

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, April 28, 1992***SENATE***Tuesday, April 28, 1992*

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 from today's sitting to Sen. Salisha Baksh.

**PAPER LAID**

The Immigration (Amendment) Regulations, 1992. [*The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Russel Huggins)*]

**SUGAR INDUSTRY (RATIONALIZATION)**

[THIRD DAY]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [March 24, 1992]:*

Whereas there has been wide agreement since 1978 on the need for rationalization of the sugar industry in the national interest:

*Be it resolved:*

That this House urge the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to proceed expeditiously with rationalization of the sugar industry, with appropriate safeguards for the welfare of all concerned, since such action is essential for the development of the agricultural sector, and therefore for economic development and for the future well-being of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Sen. Prof. J. Spence*]

*Question again proposed.*

**Sen. Everard Dean:** Thank you, Mr. President. Perhaps one can describe it as poetic justice—it could even be irony or even better still, it might be the divine hand of God that guided the re-appointment of Prof. Spence to this honourable Senate, so that he could pursue the fruit of his labours since 1978. It seems to me, that the rationalization of the sugar industry is crying out for attention. I feel compelled to make a contribution in this regard today, Sir, due to the fact that my first dollar was earned in the sugar industry way back in the 1950s and having spent a short time there, I was able to observe the creativity, productivity and thrift

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that the sugar worker is capable of. I would want to indicate that, as I said earlier, perhaps it is poetic justice that since 1978 when this report was handed in when the present party was in power, Prof. Spence's committee did their work, they tried to get it done in the last Senate without any success and, lo and behold, as fate would have it, the party that was in power in 1978 is back in the corridors of power and is now listening to Prof. Spence making a strong plea to implement that report.

I am not going to apportion blame to any of the previous administrations whether it be party A or party B. I believe that the rationalization of the sugar industry is very important, for despite what some of my colleagues might have said about the possibility of a financially sound sugar industry, I am not that optimistic. I believe I would be on the same ground as the report indicated on page 18 and I quote section 5: "Efficiency, Dynamism and Potential for Growth."

"The record of the industry over the decade 1966 to 1975 revealed the total absence of dynamism and growth potential."

And it went on to refer to a particular table, table 21 which showed that when sectorial contributions are valued at current prices, the industry grew at an average rate of 14 per cent per annum as against 16 per cent for other agriculture, 21 per cent for manufacturing, 19 per cent for the whole GDP, but more importantly, in real terms that is, when sectorial contributions are valued at 1970 prices the industry is contributions declined at an average rate of 8 per cent per annum, while other agriculture grew at the average rate of 4 per cent. and the whole GDP at 8 per cent. The report went on to state:

"This situation ensures that virtually all the stimuli and ingredients for dynamic growth are lacking, given that its supply is an infinitesimal part of the world market placing in the category of a price."

But the most important section under that, is the part which says the prospects of the industry have generally been gloomy or uncertain both for the short and the long run.

It is in this context that I am not too optimistic about the future of the sugar industry as it is today. I have heard it said the last time we met on this subject that while it cost us some \$3,900.00 to produce a ton of sugar, all we get in return is \$1,000.00. In any language, the sugar industry is uneconomical in its present form and should not be allowed to continue *ad infinitum*. I think notwithstanding that,

we all know that the death of the sugar industry will create a number of social problems—unemployment, crime, family dislocation, illiteracy and so forth. Hence the reason the present Government should strive to outdo the previous administration, both of the same party and the other one, and move post-haste towards implementing the wide agreement that was there since 1978 when the need was identified.

**1.40 p.m.**

Perhaps it is to the credit of Sen. Spence, being the Chairman of the 1978 committee that he initiated this debate some time ago in this august Chamber.

My feeling is that Caroni (1975) Limited should, and must, continue to diversify its production into a broad-based type of agricultural experiment, if you wish, and other types of business. After which, the company should, and must, embark on agro-business. We can get into the business of preserving and canning, both for the local and export markets.

We all know that our agricultural produce is, in fact, seasonal and there is usually a glut of some of our produce in the local market. Right now one can see the roadside vendors, sitting behind mounds of tomatoes, cucumbers, water melons, even topi tambo—our version of the water chestnut—trying to make a decent living. Very soon corn will join the rest of the products. Could not Caroni (1975) Limited besides planting fruits and vegetables, also process and preserve these fruits and vegetables? Another way of addressing the problem—and this is the one I know some people may raise their noses at—is the development of co-operatives to undertake the type of work to which I alluded. You would be amazed to know what co-operatives can do if they are given the right encouragement.

In its recommendations found in the opening paragraph, I think it is on page 302 of the report, it says in section (e): Reorganization of the Industry:

"The Committee considers that it will be essential to reorganize the existing sugar industry to provide a base to enable it to implement successfully, the proposed changes. Accordingly, the committee recommends:..."

They went on to list nine recommendations. The ninth recommendation is the implementation of the principle of the stakeholder participation in decision-making in the company.

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"The Committee believes that the acceptance and implementation of this recommendation will increase job-satisfaction and performance."

It is in this context, the concept of stakeholder in the sugar industry, that I recommend the consideration of co-operatives to run that industry in a rationalized form. Earlier on I indicated that I had been an employee of the sugar industry very early in my life, and I am sure that the discipline of the sugar worker carries all the ingredients with it for a successful co-operative. One can look at groups in particular areas and work with them with the view of developing small enterprises, using the co-operative concept to do the things that cannot be done at this time and which is costing the Government hundreds of millions of dollars.

On the question of the millions of dollars that Caroni owes the Government, I think it would be prudent for Government to consider converting that debt into something else, because I believe, in accounting terms, that receivable which the Government is now carrying on its books, will never be received. In fact, the liability that Caroni (1975) Limited now owes the Government, cannot be paid. Some time ago, I think it was Sen. Muntaz Hosein or Sen. Maharaj, who indicated that the Government may want to consider using the same yardstick that was used to liquidate the debt at Trinidad Cement Limited. Here again, is another experience that I have in my working life, because while I earned the first dollar in the sugar industry, my last full-time employment, that last dollar was earned in the cement industry. So therein lies the experience, or the knowledge, of what takes place in the sugar industry and in the cement industry.

I see a great opportunity for Government to divest themselves of this yoke that they are now carrying by giving sugar to the sugar workers. I believe that if our Government gives the right encouragement, we can transform Caroni (1975) Limited, not only into a profitable enterprise, but we would also be looking at the economic and social welfare of the workers, who, I might add, deserve a better deal.

In essence, what I am saying, is that we should put people first and assist them to realize their ideals. Let them be motivated, not only by the desire for economic benefits, but also to uphold their human dignity. I thank you.

**1.50 p.m.**

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Mr. President, the motion before the Senate seeks to urge the Government to proceed expeditiously with the rationalization of the sugar

industry. In view of the urgent need for change, reorganization is an imperative if the industry is to survive in the long run and if the agricultural sector is to be properly developed, and to assume a status of financial viability.

From the very outset it is essential to recognize that the rationalization of the sugar industry is inextricably linked to the development and viability of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed the economic, social and political evolution of our history has been intimately connected to and founded upon activities in agriculture with the sugar industry constituting the most or, foremost pillar. It is the sugar industry which has been responsible for the emergence, virtually, of our agriculture sector. Even today sugar constitutes the country's major agricultural export. Rationalization and diversification, therefore, constitute vital imperatives for the sugar industry. These imperatives assume even greater significance in the context of the major development challenges facing Trinidad and Tobago for the remaining years of the 20th century. The problems are extremely serious, and are likely to become more acute unless the correct and appropriate policies are adopted.

There exists a serious link between the rationalization and diversification of Caroni (1975) Limited and the nation's continued dependence on a mounting food import bill. An examination of the facts and the figures would reveal the following—I am quoting from a handbook of key economic statistics which was published by the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago.

This is Trinidad and Tobago in 1955. Our population a mere 720.8 thousand citizens. In 1955 the food import bill was \$50.2 million. In 1965 the food import bill increased to \$87.6 million. By that time the population had increased by 9073 million, close to a million persons by 1965. By 1975 with a population of 1.011 million our food import bill quadrupled from 1965—from \$87 million to \$284.9 million—and from 1975 even though the rate of growth of the population remained relatively stable during that period, what we had was a situation in which the food import bill continued to rise. In 1976, the food import bill increased to \$321.3 million. By 1980 we were importing close to \$709 million worth of food. In 1984 the figure increased to \$894.1 million worth of food and according to these figures at the end of 1987, Trinidad and Tobago with a population of 1.3 million citizens was importing \$833 million worth of food.

The latest figure that I have indicates that at the end of 1989 we had imported close to \$914 million worth of food. These figures tell us a story about the

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management of our economy, the lack of vision, the absence of meaningful linkages in the whole process of development.

The quantum of food imports is taking place against a background of mounting and escalating unemployment and under-employment, unutilized and under-utilized lands, holdings, both privately owned as well as state owned. It is taking place against a background of growing malnutrition and undernutrition particularly among the school children. We have chronic poverty both in absolute and relative terms in Trinidad and Tobago and still our food import bill at the end of 1989 was close to a billion Trinidad and Tobago dollars—not to mention destitution and vagrancy which stalk the land.

The point I make is that when we talk about malnutrition among school children—I want it to be drawn to the attention of this Senate because this is a very important motion and my focus here today is to emphasize the link between the reorganization of Caroni (1975) Limited and the great agricultural potential—the kind of triggering mechanism that can take place to deal with and to advance the development process in Trinidad and Tobago.

That can deal with both welfare as well as poverty in Trinidad and Tobago. I do not know whether the present Government has this report which I have. They need to get this report. It was passed on to the last administration. It deals with the nutritional status of primary school students in Trinidad and Tobago between the years 1989 and 1990. This is a very useful report because we are dealing with a motion that once properly implemented—because I am certain it would be accepted—can go a long way in dealing with some of the critical problems affecting our nation's students.

**2.00 p.m.**

There is a situation in Trinidad and Tobago where at the end of 1989—1990, 33 per cent of our school children between the age range 4 and 6 years suffer from anaemia. We have a food import bill of close to \$1 billion. At the Guayaguayare R. C. School, 62.2 per cent of the children were suffering from anaemia when they were examined some time in 1989. If you examine what has been taking place in Trinidad and Tobago over the last two years, you will see that nothing has changed fundamentally. In fact living conditions have deteriorated over the last period.

The point I am making is that there are serious pockets of undernutrition and malnutrition in Trinidad and Tobago, particularly among our school population. I

want to make reference to a school feeding programme, not the limited one which we have in the country at this time, but a massive school feeding programme that can deal—

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** On a point of order. I would ask for a ruling that the hon. Member stick to the motion before us in his contribution. He is straying a little.

**Mr. President:** Sen. Mark does tend to shift his arguments to an area that is concerned with the welfare of the worker and the families of the worker. I always allow him a little liberty as long as he does not dwell too long on it.

I have heard this report being referred to by Sen. Mark in a debate in the previous Parliament. So it might be new to most of the Senators present, but for my sake, I would ask him not to go into too much detail again, please.

**Sen. W. Mark:** May I proceed?

**Mr. President:** Yes, you can proceed, but a word to the wise is sufficient, I think.

**Sen. W. Mark:** I really want to indicate that in this particular motion there is a link and if the hon. Senator is not seeing that and he is misinterpreting the Standing Orders, I think that you ought to correct him on that matter because there is in fact a link between what we are talking about and the motion before us. I take strong umbrage to any effort on the part of the hon. Senator to indicate that I am straying. I am not straying. I take your point, Sir. I would not take the opportunity to go into detail on this particular report, but I daresay this matter is connected with what I am advancing.

The point I am making is about the high food import bill—and we hope that the new administration would seek to address this issue because as you know, this situation has grave implications for the development of the prospects of the country. That is why food is so important. Food has been used and continues to be used as a weapon. As a developing country we cannot be unmindful of our responsibility to this nation.

If we are talking about Caroni (1975) Limited, we can only do so in the context of a rationalization and diversification plan in which agricultural development would constitute its cornerstone. You must see a link between agricultural development and the whole issue of malnutrition in the country if we are serious. If you want to play by the book and simply refer to rules and not

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understand the significance of what we are dealing with, then, people would really say that we are “kicksin” in this Parliament, that we are engaging in theatrics, as the Government seems to be doing.

I want to make it abundantly clear that food is critical to this particular motion. I am saying that food has been used as a weapon against developing countries by powerful rich industrialized nations in the past and today as well. That is why we have to look at the manoeuvre. I do not want to create dragons and demons—the Government has replaced the “dragon” with the dove—but we have to concentrate on the kind of policies which are being imposed on this country and to see to what extent that is going to hamper the very effort which we are making here today.

We are seeking to rationalize an industry to give it some life so that Trinidad and Tobago can become, as far as is practically possible, self-sufficient in agricultural production. That is what we are talking about today. There are institutions like the World Bank, IMF and IADB seeking to subvert and undermine the very independence and policies which we are seeking to put into effect through this motion. There is a link between those international lending agencies on the one hand and on the other, the policies and efforts which we are making to transform Trinidad and Tobago and make it self-sufficient, particularly in the area of agricultural production. I will have more to say about that later on.

What I am saying is that we have to ensure that if agriculture is to play its part and to make its contribution, we cannot continue as an independent nation subjecting this country and the citizens to high levels of imports. The PNM did it in the past when they were there for 30 years; it continued under the NAR and we wait with bated breath to see what the new PNM is going to do about agriculture and the revolution which is needed to transform that sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

When we talk about agriculture, we are talking about Caroni, we cannot divorce the activities of the commercial banking sector in this country as far as agricultural development is concerned

**2.10 p.m.**

I just want to quote from a text prepared by the last administration, Restructuring for Economic Independence and Medium-Term Macro-Planning Framework, 1989—1995. I do not know if the present administration is going to be adopting it, but on page 47 of this report there is a table which deals with the



distribution of banks' lending between 1982 and 1989, and it is amazing what percentage the banks in our country allocate to agriculture.

In 1982, out of a total allocation of 100 per cent, 1.5 per cent went towards agriculture. We cannot be serious, if we are talking about rationalization and diversification and seeking to use Caroni as a trigger to spawn agricultural development in Trinidad and Tobago, if we do not address this issue. The NAR Government had indicated that the state has now become a tireless mother, no longer capable of taking care of its young ones, and this new administration, simply engaging in new forms but pursuing the same old objective, is telling the country that the private sector must now take the leading role—must now become the engine of growth in development. This is the same private sector that has undermined our efforts at agricultural development. What explains the fact that up to 1989 a mere 1.2 per cent of the banks' resources was being allocated to agriculture?

In 1982 it was 1.5 per cent; in 1984, it was 1.4 per cent; in 1986, it collapsed to 1.1 per cent. It stayed there in 1987, and then in 1988 and 1989 it went up by 1 per cent. At the same time, what is taking place in the retail sector? What is taking place in terms of consumers? We had a tight crisis recently. It seems as if it is beginning to smoothen out and they are back on the old kind of arrangement—seeking to entice consumers to go abroad to buy cars. I am not against going abroad and I am not against buying cars, I am saying that we have to make a collective effort at development, and our resources are scarce. This is why the Minister of Planning could tell the entire world that this country is not rescheduling, yet the country is going to the international capital markets. To do what? To play games? Trinidad and Tobago will be going to the international capital markets to borrow money, so we are paying \$3 billion in 1992 and while we are paying that we are borrowing \$3.2 billion, maybe more. We do not know because we do not have the facts before us. Whom are they fooling? It is our children who will pay for this—my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren.

We are talking about a situation in which, in 1982, 38 per cent of the banks' resources was allocated to consumer goods and services and at the end of 1989 it was close to 35 per cent. The simple point I am making is that we cannot be treating agriculture and agricultural development in a very light, flippant fashion if we are serious about transformation and development. The United States of

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America feeds itself. We must never forget that. She is a warlord all over the world but she feeds herself. We are negotiating and accepting conditions that will in fact result in Trinidad and Tobago being more dependent as a result of those loans that we have already negotiated and are getting involved in, particularly that World Bank Structural Adjustment Loan. It has grave, deadly, and dangerous implications for agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago, and we shall come to that.

I am saying that if we are serious about development we have to look at agriculture from the point of view of its contribution to welfare and poverty relief. I think it is Lloyd Best, who has been calling for a massive school feeding programme—not on the limited scale we have in Trinidad and Tobago today—but we do not know, for instance, if this Government is serious about that. If we have a massive school feeding programme, it could assist enormously in triggering the agricultural sector and solving two problems simultaneously. It will deal with poverty and welfare and it will focus on development at the same time, but that is if we are serious. That is if we have the political will, courage, foresight and vision; that is if we do not have to account to multinational corporations, or international financial lending agencies or the local massive conglomerates that are emerging today.

So, when we talk about school feeding, we are saying that that is an aspect that the Government can look at in dealing with this matter. We have 468 primary schools in this country, several secondary schools, adult classes and many people at the school levels go hungry. I am suggesting that we have to cope and we have to change our tastes and habits if we are serious. You see, agriculture can make a great contribution towards the whole process of decolonization. We have surrendered completely our palates to foreigners and foreign tastes, and we cannot be serious about development, savings and investments in this country if we do not address the issue of our tastes and habits. The Government of this country inherited an agreement that was signed by the previous administration and that agreement is going to make our taste buds more colonized to foreign foods and also create a preference in us for foreign goods and services. That is what trade liberalization is all about.

**2.20 p.m.**

Trinidad and Tobago has a jokey, Mickey Mouse, manufacturing sector and we cannot compete with those giants like Japan, North America and Europe. Those same manufacturers are in support of the trade liberalization policy. It is

going to affect Trinidad and Tobago adversely. I am saying that the element of that trade liberalization policy that is going to affect us enormously is the one dealing with agriculture. We could put whatever anti-dumping legislation we want in place, the goods are going to come here, and unless we protect our agricultural sector, our farmers, and work towards creating some degree of self-sufficiency in that area, we are going to be in trouble.

I am saying that when we are talking about development, agriculture, and Caroni (1975) Limited, there is something called the Agricultural Development Bank. That bank was designed to provide farmers with soft loans, make credit facilities available at a reasonable price. But with the collapse of oil prices in 1982, and the fact that our oil production continues to fall every year, the Agricultural Development Bank is in a position today where it is strapped for cash; therefore it has to get moneys from abroad. It goes to the IADB for a loan and the IADB tells the ADB, you have to charge farmers almost the same rate as you would charge, for instance, somebody who is going to buy a vehicle.

How can we be serious about agricultural development when we are not providing incentives in an organized way that you can monitor to all farmers? It is a fact that the rate of interest at the ADB has increased. When we are talking about agriculture, we are not talking about agriculture in isolation; we are talking about agriculture in the context of a region, because we are about regionalism as well. We want integration.

Do you know how much food we import in this region today, Sir? Over US \$1 billion. We cannot be serious, Mr. President, and I say that we have to become serious about development. I am of the view that Caroni (1975) Limited properly rationalized and diversified, can, in fact, make an enormous contribution to the reduction of our food import bill and a solution to our problems.

A rationalized and diversified Caroni (1975) Limited can make a significant contribution to the process of growth and development. There are major benefits to be derived from such a rationalized and diversified company and industry: Food security, Sir.

You would know that during the Second World War, in Trinidad and Tobago we had to plant to survive, because the Germans were mining the waters and food coming from Britain in ships did not always reach us. You know what we had to do, Sir, in the 1940s? We had to plant. So food security is critical and that is what a properly organized, diversified and rationalized Caroni (1975) Limited would

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seek to ensure: Greater food security for Trinidad and Tobago. There are advantages to that, not to mention its social implications.

In a country called Venezuela, they have food riots; Brazil also had food riots. When people are hungry the social and political fabric of a country is threatened and could be overturned. So we have to take food security as a great priority as far as benefits are concerned under a diversified and rationalized Caroni (1975) Limited.

We also have to consider another benefit: We can both save and earn foreign exchange. There are opportunities open every day, internationally, as a result of the so-called new international world order. But with proper marketing strategy we can penetrate the international markets. So apart from saving foreign exchange that is vitally needed, we can also export our agricultural products through that same Caroni and become the food basket of at least Trinidad if not the Caribbean, because Guyana, I know, has a lot of potential to assume that role as well.

It has been estimated that a properly organized agricultural sector could generate over 20,000 jobs, which would take into account the whole stream of activities involving agriculture, including agro-processing. The economic linkages, both backward and forward, that could be derived from such an activity are critical, very important.

We are also looking at the proper utilization of underutilized resources. But can the present Government summon the will, the wit and determination to revolutionize the agricultural sector? I know that, for instance, the hon. Minister Rowley might be a person with great intentions, and he might wish to bring about that transformation, but like so many of us in Trinidad and Tobago—it was the same with the last regime—they all have good intentions, but you realize that you become a political prisoner of an order, and you find yourself being hamstrung to bring about the kind of transformation that is necessary.

So even though your intentions might be great, you are hamstrung because there are powerful forces in this country, one that has funded the PNM—McEneaney Alstons, boasted that they funded that organization—that conglomerate, has a large interest in the food business, as well. Not to mention this megacorporation that is being formed, Neal & Massy and Geddes Grant, generating over \$2 billion in sales, having an after tax profit of close to \$1.8 million to \$10 million, controlling almost every facet of economic life in Trinidad

and Tobago and this Government sits idly by and allows this madness to take place.

**Sen. Dr. Kuarsingh:** Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 34(b). I am still enjoying my colleague's contribution, but I wish to learn: Would it be the policy of an incoming UNC government to dismantle the conglomerates to which he refers in such bad terms?

**Sen. W. Mark:** I think that has nothing to do with my motion. I can have a discussion with my colleague. I have a copy of our manifesto; I can make it available to him during the tea break. I know that, Sir, in many instances there are some of my colleagues on the opposite side who realize that unless they do something quickly—

**Sen. Dr. Kuarsingh:** Be honest, answer.

**Sen. W. Mark:**—they may end up like their predecessors.

Mr. President, the point I am making here, however, is that if the Government is ever able to summon the will and the determination to deal with this situation, the issue of land ownership and distribution in Trinidad and Tobago, as far as agricultural development is concerned, must also be addressed.

We know for a fact that the state owns many of the resources in the country. The state controls an abundance of land, but Trinidad and Tobago is filled with idle hands. I propose, at the same time, that we should have a marriage—and I think Sen. Spence is proposing that in his motion—let us marry the idle lands to the idle hands and let us create the necessary production and generate the kind of employment that is absolutely needed in the country today. Too much underutilized and unutilized land in the country, both at the state level and at the private sector level. Maybe we need a land commission, we need land reform, a programme of land reform that would assist enormously in the process of transformation.

We know that the distribution of land here is extremely skewed: Large landowners own all of the land. Small landowners squat, as they say, or illegally occupy lands for agricultural purposes in the country. We have had government after government—this one will make it almost 40 years of nationalist rule, no colonials in charge, yet the colonials are in charge because we have not done anything substantially to alter the distribution of land in the country. Land, as you know, Sir, can create wars, revolutions and bloodshed.

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I am saying in this particular motion, which I am supporting—

**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. S. Capildeo*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. W. Mark:** Mr. President, I had to spend most of the time on agriculture, because it is the core of this motion. I am certain that Sen. Prof. Spence in his winding up will recognize that, because I think that was the point he was hammering home during his presentation, as well, the whole issue of agriculture.

I want to spend a few minutes on the issue of domestic agriculture. Because, you see, there is a contradiction, and I think the Minister of Agriculture needs to pay some attention to this issue. Why is it, as our agricultural output on the domestic front increases from time to time, we still have not been able to do any justice to the level of our food import bill? So you have domestic agriculture increasing, at the same time your food import bill is rising, or is stagnant. So somehow, the composition of our domestic agriculture has to be addressed. Something is critically wrong in that area.

I want to look briefly at that issue. We cannot be serious about agricultural development. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Uruguay Round, as it is called, taking place since 1986, close to six years and it cannot be concluded. You see, we go about glibly talking and adopting policies. We seem to have an excessive capacity, an infinite capacity to imitate and to be "mimic-men", as Naipaul described some of us in the region. But here, in the *Express* of Monday, April 27 is an article that is in support of trade liberalization. This newspaper is indicating, from the United Nations magazine, a situation in which access to the rich countries' markets is becoming less and less possible. Because of lack of access, \$500 billion a year—this is what is stated in this editorial—is lost to developing countries.

So whilst we are freeing up, these people in the rich, industrialized countries are closing up. We are freeing up, and they are closing up the markets on the developing countries. So you can see, Sir, free trade is a theory, it is a concept. It operates under certain assumptions, theoretically. But we are living in a ruthless, brutal and sometimes cruel world in which economic interests and power are what determine where we go and what we do, and if America will tell the Minister of

National Security, “Take action on the drugs, otherwise no money!”, \$2.1 million. “I have the money to be released, but you will not get a cent unless you take action”. The Minister of National Security has to take action—as he has attempted to do.

I am saying that we are in a situation in which our very lives are being dictated by external agencies and forces. This is a living example: We cannot gain access to these international markets because they erect—the America alone, I am told, have about 10,000, close to about 8,000 to 10,000 different devices and mechanisms to deny developing countries access to their markets. If you fail here, they trap you there and if you get through here they trap you somewhere else. Where are we going with that? We freeing up?

I believe that the present round of GATT is going to have implications for us here. Because, for the first time agriculture has been put on the agenda of that organization. That is because the rich, developed countries have reached a stage in their development effort and process where they want to access national markets in the Third World. They have already subsidized, and they continue to subsidize their farmers. That is the struggle right now. The struggle right now in Geneva between the EEC and the USA is over subsidies for farmers. There is a big battle taking place there. America wants Europe to free up because she is organized; Europe says she is not freeing up, but we have these developing countries and so on, let them free up, but big Europe, EEC, common market, 300 million people, they tell America they are not freeing up; talks stall, collapse.

I am saying that if we are going to reorganize agriculture in this country, we have to ensure that there is, in fact, a certain level of protection for our farmers. I like Sen. Dr. Lenny Saith’s position, he speaks well, he told the IMF, “no devaluation”. I like that. That is man: Strong. No devaluation, none. We do not want that. It is not on the agenda. I am happy to hear that.

I recall some time ago the former Prime Minister in the United States telling the United States “no devaluation”. He was there in June. And in August there was a massive one. I hope it does not repeat itself. You know how history has a way of repeating itself. I hope for the sake of Sen. Dr. Lenny Saith it does not repeat itself.

Mr. President, I just want to wind down now, because I think I have said sufficient to at least bring my colleagues back to their feet. I think that there is one area that we need look at before I close: Diversification, yes; rationalization, yes,

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but we do not want an increase in cost. When I say in cost, I want to explain this: There are some hopes in the form of business people—I have nothing against business. I myself would like in the future some time in my twilight years to get into some area of activity, so I am not against business. I do not know why people think the UNC is against business. What we are against is advantage. We do not want advantage as how the monopolies, through the conglomerates are exercising, administering and executing today. We have a problem with that.

There are some organizations, corporations and businesses that are just standing, waiting for that process of rationalization to take place. They will enter Caroni. The chemical business, in particular. I know there is one particular chap who is involved in that area, and he is waiting like a hawk for the rationalization plan to take place.

Caroni must be given the authority to import, and not to depend on these local people who are simply importing, putting a high mark-up and taking advantage of the consumers in the process, tractors and so on, like Trac-Mac. Mr. President, I am saying yes, rationalization; I am saying yes, diversification; and a last word: I think the Minister ought to take account of the fact that as a trade unionist, I must intervene on behalf of the workers.

I think the Government of Trinidad and Tobago owes it to the workers of Caroni Limited to do something—not the \$20 million—but do something, take some form of action to ensure that the workers who have been working for 1983 wages, but paying 1992 prices—they require some form of justice and they require some form of adjustment at the same time.

I do not know when it will come, because we are paying all our foreign debt this year, \$3 billion. Maybe that is a good thing; maybe it is a bad thing. But I am certain that the people who will suffer in the process are the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. I believe that it is necessary for the Government to decide and to declare a policy on that issue: When will the sugar workers obtain their backpay? You see, there is a perception in the society—and we cannot escape it—that the PNM is fixing up one sector of the society and it is leaving the other sector exposed. That is dangerous politics. I am saying there is a perception, I am not saying that it is a reality. Sometimes perception has a way of transforming itself into reality. I am simply saying, Sir—

**Dr. Rowley:** Thank you, Senator, for giving way. I am very grateful that you have emphasized that it is a perception which may not be reality. But since you



prefaced your comment by saying that you are an integral part of the trade union movement, would you care to give us what your opinion is as to whether it is perception or reality, since you have the facts available to you?

**Sen. W. Mark:** You want me to put on my trade union cap at this time? No, I think I am pressed for time.

**Dr. Rowley:** I appeal for some time on your behalf. What is the correct situation?

**Mr. President:** I do not have that power, I am afraid. The Senator has one minute to wind up.

**Sen. W. Mark:** Minister Rowley, we can discuss that over tea. I will give you my views on the matter, how I see it and so forth, how the trade union movement sees the matter. But in closing I should like to indicate that the motion put forward by Sen. Spence is one that we on this side would have no difficulty in supporting, but I believe that if the Government is serious, it must find, as I said, political will. It must find the determination, courage and most importantly it must rally the support of the masses, the people of this country to give it the kind of support that is necessary. Because development cannot take place without the intervention of the people. From what I am seeing, there appears to be an initial approach that gives the impression that the Government was on consultation; they wanted to talk to people but I see rationalization of the oil industry taking place and I do not know what is going on because I understand they discussed that with the country, but yet we hear that the plan has been accepted in principle. But the population of the country is not aware of this particular plan. We shall leave that to another time when I put a question to the hon. Minister Sen. Barry Barnes.

Mr. President, I think at this point I would want to indicate that we have no difficulty giving support to the motion but we believe that the Government has a duty and a responsibility to look at this issue of Caroni in the context of transforming the country, and at the same time address welfare and poverty measures and use agriculture as a triggering mechanism to develop Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you very much, Sir.

**2.50 p.m.**

**Sen. Carol Mahadeo:** Mr. President, I will be very brief. I do not propose to make an emotional contribution but I hope it will be conscionable. I do also want to borrow the two previous contributors points of view—Sen. Everard Dean when

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he spoke of co-operatives being tied in with this motion before the Senate today, and Sen. Wade Mark when he said, not only food but also this motion of sugar rationalization is tied in with the whole question of agriculture. I am happy that our hon. Minister of Agriculture is present and seems very well relaxed this evening, so I hope that my few brief points will be well taken. Actually I have only two horses to ride this afternoon, Sir.

On page 16 of the *Sunday Guardian* of April 5, 1992, there is a very touching account of one of the areas in east Trinidad which is state owned and there are pictures showing what is happening to that glorious 1,880 acres of the Nonpareil Estate owned by our Government. In that copy, if the report is true—and I take it that the *Trinidad Guardian* is reporting accurately—there is also an article.

In my maiden contribution in the budget debate in January this year, I pointed out and belaboured the point of the Nonpareil Estate and, as I said, we are on rationalization of the sugar industry; but again it is tied in with agriculture.

Sen. Wade Mark—I am sorry he is not here—did indicate that not only are we depleted by way of help with the underutilization of the private sector lands but also of the state sector lands. I am now here concerned with two areas completely owned by the state. About this Nonpareil Estate to which I referred, the article says:

"A once majestic Nonpareil Estate dying from neglect"

Dying of neglect by whom, Sir? That is the question. Our governments whether past, or present, but at this time it is our caring Government which has been in power for a little over four months. From what I have read here, though, there is a board of directors and a manager to manage the estate, but up to this moment there are no funds released by Government, which is the owner. In essence, there is nothing with which the manager can manage that 1880 acres of land which is overly underutilized; nor is there anything for the directors to direct.

But the board is most certainly paid monthly salaries. I hope they are paid their salaries. But the over 50 to 60 odd workers who work—and I quote again from this newspaper—"wearily from day to day". And I understand the people in agriculture can work wearily—make, I am told, an average of \$8.00 per day. The women are paid \$1.00 for every tree they cut, and there are not enough trees for them to cut so that, on the average, some of them cut two trees per day, and they

are going home to their children at the end of a day with that in hand to eke out a living.

It is said, Sir—and here I intend no insult to Caroni (1975) Limited—those workers are entitled to their backpay; they are entitled to everything that is due to them and we are, at the moment, speaking of sugar, sweet sugar. But the people at the Nonpareil Estate are among the lowest paid in the state industries in this country. Everything about that enterprise is primitive, and it is down again to the words "gross under-utilization of its assets." Workers there have claimed that they have not been paid for months. I stand corrected. Our hon. Minister might be able to shed some light on that, Mr. President, but this is what I am told.

If only Government—and I do not want to borrow a phrase from Sen. Mark who spoke about father and children, and so on; but my little notes were made long before he spoke—which is the legal father of that enterprise, would provide more meaningful funding, I believe that this estate could be transformed into a commercial venture providing definite employment to many.

From what I see here, I think the manager has spoken to the newspaper. In this article he stated that one of the major problems was that at the time Government acquired this estate—and I place no blame upon the present Government because it was acquired, I think, during the reign of the previous Government, or perhaps even before that, I am not sure. *[Interruption]* So it was the PNM Government that was prior to this one. I thank you very much. No definite statement was ever made regarding the future of this estate ever since the state acquired it. It is my firm belief that these 1880 acres in that part of Trinidad can stand head and shoulders above the Aranguez Food Basket, as it is popularly called. Again, I refer to Sen. Dean when he said, "we can produce more food." That point was also echoed by Sen. Wade Mark. That area of so many thousand acres of fertile land, if only Government would see to it that some more money is put into that project it could, in fact, provide us with food so that our food imports would be grossly cut down.

### **3.00 p.m.**

Sen. Spence made reference to the unwise use to which valuable agricultural land was put in the East-West Corridor, sacrificed as it were to construction. I recall his saying that we would weep with him if we took a drive along the East-West Corridor and saw where valuable, arable lands are being put to construction and housing."

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At this point I pause to ask: where is the proper planning involved and by whom? Again, it would be the administrative or the technical arm of Government that has to do the planning, to test and see which soils are suitable for what and which are not. Is there proper planning? The valuable lands there are now being put up under housing construction. This brings me to the other point, the second thing that I want to right this afternoon and to which I also made mention in my maiden speech in January.

We are placing square pegs in round holes. That area Fort Reid, Wallerfield, east of Arima and just west of Valencia. Vast acres of land, not at all suitable for agriculture, not at all suitable for the purpose to which it is put. Dairy, pig and poultry farming is done here on lands that are very arid and not conducive at all to the rich growth of grass, which is a prerequisite for cattle rearing and the production of a high yield of milk and quality meat. Perhaps we could use some of Sen. Spence's expertise in that area so that he could advise Government as to what should be done there. I am sure he would be willing to do that.

This vast area, as I have said before, has all the necessary infrastructure. It is already laid down and has been left by the American military years ago. With some funds and refurbishing at the hands of Government, this could generate work in the construction industry. Switch it around: East-West Corridor for agriculture; and use the Fort Reid area which is so very gravelly and arid, for construction, housing and other things—not to be left to drag racing, and other sporting events every now and again. Please leave the fertile soils of the East-West Corridor for agriculture, is my plea. Planners, please listen to our plea on this end. As I said before, Sen. Spence would be willing to assist you to work out with his expertise.

Therefore, Government must move with dispatch to identify and release funds to give a shot in the arm to these two areas, thereby putting their money where their mouth is and has been, giving teeth to their slogan, "We care". I hope the hon. Minister of Agriculture, cares and that in the very near future we shall be hearing, not only of rationalization, which Sen. Spence has been flogging since under the last regime and is again at it under this one, but we shall have rationalization of the sugar industry of Caroni (1975) Limited and also diversification, and the end result, expansion. Thank you.

**Sen. Hydar Ali:** Mr. President, I should like to confine my remarks to the sugar-cane industry, so I hope you do not rule me irrelevant. This debate is the

most recent in a long line of debates, plans, commissions, reports relating to the sugar industry. I have been able to check about 11 commissions, reports, plans, *etc.*, within recent times. The need for so many reports, plans and so on would have been understandable if the plans were not suitable, but this is not the case. The preamble to the motion implies that there has been some agreement:

*"Whereas there has been wide agreement since 1978 on the need for rationalization of the sugar industry in the national interest;"*

We know that the 1978 Spence Report was adopted by both Houses of Parliament in 1979. I hope that what we are going through here will not be subject to debate by another group of people, and that there will be action based on what has been said so far.

The contributions of Sen. Spence and Sen. Maharaj—I do not know whether we should call him former Sen. Maharaj—are very detailed and informative and I am just going to highlight certain areas from those. My first point, concerns the greater role that I feel cane farmers ought to play. If you recall from Sen. Maharaj's contribution, in 1991 there were 5,200 independent cane farmers and in that very year they produced 616,079 tons of cane.

Let us look at the significance of these figures. The quantum of tons of cane has been increasing. As I mentioned already, it amounted in 1991 to 616,079 tons and in 1992 the forecast is for over 650,000 tons—I think it is about 651,000. According to a bulletin that came to me at the Phoenix Park and Claxton Muslim Organization from the General Manager of Caroni (1975) Limited, there are 5,500 farmers. I do not know whether that has been increased or not. It has been observed that at Ste. Madeleine the tc/ts ratio, which is the tons of cane to tons of sugar ratio, has been greater than that of Brechin Castle.

One cannot offer any scientific reasons for this, but I should like to make the following observations: The Senate might be interested in the fact that cane farmers supply 80 per cent of the sugar cane milled at Usine Ste. Madeleine. The yields are greater. This is implied in the same report from the General Manager, Caroni (1975) Limited where he says that Caroni (1975) Limited grows 30,000 acres of cane; our farmers grow another 30,000 acres of cane. But before that he mentioned that this year Caroni (1975) Limited will harvest 630,000 tons of cane and will purchase 651,000 tons of cane, and with the same acreage. So one will assume from that that the yields are higher. I do not think it is a coincidence that the tc/ts ratio is higher at Usine Ste. Madeleine than at Brechin Castle.

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Before I put a suggestion to the Senate, I should like to give some additional figures. It costs Caroni (1975) Limited \$300 to produce a ton of cane, whereas it costs the farmer, apparently because of better husbandry and what not, just \$120. Based on these facts I make the suggestion that Caroni (1975) Limited consider the feasibility of leaving the production of sugar cane entirely in the hands of cane farmers. This is not a radical suggestion. Sen. Spence is probably referring to this. He hinted to this in his presentation here:

"We should consider whether we want Caroni to be continuing to produce a large area of sugar, or whether a substantial part should also go to the cane farmers".

Substantial in this case obviously means over 50 per cent. I have just upgraded that to 100 per cent.

### **3.10 p.m.**

Now, if one looks at this on the surface, it is a scary sort of thing. One would automatically think about retrenchment. But I do not think it is as bad as it sounds. If you glance through some of the reports, you will see that some form of retrenchment is an integral part of those plans. One way in which we can get around that is to give the displaced workers some money, if they want to leave the industry, also offer them land by whatever mechanism exists, by leases and what not, to cultivate sugar cane. Also, based on something Sen. Spence mentioned, people are not encouraging their children, because of the situation in agriculture as it now stands, to go into agriculture, but I think it is possible to attract new people into the industry. This ties in with what Sen. Everard Dean mentioned, that this may not have to be dealt with by individual farmers. Perhaps they can grow their cane through co-operatives. Tied in with this is the fact that in this scheme, Caroni (1975) Limited would still have the responsibility for the milling. Now a consequence of this, provided it is feasible, is that Caroni would still make a loss—I should not use the word, "loss" because I have to make a comment on that in a minute—the industry might still have to be subsidized, but to a lesser extent. The reason I do not want to use the word, "loss" is that I want to refer to a statement made by the new chairman of Caroni (1975) Limited in a report in the *Sunday Express*, March 29, 1992:

"Dr. Harracksingh is not amused when people talk about Caroni Limited as an industry losing money. He said, 'they use this phrase in the most narrow sense, in an accounting sense, in the sense of a balance sheet'."

So that perhaps one can read into this that there is some loss, but it is a qualified kind of loss.

I move on to something else. Again, this concerns the export of sugar. Since this motion came to the Senate, I noticed that Caroni (1975) Limited is giving almost a daily report on their production, how they are about to pass the target and so on. I do not know whether that is a coincidence or whether it is because I am looking out for these things in the newspapers, but there is a certain amount of consciousness in the sugar industry at this time.

Caroni (1975) Limited could probably also consider the feasibility in the medium and long term of not exporting sugar. Again, this cannot come overnight; that is why I qualified it by saying that this is a medium or long-term plan. The report in the *Trinidad Guardian*, April 20, 1992—and I think it is probably updated after that—is that the revenue from export of sugar is \$132.5 million. Now, obviously, you want to recover some way, and the only way you can do this is to make sure that your downstream industry has been established. But I find it strange that we have to depend on the vagaries of the quota system, where in many years, and in fact this year too, we have to import sugar so that we can satisfy our quota to the EEC and the USA and have enough sugar for domestic consumption.

So I am wondering if we were to concentrate on our downstream industries, whether we would not have to depend so much on earning foreign exchange from selling to people who might want to lower our quota just at the stroke of a pen.

I should just like to refer to Sen. Maharaj's contribution when he mentioned that we should make a distinction between the sugar cane industry and the sugar industry. He gives two examples. The example of Brazil, where only 35 per cent of the production is used for sugar, and in India, where less than 50 per cent is used for sugar. So that this suggestion is only feasible if there is some way in which we can earn that type of money, or, of course, earn more. If we earn the same and it costs more, well then that would not make sense.

I make another suggestion. Before that, I should like us to look at the Cuban experience in this. Let us see some of the things they do in their sugar industry. They try to improve yields. Secondly, they try to increase a range of products from sugar and the sugar cane plant, using various techniques. In their diversification and by-product development strategy, a major element has been a close integration with the livestock industry. There have been significant breakthroughs

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with respect to the use of bagasse, molasses and factory waste, in feeds for certain livestock.

Some of the by-products are the development of bagasse board. I must pause here when I mention bagasse and bagasse board because at least twice a day I drive past what used to be the bagasse plant and only last year or some time ago, I heard that there were plans to resuscitate it. I think we need to resurrect that. Every day I pass there, it has deteriorated even more. I do not know what is happening about that. It was not the present Government who made that announcement; it was made by the last government and I think that is something to be looked at again, because the bagasse is just piling up there. If you drive along from the connector road to the Pt. Lisas area, you will see two signs. One of them: "Cane is our Life; Do not Burn our Lives." The other is: Something like: "We have a lot of Bagasse here; just Provide your Transport and you can Move it Away." So, obviously, not much is being done with the bagasse, except to give it away. There is much expense in just trying to keep it from burning. I see two and three bulldozers and sprinklers there all the time, trying to prevent it from burning. When it does burn, it causes disruption in the area.

They have also produced animal feed based on bagasse and protein molasses. In order to achieve this, we must move away from the traditional end products of raw and refined sugar. Again, it comes back to what I was saying before, that when we think of the sugar cane industry, we think of some traditional things. I am saying that we should move away from those things, from raw and refined sugar, molasses—I have alcohol here; and I am sorry we have to mention that; we could do without that too—and bagasse for energy-production.

We must not take diversification away from production. One of the things that come to mind when we think of diversification, is that we are going to take up some of the sugar cane land and use it for something else. That is probably a thought that occurs in many people's minds, but this is not necessarily the case. From what I have mentioned before, one can use the sugar cane and its by-products and perhaps try to have a viable industry.

### **3.20 p.m.**

I have prefaced these things by saying that this is the Cuban experience, and one would think how relevant it is here and how long it will take to transfer that technology here. All these things I have mentioned, more technical details can be had from this paper by Rena Pérez, entitled, "*The Development of Animal Feed*



*Production Systems in the Cuban Sugar Mills.* The author is an FAO consultant at the Sugarcane Feeds Centre and this paper was presented at the Association of Professional Agricultural Scientists of Trinidad and Tobago at the University of the West Indies on January 29, 1992. There was passing reference to the Sugarcane Feeds Centre in Sen. Spence's contribution. He talked about the contribution of the Canadians there, where there was heavy clay soil, they laid pipes, drained the soil and were able to produce heavy cane. He also mentioned some other things—that the machinery could not be found and when it was located it was not usable again.

So that kind of thing is being done there where the actual sugar cane is used as livestock feed. I think that is an area we will need to look at. Unfortunately, Sugarcane Feeds Centre is just a demonstration unit and does not go into any kind of marketing of these things. It does assist small farmers. Some farmers have already benefited. I know there are a couple of farmers who are using the system for feeding sheep. I am making a case based solely on using sugar cane.

My other suggestion is, rather than growing less cane—if we are going to do all these things, and I do not see why we should not be thinking about doing all these things, we should be growing more sugar cane and not less so diversification does not necessarily mean cutting down on some acreage for other things. We should be growing more sugar cane.

Before I leave the Sugarcane Feeds Centre, I should like to mention that the place survives on a contract; I think its present life ends this year, I would suggest that when we consider the rationalization of the sugar industry we need to see the great contribution that centre can make, and make sure it does not depend on these short-term contracts. And that is not the only thing that prevents it from operating efficiently. I understand too that its budget of \$2.2 million is not enough for it to survive.

I would spend the remaining couple of minutes on two areas. One of them is rice. We have heard from Sen. Spence that rice is really a success story. Unfortunately that success is diminished by the information that farmers are squatting on 2,000 acres of land. I feel that this problem should be addressed. I know Sen. Wade Mark used a different term for squatting but we are told that they are in fact, using this land and not paying any rent. The recommendation made by Sen. Spence ought to be followed up.

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I gather that in spite of the success of the rice industry there are some problems relating to irrigation because the water needed for this comes from WASA and that is not always forthcoming. Again, this is tied in with the ability of WASA to supply the rice industry with enough water. I found out that you can depend on rain-fed rice as an alternative but this depends on the weather. If you have weather as we are having now, that will not be very successful

My third point, Mr. President, still relating to rice. I understand that there is an area that is not cultivated at present just west off the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway which is considered brackish water. Because of that there is not enough rice being cultivated there, but I gather that some studies have been done in which it is possible to sow a type of rice that will grow suitably in that kind of environment.

My final point concerns cocoa. If I had spoken earlier the hon. Minister of Agriculture would not have pre-empted me when I heard him saying recently that Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the quality of cocoa which is produced here. My recommendation is that everything should be done to make sure that the level of production is increased because of that high quality. Some time ago another Senator spoke about a sportsman being an ambassador but on a recent trip last summer to the United States we found out that cocoa is a good ambassador. We visited a chocolate factory in Pennsylvania and when the people found out we were from Trinidad and Tobago they told us that we have the best cocoa. It is so good that they use only a little bit for the surface to just give it that finishing touch. I feel that this industry should be encouraged.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**Sen. Dr. Eric St. Cyr:** Mr. President, I am very honoured to be able to speak in this honourable Senate. This should be, and I hope is, the fount of wisdom in the nation. I am just reminded that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord and in addressing this very serious issue before us, I do not think that we are able to tackle it except we tap into that great fount of wisdom.

I know it is not usual in secular circles to speak as though one were under the authority of God, but I make no excuse for that and, I think that considering the tremendous problems which pervade the nation, there must be some more profound malaise, in the society, perhaps, of a moral nature—more likely of a spiritual nature—and we need, in addressing the other issues, to look more deeply at what might be some of the root causes. I may in passing, before I speak

specifically on the motion, refer to problems of individual discipline, problems in the families, and problems in the areas where we organize to produce economic goods and services, business places, so-called.

The basic issue which I am addressing is that there are wider, more profound problems in the society and when we look at a specific issue such as the rationalization of the sugar industry, we want to locate that problem in a total context.

On the motion in particular, I want to make brief remarks on agriculture first of all, and then probably some more extended remarks on the rationalization of the sugar industry proper.

I am not convinced that in this country we really believe that agriculture is important, fundamental and should have not only our attention, but should also have our resources. If we were to look at the measure of investment we have put in the last 20 years in various places, I think we would easily agree that agriculture has had rather less than its fair share. I suggest that that perspective derives from a gross misinterpretation of one of the leading intellectuals of the Caribbean region, the late Sir Arthur Lewis whose proposals on economic development, I think we had misread, we continue to misread, misinterpret, misquote, and even when as was reported in the *Sunday Guardian* of last Sunday, concede that there has been some misinterpretation, I do not think we really go to the core of the problem.

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

If I may take a couple of minutes to address that issue. Sir Arthur Lewis was arguing that the only way that one can raise incomes in the Caribbean and come out of poverty was to raise productivity. In other words, money simply represents the volume of goods and services which a nation produces and could therefore use. So that if the quantity of goods remains the same, but we print money and distribute it, we are no better off. The source has to be increased production of goods and services.

When Sir Arthur Lewis was writing in 1950 and 1954, the big industry in the Caribbean was agriculture. He was in no doubt whatsoever, that that is what had to be improved and expanded in terms of its efficiency and productivity. Other things would be added, but agriculture should never be whittled down, made smaller or less important.

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I think they have misinterpreted that because there have been historical associations of an unpleasant nature with our agricultural past—the great emotional shock of slavery and the equally demeaning shock of indentured workmanship/workwomanship. So that it is very easy to have negative associations with our agricultural past, but, you know, one of the things about history is that although it is tremendously important and must inform us, we cannot do anything about past history. We must come to the position where we accept it as given, use it to inform us, but since we cannot change it, we are wasting out time if we keep looking back at it and allowing it to hold us back. We must look into the future and we need to change our perspective on agriculture as a whole.

I suggest that we think about agriculture as a business. I do not want to narrow the focus because while it has its roots deep in society, there are certain cultural aspects of life associated with agriculture, yet at rock bottom agriculture is an industry. I want us to think of land—although again, it has associations of an anthropological nature—as the basic input into agricultural production.

I say these two things because it is so easy when we come to discuss the rationalization of the sugar industry to focus on the ethnic differences in the society. Those are real, but my understanding is that we are made of one blood, all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth and there is a universal brotherhood that must go with nation building. It does not matter whether we are tall or short—to take a very easy example—male or female, black or white, African or Indian, we belong to a common nation and a nation has to share a brotherhood that transcends all these other differences.

In approaching the issue of rationalization of the sugar industry, while cognizant of the ethnic differences and the implications, we should not allow that to cloud the clarity of our thought which we would bring to bear on this problem. Similarly, I want to suggest that the issue of land should not be thought of in terms of some people grabbing hold of this resource which has the possibility of capital value accumulation through the years. I want us to think of land as the basic input into agricultural production. In other words, we must see land not as real estate, but as basic to agricultural production.

We may want to be careful about how we deal with the tenure of landholding. During 1983—84, I did have the opportunity to look at this specific issue and it seemed to me that some leasehold arrangement of 30 years, renewable for another

30 years might be the way that one could go. Of all the things which I viewed then, perhaps, that is the one big proposal that I, at this time, am prepared to revise because leasehold tenure does not so well encourage good husbandry. Perhaps, if I am to trade that form of tenure against the possibility of having lands really fully developed, cared for and looked at as a renewable resource, one that will be there in perpetuity, I would be inclined to concede on the tenure and go for the one that will absolutely ensure best husbandry.

I think we want to put agriculture in the place where it properly belongs. There is no nation in the world which is developed which does not have a highly productive agriculture. So productive is American agriculture that they do not know what to do with the large volumes of output. They buy it and store it, *et cetera*. That agricultural productivity is based on an organizational structure—which I will come to when we discuss Caroni (1975) Limited in particular—the investment of tremendous amounts of capital to improve the fields and to have equipment for doing large-scale agriculture; and on the development of the technology of agriculture, which inheres in the people who farm.

Let me give a story. I visited a farm in Britain just outside Cambridge in 1964. I met a man who was the Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture in the British Government in those days. He farmed a 2,000 acre plot and employed 10 people. Of those 10, six worked in the garage maintaining equipment; two worked in an animal feed preparation plant and the other two drove the equipment up and down the 2,000 acres. They produced an enormous amount of the best barley and wheat. It was organized along very modern lines.

This is the problem which I think Sir Arthur Lewis was addressing. If you are to have a farm of that size 2,000 acres, engaging 10 people in a situation such as in the West Indies, where land space outside Guyana and Belize is generally small and even in the larger islands not much of it is suitable to agriculture, because of the hilly terrain, the only way we could improve the number of acres which each person farms, is to make alternative employment for those people. We cannot kill them, we cannot just chase them off the land or put them in the sea. We have to make alternative arrangements for them.

I want to suggest that it is on this and this alone, Sir Arthur Lewis advocated that we should then develop manufacturing industry to place those people, and in doing that, he was saying, well, this has been the world experience? This is how America did it. In 1910, some 60 per cent of the labour force in America was

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engaged in agriculture and they were chased into the factory to make the tractors which were used to farm the land. At this time less than 10 per cent is engaged in agriculture in the United States of America but the people are in manufacturing and now more in services. So that what we heard in the Caribbean was not what was said by Sir Arthur Lewis.

**3.40 p.m.**

What we heard in the Caribbean was that we should stop engaging in agriculture so that we could go into the modern manufacturing industry which other people do. That is blatantly incorrect, since the fundamental point at which Sir Arthur Lewis started was that the only basis of raising incomes is to raise productivity. In other words, he set out to make agriculture more productive.

I must say that in the course of our policies over the last 40 years, we have done a great disservice to agriculture, and in most things we do not see the consequences of our action for 40 or 50 years because most of these things impacting on society take decades to work their way through. This is why I think that in this honourable Senate we really need the wisdom of God if we are not to do things which are foolish, the consequences of which we would not live to see. We want here to be careful and to go to where we can find the accumulative wisdom of the ages.

Let me say a little bit about Caroni (1975) Limited, the sugar industry. Again, if I take a historical context and say, first of all, something about ethnicity, the majority of cane farmers in the sugar industry 100 years ago were of African stock, so that the industry has not always been peopled largely by people of East Indian stock. Why do I say this? I say this because we live in a changing world and once we recognize the desirability of change and are patient to give change enough time to work itself through; that the inevitable pain which comes with change is able to be borne by those on whom it falls, we can then get consensus for that change, Because people do not see themselves being thrown on the breadline or being unfairly treated for in the heart of everyone, there is a deep inbuilt sense of justice and we have to be just in all we do. Basically, if we gave ourselves the right time perspective, if we approach the issues with sincerity, trust and mutual understanding and, if it is clear that the direction in which we are going is guided by wisdom—and I just cannot help but say that as far as I am concerned there is one source of wisdom and if we would ask He would give it to us liberally since he is a generous God.

The lands in Caroni, the roads through Caroni, the buildings, the equipment, the 10,000 hardworking people, the agricultural scientists and the engineers—they represent a tremendous volume of productive resources and my bottom line position is that we are not using those resources correctly because they are badly organized.

Forty years ago, there were over 30 companies operating that same area which, progressively have come to be incorporated in a single firm. It made sense to move in that direction because the final owner, Tate and Lyle, had a powerful management structure which could integrate this field unit, producing raw sugar for export into a wider system of resource mobilization and use. The agronomists and the experts in pest control need not have been located here in Trinidad. It seems to me basically that as that industry is organized at the moment we do not have the capacity to manage it effectively.

Let me say quite clearly that I am not against large organizations but I would not go for a large organization for the sake of having a large one, because I know that GM is large. I would go for the efficient organization so that if the size of organization that I could effectively manage is small, then I would go for a small organization and, as my management capacity expands, I would naturally move in that direction because I want to optimize all the resources—not only the land resources and the people resources, but the skills at my disposal.

Where ought we to go in that industry? When I studied that problem eight years ago, the bottom line I came up with was that we could not leave it as it was. If we left it as it was and attempted to do what is called diversification, that is, produce different products, different outputs and so on, the fundamental problem would not have been addressed. So, I rather like the word rationalization, that is, bringing reason to bear on a problem. When I look at the countries of the world where agriculture has failed, the USSR—they collectivize theirs—that was the source of enormous problems. They never got it right because, perhaps in its very nature, that is not how agriculture ought to be organized.

We have a model which was given to the nation of Israel. The land was to be distributed, and in that distribution there were built-in safeguards against that land ever being accumulated in the hands of a few and I believe—and I draw here on the privilege that we all enjoy of freedom of religious beliefs in this country going hand in hand with freedom of expression—that that book was written by divine inspiration and is the Word of God, who knows and who gave us models by which

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we can live. I am happy to be able to have the privilege to express my personal conviction.

**3.50 p.m.**

There were safeguards built in against all land ever ending up in a few hands. Every 50 years there was the Jubilee where there was a release and all debts were cancelled among members of the nation. You held on to your debt contracted to strangers, so I want my dear colleague, Sen. Mark, to know that we shall always have to pay the debt we contracted overseas. So we are not going to ever get debt forgiveness there except for marginal amounts.

But within the nation, there were laws which prevented the land from being concentrated in one or a few hands. The concept was the concept of a commonwealth and I think in our nation, which is a property-owning democracy, we would be in error if we continued to concentrate ownership in a few hands, be those hands individuals or the state.

It took from 1917 to 1991—my arithmetic is not very good today—but that length of time for the error committed in Russia to be corrected. I believe that out of the resources engaged in sugar, we must move to create viable-sized farms. I believe that these viable-sized farms would give the incentive to entrepreneurial people to maximize the use of those resources. I believe that the capital will then be forthcoming, because the same banks that extend only one and a half per cent of their credit to the agricultural sector would do it if we came with viable, sensible business proposals.

I believe that we would build into that industry, if we were to go in that direction, the flexibility that some people will go in some directions. For example, some people will grow more sugar, others will grow less, and whichever one came through successfully, the other one will move in that direction. In other words, I would not start by presuming that I know that we should grow more sugar or less sugar. What I would do is set up a system which will tell me that.

You probably want to know how I would deal with the issue of who would get the lands. I think I was not in this honourable House when this debate was started, but I would certainly not treat it in the way that one of the Senators suggested, that it should be given to people, as it were, in payment for compensation for past ills, because I am saying that history is past and we have an opportunity to start afresh. I would give it to the hands of competent farmers, business-oriented—competent



farmers. I would make it a business proposition. They would have to pay for it, so it would not be given as a hand-out, so that I would be reducing, somewhat, the possibility of favourites getting and others not getting.

I would also have resources coming which would go to meet some of those outstanding debts which I hear are into the hundreds of millions which we probably do not need to write off and let the state have access to those resources. The wealth is here. This is a wealthy country. But we have to draw out the wealth. Wealth never falls from heaven; wealth is got by the mixing of labour with resources. That is the source of wealth: The mixing of labour with productive resources.

Mr. President, I would end by saying that we have been grappling with this problem for 15 years, at least. This is a most profound problem, so we probably did correctly not to have rushed to a quick solution before. We have to move with consensus, so perhaps over the last 15 years those 11 reports which my colleague referred to were not wasted because what we were having there is a debate. We want to be sure and be clear that when we move, the persons now engaged in the industry do not in any way feel threatened that their bread and butter would be removed from them, nor the bread and butter, the livelihood of their children or the future generations. We want to be sure that that is clear. We want to then take a time perspective over which we would seek to implement whatever changes we agree to implement because this would have to be by consensus.

I want to suggest that we do not attempt to do the whole thing all at once. I want to suggest that we creep up on the problem. We may start with 5,000 acres, or 10,000 acres and see how that works. If it works well, we push in that direction. If it does not work so well, then we have not made a big mess, we can try somewhere else.

I want finally to say, Sir, that if we cannot move in that direction, to get the core of the agricultural resources of this country brought to maximum use, I would, myself, not have a great deal of hope for the prosperity of the nation. But I know that it is not the will of my Father that I should be poor. He wants me to prosper and be in health as my soul prospers and so, on that confident note, I think I could step out on these promises.

**Sen. John Bharath:** Mr. President, the motion before us has made certain definite requests. I should like to read this part of it:

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*“Be it resolved* that this House urge the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to proceed expeditiously with the rationalization of the sugar industry with appropriate safeguards for the welfare of all concerned since such action is essential for the development of the agricultural sector and therefore for the economic development and for the future well-being of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.”

Mr. President, I endorse the words and opinions of the speaker immediately before me when he said that apparently we placed no real emphasis on the development of agriculture during the period in question.

When one considers that 1987 and 1979, the years in which the call for rationalization, study on the rationalization of the sugar industry, and the submission of a report on the same were made, we would realize that the then government had access to tremendous resources, and had it decided that it was going to develop the sugar industry or rationalize, the agricultural sector, for that matter, it would have been quite easy. The development of Point Lisas is an example that, if the Government of the day had that consideration for agriculture and the sugar industry, it could have easily attained the desired outcome.

We know that the then Government was also considering the regional implications of agriculture and we know, also, that the trade in agricultural products from Grenada, St. Vincent, and other islands impacted directly upon the consumption of agricultural products in Trinidad and also on the production of those products in the island. We are also aware that the DEWD programme significantly impacted upon the availability of labour for the sugar industry. I believe that that particular programme pulled labour out of that vital industry and placed people leaning on shovels on the roadside in more or less unproductive work, if you call it work at all.

It was never the intention of the then Government to develop agriculture. It had other aspirations; it had other directions. When we consider that during that period when we were considering the development of other industries, the food import bill rose significantly, we know what we are talking about.

The importation of food is one of the most lucrative businesses in this country. If I were to get a licence to import food in sufficient quantity, I know I would be a very rich man, very soon. The policy of the government around that time to give certain monopolies to certain individuals to import food into the country definitely had an impact on the concept of agriculture and the possibilities for its growth, its

rationalization and also diversification, if any; in particular, when I say diversification and rationalization, I am speaking specifically of Caroni (1975) Limited.

I heard a while ago a Senator mention the worth of our cocoa. It is not only Caroni (1975) Limited that is suffering from the withdrawal of our enthusiasm for agriculture. The cocoa industry is suffering as well. If you view what is taking place in Toco, unemployment, the cocoa industry is abandoned, virtually. These have serious implications for our development.

As I was on the point of the importation of food, Mr. President, you would realize, with the liberalization of our trade, which might come up very soon, the scope for diversification of our agricultural sector to be a viable and profitable enterprise is very limited. Had this rationalization and/or diversification taken place, let us say 10 years ago, I am almost certain that we would have been in a position to face the challenge of liberalization. But, as Sen. Wade Mark has pointed out, with the dumping of more advanced productive countries' agricultural products on our market, I wonder how far we are going to get.

I also wonder about the timing, because it is important to consider timing here. Is it that now that the PNM is going to go ahead with the rationalization of the sugar industry, it is known by certain elements and interests in the society that this will fail and their importation of food into this country will not be affected in any way? These are questions that we shall have to ask ourselves.

I am particularly concerned about the agricultural sector. Because recently there were reports in the newspapers that the Cedros people, who deal with the coconut industry, are suffering tremendously. That is another aspect of the agricultural sector that is not being considered, at least at this point, because we are talking about the rationalization of Caroni (1975) Limited, but it is connected. Because it must have been a deliberate policy of the past regime—I am not talking about the immediate past, but that particular one is also included—I am speaking about the policy of the past regime as it relates to agriculture: It must have been that they had no intention to develop that sector.

I should like to make one mention about the area of monopoly, because the United National Congress and our policies do not deal with the destruction of conglomerates and so on. What we are concerned about is what all persons who are concerned about the operation of the free enterprise system are concerned

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about: The eradication of harmful monopolies, monopolies that bar entry to trade and monopolies that cause the consumer to pay high prices and receive substandard goods. And if removal of those monopolies was effected, we would have better goods and services available at cheaper rates. These are the monopolies that we are concerned about.

Mr. President, in closing, I say that I do not think that the sale of Caroni (1975) Limited to certain individuals, businessmen and so on, will work. The business community in this country has always neglected certain kinds of investment, especially since the oil boom. The record is there to show that despite the billions of dollars that have been made by certain private sector organizations, their moneys are either stashed away in banks all over the world through the effective use of over-invoicing and other schemes, and also that they do not care to engage in certain developmental programmes if immediate and large income by way of profits is not forthcoming.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**The President:** Hon. Senators it appears that by consensus the Senate wishes to take the tea break at this time.

**4.15 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**4.45 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley):** Mr. President, I crave your indulgence to take a minute to sort through numerous papers which we have to organize after the tea break.

In a way, Sir, I am in two minds with respect to this motion today. I should have preferred if there was no such motion for debate at this time, while at the same time I have been very happy that we had the debate, in that, it permitted the ventilation of so many points of view which are paramount.

Permit me to congratulate Sen. St. Cyr for what, I think, is his first speech in the Senate, and what an excellent speech it was. I think that it has set the tone for all that we can aspire to do properly at Caroni, and for the Senate as a whole. I am extremely happy to be speaking after him, and though I am not a Member of this Senate, I commend his contribution to the Members thereof, especially on an issue as prickly as Caroni (1975) Limited.

This debate started a long time ago and there were some not so happy thoughts in earlier contributions which I would want to address very briefly. But permit me to start with this concern for Caroni, the concern for the agricultural sector and the commitments that we are going to make both to Caroni and the agricultural sector.

We on this side got into office on the basis of taking certain positions in our manifesto, which is a statement of positions, and to the extent that you trust us, Mr. President, you have to hold us by this. Permit me to quote from page 17 of the PNM manifesto which refers specifically to Caroni (1975) Limited:

"The PNM recognizes the critical socio-economic importance of Caroni Limited, and therefore, is committed to preservation of the company and its growth and development as a fully diversified agro-processing company. The PNM believes that the future of Caroni Limited must be the subject of agreement between the Government and the relevant trade unions.

It is clear however that the diversification effort which began in 1983 must continue and will continue and will be intensified."

It goes on to say:

"As Caroni Limited continues to produce sugar, the PNM sees an expanded role for the cane framers as the company concentrates on sugar manufacturing and the diversification process.

Given the expertise and other resources of Caroni Limited, the PNM sees the company to be of strategic importance and therefore it will be in a position to play a major role in the execution of national agricultural policy."

I think that is the foundation on which much of the arguments were presented, much of the positions, much of the suggestions in this very long debate. Much of what was said by a number of the Senators can be put on that foundation somewhere in there.

However, let me start by dealing with what I consider to be the unpleasant side of this whole thing and end up with what I hope to be the pleasant side. You see, certain contributions were made and they are now a matter of parliamentary record. Much as I would have ignored these comments elsewhere, I cannot do that here since it falls to me, as a result of my duty, to set the record straight or to respond, to some of the comments that were made in the earlier times of this debate.

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One of those comments came from Sen. Sam Maharaj. In seeking to put the Caroni problem a national problem really in perspective, he saw it in a way which I would not see it. Then he spoke about the government of the past—formed by the party to which I belong—pursuing a policy of discrimination against the sugar industry. He also went on to say that previous governments pursued a policy of sabotaging the industry.

Sen. Hosein spoke, and his words were:

It is important to understand how way back when, the PNM had been putting this country and, in particular, the people of Central, Trinidad in a monkey pants...

He spoke of the politics of exclusion. He said that sugar workers and agricultural workers in our country became second class citizens. That vein of approach—in fact, Sen. Baksh went a little further—she was a little more explicit—when she said:

For too long the sugar-cane industry has been treated like an outcast.

She also said that:

...this industry has been left on the wayside on its own. This mal-treatment projects the suspicion that its neglect is due to discrimination of some sort, perhaps one based on ethnicity...

She went on to speak about sabotaging the industry. Those kinds of comments were made.

I should like to simply say that the problems as they relate to Caroni (1975) Limited can very easily be represented in this way, but to do that would be to take the easy way out. It might suit the purpose of individuals to take that line but, as a country, if we are to deal with what I think this motion is seeking to deal with, which is a serious economic problem which has serious socio-economic implications, that kind of approach does not help anybody.

I think in the light of those comments we might want to take a little look at some numbers to see to what extent there is any automatic justification for that kind of approach, which I should like to dismiss. We have a sugar industry in this country but we are not the only country in the world with a sugar industry. We are not the only country in the world with a sugar industry which has had a serious problem for a long time. In fact, I distinctly recall when we first started talking

about rationalization in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, there were spokespersons who offered to use the Barbados sugar industry as the model of what we should do to get out of our morass. Interestingly enough, there was no PNM Government there and there was no ethnic factor there, but, only recently, that industry virtually came to a grinding halt. I do not know if hon. Senators are aware that at this point the sugar industry in Barbados, Jamaica, Belize and Guyana is now virtually in the management, by invitation, of the previous colonial owners. There was no question of ethnicity in that; it was simply an economic problem which got the better of those who sought to deal with it. I submit, that the problem with sugar in Trinidad and Tobago is no less economic. To the extent that there are considerations of ethnicity, I think that we, as leaders and spokespersons for the problem and for those who are affected directly by it, should be very careful how we make statements if those statements are not going to contribute to the advancement of the proper cause.

For example, I did have reason to comment on the position taken by Sen. Hosein when he sought to give the impression, which today was raised by my Friend, Sen. Mark, that there is a point of view—in fact, Sen. Mark was very careful to say that there is a point of view that the Government is treating with one class of citizens, one type of citizen, with respect to arrears while others are not seen to be treated the same way. He was very careful to say “a perception.” Sen. Hosein went a bit further when he said that the Minister of Finance had actually treated with one aspect of the problem for some people and deliberately ignored the others. Seeing that Sen. Mark identified it as a perception, the question is: Where is that perception coming from, and who is furthering that perception, and to what end? To the extent that we know the facts, I would appeal to all persons who are seised of the facts not to foster that perception, because it is, in fact, only a perception. Later on I will tell you, Mr. President, where the position is the opposite with respect to treatment of arrears to workers. But I was about to introduce some figures into the scenario.

**4.55 p.m.**

**Sen. Hosein:** Mr. President, since the Minister is saying that it is a perception, perhaps he can tell us when the Government intends to treat with the Caroni workers in respect of their backpay and so on.

**Hon. Rowley:** You see what I mean? It seems to be only a perception. I shall go further than that. It is not a perception unless those who would like that

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perception to exist seek to foster it. I shall clarify that point later if the President would permit me time. But let us put our sugar industry in perspective, and I shall do that against the point made by Dr. St. Cyr, who said that in 1984, as a researcher, he examined the sugar industry and came to the conclusion, to put it in calypso words if he would permit, “we just can't go on this way”.

These are some of the figures available to us at this time. If we look at sugar production—and I am putting a worldwide view here—in Australia , 750—900 tons per employee; South Africa, 800—1,000 tons per employee; United States, 700—800 tons per employee; Barbados, 150—200 tons per employee. They had to call in Booker. Jamaica, 100-150, that is tons of sugar per employee; Trinidad and Tobago, 75 tons per employee. We are in that ballpark. We are in a competitive environment and maybe, later on, I shall make a comment on the comment made today that maybe we should not export sugar. But if we have to export sugar in the open market situation that is the picture.

If we look at the ratio of average hectares per employee in cane production: In Australia 80 to 100 hectares per employee; South Africa, 80 to 100 hectares per employee; USA, 40 to 60 hectares per employee; Barbados, 6 to 8 hectares per employee; Jamaica, 3 to 4 hectares per employee; Trinidad and Tobago, 1.5 hectares per employee.

Sugar prices on the world market. 1989—the best price we got for sugar was through the EEC arrangement—ACP/Lomé arrangement. The EEC price in 1989 for a ton of sugar was \$2,216. It was costing \$3,693 to produce a ton of sugar for which the best price we were getting, which was twice the world market price, was \$2,216. In 1990 we were getting our best price, \$2,526 per ton. It was costing us \$3,138 per ton to produce that. In 1991 it was costing us \$3,798 per ton, an increase in the cost of production by almost \$700 per ton and our best price had only increased by about \$400 per ton; and in 1992 our production cost per ton is forecast at \$3,863 with about the same sort of market price. This is the scenario in which we are producing sugar—with a significant export component.

Now, with respect to the accusations about sabotaging the industry and doing it because people of a certain ethnic background are involved in sugar and that kind of talk. What has been the fact with respect to resource support of this economic unit? In 1985 the total support, both in guarantee support, price support to cane farmers, and sugar rebates—\$253 million. 1986, total support to Caroni Limited—\$151 million; and it went on like that to 1991, \$126 million; 1992, this



year, as you would have heard in the budget, \$90 million. In gross, in the last seven years, in total support to the industry from central government, \$1,876 billion.

That is the industry that you are hearing people talking saying is being sabotaged and that it is sought to oppress an ethnic grouping and all that. No! It is simply bad economics. It has nothing to do with what your hair looks like or where your grandfather came from. What this motion seeks to do is to call upon us to address the economics. To that extent we seek to address the economics, whether you are East Indian, African, Syrian or Japanese, if you are a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago and especially directly dependent on the sugar industry—and I do not mean sugar workers because there is tremendous backward linkage in the industry. There are those who will tell you, maybe the simplest thing that should have been done in the past was to have paid all the workers a substantial sum of money and sent them home—close down the industry.

That might have been a good result for the balance sheet. But what we are not putting on the front burner all the time is that there are many thousands of persons who are indirectly dependent on the existence of Caroni (1975) Limited, for example, contractors and equipment suppliers. If you look at the list, Mr. President, you will understand that it is a serious economic unit, a significant portion of the national economy which cannot be treated from the point of narrowness and ethnicity and sidewalk talk. It has to be addressed seriously with respect to where the country is going as a unit.

Mr. President, those figures I gave you did not include loan support guaranteed by the Government through the CDB, US \$4.5 million, guaranteed floating rate debentures of \$100 million, loan from FINCOR in the sum of \$120 million, of which \$100 million financed an overdraft; and that kind of support. We have been trying over the years to support an economic system which defies economics. That is why on assuming this portfolio, I came to the same conclusion that Dr. St. Cyr came to—that we cannot go on this way. I told you, that in 1992 the company is to receive \$90 million in support. What I did not tell you was that the company's assessment of what it requires to keep its head above water is \$268 million. That is what they asked for. To the extent that it was available, they might have had it. In fact, from the numbers I called for you earlier for the periods 1985, 1986 and if I go further back, you will see similar numbers, nearer \$200 million.

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The approach then at that time when we were more flushed with money, was to try to deal with it by providing it with that kind of support.

**5.05 p.m.**

History has shown us now that that is not the solution to the problem, because even on the face of that, the problem is still with us and in fact, it is worse. Because if one takes this curve and projects it for five years or seven years or eight years, or even three years, and put that curve against a curve of the Exchequer, one would see the two curves going in a direction which will allow us to come to a conclusion which we cannot escape, that this company's future, as an economic unit, is very bleak. Therefore, in the face of that, whether we like it or not, these economics, these numbers, this situation, demand that we do something about Caroni (1975) Limited and do it now. Yesterday has gone.

It will serve no useful purpose for us to come here and talk about whose father sweat in cane and who love cane farmers or who hate cane farmers and what not. Because I can tell you, if that is the case, I am way ahead of the race, because I might be the only person in this Parliament who is a son of a cane farmer, who actually worked in cane. I do not make a livelihood out of telling people I am the son of a sugar cane worker. I do not tell people that, because that is part of history. In fact, they may not believe me. But maybe one of the reasons why I have so few grains of hair on my head is that I carried too many bundles of cane.

That is not the issue. The issue is how do we keep the commitment that we made in this manifesto, to recognize the strategic importance of Caroni (1975) Limited and to take the required action to end up with a viable entity. The motion calls for us to note, and it says:

*"Whereas* there has been wide agreement since 1978 on the need for rationalization of the sugar industry ..."

That is true. There has been a body of agreement. I do not know that there was consensus. At that time, and I hope up until recently, the approach was that you had to have consensus. All of us must agree on everything.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Mr. President, if I could just make a point. In the 1978 rationalization committee for Caroni, all parties were represented—the sugar cane farmers; the sugar cane workers the trade union and so forth. There was one reservation put in by one of the cane farmers which is not a significant reservation. But apart from that, there was not only agreement, but consensus.

**Hon. Rowley:** I thank the Member for that. But to the extent that the impression is—maybe not in this Senate—but to the extent that we speak to the national community when we speak here, and to the extent that one gets the impression that you had this report which said what ought to be done and it was totally ignored and nothing was done, and basically what the motion is seeking to do now is to say, okay, let us do that, that is not an accurate picture. Because what I tried to do in my ministry was to analyze the report, see what it had recommended at the time, see what action was taken on those substantial recommendations, see where the recommendations were ignored or where there was tardiness.

If I am permitted a few moments, for the benefit of Members of the Senate—Recommendations of the 1978 Rationalization Committee for Caroni. One of the recommendations was to "optimize the harvested production of sugarcane from the present acreage." What has happened to that? The sugar industry has not been maintained at levels recommended, that is, 200,000 tonnes per year, because of a loss of foreign markets and subsequent directives to reduce the size of the industry to satisfy domestic markets and guaranteed markets. So the target had moved downwards from 200,000 to 120,000. So that part of the recommendation, even though you had set out to do that, certain changes apparently justified the target of just over 100,000.

"Increase the value-added size and flexibility of product range through diversification."

I take it that you are talking here about diversification within sugar, as against diversification of getting into other types of things. I do not think that substantial progress was made in that area, because my column here does not tell me that. Another recommendation:

"Develop alternatives for sugar cane and produce alternative crops."

The company has initiated its diversification programme with the production of livestock, some food crops, rice, citrus, cocoa, coffee, mangoes, cashew. So some attempt was made to do that. I shall come back to that in a little while.

"Maintain the current mix of sugar company versus farmer acreages."

By "current" there, you are talking about 1978. The mix of farmers and company growing cane has, to a large extent, been maintained on a one-to-one basis, the company producing roughly half, the farmers producing roughly the other half.

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"Improve the scope and quality of extension services to farmers."

This has been done on a limited scale with extension services. They provide ploughing of farmers' lands, bulk purchasing, provision of herbicides, pest control, seminars and so on. So some attempt was made to do that.

"Expand the sugar refinery and de-link the operations with Usine Ste. Madeline."

That was a specific recommendation. What has happened? The refinery now operates independently of Usine Ste. Madeline with a capacity of 60,000 tonnes per year, with the present local demand of 35,000 tonnes. So we do have some spare capacity there. But that recommendation was put in place and that is operating.

Another recommendation of the report was:

"To review the feasibility of maintaining Woodford Lodge factory."

What has happened with that? This factory has been closed since 1983, together with Orange Grove and Reform. So we had some action there.

"Improve the operational efficiency and environmental applicability of Brechin Castle and Usine factories."

Although I do not have a quantitative expression of that recommendation, I have been out there in the factories in recent months, and the general point of view is that you can demonstrate that Usine is operating more efficiently than Brechin Castle and that there is some measure of improvement, given the state of the equipment provided to the workers. But again, we are not in a position to quantify that. However, we are running ahead of schedule this year as a result of some modifications which were done last year.

So some attempt was made to try to improve that efficiency. However, we are a long way from what the report envisioned with respect to becoming a very competitive sugar producing entity.

Number 11 recommendation—a very interesting one:

"Re-negotiate industrial agreements to provide improved pension plans. Reduction in retirement age of cultivation workers; assurance of a 40-hour work week. Protect wages against changes in working hours."

What has happened? The assured work programme of a 40-hour week has been implemented. A four shift system in the factory has been implemented. Improved pensions—that is still a sore point. It has been under discussion for quite some time and is still to be resolved.

"Increase employees efficiency."

Another recommendation. Do that through the reduction in grievance stages.

"Provision of work rules and manuals; trade testing on the job, clocking, flexibility of labour, job descriptions."

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

Now, what has happened? Work rules and manuals have been prepared and reviewed where necessary. Trade testing has been implemented. A guaranteed price for farmers' cane has been established although revision of the formula probably is desirable. The other recommendations: increase the use of capital equipment through the provision of computer services to other industries; adaptation of field and transport equipment for other uses; provision of maintenance and repair services to other industries. These are some of the recommendations. And what has happened? Computer services have been offered to other industries and other materials and produce is now being transported by the company.

No success has been achieved in providing repair and maintenance services for hire, the reason being that most of Caroni's equipment, is not very new and the time when that equipment is available for use by others, it falls to Caroni to have that equipment repaired and kept as up-to-date as possible, for when the crop calls. Because if that equipment is used, as per this recommendation, one may very well end up with those old beat-up equipment not being ready for the crops when the bell rings. So that aspect of the recommendation has not gone on.

With respect to diversification, we know that some things have happened and since 1985 certain things have been happening. If we look at this brochure which the company produced late last year, we would see some very pretty pictures, one of which I find particularly interesting is a crop of prawns on the cover. It is a direction. It is not a big economic activity. It is an indication where the company wants to go, however, having only spent \$28 million on its diversification programme, one could not go as heavy as one would have wanted to. So you see that there as one of the interesting things. You also see with respect to livestock, a

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very pretty picture of sheep. Caroni today has one of the larger flocks of sheep in the country. You see some very beautiful cattle. Caroni now has significant numbers of cattle under its control.

However, when one puts all of that together, what does it mean in terms of the overall problems? In terms of scale, Caroni is now into rice production—15 million pounds with a revenue of \$15.5 million. We now have just over 3,000 acres of citrus with a revenue—just beginning to bear—so the revenue is low, just over \$800,000. Buffalypso just over 1,000 heads earning a revenue of \$0.5 million. With respect to dairy, we have a number of 1,278.

If you look through the recommendation with respect to livestock, you would see that there was a recommendation to establish two to three hundred acres of cattle farms using locally developed feed mix and so. Some action was taken but it was not finalized. We need to go further in that direction. It says establish 15, 20—40 head dairy farms to be operated by farmers. We have gone some way in that direction though again not as systematic as we would have liked and the rate of growth—someone mentioned this morning, the Sugar-cane Feed Centre approach which was largely a demonstration to see if this thing can work. We have reached the stage for quite sometime and, yes, it can work. What is required is investment to put it to work on a major scale and to the extent that that investment has not been forthcoming, the company has not been able to accelerate into these directions.

We have one recommendation to convert Orange Grove into a crop rotation system producing tomatoes, legumes, onions, carrots, watermelons, sorrel and papaws. As the current Minister I have a problem with that recommendation because I believe that when one eventually comes up with a strategic plan for viable Caroni, that plan would not see Caroni as a supplier in competition with the small farmers of this country and it will not see Caroni as a supplier of fresh vegetables to the local market. Therefore, I have a difficulty with Caroni producing watermelons, papaws and tomatoes because Heaven knows, if Mr. Harry or Mr. John plants some papaws or tomatoes up the road, and he has to go to the market and compete with Caroni he would be in serious trouble. Unless that kind of production is for processing specifically or for export, I would have difficulty in supporting that recommendation.

We also have a number of other recommendations, one of which indicates a kind of joint venture approach which we did hear something of in the debate. I

was very pleased to hear it coming from Sen. Maharaj that he is not opposed to that kind of approach; it would bring some relief to the situation. Of course, there was a recommendation to have Caroni get involved in a large cane vinegar plant. I know there has been significant private sector investment in vinegar production. I do not know to what extent the scene has changed whereby Caroni can now continue to produce or set up a new vinegar plant, since the private sector has gone ahead and we have at least one very large continuous producing vinegar plant here in Trinidad.

In short what I was trying to say is that some things have been done; not enough has been done, something has to be done and that brings me to what we are going to do. In January when we were debating the budget—and I think it predated the placement of this motion, Sen. Prof. Spence might correct me on that—I focused on Caroni to a certain extent and gave certain assurances. This was in recognition of most of what was said by a number of Members. To the extent that I have tabled an amendment to Prof. Spence's motion, it ought not to be seen as seeking to, in any way, detract from the general substance of the motion, its importance or its timeliness. What I am seeking to do is to bring the motion into the current line of action.

Before I focus on that, let me tell you, in the light of what I said earlier on in respect of reorganising our industry, how it faces its competitors; its shareholders who have been propping it up with funds which we now do not have; how it shapes up with respect to the commitment the Government gave in its manifesto, recognizing its socio-economic importance and recognizing the need for some measure of agreement. I use the word “agreement” because I have difficulty with using the word consensus because on matters as prickly as this where there are so many different points of view, some reasonable, some not so reasonable, some emotional, some logical, I am not sure that the word he wants to use is consensus. What I am seeking to accomplish, which I think will satisfy Sen. Spence, is agreement on the action to be taken to deal with that economic problem which is Caroni. I do not believe that the Government is the repository of all wisdom. I also recognize that we do not need any further study on the Caroni situation.

**5.25 p.m.**

In this Senate today, we have two of the—shall I use the word *douens* and with no disrespect to Prof. Spence and Dr. St. Cyr, two other persons who have

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done work on the Caroni problem, doing analyses and presenting them. We have many others. What seems to have been missing all the time is not a report saying what we should do but an agreement on the “how” and I regard that as an absent action plan. So what we propose to do at this time, in fact, what we already have in train is seeking to find that action plan, which would have germinated some considerations as were raised by all the speakers, whether they were those of Sen. Mark who made reference to the need to look at what the gap may mean for us, the considerations of Sen. Capildeo who made reference to the historical and emotional link between the sugar worker and the product, and the Senator who spoke about the need to ensure that there is justice. I think it was Dr. St. Cyr who spoke about that kernel of justice in all of us.

We believe that if we put all of that together, not by the Government saying we are going to do this because we are the repository of all wisdom and we know all that is right and wrong, but by the Government recognizing that there are those with a very strong point of view, whose support can make the difference between success and failure of whatever plan you come up with. The Government and all the people of Trinidad and Tobago are responsible for the economics of this country in its macro scale and we are keeping to the commitment to consult before and while taking action on this very thorny and important issue on which we are taking action better late than never.

The Government thought that they would take the position of bringing to the table those who can bring to bear, their reason and expertise and that desire for success of Caroni. They gave the commitment that they would set up a tripartite committee made up of the Government, the workers' representatives and the cane farmers—three major elements involved in the sugar industry in Trinidad and Tobago: Government as landlord and bankroller; the representatives of almost 10,000 workers who are involved in the industry and the cane farmers who on their own produce cane for supply to the industry. That is basically the basket of Caroni, the sugar producer.

We have all the records and studies of the minds that went before, not only the 1978 Report. Subsequent to that, we had other reports. It was very interesting to sit here and listen to an Opposition Senator speak about discriminatory action by way of advancing alternatives in the 1978 Report. One of those discriminatory actions was, the famous Rampersad Report—I think it was—which was advanced in lieu of the 1978 Report. That was advanced in this Senate as PNM



discrimination. I wonder whether that was the same Mr. Rampersad who was recently blowing the trumpet about discrimination of a similar nature, when in fact he was accused in this Senate of advancing discriminatory practices against the Caroni sugar workers.

I draw that point just to show you how far down the river we can get washed, if we do not hold on to a plant on the bank. To come back to the tripartite approach, we decided to give the commitment that if we can bring these minds and interest groups together—we refer to them as the stakeholders, Government as trustee on behalf of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago—because we make the point that the problem of Caroni (1975) Limited is not the problem of county Caroni. They might be the ones most directly involved, but it is a problem for the nation as a whole to the extent that there are going to be solutions which must find favour with and acceptance by the national community. So, we bring them together.

Having given that commitment on January 6, 1992, today, April 28, 1992, I can tell you that the other arms of the tripartite have agreed to join the Government in this approach. We invited them to provide representatives and the cane farmers and the unions representing workers have agreed and we have our tripartite.

If you were following the news, you would have seen where they were inaugurated in the presence of the press. On behalf of all of us, I asked of them; I begged of them to let reason prevail. I give you the assurance that the tripartite was not meant to produce another study on Caroni; far from it. We do not need another study on Caroni and there shall not be another study on Caroni, if I have anything to do with it. However...

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

*Motion made,* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Hon. L. Saith*]

*Question proposed.*

**Hon. Rowley:** I wish to thank hon. Members.

The tripartite team is meeting. What are they meeting to do? They are meeting to bring together the main stakeholders to agree on a workable set of arrangements an agenda for action which will permit the implementation of the approved decisions. In short, to map out an action plan to which the Government has given a commitment before, that it would implement once it arises from these decisions.

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For those Members who spoke of the concerns, I want to mention their terms of reference. This approach is aimed at furthering the national interest in terms of agricultural development as well as addressing the special concerns of those directly involved in the industry and the company, for all are agreed that the fortunes of the sector are linked with those of the company. There is consensus too, that the company must be restructured and changes instituted to facilitate acceleration the diversification programme through a pipeline of bankable projects.

I wish to ask Members of the Independent and Opposition Benches to put what I just said in the context of the proposed amendment to the motion and they will see that I have not substantially changed the tenor of the motion. However, the amendment asks the Senate to take note of the tripartite arrangement which seeks to bring to the table an agreed action plan because that agreement is required so as to guarantee success?

Bearing in mind the mandate which I have just outlined, it would be superfluous to have the motion read as is, so I would just ask for that to be tidied up, so the motion would read very smoothly.

**5.35 p.m.**

Who make up the tripartite team? On the Government side, Government as custodian, trustee for the public. What I did not say is that prior to putting the tripartite team in place, we very carefully selected a very impressive board for Caroni (1975) Limited, headed by an ex-Senator, Dr. Kusha Harracksingh. He did serve in this Senate at one time. He is today the Chairman of Caroni (1975) Limited. charged with the responsibility of chairing this tripartite approach, and I have no doubt that he will do this Senate proud at the end of the day. Accompanying him are two members of the management of Caroni, the General Manager and the Financial Comptroller, for obvious reasons; then the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance; the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and Mr. Dennis Pantin, an Economist. I emphasize this. To get back to the point I started on, that we see this exercise and this pursuit as rooted in common sense economics.

I wish to thank the Members on the other side, particularly Sen. Teelucksingh, Sen. Daly, and Sen. Maharaj, who is not here today, who did recognize in their contributions the tripartite approach and who did indicate, if I understood them correctly, that they support the approach. I commend the approach to the other

Members. I think that we are at one with Sen. Spence that we need to have action on Caroni (1975) Limited, and I am sure that at the end of the day, when reason prevails, we will have an action plan which shall serve the needs of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly those whose future and fortunes are tied with Caroni (1975) Limited.

I do not want to say very much as I do not wish to prejudice the negotiations on the restructured Caroni (1975) Limited which are already under way. They have had a number of meetings, proposals are being put forward, ideas are going around; I want to say nothing here which will prejudge the situation. They are meeting, and I hope that at the end of the day I will be in a position to report to this Senate and the other place that progress has been made and we are on our way with respect to the creation of—and this is something that I will introduce on my own—I hope that one of the things that they will agree to is a more appropriate name for what we will end up with, so as to identify more closely with what the entity will be doing rather than just Caroni (1975) Limited. There is a point of view that Caroni (1975) Limited might be a problem because they might still be behaving as if it is 1975 when in fact we are on to the year 2000 and facing the GATT and similar agreements.

I think I have said enough on the Caroni issue to convince Members on the other side that we can support the amended motion without losing sight of what we are trying to do.

There were a few points made by Sen. Mahadeo which I would like to touch on. She mentioned Nonpareil. I want to give her the assurance that I am very much aware of what is happening. I went there myself. To the extent that a new board has been appointed, I am meeting with the new board tomorrow morning, hopefully. Also, I want to give the assurance that what is now Nonpareil, which is the Treasury farming 400 acres of cocoa—paying the wages out of the Treasury, paying a Managing Director who was appointed Chairman, who promoted himself to managing director and collects \$5,000 a month out of the Treasury, while the Treasury is paying the workers a daily wage. While they are farming 400 acres of cocoa the net income for the last year was \$15,000. I can assure you that is not farming and that this Government has no intention of pretending that it is so. There will be radical changes at Nonpareil, and in fact, Nonpareil is central to our recently stated initiatives on the expansion of the cocoa industry, and you will hear more on Nonpareil in the not too distant future.

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I do not have the time to go into several of the other points mentioned by Sen. Hydar Ali. He did speak of the better prospects for cane in the south as against cane in the north. These are technical things, which I can assure you are attracting the technical input of the tripartite negotiating team. At the end of the day I am pretty sure that the most logical and reasonable result will follow from there. Tons of cane per acre may also have to do with the variety of cane. There are certain varieties of cane that are bigger and heavier; they are not the best for sugar production. These are all technical things which will have to be assessed by the experts who are involved in it.

Somebody did mention that we should not export sugar, as one of the options. I wish to tell you that I do not think that option is a feasible economic one.

Earlier on in the debate a point was made that the price of sugar should be allowed to float to its natural high level. One has to understand the economics of that. Caroni (1975) Limited. has a monopoly in this country and I am sure that Sen. Mark, more than anybody else, understands the danger of a monopoly. To the extent that the price of sugar should be allowed to float to the highest possible level, there is no law which says that those who use sugar in this country must buy your sugar at the price at which you put it. In fact, we already have a situation where, in order to encourage them to buy and use Caroni sugar the Government has to provide substantial cash rebates to these users, who, for reasons of their own business to which they are beholden to their own shareholders, can very easily find substitutes for our locally produced sugar. And that is the last thing we want.

These are some of the considerations that I have the time to touch on. If I have not touched on some of the points raised individually, please do not take it as a lack of consideration for the importance of the points. It is because of a lack of time, as regards your own Standing Orders, but I should be very glad to talk to any Senator who wishes to know more about what we are doing with Caroni (1975) Limited and the sector in general.

I thank you for your support.

I beg to move that the motion be amended as follows:

- (1) Substitute for the words "urge the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to proceed expeditiously with" the words, "take note of the composition and mandate of the government-appointed Tripartite Team which is currently engaged in deliberations aimed at formulating an action plan for the";

- (2) Delete all the words occurring after the word "industry" appearing in line three thereof.

*Seconded by Dr. Lenny Saith.*

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. President:** The amendment has been proposed. Those who have not yet spoken and wish to speak may do so before Sen. Spence replies. If there are others who have spoken and believe that there is something more they would like to say, a little consideration will be given.

**5.45 p.m.**

**Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh:** Mr. President, I have a problem. It is that I did not read this to be an amendment. Somehow or the other, I have a feeling that this is a new motion. It has the disguise of a new motion and therefore it is not properly before this Senate.

**Mr. President:** An amendment has been proposed. It has been seconded. The Chair has accepted the amendment and it is proposed for debate. Those who wish to speak on the amendment may do so now. Do you wish to speak on the amendment?

**Sen. Teelucksingh:** Yes, Sir. I am enlightened and feel very optimistic after so many days of listening to learned and experienced persons share their expertise with us. We have discussed this topic almost exhaustively and so many excellent proposals have been enunciated. For me, this exercise has been illuminating, Mr. President. I believe we have had our own symposium within the last few days on sugar and agriculture. As I said earlier on, I have my doubts about this amendment. We have to accept that it is valid, but I am certainly disappointed with its intent. Somehow or the other, it undermines the seriousness and urgency with which the sugar industry should be considered as enshrined in the substantive motion. This was my problem initially when this amendment was circulated just before the tea break.

All of us are very happy with the hon. Minister for his update on the tripartite team. But I wish this amendment did not come to the Senate. I feel it was not even necessary. I wish it would have been withdrawn. There is still time to withdraw it. I thank you very much.

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Senator opposing the idea of an amendment, or the substance of (1) or (2)? I need to be clear on that.

**Sen. Teelucksingh:** When I saw the amendment, I felt disappointed in that I really did not see the need for it. The substantive motion proposed by Prof. Spence, which we have been discussing all along, I thought was enough. What could have happened, instead, is for this House to have received this generous report by the hon. Minister. In fact, we have been following the progress of the Government with so much interest I am really happy about their efforts.

Mr. President, instead of deletions, as proposed in the amendment by the hon. Minister, his amendment could be added instead of deleting any section in the original motion. I would have gone along with that.

**Mr. President:** Any Senator is free to move an amendment to a motion or an amendment to an amendment. Just follow the rules; submit it in writing and it will be proposed.

**Sen. Martin Daly:** Mr. President, I recognize the lateness of the hour and like Sen. Teelucksingh I recognize that the Minister has a strong commitment to action on this matter. But I cannot do anything other than oppose this amendment, and I should like to explain briefly why. This amendment really does nothing to support the idea that action is required—that we do not need another report on Caroni and so on.

My difficulty with this amendment and the reason I oppose it is twofold: First of all, I think it is a bad practice. That is my respectful suggestion. I think it is a bad practice when there seems to be broad agreement among everyone about the problem to spring an amendment on us at this late time. Because it does not permit for any kind of—I believe it is called behind-the-Chair—it does not permit for those kinds of discussions. But more fundamentally, the reason I oppose it is that in the way—

**Dr. Rowley:** Just to enlighten the hon. Member; it did permit for behind-the-Chair discussions and I did have some of those. Thank you.

**Sen. Spence:** Mr. President, I think it is necessary for me to comment on that. The Minister did show me his motion, but it had already been submitted for circulation. I did not have my spectacles with me, so I could not read it. He read it out to me, but I really was not in a position to comment and as it had already been submitted for circulation there was nothing that could be done at that stage to alter it.

**Mr. President:** It would seem to me that we shall not achieve too much more this afternoon by discussing the pros and cons of the amendment.

I think Sen. Daly summed it up quite well, as I was about to suggest. Probably there should be some behind-the-Chair discussion. Both sides might wish to discuss the proposed amendment before we have any more contributions and before we hear the reply from Sen. Spence so that when it comes to the vote, Members will be quite firm in their minds as to what the issue is. I do not know; it is only a suggestion.

**Sen. Dr. Saith:** Mr. President, taking your advice, I would suggest that we adjourn for five minutes. I am sure that we could come up with an acceptable amendment.

**5.50 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**6.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Hon. K. Rowley:** Mr. President, I wish to thank hon. Members on the other side for their co-operation on this bit of parliamentary drafting. Mr. President, I seek leave of the Senate to withdraw the original amendment.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, the question is that the original amendment proposed by Minister Rowley and seconded by Minister Saith be withdrawn.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Amendment withdrawn.*

**Hon. Rowley:** Mr. President, thank you very much. I beg to move an amendment to the motion by inserting in paragraph 2 after the word 'House', the following words: "take note of the composition and mandate of the Government-appointed tripartite team which is currently engaged in deliberations aimed at formulating an action plan" and to come just before the word "urge". So that is an insertion between the words "house" and "urge".

*Seconded by Sen. Teelucksingh.*

*Question proposed.*

*Adjournment*

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith):** Mr. President, after discussions with my colleagues on the other side and an indication from Sen. Spence that he would need a fairly substantial period for his reply, we have agreed that we should take the adjournment at this time.

I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, May 5, 1992 at 1.30 p.m.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.05 p.m.*