prefer most is Chinese music. It is strange. They could hold the Soca and give me a little Lata Mangeshkar; or you could hold the Lata and give me Soca, it does not make much difference. Depending on the mood, I like Talat Mahmood or Hemant Kumar, or could listen to Stalin; it does not matter. If it is nice and pleasing, I enjoy it. Perhaps that is what history has done to me, I am a plastic man, and I might be condemned by people with more cultural fervour and allegiances. That is what I am. When it comes to dancing, well, that is a different thing. If the music is nice, I could dance. It does not dominate my consciousness as to what I should respond to at the exclusion of others. If there is one kind of person who could be called a Caribbean man, it is people like me, I believe, who cross the bridges back and forth and readily, one way or the other. Perhaps the plasticity might be looked upon as a vice because we have no roots, but then, that is another

thing. The universality of man is a cry that is calling beyond the frontier; and I am perhaps answering to the whisper, who knows?

These are the intangible issues surrounding this matter. This has nothing to do with criticizing Dr. Rambachan. As far as I know his interest in his own cultural roots, both in terms of propagating it and in participating in it, are well-known. That is not my point. My point is that one part of the story says—a former president of the Maha Sabha, Dr. Sharma referred to the negative impact being made by the apparent support for segmented culture, and the Trinidad and Tobago image of being a Christian-African society, and appealed to state enterprises and state corporations to extend the benevolence so as to accommodate other cultural groups in the rainbow. Could you get the gist of what he is saying? He is saying, "Well, support us too; treat us equally; and give us piece of the action."

The article continues:

"Dr. Sharma was of the firm view that present practices, unless checked and controlled, could lead to a division in the society."

I am not saying that. Further, I am not saying that I agree with that. What I have to do, as a social scientist of some sort, is to recognize the cultural movements in the society, the areas of turbulence, and pay homage to them especially in areas where taxpayers' money is going to be used.

Dr. Rambachan: Could I ask a question? What in your view can be done to deal with the kinds of issues raised by Dr. Sharma in his statement?

Dr. Deosaran: Well, will you wait? I have a passage at the end and I will try to suggest what I believe could be some of the alternative approaches to questions like these.

Carnival has a range of elements in it. As you know, the question of vulgarity and lewdness comes up every year. The men of the church—as they are doing in Jamaica, as they are howling against it in Nottinghill and Toronto—make religious objections. So even though we might say it is a national festival, I would also say that there are parts of it that still appear to be objectionable to certain groups in the society, apart from the cultural groups, religious groups, even those that are called Christian groups. So the question would remain: Is that something that Government should get into? When the controversy starts, how would the Government divorce itself from active support of taxpayers' money into such, what appears to be an innately controversial issue.

It is not like giving water to a district or supplying electricity. This whole issue is an inherently controversial one. It was born that way; it has developed that way, and from all signs, Trinidad and Tobago carnival will always be that kind of carnival. Every year I hear Stephen Lee-Heung say that he would stop playing mas, that he is withdrawing. They will begin to hold Government to ransom, because when the thing starts to falter people will not condemn this band leader or that calypsonian association. I have already made that point with respect to the Judiciary. People point fingers at the Government. Therefore, you ought to think twice about whether you would be entering into a jack-spaniard's nest prematurely, too precipitously, or not. This is one of the areas—if I can be as gentle as possible with the Minister, because I do not want her to believe that this is something that I am just getting up and objecting to. I have studied the issue and, as you know, I was prepared to speak last week but as events overtook me, I had to leave. So I was prepared to speak on this in the same way in which I am speaking about it, with some reluctance, but trying to give her the benefit of my small experience.

I mentioned a song just now—“Tell Me Something Nice”. I must tell you I like the song. I do not agree with the song. It is exaggerated with a little perversity in it, because it tries to give adulation where, perhaps, none really was deserving. But as a song, and the way the fellow comes with his regiment fatigue on the stage, I enjoy it. I want to see that there too, just at Stalin's winning songs alongside that one. I want to see the potpourri of reality, social commentary, unobstructed by undue political censorship. That is one of the fears that hovers over this particular bill, because governments, inside or outside carnival, are not neutral. The neutrality of the state, as a political entity, is a myth. We can stand that; we can bear with that, because that is a reality. But when it comes close to a festival that is so dear to the hearts of the people, I believe a word of caution should be given, and that is the word of caution that I have tried to give.

2.05 p.m.

Every day in this country in letters to the newspapers, in conversations, there are charges about discrimination and prejudice. If I were in any government, I would like to remove myself from any such possible accusations. We have enough of it already and given the cultural context in which this bill is founded, I believe the Government would be unduly exposing itself to such charges of discrimination and I will explain why with respect to the composition of the board. You see this is a small country and there is this perennial struggle for

scarce resources—jobs, if we are speaking about equal opportunities. We have a Constitution with a very liberal offering of human rights and freedoms, and it is very easy to file a constitutional motion against a state body as we had with the Orisha case against TTT.

Again, I implore the Government to slow down a bit because even though we might disagree with many of these charges about race, discrimination and cultural oppression, the people who make these remarks are entitled to do so for two reasons. One, they easily and quickly refer to the National Anthem "where every creed and race find an equal place" and that is a strong premise for them to rely, whether or not we agree with them, I think it matters "where every creed and race find an equal place", people are entitled to voice their complaints on grounds of racial discrimination or cultural oppression. But they have to justify it and I will come to that later on in the context of this bill.

The second premise on which they are entitled to make such comments is if taxpayers' money is being used for the exercise at hand. So when Sen. Persad made his remarks, it did not sound like sweet music to my ear. I found it, in some cases, a little jarred, but he is not here to please me or *vice versa*, he is here to speak for his party and as Leader of the Opposition in the Senate. It is good for us to hear of such things now and again because too many of us stay in our offices in Port of Spain—I should not say too many but a few of us; but it is when you go through the country and you listen to the conversations, you realize there is something happening that we ought to be careful about.

There is carnival in schools now, it is a worthy exercise but in the context in which such a bill seems uncomfortable to the people from the start, surely you will need a greater support base for carnival across the schools to be more readily accepted, practised and developed. But, if you sense from the start, the kind of resistance from the Opposition Benches, in Sen. Persad's case, who is speaking for his party or constituents, I think it is a signal for caution. It does not matter whether we agree with it or not. We have to treat a cultural fact different from other more objective considerations. He has a right to speak, maybe not as he does in some cases, but he has a right to say those things.

It does not end there you see, because while you might use this bill to talk about culture, prejudice and discrimination it is not simple to say that carnival is a Christian festival and, therefore, other groups such as the Hindus are discriminated against. Because even within the Hindus there is discrimination. Something I have always found very detestable is the caste system. We have to

Speak about that too if we want to speak about discrimination in other ways. That is my view. If we introduce these things in a debate, I would like to see a more refined approach to the question of discrimination and the thing I detest and quite a few other people also detest, is this caste system within the Hindu community. One of these days, I want to hear something rather than just letting it rest on some philosophical basis or on some historical view about who invaded whom and where and so on. As far as this country is concerned, that caste system has no place, like any other form of discrimination.

So it is a complex issue and even though you all might want to make a point, there are other points that can be equally considered, especially where the bill has provisions for displaying things, researching and preserving and I believe it will have a role to play as far as carnival in the schools is concerned.

I am saying there are schools all over the country and there are schools run by many different denominational boards and what these boards and their representatives say as of now should be important as far as the propagation of carnival in that respect is concerned. Once you move into setting up a statutory board, it would appear to me that it would become subject to section 4 of the Constitution, especially given the cultural nuances, the possibilities of discrimination in this very intangible area, carnival, with so many different groups struggling with so many people feeling left out of state resources.

Sen. Rambachan made a very interesting point—that there is a siege mentality in the country that people not only get left out but they refuse to get in. That is another point. But as I say we are not talking about what ought to be, we are talking about what is in the realm of the cultural life in this country.

Section 4 for the record, if I might read, states:

"It is hereby recognized and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms, namely—

- (d) the right of an individual to equality of treatment from any public authority in the exercise of any functions."

Once you say that and you look at the way the board, as stated in this particular bill, would be constructed; how money would be raised and spent; where groups would be tussling for a piece of the action, if it comes to pass that this National Carnival Commission, becomes a reality it would be subject to a

string of court actions. Even without this we have court actions. There is so much bacchanal with all the different groups which take part in carnival. Sometimes you do not know who is the leader.

2.15 p.m.

So I am trying to make a case for what I would consider, on the face of it, the reasonable grounds, to ask the Government to wait a while. Let us be reasonable because this is an election year. Everybody is seeing something behind a bridge. This is the season of all strange things. I am not accepting it; I am telling you again what is the reality. To bring the bill now, could produce even more problems than it deserves. Perhaps, if or when you form the next government, maybe the next year might be a better time to bring a bill of this kind. I said, when, but I also said, if.

It reminds me of when Sen. Rambachan spoke. He had brought an action against TTT to which I totally agreed. Public authorities inflicting discrimination has been a very vulgar happening in this country and it is good that he used the law because that is the only recourse he had. Because although you have all these guarantees in the Constitution, nobody brings fairness and justice to you. You have to fight and struggle for it. This is a strange thing in this country. Personally, I feel very distressed about this.

As somebody told me last night, “boy this country gone through”. Look at the pessimism which is creeping into this country. As the calypsonian said, “The spirit gone”. We are sinking, and yet we are playing these little games of politics. I am not saying the Minister is playing politics, but you will get that kind of reaction and response because of the intangible nature of the event that she seeks to control.

I know democracy is a noisy affair, just like carnival, and we are invited to a little heave here, a pull there and a tug there, but when taxpayers' money is involved, I think there ought to be limits to the adventure, especially in times when there are claims of scarce resources. So I say, take it easy, leave it to the people, the entrepreneurs and Spektakula Forum.

Look at what happened to chutney singing. It took a STAG advertisement, more than any single promotion, to hit the chutney across the country on Panorama News as an advertisement with Anand Yankarran. People who never heard an Indian song yet, were almost compelled to sit and listen. But I hope they listen to Panorama. They were forced to listen to Yankarran. Chutney advertising STAG. It shows the link between the businessman and the artiste—mutual

benefits. None is neutral, but there is an endearing and enduring mutuality of interests. It could not be the same with the Government and the artiste. That is a slightly different issue, but it is not the same.

Since then other promoters took it up, CARIB did its bit too, steelband, cultural shows. So there is a lot of room there for the businessmen at the present time to get involved and do some of the things that the Minister wishes to do through the bill that she brings here, because it is spreading. The whole entrepreneurial aspect of that activity is spreading. You have curious blending through the freedom of the people's movement. You have Sundar Popo singing soca. For those of you who do not know, like Sen. Mark and so on, Sundar Popo is an Indian singer. You have Drupatee, Ricki Jai, Rajah, the Hindu Prince. You have a movement going there.

I must tell you quite frankly, I always promised to compose a calypso for this country. I started after July 27, a D.J. Calypsonian is my consultant, but one of these days—but if the Government passes this bill I do not think I would want to take part in any singing competition.

Mr. President: The speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. A. Lequay*]

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. Deosaran: If we come to the question of researching as in the preamble to the bill, it states at (c):

"To establish permanent arrangements for researching into, preserving and permanently displaying the annual accumulation of carnival products..."

I agree with this. What I do not agree with all the way is Government trying to create a statutory board for researching into the carnival.

My experience with this Government and the last one, usually, is a kind of political bias in identifying which area to research and which area not to research. I would like to keep research out of any kind of political ambit as far as possible, because, as I said, many times governments are not allowed to be neutral. They have to defend their fort because there is always the next election. One can live with that as we are prepared to live with it on the question of public utilities, good roads, health and education, but when it comes to these other things, nobody wins and most people lose.

When Sen. Lequay was speaking yesterday—he is a very fortunate Member of this House—his motion was not even passed yet and he got action on it. It is quite commendable. This House passed a motion three years ago on a national survey, on the equality of educational opportunity and not one thing has been done. Sen. Lequay, if you could tell me the formula—that education motion was passed unanimously. Does that mean the only way I could get it implemented, is to join. [*Interruption*]

Too much politics is killing this country, really. Sometimes I feel as soon as one election is finished, everybody is looking at the next election, and they are right. That is the system. Five years is a little bit too short. Because if you only stay idle, people pass you in the race. So I understand the structural considerations and again we are prepared to live with that, but please, let us stick to what the people will be happier with—some basic amenities. When I look at the bill and I see clause 18, this question of collection of money—in fact, there are more clauses and provisions in this bill about how to manage the board; what the board members must do; what they are immune from; how they will raise money; how they will spend the money, than there are talking about carnival itself. Maybe, it is necessary but you begin to sense the imbalance by virtue of having, what I said initially, was an overdone bureaucracy and clause 18 is one of those clauses that makes this matter quite clear.

2.25 p.m.

The Minister spoke about what is happening abroad to carnival. Her fear is—with some justification—that soon enough we may not be able to recognize carnival, from what is happening to it. But if you try to export carnival today, really, it is already like taking coals to Newcastle. I have seen the carnival in Miami, New York, England, Toronto and the most recent place is Jamaica. All across the Caribbean there is carnival. In fact, I do not agree, from what I have seen and heard about the Jamaica carnival, that we are safe down here. Jamaica is overtaking us because of where it is located and the facilities it already has in the Ocho Rios stretch; the airfare makes it a readymade place. The question we are left with is whether the Government could solve that dilemma or whether we need a more robust participation or partnership between the artistes and businessmen with Government, as I said yesterday, as facilitator and not as heavy regulator.

With respect to what is happening in Jamaica, it took Byron Lee, who merely fell out with an initial group of organizers, and got determined to do his own

thing. Now he has so many of our artistes rushing up there and coming back almost defending the Jamaica carnival. But it was the people and the leadership by one man who took all the entrepreneurial spirit that we have. I believe in those circumstances the Government should hold its hand. I do not understand the mixed messages from the Government. Financial hardships: you are asking the business sector to pick up the slack, you are cutting back, you are cutting down and yet you are expanding into an area—if I am to speak frankly—where you already have certain offices abroad in your missions.

You already have trade officers, for example, but be that as it may, carnival is a night and day affair, a 24-hour affair. You have an office for carnival abroad and it is an 8.00—4.00 office. When somebody calls you on the phone at 8 or 9 o'clock in the night to get or organize something, the office is closed, as all public servants' offices are closed. That is just one example; I can list so many of the disadvantages by having a heavy bureaucracy try to control and manage something as carnival in the way that the bill seeks to do.

Sen. Rambachan asked me how to solve the multicultural dilemma. I think this country has not resolved the dilemma about what is national identity against the fact of multiculturalism. That is why it is being raised in so many frustrated outbursts. The last Government gave no direction on this matter, they left it boiling, trying to create the facade, where none really existed, by slogans. I had thought, and I still expect, that this Government will come to terms with that. You have to recognize it as a fact but if people start promoting something and trying to impose it on other people who are unwilling to accept it as part of their own expectation or lifestyle—I am not speaking for myself because I told you I do not particularly care too much one way or another—those things become political facts.

I could tell you what I have written on the subject, but that will be overstating my case. But we have to come to terms with what really is our national identity and how we can accommodate the multicultural fact in that entire facet. Thank you very much.

Sen. Wade Mark: Mr. President, there is an old saying that the more things change, the more they seem to remain the same. It was Prof. Kari Levitt, who recently reminded us of the importance of culture and consensus in the whole development process.

In a lecture entitled "Debt Adjustment and Development—a Perspective for the 1990s", and delivered at the 8th Eric Williams Memorial Lecture at the Central Bank Auditorium on May 5, 1990, Prof. Levitt stated—

"The 'market magic' paradigm will have to yield ideological pride of place to a vision of the world which takes account of our fundamental need to be rooted in society, to be sustained and supported by relations of solidarity and to live in dignity and harmony with the physical environment. Any meaningful notion of 'sustainable development' must begin with the recognition that the diversity of cultures which nourish human creativity is as precious an inheritance as the diversity of plant and animal life. It is the repository of collective wisdom from which springs the capacity of individuals and societies to survive adversity and renew the commitment to future generations.

Development cannot be imposed from without. It is a creative social process and a central nervous system, the matrix which nourishes it is located in the cultural sphere. Development is ultimately not a matter of money or physical capital, or foreign exchange, but of the capacity of a society to tap the root of popular creativity to free up and empower people to exercise their intelligence and collective, wisdom."

The message is therefore absolutely clear, and the very opposite is being attempted in this bill.

The issue that must be addressed is Government's role in the process of cultural development. Should the Government be a mere facilitator or a regulator? It is our view that Government's involvement in culture should be limited to that of a facilitator. Government should seek to develop culture in its broadest sense by developing the people's well-being. This means satisfying their basic needs, wants and requirements. It means the provision of food, clothing, shelter, proper health facilities, provision of adequate water supplies, proper schools and the provision of quality education, among others.

The reality of the present bill does not attempt to properly locate the existing state and quality of carnival in Trinidad and Tobago and hence is unable to properly situate carnival within the entire cultural matrix of our society. It is in this context, that the timing of the present bill is extremely worrying and indeed profoundly disturbing. Why now, in the Government's dying days? What is the purpose of the Government's timing? Is it mere political gimmickry? Is it

designed to “mamaguy” the people who are directly involved in the arts and culture? Were the cultural forces and artistes involved properly and meaningfully consulted?

2.35 p.m.

The reality is that Pan Trinbago, the Carnival Bands Association and the calypsonians have not had the courtesy of being informed, much more to be consulted on such an important piece of legislation. This is absolute disrespect and utter contempt for the cultural forces involved in carnival. The Minister seeks to establish a commission on carnival without consulting the real forces behind the people's festival. This is neither strange nor is it new. In fact, it is a continuation of a series of blunders and grave miscalculations on the part of the present administration.

For instance, we recall the fiasco surrounding the proposed staging of carnival at the National Stadium and also the perennial problems of the Carnival Bands Association and the calypsonians. In 1990, the calypsonians fought for increased appearance fees. In 1991, it was the carnival bands threatening to boycott the festival. However, what is clear in this bill is the attempt once again by another regime to ride “piggy back” on the people's festival. The proposed establishment of the NCC would merely serve as another parasitic and vulturous organization, seeking to facilitate the further exploitation of the cultural forces involved in the people's festival.

This bill is an unmistakable attempt on the part of the Government to interfere with the people's culture, the people's festival, a festival which this Government and previous governments have merely paid lip-service to. Ask David Rudder, the Mighty Sparrow, Lord Kitchener, Bally and Cro Cro; the pan-men and pan-women; the carnival bandleaders among others, precisely what this “stingy and mingy” Government has done to promote the calypso art form, the steelband movement and the mas, apart from a gesture which the Prime Minister announced, when we had the attempted coup in 1990. He had announced the Government's intention—

Dr. Sampath: It was an attempted coup, not a coup. I wish the Senator would be accurate in his statement.

Sen. Mark: At that time, the Prime Minister had indicated the Government's intention to make some \$7.5 million available to the steelband movement. *[Interruption]* This is what I said, “an attempted coup”.

Dr. Sampath: No, Sir. I wish he would correct it publicly.

Sen. Mark: "An attempted coup". Does that satisfy you?

Dr. Sampath: Thank you, Sir. It does very much indeed.

Sen. Mark: Apart from this gesture, the cultural forces have had to promote their art forms through their own sweat, tears and blood. That has been their experience. Instead of the existing regime seeking to promote confusion and chaos in the arena of carnival, as it has always done, it should really be focusing on ways and means of genuinely assisting the cultural forces. The plight of the steelband movement is very glaring; the insecurity of tenure, and the latest scenario is the imposition of co-operatives on the steelband movement by this regime, through the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization. I have a memorandum here dated October 12, 1990, to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago from Pan Trinbago. I quote from section 4:

"As a society we never seem too tired in our proclamation of the progress made by the steelband over the last 50 years. However, whilst not gainsaying the fact that there has been some advancement by and large, the rhetoric is sadly at odds with what the nation ought to be, a depressingly embarrassing reality. The dilapidated physical premises of the majority of our steelbands bear eloquent testimony to the continued social marginalization of the steelband and remain vivid reminders of the road yet to be travelled."

This Government, through the interim NCC which is really an arm of the NAR—in fact it is the NAR's "A" team in action as the NCC—ought to be more genuinely concerned with assisting calypsonians in obtaining a pressing plant; greater protection in law for their art form; a greater say in the running of carnival; greater assistance in the provision of a head office and not insulting their representatives.

I have two letters and if I really put them into the record they will tell you the kinds of insults that Sidney Benjamin better known as "Gibraltar" has been subjected to, at the level of the NCC. He has written two letters to the Minister here today, on the kind of treatment he has been subjected to by the chairman of that body, but I would not even read them. It is so disgusting, but that is the kind of thing we have taking place at the NCC. I just want to share a letter with my colleagues that was written to the Minister of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts. It is dated May 2, 1991 and signed by Sidney Benjamin the President of the

Trinidad and Tobago Calypsonians Association. I would just read the first paragraph:

"Due to the fact that I had written a letter to Mr. Andy Johnson, a news reporter at Radio Trinidad who broadcasted the contents last week, it created a stir especially within the Chairman of the National Carnival Commission, Mr. Roy Augustus. So when I attended the NCC meeting as representative of the Trinidad and Tobago Calypsonians Association on May 01, 1991, he said that I am only writing letters about him and then admitted when questioned by me, that the Trinbago Calypsonians Organization was formed by him and emphasized that as long as he is the Chairman of the NCC, the Trinbago Calypsonians' Association will be the representative body on the committee, and as far he is concerned the Trinidad and Tobago Calypsonians' Association does not exist."

He concluded with this statement:

"I am passing an order as from today May 1, you must not be invited anymore to any NCC meetings.' I would like you who put me there,...'"

He is addressing the Minister to ascertain if what he said is final.

Sen. Rampersad: Would you give way to a question? Would you like to tell this honourable House whether or not there are other organizations representing calypsonians in Trinidad and Tobago?

Sen. Mark: I mentioned that there are two organizations representing calypsonians. The majority one, I understand is Trinbago Calypsonians Association, but the representative who is currently on the board, on the interim commission, is from the Trinidad and Tobago Calypsonians' Association, and its representative is Mr. Sidney Benjamin.

2.45 p.m.

Mr. President, the NCC should be making it easier for mas men and women to obtain carnival goods at more concessional rates. Why must a masquerader be called upon to pay VAT on a carnival costume? Indeed, the Government should be seeking to establish better infrastructural facilities as well as seriously investigating the real needs of the cultural forces involved in carnival. This bill, as it is presently formulated, would result in carnival serving the NCC instead of the NCC serving carnival.

Mr. President, the bill before us has not been properly thought out. Its intentions are not positive to the people's festival at all. Indeed, the bill holds ominous and dangerous implications for the people's festival. One of the issues that must be addressed very squarely by the Minister is precisely, how this bill is going to assist in the cultural harmonization of our peoples? We must remember that we live in a multiracial, multicultural and multireligious society. Would not this bill further entrench cultural differences between our peoples? I say no more on this matter; a word to the wise is enough.

Let me re-emphasize that culture cannot be legislated nor can it be prescribed. A government must first satisfy the needs of the people, and in the process of so doing, establish the pre-conditions that would facilitate a virtual cultural explosion.

But can the present regime do so? I am afraid not. The record of this strictly accounting regime, in spite of its many false claims and promises, is indeed dismal as it is bleak. How can this Government really seek to promote, market and manage and develop carnival when it has done everything in its power to emasculate and virtually strangle it? The same Government that has impoverished the practitioners of the people's festival that has broken both the spirit—

Sen. Rampersad: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I rise under Standing Order 32(6); the Member seems to be reading his speech.

Mr. President: He has the permission of the Chair. Continue.

Sen. Mark: Mr. President, this same Government that has actually impoverished the practitioners of the people's festival, that has broken both the spirit and pockets of its practitioners now humbly seeks to promote it. It was this same regime that seized workers' cost-of-living allowance, slashed in the most arbitrary fashion their salaries, suspended their merit increases, and shelved the Industrial Court Award. It is this same Government whose misguided economic policies have resulted in the retrenchment and unemployment of tens of thousands of able-bodied young men and women, as well as under-employment of tens of thousands of young people who now seek to rescue the people's festival.

Mr. President, the mas is fast becoming a middle class occupation. The youths do not take an active part in this festival as they ought to. They are more active at the fetes and in the pan-yards. Mas has become cost prohibitive for the small man in this land. It is a choice between \$20 in a fete at Soca Village or Carnival City and a costume valued at \$400. Carnival is virtually dying. It is a virtually dying

festival, particularly the mas element. The spirit is alive, Mr. President, but the content is dying. This is because the masses have been virtually alienated and excluded from its operations. Since money is the name of the game and the masses have little or none, the middle class and the upper—whatever is left of the middle because the Government has devastated that middle class—are now virtually in charge of the people's festival.

Putting mas in the national stadium would have placed the final nail in the coffin of the people's festival. The Government, by its very actions and deeds, is attempting to bourgeoisify the people's festival and place it virtually out of the reach of the ordinary man and woman. Too many restrictions and too little innovation and creativity.

Mr. President, I wish to refer to a book entitled *The Trinidad Carnival, Mandate for a National Theatre*. It is written by Errol Hill and published in 1972, and he was talking about carnival then. Hear what he said in 1972 at page 92:

"It is apparent that the traditional masquerades are dwindling and may soon disappear from the Trinidad carnival unless positive action is taken to regenerate them. This challenge belongs to the Government-appointed Carnival Development Committee. The committee, under the inspired chairmanship of Senator Ronald Williams, has done a magnificent job in helping to organize the festival without at the same time crushing its spontaneity by too much control."

This was in 1972, so it was recognized then that the festival was experiencing difficulties. At the same time, what was very clear was that they were seeking to organize the mas without crushing or without severely controlling the gaiety and the spontaneity of the festival as we know it.

In fact, Peter Minshall in an article on page 13 of the *Express* of Monday, February 11, 1991, headlined, "The Mas' is Dying", provided the population with an explanation as to why he was not playing in 1991. Hear what he said, Mr. President:

"This is exactly the problem. I am prevented, or seriously restricted from doing what I want to do. Anyone who might want to do his best work in the medium of mas' is similarly restricted. The environment in which the mas' happens has so many obstacles, limitations and impediments that a masman simply cannot do his best work."

He went on further:

"They have physically blocked mas' from appearing on the stage. They have protested each effort to introduce a new element to mas-playing, such as special music or lighting effects. When they can't find a rule to prohibit a new idea, they have actually gotten the rules changed to prohibit it. They have even persuaded the NCC to abolish the People's Choice Award.

The most recent example concerns Tan Tan and Saga Boy. As everyone can understand, these two were made to dance with each other. It was not how they looked but what they did that mattered. And despite all the regulations, they were able to dance with each other on the Dimanche Gras night, because there was a provision allowing a King or a Queen to have a mascot.

Tan Tan and Saga Boy danced together. People thrilled to them. Children looked at them with wonder and delight. It was one of the most exciting mas' presentations I have ever created.

One would think that the response of the NCC and the bandleaders might be to encourage more mas' like this, mas' that excites and entertains. Instead, they change the rules to prevent it from ever happening again. The new rule prohibits mascots that are played by anyone over 18 years old, and no mascot can be more than half the height of the King or Queen it accompanies. No more Tans Tans and Saga Boys."

Mr. President, the point I am making is that the environment is too restrictive. There is no room for creativity in the mas'. The same NCC, this NAR "A" team that is in charge of the NCC at this time, has imposed and changed rules, and is actually strangling the carnival, particularly the mas'. You want now to vest them with power? What are they going to do? They are going to kill it now.

Mr. President, it is a tribute to our teachers that the Children's carnival has been able to sustain and perpetuate itself. They are the true heroes. The teachers have demonstrated tremendous organizational skills and creativity in promoting children's carnival without being paid a cent. Children's carnival has now become an established annual event in our country.

Mr. President, an examination of the objects of the commission reveal serious contradictions, vagueness and, indeed, confusion. In clause 4(a) the object reads:

"To make Carnival a viable national cultural and commercial enterprise;"

I ask, is it possible to achieve all these aims in one object? A commercial enterprise means, first of all, profitability. How does profit coincide with the national interest and, indeed, carnival? Must every enterprise serving a national

need be profitable? Can we seriously run carnival as a profitable commercial enterprise and simultaneously promote the cultural and national interests of our people? This seems confusing and contradictory, but it is consistent with the regime's mind-set which begins and ends with the financial criterion of profitability, and this is wrong, Mr. President. The principal purpose of carnival is to enrich ourselves as a people and not necessarily to sell it.

What about clause 4(b)? Mr. President, clause 4(b) says:

"to provide the necessary managerial and organizational infrastructure for the efficient and effective presentation and marketing of the cultural products of Carnival;"

What are these cultural products to which the Minister is referring? Why are they not defined? There is need for the Minister to clearly identify these cultural products that she is talking about. What is the schedule of these carnival products and their costs? Should NCC be allowed to interfere with the products of carnival, Mr. President? Can the NCC really tell the cultural forces what constitutes a saleable product?

Would they be qualified to do so? If anything, the National Carnival Commission would destroy the culture. Why single out only carnival products? What about fashion designers, Indian dancers and other artistes?

3.00 p.m.

Mr. President, clause 4 (c) says:

"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 and composers, as well as designers of carnival."

The object is defined, but how is it to be implemented? Where is the authority and power to establish a carnival museum, in this bill? This is highly inconsistent.

On the one hand, the commission is asked to preserve, research and permanently display carnival products, but no real provision is provided or given in the bill for it to do so. Further, the question may be asked: what is the relationship between the national museum and the National Carnival Commission? I think it was Sen. Furness-Smith who alluded to this in his presentation. Is the National Carnival Commission going to duplicate the work of the national museum? This Government is absolutely confused. Where is the detailed planning that the

Minister of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism bragged about during his presentation?

This object intrudes upon an ongoing carnival museum project, already approved by the Minister's Cabinet—Cabinet Minute No. 550, dated March 9, 1990. It was to establish a carnival museum that was approved by her Government. A feasibility study was done by the Organization of American States in 1988. The EEC and the Inter-American Development Bank have already granted equipment for the project. Maritime Life has written and offered to finance, design and construct the building.

Sen. Hosein: Is the hon. Senator going to congratulate the Government for that?

Sen. Mark: This project merely awaits a political decision from the Cabinet, to begin. Why, in the face of this, does the Government seek to establish another institution for research, preservation and permanent display of carnival products? The Minister must account for this confusion.

Mrs. Johnson: The confusion is in your mind.

Sen. Mark: Mr. President, the products of the musicians, craftsmen, composers and designers need to be protected. For example, the copyright law is not being effectively enforced. Pirates still abound in the music industry.

The issue of intellectual property rights refers to the creations of the human intellect, hence they are the legal expression of privileges granted by the state. It relates to items of knowledge and information which can eventually be embodied in an unlimited number of copies of tangible things, artifacts or goods. The concept of copyright does not appear to be working in Trinidad and Tobago. Recently, the Copyright Organization of Trinidad and Tobago admitted that over 60 per cent of the music utilized in Trinidad and Tobago is illegal. The Government needs to protect the artistes from becoming victims of exploitation of their work by upgrading existing legislation.

Clause 5(1) which deals with the skills and qualifications required by the commissioners, turns out to be quite interesting. This clause calls for persons trained in finance, management, government, international trade, law, export-oriented business, commerce, culture or the arts. Frankly speaking, Mr. President, we have no quarrel with the lawyers, because we need to upgrade our copyright law; the question about intellectual property right. We have no problems with the arts and cultural personnel, but why the rest? Do they not exist in other

institutions? Why duplicate? Why waste limited and scarce resources? Why do we need someone with export-oriented talent, business or commerce? Indeed, with the exception of law and culture, there is little need for the other categories. Maybe their assistance will be required later on.

For instance, the Export Development Corporation should be the agency responsible for the export and marketing of our cultural products. Why duplicate? Indeed, the question could well be asked: What are we going to export? That has not been defined or cleared up. Or is the real aim of the bill to provide the NCC boys with a big pay-day? The bill is highly undemocratic and dictatorial.

Mr. President, why one nominee from pan, calypso and mas and six political appointees? Why not equal representation?

Sen. Hosein: Mr. President, I would like to find out from my good Friend, if he is alleging inequality, what policy, what is the position now in respect of appointments to the National Carnival Commission? That is, who is the person or the institution charged with the responsibility of appointing those persons, and from what categories those persons come, as against what is the position that is proposed in the new bill?

Sen. Mark: Mr. President, my good colleague is well aware of the present composition. It is almost the same thing. I am advancing the view, why not equal representation? Why not three from Pan Trinbago, three from the Carnival Bands Association, three from the Calypsonians Association, and three such persons as the Minister may appoint? Too much power is being placed in the hands of the Minister. What about our musicians? What about our deejays? What about our hoteliers and tourist board officials? Should they not be also included?

Mr. President, there are two calypsonians' associations in Trinidad and Tobago, as I understand it: the Trinidad and Tobago Calypsonians' Association and Trinbago Calypsonians' Association. Both are valid; both represent interests. Who is going to decide which one must be on the commission, the Minister or the chairman? This is high-handed and autocratic. It is wrong, and it needs to be addressed immediately. Why not a mutually agreeable chairman? Why impose a chairman and a deputy chairman? Where is the democracy that the NAR brags about?

The issue of carnival has always been one of placing square pegs in round holes. It has been so in the past, and it is so today. Conflict persists between the cultural forces responsible for the development of carnival and the management

of the festival, whether it be CDC or NCC. If the festival is to be successful and the management is to work smoothly, there is need for equality or equal representation on the commission, as opposed to the continued political control of the people's festival as manifested in the proposed composition of the National Carnival Commission.

In his book entitled *The Trinidad Carnival—Mandate for the National Theatre*, Prof. Errol Hill warned about ignoring our artistes in planning for national development. Hill stated and I quote from page 94:

"The history of carnival is a history of a common people's struggle for freedom of expression, from the misguided paternalism inherent in colonial rule."

Mr. President, it is the same kind of misguided paternalism we are witnessing today in the Government's approach to the steelband movement. Imagine the Government referring to the panyards as pan cottages, and seeking to impose co-operatives on the pan movement.

3.10 p.m.

I want to quote again from Pan Trinbago. Listen to what Pan Trinbago says on page 28 of their memorandum:

"One unsavoury aspect of the 1990 programme was the insistence by government officials that bands transform themselves into co-operatives in order to benefit from the programme. We believe that this paternalism is quite distasteful, unnecessary and unacceptable. Pan Trinbago will select 20 steelbands for 1991. The bands will be selected on the basis of clearly articulated criteria and should not be forced to become co-operatives. This should be an option open to the bands, not necessarily a criterion for selection."

They are looking for party groups, that is why they are seeking to impose this on the steelband movement. *[Interruption]* Accountability?

When we look at the duties and functions of this commission, the authoritarian and dictatorial powers of the NCC become even clearer. "The regulation, co-ordination or conduct of all public carnival activities throughout the country." What does this mean? Who is the NCC to seek to regulate and control the conduct of the cultural forces in our country? Are we seeking to introduce subtle censorship through this bill? They want to ban Watchman's

calypso, "Attack with Full Force". Is this what they are trying to do? Could this not be used to stifle the creativity of the calypso art form? I say, hands off the people's festival.

The present interim NCC has done little or nothing to promote the people's festival, yet it is now being given formal powers to regulate and control carnival activities in the country. This is pure dictatorship and we wish to sound a word of warning to our cultural forces of the grave dangers of such a provision. This is recklessness on the part of the Minister. We cannot lend support to such a provision at all. The Minister has become a virtual victim of perpetual wrong advice.

Clause 9(1) seeks to further consolidate the dictatorial powers of the NCC over the people's festival. What does 9(1)(b) really mean? It is indeed ironic that when one examines the liberal and almost *laissez-faire* economic strategy of the present Government on the one hand, and its dictatorial and authoritarian approach to the arts and culture on the other, one becomes confused. Whilst there exists no real policy on the arts and culture in Trinidad and Tobago, whatever smattering of it that may exist, the regime is seeking to place it under "heavy manners". The Government is seeking to regulate and control it. Whilst the Government seems prepared to privatize, deregulate and liberalize the economy according to the dictates and diktat of the IMF and World Bank, it does not want to extend that same freedom to the arts and culture. Is this not strange and contradictory, Mr. President?

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

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. P. Persad*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Mark: Clause 9(1)(c) is also vague and nebulous. What are these cultural products and services that would be identified, evaluated and promoted? These products need to be listed. The reality remains that no government would be allowed to tamper or interfere with the people's festival and with the arts and culture of our nation. The masses would not stand for it and would not allow it.

Mr. President, there is need for clarification on a number of clauses. What is clause 12(1) about? Could the Minister justify this? Why is the Government seeking to escape the NCC from the search-lights of the Public Service

Regulations? The real intent of this bill is designed to play politics with the people's festival and avoid the real issues and problems confronting carnival. This Government is not really serious about carnival. If it were, then it would be addressing the problems of carnival.

The Government, through the NCC, should be seeking to address the manifold problems plaguing the people's festival instead of attempting to control and regulate it. What about the development of a pan factory and a drum factory? What about the industrial production of instruments? What about the dilapidated physical premises of the majority of our steelbands and their consequent social marginalization? What are they doing about it?

What about addressing the annual recurrent cost expended on carnival? In a period of limited and scarce financial resources, let the Minister explain the wastage involved perennially in the construction of the various stands to facilitate carnival. Millions of dollars are involved. I understand that merely to construct the North Stand costs \$2 million; renting of public address systems cost another \$300,000; lighting arrangements amount to approximately \$500,000; transportation costs amount to nearly \$1 million. These are some of the problems that the Government should be attempting to address and redress and not this obnoxious bill which seeks to muzzle the cultural forces.

If the Government is serious about the artistes and the cultural forces it should establish a national fund and a hall of fame for the nation's cultural forces, especially those involved in carnival and not merely for calypsonians, panmen and carnival bands, but all national cultural forces must be involved.

There are many carnival heroes to whom we need to pay honour and respect, not by mere lip-service but by concrete deeds. Too many great panmen, masmen and calypsonians have had to migrate or leave their homeland merely to survive and gain recognition. Some have become virtual destitutes and vagrants. We have great pan heroes in the personalities of Bobby Lennox Mohammed of Guinness Cavaliers in the South; Bertie Marshall of Highlanders; Anthony Williams, Pan Am North Stars, a great tuner, arranger/innovator. There are some who have left our lands like Ellie Mannette of Invaders; Robert Greenidge of Desperadoes; Neville Jules of Trinidad All Stars; Emmanuel Riley of Invaders. One of our great carnival bandleaders, "Bompart"—I do not know his real name—died as a virtual destitute. His carnival costumes that were lodged in the old fire station were unceremoniously and heartlessly strewn on the streets. They were put out

right there. As Bro. Resistance would say, "they do not care a damn for the culture."

3.20 p.m.

Mr. President, the Government should be seeking ways and means of assisting the Carnival Bands Association by organizing to obtain their materials at cheaper prices. The Government should assist the calypsonians by seeking to establish a pressing plant to record their music and save vital foreign exchange. How much does it cost the country in foreign exchange to have records pressed abroad? In Trinidad and Tobago, I understand we produce some 300 albums in a mere six-month period. Yet after 29 years of Independence and 15 years of republican status, this country still does not possess a pressing plant. Trinidad and Tobago is one of the most prolific music producers in the entire Caribbean. In fact, it is the most prolific music producer in the Caribbean and I dare say, even in the world.

This Government should be seeking to put proper legislation in place to protect the intellectual and creative property of the artistes. The copyright law is too weak. The machinery to police the copyright law is too feeble. Piracy is therefore the name of the game. We need a piracy squad to urgently deal with that issue.

Mr. President, there is need to reduce the cost of carnival. It is my understanding that one of the major bands in this year's Carnival, paid over \$160,000 for band music and DJ music combined. The two music bands were paid \$70,000 each, while the DJs received almost \$10,000 each. Instead of merely reaping the rich carnival harvest—the Minister herself stated that the Government has enjoyed carnival itself; that industry has made over \$100 million in 1990—the Government ought to be looking at ways and means of facilitating the festival so as to make it more accessible to the small man.

Carnival is becoming increasingly a rich man's festival. Although there were some 62 bands registered in 1991, only about 10 can be described as viable entities and that has to do with cost and technology. Let me quote from the country's Prime Minister who seems to have a different view of the NCC, or has been written a different script on the role of the NCC as a facilitator of the people's festival.

Mr. President, in a keynote address recently, at the presentation of carnival awards held at Queen's Hall on Friday, March 22, 1991, this is what the Prime Minister said:

"Some of the questions which the Commission needs to reflect upon must involve the organization of the festival. It must review roots, venues, crowd control and the presentation mechanisms for all aspects of the carnival. It must critically continue to question whether it presents a carnival in the most effective ways and whether it does the fullest justice to the artistic endeavours which it purports to display.

In other words, the Commission must constantly review its role as the servant of the great arts festival which carnival is."

Mr. President, finally, I would like to refer to an article in the *Trinidad and Tobago Mirror* involving one Mr. Roy Boyke. He is an NCC member (Marketing Specialist). He is a Public Relations Consultant, the owner of ATLAS Advertising Agency and I understand he is an Adviser to the Minister of Culture. Listen to Mr. Boyke and you will understand the purpose of this madness before us:

"An artiste must format products and some producers should be permitted to package carnival on video, local or international producer, but at present there are too many obstacles. People in carnival do not trust government, not this one, not the last one and I do not see that changing. The only amateurs in carnival today, are the creative people and members of the steelband movement."

Mr. President, the intent is clear and the purpose of the bill is unmistakable. If the creative people and members of the steelband movement do not trust the Government, then use the Parliament to impose rules, regulations and provisions on the creative people and the steelband movement. It will not work. We shall not stand idly by and allow this Government to foist legislation down the throats of the people, without their involvement, consultation and participation.

I hope that the message is clear. The bill is tantamount to cultural dictatorship and we on this side call on the Minister to gracefully withdraw it and seek meaningful dialogue with the cultural forces involved in carnival. No support can be expected from the Opposition on this bill and we call on the entire Independent Benches to vote unanimously against this highly dangerous piece of legislation on the peoples' culture which we know as carnival. Thank you.

Sen. Horace Broomes: Mr. President, since I became a Member of this honourable House I have made more public speeches than I care to remember. However, this is the first speech that I am about to make in this honourable House. I did answer a question at some stage and during the course of answering

that question, or indeed, after I had just finished answering that question, one of the Members opposite made sure that I got up on several occasions to answer subsidiaries, so much so that what I finally produced, to my mind, was tantamount to a speech.

All the same, this I must regard as my maiden contribution. I understand that the convention is that, when faced with this kind of impediment, one is not allowed to throw any "bois". One has to wait until one has crossed this impediment. I regret this deeply, having heard my good friend Sen. Mark who just completed his presentation and indeed, having heard the more sober presentation of my Rotary colleague, Sen. Deosaran. I would have liked to throw some "bois", but I must respect the convention.

Mr. President, let me add at the outset that although I do not propose to read a speech, my notes are rather extensive and I shall make extensive reference to them and I crave your indulgence.

The hon. Minister of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts has made the point that this bill which conceptualizes carnival as an industry, is the most significant, the most challenging and the most potentially productive clause of the bill. I am not sure that this point has been well-taken. I have no doubt that the clause to which the hon. Minister refers is clause 9 where the functions of the proposed Commission are outlined. It is in particular subclauses (1)(c) and (d) of that clause that focuses attention upon the unexplored potential of carnival as a lucrative activity, a potential which some people, judging from all we have heard, do not even begin to understand. As for me, I wholeheartedly support the Minister's viewpoint and perceive quite clearly, the significance of this focus on carnival, and I propose to return to it at a later stage.

3.30 p.m.

For the moment, please permit me to refer briefly to subclause (1)(a) and (b) of clause 9, which deals with matters that are only marginally, if at all, less significant than those forming the subject matter of the rest of clause 9. These clauses deal with the business of the organization of carnival throughout the country and I stress, throughout the country and with the development, maintenance and continuing review of procedures. I repeat, continuing review of procedures because I heard someone say that the hon. Prime Minister was at variance with what is in the bill because he placed emphasis on continuing review of procedures. The bill provides for continuing review of procedures to ensure uninterrupted smooth operation of carnival activities.

In this regard, clause 9 ties in very effectively with clause 16 which makes provision for the establishment of regional branches by the proposed commission. These regional branches are to be responsible for the conduct of carnival functions in the various areas of the country. It is important to note that whilst subclause (3) of clause 16 makes it incumbent upon the branches to implement the policies of the commission and to be accountable—because as you know, accountability is one of the watchwords of this Government—to the commission, subclause (4) provides that the branches—and this is very important, it is important to show the focus on the people in their particular areas, conducting their activities the way they see fit. The branches have exclusive authority within the region falling under their purview. This is very important. This is in keeping with the fundamentally important, the cornerstone policy of this Government to guide and assist our people; to nurture and develop the habit of managing their own affairs; of firmly taking their fate into their own hands and of developing themselves and their operations in such a way that they go into and become all that they can be as citizens of our country.

It is important to stress that this manifest love of our Government for our people, is not reserved, as in times past, for party members and supporters. There is abundant evidence that this love flows out freely to all our people. But on this score, I should not detain this honourable House any further, than to point out that from among members of boards of state corporations appointed by this Government, there has emerged at least one Member of this honourable House who even after he declared his political allegiance, was not called upon to retire from the chairmanship of this particular board, but who was able, in his own good time, at his option, to resign and take up his seat in this honourable House.

Further, there are at least two candidates of the late opposition party, potential candidates—they are not sure who their candidates are yet—but there are at least two of them who were nurtured on state boards and who were appointed to those boards by this Government. They were never called upon to resign. There is at least one who was appointed to an important commission of inquiry, the Commission of Inquiry into the Death Penalty, who is now a potential candidate for the late Opposition. So, this is some evidence and there is a lot more, that this Government does not run this country for its party members or supporters.

The objectives set out in clause 9 are further concretized by the provisions of clauses 18, 19 and 20. By clause 18 there would be established a National Carnival Fund to be administered by the Commission itself. This would reduce the intensity of the standard occupational hazard of the larger bureaucracy, what

some people are afraid of. It is designed to avoid, as far as possible, the bureaucracy and red tape, showing once again the intent of the bill to place the running of the carnival into the hands of the people without let or hindrance.

It is a means of getting things done fast by the people for themselves. It is not developing a dependency syndrome because we all know that those who like it so have spent many years developing the dependency syndrome to a fine point. This commission is about breaking up that dependency syndrome; it is about getting some real strong men in the society, doing things for themselves, replacing the little boys. Into this important fund would go, not only money appropriated by Parliament—indeed, I believe that the intention is that in due course, no moneys would be appropriated by Parliament to go into the fund. It will contain also, revenue earned by the commission: gate receipts, donations, income from sales, grants, royalties, contributions from the private sector; all moneys that come into the hand of the commission, go into the fund to be administered, not by the honourable Minister, not by the honourable Minister of Finance, not by the Prime Minister, but by the commission itself.

Clause 19 further takes care of these important people who will be administering carnival on their own behalf. It empowers the commission to create reserve funds—sub-funds you might call them—which can be used to establish scholarships and grants for artists, for designers and for people in music. In fact, for anybody who is making a serious contribution to carnival.

In what to the connoisseur of bureaucracy, among which number I count myself, is nothing short of a giant leap forward, the commission is empowered by clause 19 (3) to invest moneys not required for immediate expenditure. No Government department is able to do that. As the hon. Senator from Tobago well knows, you have to return unspent money to the Treasury and you cannot invest it in anything. So this commission is a unique concept designed to allow people to carry on the affairs of carnival in the way they see fit without let or hindrance.

3.40 p.m.

The empowerment of the commission to own, manage and control property as provided by clause 20, can be used as the basis of considerable developmental action, not only in Port of Spain, but in every single one of the regions created by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1990. What is more, in these regions, such developmental activity would, through the branches of the Commission, be

executed and controlled by the people of the various areas for themselves, because to this Government those are the people who matter.

If I may revert to the note on which I began, I emphasize that I do agree with the Minister; that the focus on carnival as an industry is the most significant perspective created by this bill. I note with considerable satisfaction that clause 9 (2) empowers the commission to establish subsidiary companies as well as to acquire equity in other companies and other undertakings engaged in carnival. So that the commission is not a closed shop, it is not a cocoon, it is not an oyster shell; it is something put there to facilitate. So when we talk about facilitating by the Government, it is for the Government to set up the agency through which it would facilitate and this commission is an agency to facilitate, through which the Government will facilitate. You cannot intend that when you say the Government must facilitate that the Cabinet must go around it, if that is what you mean by the Government. Because even that question can be debated *ad nauseam*, what you mean by the Government. Is it not the Government, when you set up an NCC to facilitate? I submit that it is the Government, using the commission to facilitate.

Further than establishing subsidiaries and acquiring equity in undertakings engaged in carnival, the commission is empowered to establish new companies to engage in related activities. One begins to see the scope that these economic activities can take, the business side of carnival can take. So one may be able to see out of that the possibilities of lowering the cost of material that concerns some hon. Senators of this Senate. The point is that this commission is put there to look into all these things; to facilitate. It is not a case of picking up what one member would like done immediately and picking up over there what another member would like done immediately. It is a case of setting up a body to act for the Government to facilitate and to take into account all the desires expressed by hon. Senators.

The vast array of almost incredible skills that are brought to bear upon the successful production of carnival year after year is now legendary. It is certain that the proposed commission functioning as a commission merely and without subsidiaries, could not do justice to the task of harnessing all these skills, and imposing a regime of industrial discipline, productivity and organization upon the exercise in such a way that these skills would bring just material rewards to those who possess them and to our society as a whole.

It is therefore with some elation that I note the empowerment of the commission created by clause 9(2), to use other desirable forms of organization,

other desirable organizational techniques, to help our country and our people get the most out of the considerable abilities which we put on display every year at carnival time.

In clause 9, the commission is charged with identifying, evaluating and promoting carnival-related industries. If the commission is to be charged with that it is hardly possible for the drafters of the bill to put an annex identifying the industries, because it is part of the work of the commission as is proposed by the bill; it is part of the work of the commission acting as agent of the Government acting on behalf of the Government to do this. It is wholly unnecessary to clog the bill by listing, I do not know how many industries, and putting them as an annex to the bill. The commission is charged further with enhancing and marketing the cultural products. It is also charged with the development and implementation of a marketing strategy for all carnival and carnival-related products, so that the country, and more especially, the people directly involved, will earn all that it is possible to earn from the skills they display during our national festival.

It is to be noted in respect of the fund that the Commission has a responsibility to interact with the private sector because there has been reference to the possibility of the amorphous band of carnival people interacting somehow with the business sector in order to produce magic without organization that this bill seeks to apply to carnival. Apparently, the bill has been so well drafted that in advance it has taken care of all the concerns of some of those who oppose it. The commission is to interact with the private sector in order to test their capacity to provide funds for the work of the commission and to urge them to provide those funds to the limit of their abilities.

The commission must further engage in marketing activities abroad and must forge closer links between the tourist industry *per se* and the carnival industry, because there is a difference; there is overlap but they are not one and the same thing. The carnival industry is a distinctly separate industry, although part of the whole. In this regard, it is worth noting that clause 16(2) empowers the commission to establish branches not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but also abroad.

Given this provision for the establishment of branches abroad and a mandate to promote carnival abroad and link it more closely with the tourist industry, the fears expressed about the staging of some form of carnival in Jamaica have to be assuaged, not by depriving the poor Jamaicans of carnival but by so organizing

and marketing our own carnival that the Jamaican carnival will end up being merely an advertisement for the real thing.

I have to say that sometimes I think that in this society we suffer from too many fears. Little ones, but too many. They pile up. I do not know why we are so afraid of so many things. I am convinced quietly, deep down, that it has to do with lack of self confidence. We are afraid to give service in any form. We are afraid to say, "Thank you, Sir" or "Thank you, Madam". We are afraid to be polite to one another at all, because we are afraid that by being polite, we belittle ourselves. Some people are even afraid to be proud of the fact that we have one of the most efficient governments in the world led by one of the most able Prime Ministers in the world today—though happily the numbers of these people we observe are dwindling day by day and will approach zero as we approach election time.

At this time, with your leave, I congratulate my friend and erstwhile university teacher, Sen. Bahadoorsingh—I am letting out your secret—for having the courage during his contribution to this debate, to place on the records of this honourable House the plain and simple fact—at any rate plain and simple to those of us who work with the Prime Minister from day to day—that the Prime Minister is totally and completely incapable of being racist. Mr. President, the hon. ANR Robinson is wholly incapable of being racist—I repeat it—in any sense, in any regards, in any context. If I may say so, Mr. President, I fervently wish that in that respect as, indeed, in many others, many more people in this country were like the hon. ANR Robinson, a man who truly deserves the title of "honourable". I go further and urge the people of this country never, never to have as Prime Minister in this country anybody who is a whisper capable of being racist.

3.50 p.m.

To return to our fears, we are afraid of tourism. We are afraid that by earning foreign exchange through giving service to tourists and saying to them "Thank you, Sir", or "Thank you, Madam", we would be belittled out of sight. Do we not know that for Canada, for the United Kingdom, for the United States of America, for India, tourism is a most important part of the source of their foreign exchange earnings? Are we not aware that for your tourist dollar the Crown Jewels in the United Kingdom, or some replica of them, will be forever on display, and that for the tourist dollar, the ceremony of the Changing of the Guards outside the gates of Buckingham Palace will never cease? Do we not know that the ancient Red Fort in New Delhi, the Taj Mahal at Agra built by infidel invaders, the Minaret

Qutb Minar in New Delhi, the famous temple at Khajuraho with its erotic figurines, that all these gems of the historical glory of India are today crucial to the foreign exchange earnings of India?

What exchange earnings are we talking about? I have one or two figures, Mr. President. In 1988, India earned US \$1.25 billion from tourism, Canada earned in that year \$6.9 billion, and the United Kingdom 15.5 billion pounds from tourism. The 1988 figures are the latest ones I have for India, but if I could go on to 1989 and 1990, Canada in 1989 earned Can. \$7.2 billion from tourism, and in 1990 Can. \$7.4 billion. In 1989, the United Kingdom earned 19.6 billion pounds from tourism. This is the scale of earnings that we can aim to enjoy if as a people we simply apply self-confidence and stop being afraid.

We speak English and no other language, at any rate most of us, and many of us can and do boast of our knowledge of Chaucer and Shakespeare, but we are so afraid we seek to deny the undeniable European strain in our culture, by which I mean the culture of both large minorities in our society. But culture is indivisible. It is the sum total of what we are, of who we are, of all the factors and all the influences that very often unknown to us, inveigle our psyche, and together become the end result of what and who we are. In Trinidad and Tobago in particular, what and who we are is unique because it comes from an undoubtedly unique blend of influences. More excitingly, it is not static. It is daily evolving, daily blending, ever more sweetly. It cannot be duplicated, and in the production of it, we have not merely a comparative but an absolute advantage which we must explore.

Those who condemn or are afraid of a conference on Hinduism in the Rainbow in Trinidad and Tobago; those who condemn or are afraid of the establishment of a national carnival commission, those are the ones who would retard our development. They would hold up development by denying us the rewards of our rich and unique culture. They would perpetuate the dependency syndrome among the geniuses of our carnival by getting them together amorphously somewhere without guidance, without help, to deal with economic giants on the pretence that they are dealing on equal terms and would be able together, to promote carnival.

Let me observe however, Mr. President, that I do sympathize with, even though I cannot share, the apprehensions expressed by the Members opposite about the use of a company for these objectives, but I am sure that with a little

thought, such eminent Members of this honourable House would quickly change their perception.

Those Members would hardly deny the European influence in our culture while they take pleasure in the gems of language produced by the likes of P.G. Wodehouse, Graham Greene, and of the master himself, VS Naipaul. Those who stand here, who are afraid and condemn, did they go to see Chaitaram at Queen's Hall a few weeks ago, funded by the Ministry of Culture—the culture funds? Have they gone to see any shows by Sat and Mondira Balkaransingh? Have they once gone to see any? Have they done anything to help them? They were looking for money to put on this show. But they stand here, Mr. President, and they talk.

Have they ever heard about the Balkaransinghs in the local ballet called Penal Harvest? Have they ever heard about it? Have they ever seen it? Have they ever read about it? Or is it pure posturing about culture, Mr. President? Are they serious, Mr. President? I think we should all stop being afraid and take our culture. When I say "our culture", I mean our culture. I lived in India for 5 years and I know what Indian culture is. It is not the same thing as Trinidad and Tobago culture in any form or shape. So that the sooner we stop trying to fool ourselves and accept that we are the end product of certain historical and other forces, even though we still remain superficially different, the sooner we do that—we are going to fight all the time—but the sooner we get rid of the nonsense, the sooner we will embark upon the road to true nationhood and to self-reliance for the good of all of us.

We must develop, we must enjoy, we must market, we must export our cultural products and services. In doing so, we must do what we have learnt or should have learnt from the metropolitan centres over hundreds of years. That is to say, we must help them to develop a taste for our cultural products, and when they develop the taste, we sell the thing to them. We must be able to sell products to the bands on the Eastern Parkway, to the hordes at Caribana, to the Nottinghill crowds in London, to the revellers in Miami and to our good friends in Jamaica.

We have a small and limited land mass. Oil aside, we have no minerals. But we do have a unique culture, a great deal of talent, considerable skills. These are what we have to develop to make our living by. We have to make our living by the talents and the skills that we have, as they do in Singapore and some other places. As the world progresses by leaps and bounds in the fields of science and technology, the ways in which countries such as ours can make a living are

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getting fewer and fewer. We will always have our unique attributes by which to help ourselves earn a living.

This bill, Mr. President, displays a profound recognition of these realities. This bill is about empowering all our people to harness just one outstanding aspect of our reality. We have to take them one by one, to help us find the routes to a good life.

I am quite certain that the National Cultural Commission will come. This bill represents only a beginning, a beginning which happens to be focused on one aspect which for a long time has been crying out to be fine-tuned to help us on the road to progress. We must all support it if we are serious.

Permit me in closing a brief quotation from Kalil Gibran, and on this note I end:

"And there are those who talk and without knowledge or forethought reveal a truth which they themselves do not understand."

I thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Allan Alexander: Mr. President, the pleasure is mine to congratulate Sen. Broomes on his maiden speech in this House. The contents of his presentation indubitably indicate that he came to this House with knowledge and forethought about what he was going to address us. Sen. Broomes's contribution indicated that he studied the bill—his words were based on logic—and he

presented his contribution with such lucidity and precision that, in my view, it has given the lie to the maxim that a Minister responsible for Information is usually a minister of propaganda. That certainly he has shown himself not to be this afternoon.

4.05 p.m.

Now, Mr. President, in respect of the bill, much has been said about it by Senators who have spoken before me, and I will endeavour to look at certain aspects of the bill in my contribution. In the explanatory note, Mr. President, the main object of the bill is said to be the establishment and incorporation of a National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago with responsibility for the propagation of carnival, both nationally and internationally. Insofar as international propagation is concerned, I can have no quarrel with that main object of the bill, but I have grave doubts as to whether there is any need for the

propagation of carnival nationally, as the festivities associated with carnival are deeply and solidly implanted in the national psyche. So, Mr. President, that is one part of the bill—the provisions which seek to deal with national propagation or national viability—which seems to me will serve no useful purpose in that respect. I said that carnival is deeply implanted in the national psyche.

Carnival, Mr. President, does not belong, as has been stated, to any particular sector of the society, whether sector was meant to have reference to class, religion, sex, origin, race or colour. Carnival has been celebrated in Trinidad during the era of Spanish colonialism, and that was the case in 1797, when Trinidad was ceded to the British Crown by reason of Spanish capitulation.

By the time of the conquest, French settlers from the French islands, including free men of colour, had come to reside in Trinidad under the provisions of the Cedula of Population of 1783—and they, too, participated in carnival. The English also participated in carnival. Up to the pre-Emancipation period, the persons who participated in carnival were the English, French, Spanish and free men of colour. The African slaves were not allowed to participate in carnival. The Amerindian population, although they could have participated, stood aloof. It was only in 1834, after the emancipation of slavery, ex-African slaves began to participate in carnival.

A memorandum from the then Registrar of the Courts, Mr. L. M. Frasier, in April of 1931, gives this description of carnival. This was a memorandum to the then Governor of Trinidad and Tobago. I think he was Governor Freeling. He said, and I quote:

"In former days and down to the period of the emancipation of the slaves, the carnival was kept up with much spirit by the upper classes. There are many persons still living who remember the mask balls given at St. Ann's by the Governor, Sir Ralph Woodford, and also that the leading members of society used on the days of the carnival, to drive through the streets of Port-of-Spain, masked and in the evenings, go from house to house, which were all thrown open, for the occasion."

So the statement of carnival belonging to one sector of the population may be applicable to what occurred before 1834, but it certainly does not apply to the situation in Trinidad and Tobago at the present moment. History has shown that from 1834 to the present time, every immigrant population which came to Trinidad participated in the carnival celebrations. They participated in the bands,

the music, the theatre and they all brought their own cultural background into making carnival the rainbow festival that it is.

Mr. President, one needs to understand what this bill is seeking to do. I want to go directly to clause 9 of the bill which provides:

"(1) The Commission may do all such things as are necessary or convenient for the purpose of exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions conferred or imposed on it by the Minister and this Act and in particular the Commission shall perform the following functions:

(a) the regulation, co-ordination or conduct of all public carnival activities throughout the country..."

The regulation and conduct of all public carnival activities throughout the country is what I am concerned about.

Mrs. Johnson: For the information of the hon. Senator, I would like to state that this clause has been amended in the other place. I do not know if he is using his amended version, but it has been amended.

Sen. Alexander: I am told that the word "public" has been struck out and it now reads, "the regulation, co-ordination or conduct of all carnival activities.

Mrs. Johnson: Shall I read it for the hon. Senator?

Sen. Alexander: Yes.

Mrs. Johnson: Mr. President, it says:

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

Sen. Alexander: I have just been handed a copy of the amended version by the Clerk.

4.15 p.m.

Now what does this mean? Does this mean that the Government is going to go into competition with carnival activities which are not under its aegis? Is that what it means? If that is not what it means, then I imagine that the hon. Minister in her winding up will explain what this means. Because the term "carnival activities", is as wide as it is broad. Insofar as costuming is concerned, it begins with the formulation as to what this band is going to play; it begins with the design of the costume. Then there is the building of the costume; then there is the

organization of this band, the people to wear the costume and finally, the presentation of the band on the costuming side. Is that what the Government is intending to conduct under its aegis?

That is not all, insofar as carnival activities are concerned. A masquerader does not put on a costume and stay in front of his house. That is not how we know carnival to be. The masquerader needs music in order that he will be able to dance his mas, and the music itself is dependent on the calypsoes of the day. Are these the carnival activities which this commission is going to regulate insofar as these activities are under its aegis?

In other words, are we going to have two carnivals, one under the aegis of the Government and one that is not under the aegis of the Government? It is something that I really cannot understand because one needs to look at how our carnival has evolved through the centuries. The carnival that we know today is not the carnival that existed all the time. It is an evolution which resulted from changes in the society—economic, social and cultural.

Insofar as the music for carnival is concerned, it is recorded, that originally it was Spanish music—the cuatro, the banjo, the guitar and the maracas, that is the chac chac. When the French came, they came with their European instruments—the violin, the flute, the bass. After the emancipation of slavery, the African drum was introduced. When the drum was forbidden, the tambour-bamboo came; and from the tambour-bamboo, you had the steelband—a new invention. The steel instrument is the only modern musical instrument invented in the 20th century. That is what our carnival has produced. It was produced because of the creativity of the people—unharnessed, their own intuition, trying to make music for the masqueraders to dance.

As the music changed, so the carnival changed. Dances were made on the streets on carnival day. As Lord Kitchener said, "The road make to walk on carnival day." So, in the process of carnival, you did not only have the evolution of musical instruments, but you had the evolution of dances—the Dragon Dance, the Saga Ting, the King Sailor. These were dances which necessarily evolved with the masqueraders on the street, dancing, displaying their costumes for their friends to enjoy. And this was unfettered. The costumes kept changing as well until we reached a height of creativity in costuming in the days of Saldenah and George Bailey.

4.25 p.m.

Mr. President, I want you to understand that costuming was evolving and it evolved up to the middle 1960s after the organization of carnival was taken over by the CDC. Since that time what we have, are short skirts and exposed skin. That is what we have for costuming in this country. That is not evolution, that is stultification. Instead of dance, we have that travesty which we look at on our television on carnival Monday and Tuesday.

Before the CDC, you did not have that travesty of dance which we have today. I do not know, but if you had an evolution of carnival from the 18th century to the 20th century and within a few years stultification sets in, it seems to me to be strong evidence that the stultification of carnival was the result of the imposition of a governmental organizational body on carnival.

Mr. President, let me give you a little anecdote as to what I saw last carnival Tuesday morning about 9.00 a.m. I was walking down Park Street and I saw two men with two sticks running up Park Street. I looked back to see if anybody was running behind them. Then they ran up Frederick Street, so I decided to follow to see what was going on. Do you know what was going on? They were running up to the Savannah to get a place for their band which is then occupied by the masqueraders who will stay there for five hours, then go on the stage after which it is the end of their carnival.

That is not carnival as we know it and that is why, in my respectful view, one hears from year to year, complaints about lewdness, *et cetera*. Carnival is not stage theatre, it is street theatre. If there is anything that the Government can do, it is to take measures to bring carnival back on the streets.

Mrs. Johnson: I hate to disturb Sen. Alexander. Was he in this country when proposals were put up for taking carnival back on the streets? Does he know what was the reaction of the very band-leaders? If he does not know, I will tell him what the reaction of the very band-leaders was.

Sen. Alexander: I do not know what the specific proposals were, but what I do know is, you do not just say, go back on the streets. You have to do more than that. So far as I am concerned, I will tell you what I would have done. With the establishment of the Caroni Racing Complex, I would have put horses out of the Queen's Park Savannah. I would have put, facing Queen's Park South, stands there so the bands can come up Frederick Street, go along Queen's Park South and carry on. That is all that is needed for the development and evolution of

carnival and that is what I am talking about. I am making reference to your clause 9.

Mr. President: The sitting is now suspended for half an hour. We will resume at 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. Alexander: Mr. President, clause 9 (1)(b) is relevant to 9 (1)(a) for whereas 9(1)(a) provides for the performance by the commission of the regulation, co-ordination or conduct of carnival activities throughout the country held under the aegis of the Government, 9(1)(b) is of great import, because it empowers the commission to perform the following function—

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

This is seen immediately to have, not only reference to those festivities held under the aegis of the Government but also to others.

Now, the first question I wish to ask is: What effect would those two clauses have on the provisions of the Public Holidays and Festivals Act Chap. 19:05 and in that regard, whose regulations will take prominence? The regulations made by the President under section 5 of the Public Holidays and Festivals Act or the regulations made by the commission under clause 9 of this bill? Because, section 5 of the Public Holidays and Festivals Act provides as follows:

- "(1) For the purposes of this section, the President may, by Order, declare any day to be a day of Public Festival in Trinidad and Tobago and may specify areas in which and conditions subject to which such public festival may be celebrated.
- (2) The President may make regulations for the conduct and management of public festivals or any particular public festival and for the proper behaviour of persons and the preservation of the peace at such festivals; and, without prejudice to the generality of this provision, regulations made under this subsection may permit persons to celebrate such festivals in the streets and other public places with parades, processions, music and fireworks, and may permit them to throw specified substances at other persons, to appear masked or otherwise disguised

and generally to celebrate the festivals in any manner that may be prescribed."

Now, this is a provision which had its genesis in the Peace Preservation Ordinance of 1884 which came after the Canboulay riots. Then it went into the Summary Offences Ordinance and now it is in the Public Holidays and Festivals Act.

We all know that at every carnival the President makes regulations for the celebration of the carnival, the manner in which the carnival is to be celebrated, making offences for breaches of those rules. But now, clause 9 seeks to establish a regulation-making body in the commission; not only a regulation-making body but a review body. Is this commission going to review, or is being empowered to review, the regulations made by the President under the Public Holidays and Festivals Act? If it is not, then you have regulations made by the commission under clause 9 and regulations made by the President under section 5 of the Public Holidays and Festivals Act. Which set of regulations must the masqueraders and other persons follow?

It seems to me to be creating a situation of confusion. It seems to me, as well, that the power given, or the power which is sought to be given, to the commission for the development, maintenance and review of rules and procedures may well lead to an abuse of these powers.

Sen. Deosaran made passing reference to the question of calypsoes. Calypsoes, as he said, were in large measure, anti-establishment. Now, there was a statement which was made describing one of our more famous calypsonians, who is now deceased, Atilla the Hun. It is my respectful view, that this description exemplifies the better calypsonians who have sung and who are at present singing in our tents. This is how the late Atilla was described: "as a commentator on the social and political life of the nation; a commentator on the contemporary developments at home and abroad; his language was grandiloquent; his wit unrivalled; his courage boundless and his perception acute."

That description, I believe applies to all our better calypsonians. History has shown that Governments of the day either by administrative or legislative measures, have tried to muzzle, or censor calypsonians. Now, I am not saying that this Government is going to do that.

Mrs. Johnson: I think that it is very important for me to state at this time that this Government has at no time, in any way, sought to muzzle calypsonians. We are not going to do so.

Sen. Alexander: I never said that, I have not said that and I do not believe that you will do it. However, once you put this on the statute book another administration may want to use this regulation-making and review power to do it. It has been attempted before.

5.10 p.m.

Calypso is a carnival activity. In point of fact, it is an activity without which there can be no successful carnival and if the commission is being given power to develop and review rules and regulations for the conduct of carnival activities throughout the country, it is my respectful view, that within that power there is the power to censor the calypsonians. It has been done before. In fact, it was done under the Theatre and Dance Hall Ordinance of 1934, when one of the great calypsonians was hauled before the magistrate's court because he subjected the then Director of Education, to what the police referred to as ridicule. So, one is not dreaming up a situation. It is a reality.

Mrs. Johnson: I hate to interrupt the hon. Senator, but may I ask: Is the hon. Senator saying that this clause leaves it open for a commission to make rules about what calypsonians must sing? I think that is what he is saying, that this clause can be interpreted in such a way, that a commission could make rules saying what costumes the masqueraders must wear and what songs the calypsonians must sing.

Sen. Alexander: It is my respectful view, that "the commission shall perform the following functions; the development, maintenance and review of rules, regulation and procedure for the conduct of carnival festivities". Calypso is a carnival festivity; a calypso tent is a carnival festivity.

In point of fact, in the origin of the carnival band, the calypsonian and the chantwelle were one, but in the development, the calypsonian is now in the tent; so it is a carnival activity. From a point of view of English, the censoring of calypsonians in my respectful view, is within clause 9(1)(b). So you see, it is not only calypso, it is everything within the term "carnival festivities" which this commission could regulate and establish procedures for their conduct. In other words, this body which is being formed is given power to control carnival, and the concept of the control of a cultural activity by a government agency is an

anathema to me; but more than that, how would that be implemented and how would this commission control carnival all over Trinidad and Tobago? It seems to me an impossible task and one which the Government should not seek to impose on any of its agencies. In my view, sufficient control has already been placed on carnival and what is required now, is a freeing-up of the carnival rather than further impositions on the democratic and liberal nature of the festival.

One has to look at this bill in relation to the other general matters. This bill is seeking to establish this commission in respect of carnival activities, but by its terms the people who are responsible for the development of carnival, up to this day, their skill, ability and knowledge are recognized in an indirect way. For example, the experience and training which are specified as preferable for appointment to this board are in the field of finance, management, government, international trade, law, export-oriented business and then culture or the arts. It is only there, within those two categories that the masqueraders and the steelbandmen have representation.

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

Motion made, That hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes.
[*Sen. Furness-Smith*]

Question put and agreed to.

5.20 p.m.

Sen. Alexander: What I am saying, is that it is true that in clause 5, a nominee from the organization most representative of the steelband movement is mentioned; a nominee from the carnival bands and a representative of calypsonians are mentioned, but when you look at the experience which is set out in the main part of that clause, it is business experience, accounts and so on. They are not the people who are responsible for carnival being what it is. It is the ordinary masquerader, it is the steelbandmen about whom Sen. Belmosa spoke on the last occasion. Moreover, the nominees from these organizations only amount to three out of nine, so what is it that this commission is going to do about the carnival? Are they going to enhance the carnival, or are they going to see how they are going to get more money from it? That is the question which I have to ask.

I would not make reference to other clauses in the bill, except perhaps to make reference to clause 16 which gives the commission power to establish its

tentacles all over the country. You see, the Minister appoints the commission and the commission appoints branches in Trinidad and Tobago, in Sangre Grande, in Toco, all over the place, Point Fortin, wherever, without reference to the people who participate in the areas in which the branches are being set up.

It seems to me that these provisions go against the development of carnival. The historical development of carnival is that it has been a people's thing. Carnival has been organized and played by the people. It is the people who have brought carnival to the standard to which it has reached, and it is not anybody with any experience in business management and finance, and what have you, who brought the steelband or who created—*[Interruption]*. Accountability is something different, unless you are saying that the people who participate in carnival are incapable of being accountable, unless that is what you are saying. But, of course, I do not hold to that view.

You see, I believe that carnival being a national festival, the Government should provide infrastructure for its development and leave it to evolve as it has evolved over the years.

If I were Sen. Persad, I would not quarrel for any other festival being included in this legislation, because eventually being included here would mean that the festival will die of strangulation. That is an opinion which I have.

In the final analysis, the only useful purpose in my view that this bill will serve is the opposite to what is intended. History and even recent history has shown that government interference in the carnival has stultified the creativity which we have witnessed in carnival over the years. On that ground, I fear that I cannot support this bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Kelvin Khan: Mr. President, in the private sector, the establishment of a business which intends to market a product usually comes after a feasibility survey. The survey will indicate whether there is a need for the product, the extent of the need, how best the need can be satisfied, in short, how viable is the project.

In the private sector, to obtain funds, the lender has to be satisfied of the economic viability of the project. Of course, this proposed commission will suffer no such constraints. There is a fund. The fund shall comprise moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, loans raised by the commission, funds generated from bond issues guaranteed by the Minister with responsibility

for Finance, or assets of the commission, funds provided from such sources as the Minister who has responsibility for Finance may approve.

Again, we see at clause 24(7):

"The Commission, with the approval of the Minister with responsibility for Finance, may write-off bad debts."

A rather different situation, in my view, than a business which we hope will be economically viable.

We see in the explanatory note that the main objective of this bill is to establish and incorporate a National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago which would be responsible for the propagation of carnival, both nationally and internationally. I have some difficulty in understanding the use of the word "propagation" in this context. I assume that what is meant is that the carnival will be spread and it will be popularized. However, I do not think that locally, there is a need to popularize or to spread carnival. I would like to hear how this will be done internationally. In fact, before the incorporation of this commission, I suggest that a feasibility survey be done by suitably qualified individuals.

There is no need to establish a commission with all the costs which will be incurred. The Minister can have the feasibility survey done. The mandate to its members can be how best can the prospective objectives of the commission be achieved. They can also make recommendations as to what functions of the commission will be needed to achieve these objectives. This will be a more efficient and cost-effective approach.

Carnival, calypso and the steelband are all bound together. We as a nation enjoy them. The music, the colour, the rhythm, the "picong", the commentary, the dance. Because of our involvement, we may have created myths which need to be examined before any attempt to internationalize these activities. It may well be that these activities need to be modified to be accepted internationally and, in so doing, they may no longer be something uniquely our own.

Calypso has been around as long as I can remember, and yet it took the Andrew Sisters to make a watered-down version of "Rum and Coca-Cola" famous. Harry Belafonte achieved fame and fortune singing his version of calypso. Kitchener and Sparrow were around long before Bob Marley and reggae, and yet compared to calypso, reggae has achieved far greater international acceptance.

We need to ask, Why? It is an answer we need if we are to market calypso successfully, but there is no need to establish a commission to have that question answered. Can we imagine a businessman setting up a business to find out whether the business is going to be successful? The steelpan, we are being told, is the only new musical form of the 20th century. We have heard that time and time again. To exist, steelbands require expensive sponsorship, and this, I believe, is true of most bands that have similar numbers of players. They are not economically viable. Whether they be London Philharmonic or the New York Philharmonic or whatever, those bands continue because they are very heavily sponsored.

5.35 p.m.

Steelband music cannot be patented. We may regularize it and obtain recognition as the creators, and perhaps, the lovers of steelband music may want to come here to see where it started, or to listen live to the excellence of our own steelband, but how many people who like music, know where it originated? Where did the piano or clarinet start? Does anybody go to where the saxophone was made to listen to a saxophone being played? New Orleans blues, Mr. President, waltzes in Vienna, how many people go to New Orleans to hear Blues? They did not do so in the day of the phonograph. Today with the improvements in audio-reproduction, it is unlikely that they will come to Trinidad and Tobago simply to hear steelband music. Perhaps it is time we think of steelband music as our gift to the world and let it go. We will continue to play it, but this idea of marketing and commercializing that we seem to have stuck in our heads—who commercializes waltzes? People like it, they listen to it, but you know somewhere we have this idea that we have to hold on to steelband because it is ours. Famous instrumentalists toured the world. The great violinists, and the cellists and whatever they may be, they toured the world and people paid to hear them because of their virtuosity. Maybe this is what our pannists need to do, to tour the world. Perhaps they may need financial assistance to do so, I do not know. But this is the way we will make our steelband music famous.

Our carnival, which we, with our capacity to forever pat ourselves on our own backs and describe as the greatest spectacle on earth; which we now want to market; which we now want to commercialize, what makes it different from the carnivals of Rio and New Orleans? That is an important question to be answered if we want people to come here to see our carnival. What makes it different, so

that we will continue to expand that difference to ensure that people want to come here?

Someone said that our carnival is more spicy, has more sting, but I once saw a video of Rio Carnival—I see Sen. Rambachan is laughing—topless people. Perhaps to make it more spicy we need to have less, opposite to where they have less. But seriously, our carnival is different but we need to determine why it is different, how it is different and we have to emphasize that difference.

There is another myth as far as our carnival is concerned, and that is, the thing that makes our carnival so wonderful is the number of beautiful women who take part in carnival; Trinidad women are the most beautiful women in the world. I would not even describe that as fiction, it goes beyond fiction, that might be a fulfilling wish. When I saw the video of the Brazilians, they have the same ethnic mixture to a large extent that we have, and therefore, I found them equally beautiful as the women of Trinidad and Tobago. They have the same ability to dance. They possess the same rhythm that our people have.

Sen. Rampersad: They cannot dance. Anytime they dance the calypso, they dance like crab.

Sen. Khan: Floats, once an important part of our carnival, we no longer have. If people like floats, they will go to New Orleans because that is where you see all types of beautiful floats. What made our carnival different? Fr. Joseph has talked about spontaneity. In my view, the thing that made our carnival different, was our dance and Sen. Alexander has alluded to it. It was the “King Sailor” and the “Fireman” in the sailor band dancing on carnival day, creating his own choreography. Even the historical bands would put their best dancers in front of the band because our mas was dancing through the streets of our city. What has happened over the years? Carnival was organized; the dancing is no more; people back up on Frederick and Charlotte Streets for hours on end. We no longer have dancing. We have a parade and it is fittingly called “Parade of the Bands.”

Mr. President, we are being asked to establish another bureaucratic organization with one of its functions being the regulation, co-ordination or conduct of all public carnival activities throughout the nation, with the authority to establish branches in or outside of Trinidad and Tobago and giving it all kinds of authority to achieve objectives, without any research data as to how these objectives can be achieved. Again, I suggest to the Minister, get a small grouping

of people. She has the authority do it. Let them go and ascertain what we need, before we set up this commission.

Mrs. Johnson: Mr. President, the hon. Senator is assuming that the research necessary has not been done before bringing this bill to the Parliament. I suppose he can assume that, but I am telling him he is wrong. The research has been done and in my winding up I will make that presentation.

Sen. Khan: I am very glad to hear that. All I can say is, that it is a pity. I could have sat and many of us would have sat, if the Minister—in fact, we may not have had a debate—had provided us with this information up-front. *[Interruption]* I am not a politician; I am not in love with the sound of my voice.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would say, through you, that the result of such an approach is predictable—confusion and wastage of scarce funds. Again, I suggest to the Minister that we go about this in another way. Thank you.

5.45 p.m.

Sen. Mootilal Moonan: Mr. President, I take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. Sen. Broomes on his maiden speech and at the same time, I also congratulate him on his virgin speech for trying to propagate political campaign in this Parliament.

Some Senators are of the view that the effect of the legislation would be to nationalize carnival. Another Senator made the observation that the Government was creating another state enterprise. The failure of most state enterprises was mainly due to Government putting their political associates and friends on the board and not having astute business managers to make these state enterprises profitable. I see nothing wrong in having a statutory board run the carnival, personally, because carnival today is big business. So if we do not become more efficient and vibrant, we will lose our carnival to other Caribbean countries and other developed countries of the world. I do agree with these facts presented by the Minister. This bill would not be worth the paper it was printed on unless knowledgeable, honest and capable people are placed on the commission, without any political interferences whatsoever. This is my personal view.

This Government has become so narrow-minded in other outlooks that the few complimentary tickets—now most probably this is not the right forum but whenever you get the opportunity, you have to present it on the platform—which were extended to the members of the judiciary have been withdrawn and these judges have to line up like ordinary people to collect tickets at carnival time

which, in my opinion, is disgraceful. I suggest that all judges, senior magistrates and their families must be given complimentary tickets as the last Government used to do.

Mrs. Johnson: On a point of order. I wish to state that parliamentarians, judges, and so on, get complimentary tickets for themselves and their families. Anymore required after that they must purchase.

Sen. Moonan: Mr. President, this is not my information.

I would like to draw your attention to a statement made by the junior Minister of Tourism, Sen. Rambachan, when he referred to the UNC. The statement made was: "When dying politically, race is the final refuge." The junior Minister is the one, who in a subtle way, brought up race and discrimination when he said that Eid, Divali and Hosay cannot be treated in the same way as carnival. He never spoke about Corpus Christi or Easter. He even stated that he subscribes to the view that carnival starts on Ash Wednesday. The Minister, in a most devious way, using flowery language, is preaching discrimination.

For 40 days after carnival, we have the Lenten period which is sacred to all Christians and carnival can only start after the Lenten period. Here we have a junior Minister saying that carnival starts on Ash Wednesday. I do not agree with him. I emphasize that preparation for carnival must start after the Lenten period. *[Interruption]* I have noticed in Parliament that the junior Minister is always trying to make comments while other Members are speaking, especially when the UNC Members are on the floor. Mr. President, I advise the junior Minister that he must not interfere and make comments when other Members are on their feet. He must live up to the standards of his high office and stop making comments. I was reliably informed from his party directorate that the present Government would keep him as a junior Minister until he breathes his last breath.

I have decided to support this bill by giving the lady Minister an opportunity to set up a proper management structure to manage the carnival operations. Therefore, in conclusion, I will support this bill so it would not be said that the Government did not benefit from some of our advice. The Minister might fail, the management might fail, but I am still giving her the opportunity to get the statutory board into operation. If it is to be operated as some state enterprises have been operating in the past, it is doomed for failure, but it is my opinion that the lady Minister would try and do a very good job by putting the right people in the right places. Thank you.

Sen. Dr. Martin Sampath: Mr. President, I had hoped to speak this evening in a conciliatory manner as far as the Independents were concerned, when I detected that most of them at least hoped to oppose the bill and perhaps in a reconciliatory manner to Members of the Opposition. But after being subjected to the venom which emanated from the benches of the Opposition, it is clear to me that I have to inject as forcibly as possible, a bit of anti-venom which I trust would be as painless as it is possible to be.

I am referring, of course, to the comments made by Sen. Wade Mark. He has allowed a great deal of what is in his subconscious to emanate and that is wishful thinking. For example, he has made certain comments regarding the "dying days of the NAR." He has referred to a statement made by our Prime Minister when the coup was attempted. In fact, he spoke of a coup, apparently quite mistakenly, instead of an attempted coup. That, I regard as a sign of wishful thinking. Also, he made a statement about "attack with full force". That again is symptomatic of the sort of mind which Sen. Mark possesses.

I want to read something here, Mr. President, with your permission, which has not yet been published. It is called, "A coup that failed." It cannot be published yet because the matter is *sub judice* but there is one paragraph I would like to read:

"By 7.30 p.m., the Abu knew that the coup had failed. The Muslimeen at both beach heads, were as much hostages as those with gun muzzles directly against their heads."

I am sure this brings back unpleasant memories to our lady Minister.

"The attempt in the Parliament chamber to persuade Mr. Robinson to call off the attack was sheer desperation. The Prime Minister's heroic condemnation 'you are murderers and torturers' and his call to the regiment to attack with full force, must rank in history with Nelson's famous 'attack, I do not see the signal.' and with the American War of Independence, Admiral John Paul Jones when called upon by the British to surrender, 'I have not yet begun to fight.'"

Mr. President, this is the context within which those words "attack with full force", ought always to be mentioned. We must never, with any sense of levity, use those words in this country because who knows what would have happened to us.

Mr. President: I want to know the document from which you are quoting.

Dr. Sampath: It is an article which I have written but which has not yet been published because the whole matter is *sub judice*.

Mr. President: Members must be very careful of making to comments on what took place last year. The matter is still very much *sub judice*.

Dr. Sampath: The only point I am making is, whenever these words are mentioned they must not be mentioned with any sense of levity and I shall say no more on that particular subject. This is my view and I am repeating it in Parliament, but again I shall desist from quoting any further from this document. It will appear in due course.

5.55 p.m.

There are certain errors in what Sen. Wade Mark has said. He spoke about the bourgeoisie in certain things and he also said that carnival has now become a middle class occupation. I suppose he means petit bourgeois, but these are little refinements which I believe have escaped Sen. Mark.

Now I shall proceed with what I shall term the conciliatory remarks. In this debate there have been some excellent points made by some Independent Senators, especially Sen. Deosaran and also Sen. Bahadoorsingh, quite in contrast with those made by the Members of the Opposition. The irrelevancies abound in what they were talking about. There has been prologue and there has been dialogue and there still continues to be dialogue even while Members on this side are speaking.

There is a little error with what our engineering Senator said about the rainbow. It is extremely important because it is an analogy which applies very forcibly and very closely to our rainbow country. He stressed that there were distinct colours of the rainbow. As an engineer he ought to know that the colours are certainly not distinct. The red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet are certainly not distinct. They stretch, as he would know, through a wave length of 400 millimicrons to 700 millimicrons and they merge into one another, in the same way that the people and the cultures of this country merge into one another. There is no distinctness whatsoever. You only have to look at the composition of this Parliament and the audience, and moreso the composition of our worthy President and the Members of the NAR, to see that we are a rainbow country and the colours merge into one another.

This psychology of distinctness which is being put forward by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, is something which is divisive and which we must

always be careful not to perpetuate. He used the word “distinct” very, very forcibly and I want to negate that at this moment. There is no distinctness in the colours of the rainbow and there is no distinctness in the population or the culture of the country.

Dr. Persad: I never did say that there is no merging on the boundaries. On a point of information, are you saying, and going against scientific theory, that there are not seven distinct colours? You should say so clearly, if it is a new scientific discovery you are making. I never said that there is no merging. One expects that there is a continuum and the wave lengths continue that way. But to say that they are not distinct—I am asking you, are they not distinct?

Dr. Sampath: Mr. President, the hon. Member stressed that they were distinct colours and I am telling you as an ophthalmologist, as a person who has studied the interpretation of colours in his profession, that there is no distinctness when one merges with the other. I could give you an example. Red, orange, yellow—orange is a combination of red and yellow. This is something well-known to the layman and I am surprised that a scientific man should not be aware of this. The point I am making is that we must not stress distinctness. Let me move on.

A lot has been said about the question of indecent exposure and it has been made also by, I think, Sen. Alexander, whom I do not see here now, and by certain other Senators. There are two points I want to make about this. I do not want to spend too much time on the actual mechanics of carnival, I want to go on to the bill. It is well-known that the tributaries which have led into this movement of the lumbar area has to do with many cultures, not only carnival. I wonder if the hon. Member and those who speak about indecency, have ever attended a “lawah” performance.

As a little boy, I myself use to sneak in among the legs of ladies and witness the gyration of my sisters and cousins. That is one of the streams which has come into it. Does he know about the belly-dance of Arabia? That is another tributary which has led into our stream here. Just to correct the general impression which is erroneous, people talk about “wining”. They should not really say “wining”, but it has become colloquial and I am sure that many ladies who engage in this activity do a lot more “wining” than actual dining. It should not be “wining”, it should be “winding”. So that the “dollar-wine” is not really a “wine” at all, because it simply consists of not “wining” at all, it is simply a lateral movement and then an anteroposterior movement. It is just a misnomer. That is not the point. The point

here is, that sort of gyration is therapeutic, not only to the performer but also to the observer. I am sure that men over 40 must realized and experienced the therapeutic value of witnessing this in the streets.

Another point was made which, to my mind, is mischievous—the reference to the Trinity Cross. I myself do not think that the highest award in this land should only be the Trinity Cross and I do hope that eventually—and I do not mean this facetiously; I am very serious about it—we could have something like an award like the Golden Crescent. After all we have the Red Crescent in some States, like the Red Cross—the Golden Crescent. Again—I am very serious about this—we could have the Bow of Hanuman for people like Hasely Crawford and the Crown of Seeta, for people like Penny Commissiong. I am putting this seriously. I hope that the hon. Member would pursue this so that we would have all the cultural and religious existences in this country duly recognized.

The Trinity Cross was not an NAR award. We just inherited this and slowly but surely, this NAR is introducing things to make our country more democratic.

Dr. Persad: Will the hon. Senator then agree, judging from his comments, that there is not quite a rainbow and there is a need to bring in other cultural streams in the various areas as he mentioned, in the area of medals?

Dr. Sampath: Of course, I agree entirely that this is so, and the NAR is doing it, gradually. We are evolving. Does anybody in his/her right mind expect that after four years, after all that we have inherited, we will be able to correct all these deficiencies? But the fact of the matter is, we are on the right road. As I tell my patients sometimes when they think that progress of the disease is too slow—the people in Siparia—I say, “you know something, what we are doing here with your illness, we are travelling from Siparia to Port of Spain and we have reached Penal.” In other words, we are moving in the right direction.

6.05 p.m.

I have nothing further to say about Sen. Mark so that he is excused.

On the question of the commissioners, a lot of heavy weather has been made about nine commissioners, six being appointed by the Minister and the quorum is five, so that even if none of the other representatives come in, these people can just rule the roost and do what they like. I think everybody must know that we have responsible Ministers here, and it is spelt out in the bill where these other commissioners are going to come from and what expertise they are going to represent.

It is spelt out in the bill and here I want to talk about money. Money, of course, is extremely important. We have heard people say—they throw up their hands in despair and say—"Bobol, bobol, bobol. There has been so much bobol in the NCC, so much bobol here and there"—mind you, they only say so, they have not proved it; "and so there is going to be bobol in this new commission." It is not logical to think so. The fact that so much is devoted to financial controls, shows that the motive behind this bill, and the motive behind the thinking of this Government is to prevent bobol; to control this thing; to have the Auditor General submit reports within a certain framework. Not like in the old days.

I myself in some of the boards that I have sat on before I came to the Senate, they have had reports that had not gone to the Auditor General and are three and four years behind. I have been told that the San Fernando Borough Council's reports were about eight years in arrears. The bill makes it clear that this is not going to happen. We are attempting to do it. Our hearts and heads are in the right place.

Sen. Furness-Smith: Would the hon. Senator point that out? I do not see it myself. What distinguishes this from the borough council or any of the other statutory commissions?

Dr. Sampath: Clauses 21 to 25, I think, are the ones that the Senator must look at. Let me continue.

A lot of heavy weather has been made about this being another state enterprise. You know, the same people who criticize us, were saying, "keep the state enterprises; do not divest" and they are the same people who are now saying that this is another state enterprise. It is strange but true. The question is: Is it really another state enterprise? Are there not other boards, for example, which are at present fully state enterprises, if you want to use that expression: fully state agencies—like the Agricultural Development Bank, for example, where, in fact, of the six people on that board, two represent certain interests, appointed by the Minister and the other four are appointed by the Government, and there has been no difficulty?

As a matter of fact, I would give an example with the same Agricultural Development Bank to show the sort of integrity that pervades the NAR and its members. It is a good example because it involves the UNC. In Sangre Grande, we wished to rent a building—when I say, we, I mean the ADB—for the purposes of enlarging our activity in the area of Sangre Grande. There were two applicants. One of them was a member of the UNC who fought the local government election,

very persuasively and strongly and supported the UNC. The other was an NAR member who also fought for the NAR—it was just after the split.

What did I do as Chairman of the Board? I am an NAR man. I have always been an NAR man. I am a foundation member of the NAR. What did I do? I sounded out the team, the ADB staff, who had visited the buildings, and got their views. Then I went down with my full board to Sangre Grande, and visited both places, then took a poll—a secret poll—from the staff who were working in the office at Sangre Grande, who would have to work in the new offices. I visited both places and do you know what my decision was? I selected, on the basis strictly of merit, the UNC man. This, in spite of the fact that I was told by other people, "man give it to the NAR man because he is supporting us." But the sort of integrity which I find myself among, acted on my own decision to give it to the UNC man because his building was the better one for our purposes.

Now, this is what our Minister—and I know her well; I know the Minister very, very well indeed. We have worked together, struggled together from the old DAC days; from the time when police guns were being pointed at us whenever we went on a public platform and we did not know whether we would get home on evenings. I know the integrity of this lady sitting in front of me, and she will never, never appoint to this, any party hack or any party member who is not competent to do the job. I want to tell you this from my own experience, so as to set your mind at rest. This will be conciliatory to those people in the Independent benches who are inclined to oppose the bill. I put it there for their consideration.

Sen. Furness-Smith: I apologize for interrupting, but could the hon. Member give us the assurance of his opinion with respect to the other two political parties vying to hold office in place of his Government?

Dr. Sampath: I do welcome that question, Mr. President. The way that the hon. Senator will ensure that in government you have people with the integrity of the present Ministers and ourselves, is to ensure that this party gets back into power next election.

Sen. Spence: Could the hon. Senator say whether, in his opinion, any party should be in power forever?

Dr. Sampath: Mr. President, as a scientific person whose scientific acumen I highly respect, he must know that a question of that sort must be answered in the affirmative, since anything is possible. But we are talking here about probabilities. Of course, I can give no assurance about that at all, but the

probability is that if we get the support of the people of this country, we would get into power again. Anyway, this is by the way.

Another storm has been raised in the teacup with reference to someone who said, "Do you have no faith in the Minister of Tourism, if you are going to set up another authority to handle this aspect of tourism?" All I have to do is to ask a rhetorical question. Is the establishment of the Cocoa and Coffee Board evidence that there is no faith in the Ministry of Agriculture? It is a rhetorical question and the answer is obvious. Is there no faith in the Ministry of Health because of the fact that we have a Medical Board? These are the rhetorical questions that must be asked when something of that sort is said. You have a specialized unit handling a specialized set of jobs and they, of course, will work in collaboration with the Ministries that are involved. It is as simple as that.

My two final points have to do, really, with two persons, but I assure the two Senators who are involved here that I am not going to question their motives and I am going to be as objective as possible. The first one is Sen. Furness-Smith. I think Sen. Furness-Smith and I were probably born in the same decade. It is something which I believe, could be. If I am wrong, I give way, so that—

Sen. Furness-Smith: I certainly would not ask my friend such a delicate question. But I am happy to be born, if I was so born, in the same decade as he was.

Dr. Sampath: We, I think, have a similarity of experience. He was in the army and so was I, although I never fired a shot in anger and I still do not, whereas I think he may have done. [*Interruption*] Good, we have another thing in common. We both never fired a shot in anger. Now, I am making this preface because I believe in some ways, we must have the same sort of experiences of the past. We are both senior citizens, I hope we can all accept that. Like Sen. Horne, we are senior citizens and have a certain background of experiences in many things.

For example, carnival, we have all experienced. When I was 15, I used to dance with a piano on a truck. That is the way we played carnival then. We disguised and we danced on a truck. We went along Coffee Street in San Fernando and occasionally around the Savannah in Port-of-Spain and so on. Then we also went to dances for a whole month before carnival, every night. We went to school or work in the day.

6.15 p.m.

I remember the time before the evolution of carnival—Sen. Alexander might know this—when they dressed up very nicely as a follow-up to the slavery and the sort of dichotomy. I wonder how many people know that down-town carnival and up-town carnival are relics of the freed slaves and the upper class, as you might say, the white people carnival. When I was 19 years old, as a young man, dressed in collar and tie, as we colonials used to do in the evening, I used to go and stand outside the Princes' Building, to see the people from the Country Club and elsewhere dance. We were not allowed to do it. You see, I have experienced the evolution of carnival right through for many, many years.

The point I am making is that carnival is evolving; it is assimilating; it is integrating. “Down-town” and “up-town” carnival now, is not lower class and upper class carnival. It is the same thing; they are all coming together; they are evolving. The same way that carnival is evolving in itself, the same way, having grown to a certain size, it has to be managed in a certain way. That is what this NCC proposes to do. It is not going to interfere with carnival; it is not going to try to determine the evolution by way of mutation; it is not going to spread radiation among the revellers to make them change; it evolves. This will just regulate and facilitate the carnival.

Now I am still speaking about Sen. Furness-Smith and his general attitude to things. Now if he was [*Interruption*]

Sen. Furness-Smith: On a point of correction, I never said that carnival should not change or that it has not changed. All I said was—and I am fortunate in being supported by every single Member who has spoken on this bench—that it should not be regulated. That is the point.

Dr. Sampath: Now, I am coming to that. The point which I am going to make now has to do with attitudes to change. In the prelude, I talked about our being of the same decade and it has to do with that as well.

I will give one example. You must have heard or read about Herbert George Wells, one of the first science fiction writers in the country. When he started writing—incidentally, he lived from 1866—1946; he was very much of a senior citizen when he died. The first book he wrote was a text-book of biology; he was also the author of *Outline of History* and several other science fictions, *The Invisible Man*, talking about the future and so on. His early works were full of vibrancy, aiming for the future, looking forward, change. Change was taking place. Unfortunately, when he became a senior citizen, just before he died his

whole mood and outlook changed. It had to do with cerebral arteriosclerosis which we will all have. We as senior citizens, we get episodes of this occasionally.

Sen. Furness-Smith: I do wish the hon Senator, speaking as he appears to do on behalf of the same generation as myself, would just confine his remarks to his own personal experiences.

Dr. Sampath: What I am doing here is pointing out a danger which may afflict anyone at this age. I am not saying it is affecting him, but it is a danger which can afflict any senior citizen. I confess, that occasionally, I have fleeting episodes of this when I am depressed. Fortunately, I engage in carnival.

Following what I said before, the activities of carnival have a profound therapeutic effect on me, which I hope it has on the rest of you, therefore, these fleeting episodes are not very long-lasting. We must not be like H. G. Wells and we must not take too literally the aphorism *plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose*. I am sure that statement was not made by a young person, because the fact of the matter is that things change but only certain things remain the same. The human mentality has not changed for two million years; but many other things have changed; technology has changed; the use of things has changed; things are changing. So we as people in that sort of age group must change with them and we must not feel that because there was "bobol" before there will always be "bobol". We have to change and we must have bills like this which will facilitate the change.

I hope I have not offended any of the people in my age group by the remarks I have made; I have told you what the remedy is; I have not only diagnosed, but I have told you what the remedy is. The remedy is carnival; it facilitates all these things.

I now turn to a person whom perhaps, I can call my good friend. He is now my good friend, Sen. Bahadoorsingh.

Sen. Furness-Smith: Do I understand that the person at whom your previous remarks were addressed, you could not regard as your good friend? That really hurts me.

Dr. Sampath: I am very happy that Sen. Furness-Smith has extended the hands of friendship to me and I embrace him as my good friend.

Now, Sen. Bahadoorsingh argued—incidentally, I liked his contribution very much indeed. I do not know whether it is a simile or metaphor perhaps he can refresh my memory, when he spoke about the Jack Spaniard's nest—it is a simile—he said it is like putting your hand naked into a Jack Spaniard's nest. That is how he described this bill. Now, I will draw on the expertise of Sen. Spence who is also a biologist of some standing.

I remind Sen. Bahadoorsingh that the Jack Spaniard belongs to the order hymenoptera and hymenoptera is derived from two classical words hymen and pteron. Hymen means membrane and pteron means a wing. The Jack Spaniard is a membranous winged insect. Also in that order are ants and bees. I would talk about the bee which is a member of the same order.

You hear talk about a hive of activity. In this country, we have various hives of activities all over the country, all the honey bees in the pan yard, calypso singers, you hear a lot of buzzing, musical tones and so on. What this commission is going to do, it will be the beekeeper. The beekeeper goes to the hive, throws a net over it, gloves and a smoker. What does he do? He regulates the activity of the hive. He does not interfere fundamentally with what the bees are doing. He is not telling the bees you must dance in a different way so that your neighbour will know where the source of the nectar is. Nothing of the sort! This is the reality that I would like to put forward.

Sen. Spence: What he does is to make sure they do not sting. That is Sen. Alexander's point about the calypsonians.

Dr. Sampath: I must thank the Senator for this. The fact of the matter is, I mentioned the protection, the net over his face, the gloves and the smoker to keep them quiet and this is the sort of facilitation which the commission is going to do. Now there is a lot of sting in this and there are clauses there to protect them from being stung, those financial clauses that are there.

Sen. Fr. Joseph: Is the honourable Senator aware that the bees have a way of getting at the beekeeper? Has he had that experience with bees?

Dr. Sampath: Yes, as a matter of fact, my father who was a scout master, principal of a school and beekeeper of note, used to be able to handle bees without any sort of guard at all. I have no doubt that this Government is in power for another term, by then its members will have developed the sort of immunity so that the bees will allow them to form beards on their faces if they want, without any sort of protection. For the moment we need the protection.

I am glad that my contribution is stimulating the bees in Parliament.

Sen. Furness-Smith: I am really concerned about this. Does the Senator intend that the commission shall use smoke on these things in order to take out the honey?

6.25 p.m.

Dr. Sampath: There are things in medicine, things like tranquilizers and things of that sort. The smoke is nothing but a tranquilizer, and I have no doubt we will have a tranquilizing effect on this society.

Now, there is another activity of the hive which makes a very good analogy, and that is that every so often the bees produce a substance called royal jelly which they feed to certain individuals. Mind you, there are workers and drones in the hive as well, and we have to decide who are the workers and who are the drones.

Mr. President: Could we come back to the bill please.

Dr. Sampath: Finally, Mr. President, one of the things that this bill is going to do by way of research, this is the analogy of the bill, royal jelly is something which I would say is analogous to the fund that is going to be produced here. This will be fed to certain individuals so that they can progress. The fund is to be there and will be used to supply the deficiencies in many, many places as they exist.

I trust that the analogy I have made will help us all to think along a certain framework and that the smoke, for example, will settle some of the very, very industrious bees that we have in Parliament and persuade them to vote in favour of the bill.

Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. Alloy Lequay: Mr. President, in moving the adjournment, I remind hon. Senators, as I had indicated on a previous occasion, that we will not be sitting on Tuesday, May 14 out of respect for the Parliamentary Association Conference that is taking place in Trinidad and Tobago. I have been advised that the hon. Minister might not be available on May 21, so perhaps we could consider advancing Private Members' Day from May 28 to May 21 and continuing this debate on May 28. I am giving notice to hon. Members that we could conclude

Private Members' Day on May 21 with the motion that we started on Monday, and perhaps get on to another motion and then, if the Minister is not available on May 21, to continue this particular bill on Tuesday, May 28.

I therefore beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday, May 21, 1991 at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, before putting the question, I think you will permit me the liberty of reminding you all that next week the Regional Conference of the CPA will be taking place. All Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives are Members of the Trinidad and Tobago branch of the CPA. There are branches throughout the Commonwealth. We will be having an opportunity of receiving well over 60 Parliamentarians from other Commonwealth countries, especially from the Caribbean, and I hope that all members of the local branch will support the conference. All members of this

branch and their spouses are invited to the opening on Monday morning next week, and to a function hosted by the Prime Minister in the evening.

Members and the public are free to attend all the plenary discussions that will take place from Tuesday until Friday morning. On Wednesday, there will be a visit to Tobago. The media is invited to attend and the public is free to attend.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.32 p.m.