

Senator's Appointment

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

SENATE

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have been advised that His Excellency the President has appointed Dr. Eric Baldwin Anderson St. Cyr to be a temporary Senator with effect from November 15, 1993 and continuing during the absence of Sen. Michael Mansoor.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sen. Dr. Eric St. Cyr took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave to Sen. Michael Mansoor, to be absent from sittings of the Senate during the period November 13 to November 17, as he will be out of the country.

I have also granted leave to the following Senators to be absent from today's sitting: Sen. Salisha Baksh, Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt and Sen. Brian Kuei Tung. Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt and Sen. Kuei Tung are unwell.

The following Senators have indicated that they will be a little late for today's sitting: Sen. Martin Daly, Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh and Pundit Ramcharan Gosine.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the St. Patrick County Council for the year ended December 31, 1988 [*The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Lenny Saith)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the St. Patrick County Council for the year ended December 31, 1989. [*Hon. L. Saith*]
3. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the St. Patrick County Council for the year ended December 31, 1990. [*Hon. L. Saith*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Television Advertisement

Sen. John Rooks asked the Minister of Information:

7. a. Is the Hon. Minister aware that over the last two months there has been an advertisement on all three television stations being displayed several times per day, of the Prime Minister asking the population to "go down the road with him?"
- b. Is the Minister further aware that in local parlance this means that the country is going down and we should expect more difficult times ahead.
- c. Will the Minister please advise of the cost to date for these advertisements and who is paying this?

The Minister of Information (Sen. The Hon. Gordon Draper): Mr. President, the answer to part (a) is, yes, the hon. Minister is aware.

Part (b), the Minister is not aware that in local parlance the expression "Let's go down the road together", means that the country is going down and we should expect more difficult times ahead.

In local parlance, the expression "Let's go down the road together" is intended to convey a sense of community and camaraderie and shared experiences in working towards achieving a common objective.

It is in fact an exhortation to the national community that we all work together in the face of difficult and challenging circumstances to achieve a brighter tomorrow.

The answer to part (c)—the cost of this advertisement, to date, is \$397,722.32, and this is being borne by the Government.

Sen. Rooks: Mr. President, the hon. Minister has not answered who is paying for this.

Sen. The Hon. G. Draper: I said it is being borne by the Government.

Sen. Rooks: I certainly did not take that to be a governmental advertisement. Nowhere in the advertisement did I hear anything about the Government.

Mr. President: You cannot make a statement, Senator. If you need further information you can put it in the form of a question.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, could the hon. Minister indicate to the Senate what is the total sum allocated to this particular advertisement for 1993 and whether the Government intends to pursue this advertisement in 1994?

Sen. Draper: Mr. President, the Government's plan for its communication in 1994 is currently being worked and therefore I cannot answer that question.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, would the hon. Minister indicate to us what is the total sum allocated for 1993, insofar as this particular advertisement is concerned?

Sen. Draper: Mr. President, communication and information is a dynamic thing. There are a number of weeks before the end of 1993, the Government is always reassessing its communication needs and therefore I am unable to answer that question.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Prof. John Spence:

**Faculty of Agriculture
(Handing over of Land)**

8. Would the Hon. Minister of Planning and Development state when will the land that has been promised to the Faculty of Agriculture, University of the West Indies, to replace the Faculty Field Station land acquired for the building of the Mount Hope Medical Complex, be handed over to the University?

**Faculty of Agriculture
(Trinity Entrance Approval)**

9. Would the Hon. Minister of Works and Transport state whether approval has been given for an entrance to be made from the Trinity traffic lights to the land that has been promised to the Faculty of Agriculture, University of the West Indies to replace the Faculty Field Station acquired for the building of the Mount Hope Medical Complex?

The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith): Mr. President, I have had discussions with Sen. Spence and he has agreed to defer the questions for one week.

Mr. President: Is that the wish of the Senate?

Assent indicated.

Questions, by leave, deferred.

1.40 p.m.**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith): Mr President, I wish to seek leave of the Senate to proceed with Bill No. 1 listed under "Bills Second Reading".

*Leave granted.***SPORT AND CULTURE FUND (AMDT.) BILL***Order for second reading read.*

The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Hon. Jean Pierre): Mr. President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to amend the Sport and Culture Fund Act, Chap. 31 of 1988 be read a second time.

I consider it an esteemed honour to be afforded the privilege of addressing hon. Senators for the first time today on a matter of the amendment of the Sport and Culture Fund Act and, in particular, the need to change the management sector of the Fund.

I would like to wish hon. Senators great success in all their deliberations of the Senate and God's guidance upon every decision made in this august body.

The Sport and Culture Fund, Act No. 31 of 1988, provided for the establishment of a Sport and Culture Fund. It was administered by a board which was responsible for advising the then Minister of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts on the general administration and management of the affairs of the Fund.

The purpose of this Bill is—

- (1) to facilitate the provision of sporting and cultural activities;
- (2) to enable grants and loans to be made to deserving individuals, groups and organizations according to the criteria described by the board;
- (3) to undertake any activity related to sport and culture; and
- (4) to undertake and do all such things that are conducive to the attainment of the Fund.

Mr. President, as a result of the reorganization of the structure for managing the portfolios of Sport and Culture in 1992, it became necessary to address the issue of ministerial responsibility for the fund. Now that the affairs of sport and culture are being administered under separate ministries, this Bill to amend Act No. 31 of 1988 seeks to designate the responsibility to a single authority and to redesignate a new committee structure to manage the affairs of the Fund.

The functions previously exercised by the former Minister of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts in the administration of the Sports and Culture Fund are now to be performed under the Office of the Prime Minister. In keeping with activities and practices that are characteristic of the nation as a whole, or any component group thereof, the term culture has been redefined to include as one of its sources, the heritage of the nation.

In the proposed amendment, the board of the Fund will be reconstituted to have one representative each from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs. This is to ensure that the interests of both sport and culture will continue to be served.

Representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as the Ministry with responsibility for finance, will also be present on the board. In addition, two persons who have made significant contributions to activities related to sport and culture will be nominated.

The reconstituted board of the Fund is in keeping with the state's policy to be a facilitator for sport and culture activities in Trinidad and Tobago. It is felt that the proposed group of board members who will be selected to determine the use to which the resources of the Fund will be put, will do so in the best interest of the country as a whole.

The very nature of the Fund speaks of its importance in nation building, as sport and culture seem to be pivotal in the growth and development of character and personality. It also contributes significantly to interpersonal relationships and social interaction. Sport and culture is one sure way of bringing people together and bridging communities. A good example is the Prime Minister's Best Village Competition.

The Fund has assisted in facilitating the provision of sporting and cultural activities. Grants and loans have been made to deserving individuals, groups and organizations such as:

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. PIERRE]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

The Secondary Schools Cricket Council for its coaching programmes;
Trinidad and Tobago Golf Association for introducing golf into schools;
Trinidad and Tobago Special Olympics for participation in international events;
National Basketball Federation of Trinidad and Tobago;
Nriyanjali Dance Theatre for its ballet production.

The Sport and Culture Fund provides the opportunity for the Government to support the efforts of community-based non-governmental organizations which can use the assistance to develop sport and cultural programmes that can address the social, health, environmental and cultural issues. There are many fine examples of cultural and sporting groups which use culture and sport as an integral component of their community-driven projects.

I, too, had some concerns on the delay in presenting this amendment, but today it is here and I ask that you give it your full support.

Mr. President, I would also like at this time to alleviate the fears of the sporting and culture-loving public on the question of the money in the Sport and Culture Fund. I want to assure them that, notwithstanding the numerous rumours about the status of the Fund, all monies collected for this Fund are still set aside for the purpose for which they were intended.

The passage of this Bill will further the advancement of sport and culture in Trinidad and Tobago and put the present available resources to work for the enhancement of sport and culture. I, therefore, ask that Senators give this Bill their wholehearted support. As I close, let me refer to an excerpt from our manifesto, at page 36, which brings into focus the Government's concern for the development of sport, and I quote:

"Encourage the nation as a whole to view sport as an essential aspect of our all-round development and as an avenue for the development of a disciplined, healthy nation."

Mr. President, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Sen. Roi Kwabene: Hon. Senators, before I commence this debate permit me, please, to welcome the Hon. Minister to this Chamber and let me assure her that,

despite the fact that we are going to be dealing with the facts of the matter, it is not personal. Please do not take it personally. Honestly!

To begin with, there are four purposes for this Bill:

- (1) to reconstitute the Board of Management of the Fund;
- (2) to change the tenure of office of the Board;
- (3) to designate the honourable Prime Minister, or minister approved by the same, responsible to carry out the functions;
- (4) to include heritage in a definition of culture.

Mr. President, to give consideration to this Bill, first of all, we must look into the background and history of such legislation. Taking into consideration that this legislation was not proclaimed under the current regime, one wonders why the PNM Government has seen it necessary to reconstitute the board, among other things, at this time. But we will get into that a little later.

1.50 p.m.

This Fund was first established in 1988 and it became operational on March 7, 1989. Section 4 of the Act stipulates that:

"The purposes of the Fund are—

- (a) to facilitate the provision of sporting and cultural facilities;
- (b) to enable grants and loans to be made to deserving individuals, groups and organisations according to criteria prescribed by the Board;"

Mr. President, an overview of the resources of this Fund would reveal that the resources are usually taken from the Instant Lottery surplus—we have evidence of this being done in 1989 and 1990—loans, interest on loans made by the Board as well as investments, in addition to any sums appropriated by Parliament.

In 1988, there were three instalments to this Fund which were received in 1989. This amounted to \$2,567,752.65. The 1989 surplus—five instalments in all—was \$519,558.28. There was also an inclusion of unclaimed prize money from the Lotteries Board amounting to \$15,300; from the Instant Lottery in 1990 they got \$3,135,494.61 and interest on surplus at the Central Bank in 1990 amounted to \$51,935.36. There was also interest accrued on fixed deposits to the tune of \$84,217.

Several issues arise here. I am questioning several things. One, it appears that every time we get a new government or regime in this country, they go about putting the house in their own order. One of the things I do not agree with as a cultural activist in Trinidad and Tobago, is the way they put together sport with culture. The two do not go together. It is an argument that I have been carrying on for a long time in Trinidad and Tobago. For some strange reason, culture always suffers because of sport in this country.

Taking into consideration, one, for many years Trinidad and Tobago has seen and recognized the need to establish a national theatre. We do not have a national theatre in Trinidad and Tobago despite 36 or 37 years of independent government. However, we do have a huge complex to the west of us named after the hon. Minister, among others, and, I will be honest with you, the only sad thing about it is that again, at the expense of sport, you put culture. Here it is, there are occasions that arise where you have cultural activities being conducted at sporting facilities and they do not go together.

How can I expect to enjoy myself on a racing track? We are talking about a field, a racing track, for athletes. How is it possible for us to put the two together, I do not understand.

As I was referring to earlier, this thing about whoever gets into power going into Parliament and re-establishing new titles for ministries. This is a very serious problem that needs to be looked into. If we were to take into consideration what happens in Trinidad and Tobago at this juncture.

For instance, recently we had the opportunity to stage Carifesta. We have also had the opportunity to host many sporting events of international nature. Again, we are confronted with a very difficult situation, the separation of sport and culture. How women's affairs got mixed up in it, I do not know. How community development got mixed up in it, I do not know. But if it was left to me and, I mean, I am not the sole authority, I would ensure—

Sen. Ojah-Maharaj: Not the UNC?

Sen. R. Kwabene: I am speaking for myself here, Sir—that sport would be represented individually. Women's affairs is too large an issue to lump it with community development. Perhaps culture and community development but not women's affairs and community development. Something needs to be done in that area.

Mr. President, the issue of young people is an issue that needs to be looked into. Last week, we went into detail and we dealt with the Children (Amdt.) Bill. What has happened? What is happening with young people in this country? What do we intend to do with sport and culture with regard to this Fund? Are we going to divide the Fund in two? Are we going to put the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs in charge of this Fund? Is the designated Minister going to be the hon. Minister for Sport and Youth Affairs? We want to know and we do not want sport to be benefiting at the expense of culture, nor culture to be benefiting at the expense of sport. Perhaps a separate ministry as I suggested.

Another point—why the Prime Minister? Why burden the Prime Minister with all these duties? There is a Cabinet. There are hon. Members of this Senate who may not be ministers who can well be appointed ministers.

Sen. Capildeo: Yes. Deodath is one of them.

Sen. R. Kwabene: I mean, give him another responsibility.

Sen. Merritt: What is that? Information?

Sen. R. Kwabene: Whatever. There is another issue. It was not specified, as I indicated earlier, whether it would be the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs or the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs to be that designated person, or perhaps another.

Then we get into the whole argument about national awards. You know why that argument concerns this issue? Because the Prime Minister is also responsible for the allocation of those national awards. This is an issue that cannot be seen in isolation. One also has to take into consideration that national awards have a lot to do with our heritage and culture as a people, so they cannot be seen in isolation. Therefore, it will always be a source of debate.

Now, I do not want to pat my back here, but a year ago, I told this Senate something and nobody listened. They went ahead and spent all the money to set up a unit at the University of the West Indies to deal with the issue of race in this country. We told them all along equal opportunity for all, regardless. I would show you how it ties in.

It ties in because there are people who are recipients of national awards in this country, who have gotten awards at the expense of others and there was no equality. None at all! I am not saying that, perhaps, the recipients did not deserve

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. KWABENE]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

the awards, but there were many other people who were left out. In fact, I have spoken to three such persons and one of them made a tremendous contribution to the Red Cross Society in this country. The Red Cross Society is an institution that has a lot to do with our heritage.

Mr. President, moving away from the issue of national awards, we shall question now the composition of the Board. Who are those people to be appointed? What is the rationale behind the appointment for three years? What powers would be conveyed to the Authority? What criteria would be utilized to decide which body, which cultural organisation, which individual, would benefit from this Fund? I trust, I hope and I pray, but I know as I speak the rain will still fall.

In this country a lot of injustice is done and it is quite possible that this Fund could be utilized for political patronage. This is an issue that needs to be addressed. I am of the opinion that if it is left to the responsibility of the Prime Minister, we are going to have very serious problems taking into consideration, of course, the big promise of the big party in 1995.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. President, political mileage is a very serious charge, but there are writers and artistes in this country who have been suffering for many years, who have not been beneficiaries of this Fund, who might have been alive today and be beneficiaries if it had not been left so long in abeyance. The geographical location of the beneficiaries is another issue we have to look at. We are thinking about, "national" which should include places like Erin and Cedros and not only Diego Martin, Tacarigua or wherever.

The definition of Culture: It appears that finally the PNM Government has come around to the understanding that heritage is part of culture. I am willing to give Dr. Lenny Saith the benefit of the doubt that because he is in the Ministry of Planning and Development that they have recognized that even though they have the university, even though they are in charge of conservation, heritage will have to come in. That is all well and good. According to the definition of "culture" as it would read, it states:

"Activities and practices that are characteristic of the nation as a whole, or any component group thereof, arising out of its customs, heritage, lifestyle, beliefs and values and includes activities related to the visual, performing and literary arts."

I choose to repeat at this time that art is very important in our society. Our writers and artistes hold up mirrors before our very eyes so that we may see a true personification of who we are in our beloved land. I speak of our calypsonians, our craftsmen, the very craftsmen who are on the run in Port of Spain today because they are unable to carry out their trade. Why? Because no facilities were provided for them and the artistes in this country.

Culture is very important. It is the habits, skills, instruments, institutions of a given people at a given time, and yet after 37 years it remains in neglect. There were promises of a museum. How many years now have we been hearing about this museum? They are waiting until I am an old age pensioner before they establish a national museum and performing arts centre in this country to satisfy the young people.

Hon. Senator: What about the library?

Sen. R. Kwabene: When I talk about the library I will talk about illiteracy. It appears that the PNM has finally come around to the understanding that we are no longer 100 per cent literate in Trinidad and Tobago. They suggested that over the years, but you and I know that many people have failed by this educational system, not because of functional literacy, but because of the class and where they originate—as far as their residency. Because, as you are well aware, 11-plus is tied up in this.

The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago Act, 1991, would it ever be proclaimed? I have had the opportunity quite recently to travel through the centre of our beautiful land, and to my amazement there are many historical sites that just remain there for people to interfere with. There is no protection, no conservation whatsoever. What is the conservation corps doing, if it is not protecting our historical sites? Perhaps it is only thinking about the environment. But the preservation of our buildings and artifacts is of utmost importance if we are seriously thinking about the development of any social order in Trinidad and Tobago.

We have no national theatre, only promises, promises, promises; no national museum; no appropriate facilities to house our books. There is talk around about a national heritage library. Promises have been made in this House concerning what they are going to do, at the expense, again, of artistes, in the old Fire Brigade Station. Artifacts were dug up just across on Sackville Street. There is a building there right now which needs protecting, next door to the new police headquarters.

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. KWABENE]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

What are we doing? Where is our sense of direction when cultural policies are overlooked and other policies, without a face, are pursued with such grit? It appears that these people are just willing to sell out everything. I cannot imagine what they are thinking about for tomorrow.

The human resource, our young people; I will leave one of my colleagues to speak about the whole area of sports. But you see, culture is very dear, and a people without roots cannot survive. So we must protect our heritage. But the question remains: How are we going to deal with this fund; how are we going to administrate this fund? Are we going to divide it in two, half for sport, half for culture? What are we going to do in the Ministry of Women's Affairs? Do we have any female personnel there working at a high level, other than the Minister, who is seeing about women's affairs? What about the issue of heritage? Are we training our young people? Are we educating them at the institutions with regard to their national heritage? Here it is, in Trinidad and Tobago, I can switch on the television and tell you the climate in Detroit; I can tell you what is happening in Washington, but I do not know what is happening in Lopinot or Scarborough. We have our priorities mixed up and we have to address that, not tomorrow, but today, before it is too late.

As was mentioned earlier by the hon. Minister, \$396,000-plus was spent on an advertisement about "going down the road." That money could have been utilized to feed a few hungry people, and I am quite sure they would have gone over the hill, what remains of Naparima Hill, again, another site of historical importance. What are we doing in this country? Sometimes it makes us feel so helpless on this side, that even though we contribute to the debate, at the end of the day, the "ayes" have it.

The Hon. Minister spoke with such eloquence today. She spoke of the august Chamber. I know that she is not insulting us, and she expects the best, because she of herself happens to be an exponent of sport and I am quite sure she can give you a testimony to bring tears to your eyes with regard to her development as an athlete in this country. What are we doing to change that?

We do not want to see sport at the expense of culture or vice versa. We want to see an important role being played by the human resource in this country in protecting our national heritage. The best way for that to happen is if the hon. Minister responsible would ensure that the Trinidad and Tobago National Trust Act of 1991 is proclaimed so that we can go ahead and get the job done.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Hydar Ali: Mr. President, before I start, I would like to welcome the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs to this Senate today and thank her for her presentation.

One of the purposes of the Sport and Culture Fund, as enunciated in section 4 of the Act is to "facilitate the provision of sporting and cultural facilities."

While I am aware of the limitation of the term "facilitate" used in the Act, the board of management of this Fund should attach greater emphasis to this area. It is well known that there is a dearth of sporting facilities in Trinidad and Tobago. Certain types of sports are non-existent. We can play cricket and football under primitive conditions and even excel at these. We can manage at basketball if there is a well-placed lamp-post to put up a ring. But what about other sports? Where are the public tennis courts? If it is not possible to provide an adequate number of courts throughout the country, I suggest that the secondary schools' courts be made available to the public, provided some level of security can be assured.

2.10 p.m.

The board should look at the grave situation with respect to swimming. Although we have top-class swimmers, the state provides no pools, either for them or for the average citizens. These are just two examples of deficiencies in sporting facilities. If one was making a comprehensive statement on sport, the list would be quite long.

A society must recognize the role sport and leisure play in its development. I am pleased to say that the Minister agrees with me, based on her presentation of this Bill here this afternoon. We are not talking about facilities for the professional or for those involved in sport competitively, but for recreational purposes. It should be the policy of any government to provide and maintain playing fields in villages and towns. I live in the Phoenix Park/Savonnetta/Windsor Park area, where there are no playing fields, not to mention more sophisticated facilities. There are no tennis courts or swimming pools either. There is a piece of land next to the Phoenix Park Government School which is woefully inadequate in terms of size and condition.

I am not very optimistic that my suggestions would be heeded. The financial statements for the first two years of operation of the Sport and Culture Fund revealed that most of the allocations were for the purpose of sending teams abroad and little, if any, for local facilities.

While we are looking at the financial reports it is clear that in 1989 most of the fund for sport was used in our preparation for the World Cup qualifying series for the Central American, USA and Caribbean countries. To be more precise, \$300,000 went to the Trinidad and Tobago World Cup Organizing Committee for Football, and \$454,006.22 to the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts for the importation of screens for the November 19 football match. These amounts represented approximately 69 per cent of the allocations for sport in 1989.

I hope hon. Senators would pardon my re-opening this sad chapter in our sporting lives, but it does provide us with the opportunity to ask several questions, some of which are: What has happened to the Commission of Inquiry into the November 19, 1989 fiasco? And, what has happened to the screens that were imported to cater for any anticipated overcrowding at the stadium?

I understand that the commission has not met for over one year, and I heard a key figure in that matter say over the radio that he wanted to tell his side of the story, possibly, to clear the air and his name. I am sure every citizen is praying that he be given that opportunity to do so. It is hoped that this debate would serve to resurrect that commission.

Mr. President, there is a wider issue at stake. This concerns the use or misuse of the stadium, and I think, in some ways, Sen. Kwabene mentioned this. It appears that non-sporting events dominate activities at the stadium to the detriment of the field. In some cases, sport events take second place, and fairly recently, because of a prior booking, a major sporting event could not take place there.

If the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs agrees with me that the stadium is not being used exclusively for the purpose for which it was built, as a mark of protest, she could ask that her name be removed from the part of the complex that was named after her. There was an example of that recently where Mr. Harold La Borde has asked that his name be taken off the methanol tanker because it was alleged to be transporting cocaine in addition to its usual cargo.

My final comments are with respect to the 1989/1990 reports, in particular, the comments made by the Auditor General. In 1989, the Auditor General made reference to a loan of \$4,250 to the parent ministry and commented that this was very strange; apparently this should not have happened as it was not within the ambit of the fund. Also, with respect to the 1990 report, the Auditor General made

the comment that the terms and conditions of loans totalling \$168,262 were not ascertained. I would hope that when this Bill is passed—and I hope it would be passed—these issues would be rectified in the future.

I also agree with Sen. Roi Kwabene that there ought to be separate funds; not necessarily for sport and culture only, I feel there should be a separate fund for sports and the others can fight up for other funds. It is clear if one looks at the allocations for 1989, which was just part of the year—and the year in which we had football massive about 67 per cent of the funds were allocated to sport; that being dominated, of course, by \$0.75 million for football.

Mr. President, from the 1989/1990 reports it appears that most of the money goes into supporting teams on their visits abroad for various events. I do not know what criteria are used, but I realized that the last time we sent a relay team to the World Games, one of our best relay men was left back because there were not sufficient funds. I think situations like that should be corrected; I cannot see us sending a relay team with three good men and the other man has to find his own way there.

It seems as though this board was constituted in 1989 with a three-year term. I am just wondering and, perhaps, the Minister could answer when she replies, whether there is, in fact, a new board there now. I imagine not.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Sen. Muntaz Hosein: Mr. President, the Government's record on sport and culture in Trinidad and Tobago is dismal, barren, lopsided, rudderless and doomed to crash on the rocks of ignorance and inaction.

It appears to me that the Minister, as charming as she is, made her remarks very short. It has nothing to do with her ability to speak for a longer period, it is simply because the record of the Government is so dismal that there is very little for her to say, and we can understand that. It is time that the Government re-order its national priorities. I am very pleased that this debate comes before us on the heels of the next budget. Perhaps, what we have to say today might reach the ears of the Minister of Finance, and he can make redress for all of the problems which we have been saddled with throughout the life of this Government and the one before.

The background and importance of sport and culture in Trinidad and Tobago has never been appreciated by the Government. If the Government appreciated it,

then, perhaps, it would have done something tangible, but I could only conclude that it does not appreciate the importance. If one examines, one would see that lip-service is paid about the future.

One would remember the former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the hon. Dr. Eric Williams, talking about the future of the country being in the schoolbag of children. Well, in that schoolbag, perhaps, there were no books on sport and culture. But we believe that the future of Trinidad and Tobago is firmly in the hands of the young people of Trinidad and Tobago. I am sure that Senators opposite—because they have been making these kinds of speeches all over Trinidad and Tobago—also believe that the future belongs to the youths.

2.20 p.m.

If one looks at statistics, one would see that for the second quarter of 1993 there were 13,800 unemployed in the age group 15 to 19 years, representing approximately 41 per cent of that bracket. In the age group 20 to 24 years, there were 19,500 unemployed representing 26.8 per cent of the labour force of that group. In the age group 25 to 29 years, there were 20,500 unemployed representing 25.1 per cent of the labour force of that group, giving a grand total of 53,800 young people unemployed.

Mr. President, it is even more important today because of unemployment, poverty, the incidence of crime, drug and alcohol abuse, that we should be giving higher priority to sport and culture to keep our youth occupied in healthy endeavours. The Prime Minister should give attention to a separate ministry—and I support my colleague—for sport and a separate ministry for culture, and, more importantly, to support them with a greater percentage of the budget allocation. It is important to have specialists handle each area.

If we are saying we recognize the importance of young people and we recognize that they are unemployed and we recognize that they are involved in all sorts of illegal activities including cocaine, marijuana and alcohol, we should see the importance of concentrating on sport on the one hand and having another ministry to concentrate on culture on the other hand. Because, together, we can find answers for the problems of the young people.

Let us examine clause 4 of the Bill. It says that the purpose of the Fund enshrined in section 4 of the Act includes the following:

- (a) to facilitate the provision of sporting and cultural facilities;
- (b) to enable grants and loans to be made to deserving individuals, groups and organizations according to criteria prescribed by the Board.

Mr. President, if you examine how the money in this Fund was spent you would see from the first item, "(a), to facilitate the provision of sporting and cultural facilities" that little or nothing was done in that area at all. So one would see that this Fund is not living up to its aims and objectives. When one looks at the funds allocated you would realize that it does not have very far to go.

Clause 4 amends section 9 of the Act by changing the board of management of the Fund which will now comprise seven members, two persons "who have contributed significantly in activities related to Sport and Culture", would be nominated by the Minister. The question which arises here is: What constitutes "contributed significantly"? How will the Minister determine or select these persons? Will these persons understand the diversity of our cultural heritage? Because, the board before this one did not seem to understand that. So I ask the question: Will the new board understand it? Can they understand any other culture other than steelband and calypso? Can they understand, for example, Middle Eastern culture? Will they be able to understand Chinese culture? Will they be able to understand East Indian culture? Will they be able to distinguish between a *Thumrie* and a *Dhurpat*? Will they be able to distinguish between a *Thylena*, *Gazal* or a *Kawari*? These are foreign names to many of the people who now are the exponents of culture in Trinidad and Tobago. Will they be able to distinguish between a *Katack* dance and a "chutney" dance?

Mr. President, these are some of the questions that we would want answered because, when we look at the performance of the people who handle the funds for culture in Trinidad and Tobago, we will see that they did not understand anything we are talking about. I prefer to use the phrase "that they did not understand." I would not want to use any other. I want to give them the benefit of the doubt that they did not understand.

Let me just explain to this honourable Senate how the money was spent in 1989: Trinidad and Tobago World Cup Organizing Committee—\$300,000.00; National Basketball Federation—\$60,000.00; Trinidad and Tobago Table Tennis Association—\$5,628.00; National Amateur Athletic Association—\$19,799.00; Trinidad and Tobago Amateur Swimming Association—\$4,888.00; Trinidad and Tobago Contract Bridge League—\$4,500.00; Trinidad and Tobago Women's

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. HOSEIN]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

Cricket Board of Control—\$9,300.00; Trinidad and Tobago Squash Racket Association—\$2,800.00; Carifesta Organizing Committee—\$27,824.00; Trinidad and Tobago Hockey Association—\$31,000.00; Trinidad and Tobago Golf Association—\$15,000.00; Trinidad and Tobago Lawn Tennis Association—\$7,490.00; Trinidad and Tobago Hockey Federation—\$19,570.00; Trinidad and Tobago Bodybuilders' Federation—\$12,000.00

Let me pause here. Mr. President, you will recall I brought to this Senate the plight of one of our bodybuilders who had to represent our country in Los Angeles and he had no money to do so. I made a plea on his behalf and the plea fell on deaf ears. He still had to scramble and scrape to get himself to the tournament to compete.

2.30 p.m.

I continue: Trinidad and Tobago Cycling Federation—\$13,500.00; Trinidad and Tobago Amateur Boxing Association—\$8,000.00; Trinidad and Tobago Rugby Football Union—\$10,000.00; Lancelot Layne Video Production in support of Trinidad and Tobago team for the World Cup Games in Football—\$13,150.00; the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts—importation of screens for the November 19, football match—\$454,606.00; Carifesta National Museum and Art Gallery—\$44,000.00; Witco Desparadoes—\$543,539.00; Fyzabad Improvement Committee—\$6,000.00.

Spree Simon Community Development Committee—\$1,000; Arts Committee of Tobago—\$4,600; Queens Hall (Upgrading of electrical system)—\$142,000; Ministry of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts Trinidad and Tobago/Barbados Cultural tour for the disabled—\$65,000; Extra Mural Studies Department Payment of partial scholarships in the arts to members of cultural organizations—\$7,420; Penal Rock Road Hindu Group—\$1,134; Carifesta V Committee—\$182,341; Embeyo Bahabba—\$425; Hadyn Forde—\$10,187.

I read this out so that you would appreciate what is happening here. The fund has been spent mainly on sport; very little on culture. The pattern is about the same when you go to the back. You would see that culture, in the eyes of this committee meant a particular type of culture.

If you go to 1990, I would not call out all of it, but again, the pattern is the same. It is too heavily weighted in favour of sport, little or nothing for cultural diversity of Trinidad and Tobago. I see nothing here for the Syrian/Lebanese community; for the Chinese community and last but not least, very little for the East Indian Culture. My friend, Sen. Kwabene reminds me that there is nothing for African culture too. I am sorry I omitted that.

I really did not think that I would have the cause to come in 1993 to show this Government the blatant disregard for the culture of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. You can go on and on. We can see as we go along what is the priority item and one must ask why. Why is the priority and emphasis being placed only in one area? If you observe, money was spent for different sports, but it is all for some tour here and there; nothing at all for the upgrading of the facilities and the provision of further facilities for sporting organizations in relation to Trinidad and Tobago.

You would see that there is a blockade against East Indian culture in Trinidad and Tobago. Let us examine further and you would see what I am talking about. Mr. President, I do not know if you have had—maybe you are not a radio listener; but if you are a radio listener, what has been happening would come through very loud and clear, in Trinidad and Tobago. The announcers are either unable or unwilling to pronounce East Indian names. They have no problem announcing Spanish names. They can say Julio Iglesias quite comfortably. They can pronounce French and Russian names, but when it comes to East Indian names, they have great difficulty.

The truth of the matter is that the message they are sending out there is that those people do not matter, therefore, they, as professionals do not care whether they pronounce their names correctly or incorrectly. I send this message back to all the radio stations, that they must look, train and insist that the names of people are pronounced properly. You cannot imagine how it hurts and how people feel, when they are disregarded in that kind of manner.

Sen. Rahael: You have difficulty with my name.

Sen. M. Hosein: I understand Mr. Rahael has problems with his name, as well.

Sen. Rahael: You have finally got it right, after two years.

Sen. M. Hosein: I see that Mr. Rahael has problems with his name too, but it does not matter because his name is hardly announced on the radio, so he should not worry.

By contrast, if you listen to the announcers on the BBC and World News—these are not East Indian announcers and they are not Trinidadians—you hear them announce every single word correctly. Do you know why? It is because they know that this is a sensitive area; because they are professionals; they do not want to hurt people's feelings; they care about their jobs and the society, but we have a problem.

Mrs. Pierre: Like how we care.

Sen. M. Hosein: I know you are careless.

In Trinidad and Tobago there are people who grow in the society; they live next door to each other; they are inter-married and inter-mingle and yet they do not care anything about the culture of anyone else except their own small culture.

I had an experience when I was going to school. I want to reinforce this point because people must understand. I think it is a lack of understanding. I remember when I was going to elementary school, there was a teacher who used to call me Mintaz. I do not know how—she was an educated person; everybody else in class called me by my correct name, but she insisted on calling me Mintaz. I went through elementary school and she never corrected it. To this day, I am sure that if she sees me, she would call me Mintaz again. I felt very small when I had my own teacher not being able to pronounce my name.

In those days, in Trinidad and Tobago, East Indians were a minority, and anything that was different made us feel like aliens. I remember carrying my roti and bhagi to school—because we could not afford meat during the week in those days—and having lunch under the mango tree. Do you know that we had to hide to do that? The other students in class would laugh at us and we would be jeered at because of what we ate.

I am saying this because it is important that people and the media understand how people feel and that they have an important role to play. Take the University of the West Indies, even at that level, they give out honorary degrees to people who have excelled in culture. Dr. Sparrow got one and there are several other

people who have had before that. Do you think that the people at the University of the West Indies know anything about East Indian culture? Do you think they care?

Do you think that perhaps the late Isaac Yankaran could have been given a doctorate as well? Perhaps, the late Ramdhanie Sharma, a great classical singer and great human being. I know hon. Saith would have known of him. Do you not think that the tassa maestro, Harry Lutchman who is still alive and is the greatest tassa player in the western hemisphere, could have been given a doctorate as well? What about the sitar maestro, Mangal Patasar? Would they wait until he is dead and gone as well?

2.40 p.m.

The whole society—not just the Government, the Government is only one part of the society—treats East Indian culture as something foreign which does not belong here, and the people who adhere to that culture are also looked upon as foreigners. It hurts that I still have to stand in this Senate in 1993 and talk about this. We will not settle for anything less than our fair share.

Mr. President, I know that you have gone to all of these big state functions and you will recall the tokenism given to East Indian culture in that whole issue. Do not talk about middle Eastern culture, they do not even get a little play. The Chinese do not even get a little play either. Why? Are we not all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago? Do we not all deserve to be treated equally? I, therefore, take this opportunity, today, to call upon the Government to make certain that this takes place; that we will not have this kind of alienation of the East Indian cultural heritage in Trinidad and Tobago.

Only recently, I saw a very lovely calypso—as a matter of fact, I saw two of them—being played on television. It was done by David Rudder. It is one on alcohol and drug abuse—a lovely song. You probably know what I am talking about. It is a lovely song with a good beat. There is a lot of good dancing and so on, with many young people. But do you know, I did some checking up and found out that the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme are the people who are responsible for that advertisement and that the funding came from one of the UN agencies.

Even at that level, if you look at everybody on that skit, they all come from one ethnic group. So, I ask the question: Who is the target market for that? Who? We are not targeting all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We are targeting only one section of the community. Why? Are we saying to the community that all

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. HOSEIN]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

the people who are overindulging in drugs and alcohol are from that ethnic group? Is that what we are saying to the public? Are we insulting our brothers and sisters by telling them that? Or, are we insulting the rest of the community by saying: We know you are involved but we are not targeting you because you do not matter? Is that what we are saying?

To add insult to injury, only last night I saw another one from the same body, again very, very nicely done, and it all had one ethnic composition. It must get through the heads of all these people that Trinidad and Tobago has a diversity of culture. Trinidad and Tobago is rich in the heritage of all the races and we must all be represented for fear that we insult one or the other, or all.

It is very sad that good quality television time, good quality productions could be so insulting and should be wasted, only because people do not understand what is going on in this country. People cannot understand that there are people of different types in this country that make up this wonderful land. The Government must set the pattern because they are the facilitators. That is the new word. We are "facilitating" water, electricity and everything else. We are not providing any more, we are just going to facilitate and the poor will go without. Lord help the rest of them.

I come to the question of the upkeep of the sporting fields in Trinidad and Tobago, and it hurts to see what is happening. Playing fields that have to be upkept and cut so that you can play a good game of cricket or soccer, and the brush cutter is there and belongs to the corporations. Do you know, Mr. President, that if you have to run a league in the San Juan area and have to get the ground cut on a regular basis, you would have to bribe the driver? You would have to pay him \$100, notwithstanding he is getting paid from the corporation.

Sen. Saith: That is the driver in San Juan?

Sen. M. Hosein: Yes, yes. The same thing is probably happening near you. I do not know. This is what is happening. This country is so corrupt that we must bribe people to cut the playing fields and the money that we are spending is not reaching those it ought to reach.

I know that you have a pittance and I am making representation on your behalf and on the people's behalf that the Minister of Finance would see it fit—I see my friend in the audience here, your parliamentary representative in the Ministry of Sport and Culture, a good friend of mine, a nice guy. He knows a lot about sport. He knows what is happening in the country. If we do not provide the facilities for

people to play sport, more and more of our youths will go by the wayside, taking to drugs. The country will go down the toilet and there is no water to flush it, so that it will be even more difficult.

I want to echo strongly the call made by Sen. Hydar Ali regarding the football enquiry. The enquiry was going quite well and everybody said that we would find out what the problem is and for more than a year now it has stopped. The person conducting the enquiry—Mr. Seemungal I think his name is—has been complaining that he cannot get the thing started again; he cannot get stenographers. The administration of football in Trinidad and Tobago is in a mess. One wonders whether the Minister of Sport has any kind of responsibility to make certain that these organisations function and function properly, and that patriotic people who go to see football games will not be fleeced of their money.

Look at the amount of money spent for screens, nearly \$.5 million was paid for screens. I read in the newspapers recently that even the cocaine people are getting involved and they had a play in what happened on that fateful November 19, 1989. I do not know if the Minister read that article and whether it is fact or fancy, but it is important that all of these things come out in the enquiry.

So, I wish to ask the Minister through you, Mr. President, to expedite that enquiry. Let us hear what the truth is, once and for all, so that if there is action to be taken against the wrongdoers, we will do it. If not and there is no wrongdoing, let us put it behind us.

2.50 p.m

I ask you, Madam Minister, through the President, to do everything in your power to put the administration of football in Trinidad and Tobago on even keel. This is one of the sports that we are very good at and football can be played by anyone. Nothing special is needed, it is quite cheap to play football and therefore it can reach all those children who are under the poverty line. They can still go out and kick football in the savannah and become good footballers. If the administration of the football house in Trinidad and Tobago is not put in order it will become very frustrating and difficult for the footballers who are trying to get into big times to do so.

I do not know what happened to the gym the Prime Minister put into his house, since we are dealing with sport, I do not know if it is being used.

Mr. President: I do not think that came out of the Sport and Culture Fund. You have been talking for a long time without being irrelevant, do not spoil it.

Sen. M. Hosein: One would have expected that the Government having spent so much money would have seen it fit to set the lead in fitness. Perhaps, we can have Government Ministers setting the lead in fitness in Trinidad and Tobago. We have so many athletes on the other side, I understand the Prime Minister himself is quite a bit of an athlete. What we should probably do is have a video on television showing the Prime Minister working out daily and encouraging the rest of Trinidad and Tobago to do likewise. If we were able to do that we would encourage a healthier nation and this is the connection with which I am talking about.

What about the community centres? We have many community centres all over Trinidad and Tobago and I wonder whether the Minister could not use her good office to expand these centres to include sporting facilities. I know there might be a minimum being used now, but these community centres could, perhaps, be better used by including sporting facilities on these compounds and we would get a better and stronger nation by so doing.

I thank you.

Sen. Everard Dean: Mr. President, as you can see, Sir, I am not qualified to speak for any ethnic group in the society as I am six of one and half a dozen of the other.

When we look at the Act and the definition of culture and sport as it is stated in section 2, it says:

"'Culture' means activities and practices that are characteristic of the nation as a whole or any component group thereof, arising out of its customs, lifestyle, beliefs and values and includes activities related to the visual, performing and literary arts;

'Sport' means institutionalized psychomotor activities in which the rules are established and includes athletics, games, gymnastics and activities of an individual and team variety, whether competitive or non-competitive."

While one may look at the division of culture from sport one can easily see they are both vehicles for nation building. I do not have any quarrel on one fund for both except to say that they must be equally treated.

Sometimes the best way to deal with something would be not to deal with it at all. I refer, Sir, to the Bill before the Senate where it is seeking to empower the Prime Minister to be the person responsible for the Fund. I am afraid that if we go

on like this, we could well have Government by decree, where the Prime Minister will do everything. I am afraid that this could be the beginning of a Boris Yeltsin type government, and I hope it is not.

I agree with the Minister that sport and culture encourage growth, character and personality. What I am about to say, Mr. President, is not to be interpreted as attacking the two charming ladies who now occupy the respective Ministries dealing with sport and culture. In fact, I applaud them for the work they are doing and wish them continued success under the very trying circumstances.

I recall when this Act was being debated in 1988, the Government while in Opposition, stoutly opposed the Sport and Culture Fund, so obviously, as they are in power they must do something about it.

Firstly, when the term of the Board of Justice Ralph Narine expired it came to a halt. Secondly, the Ministries were divided and, thirdly, the Prime Minister is now to be the authority on that Fund. When we look at the provisions in section 4(b) of the Act. It states:

"(b) to enable grants and loans to be made to deserving individuals, groups and organisations according to criteria prescribed by the Board;"

Mr. President, it would seem to me from this section 4(b) that the Fund is frozen and I want to find out from the Minister in her response what is the state of the Sport and Culture Fund.

3.00 p.m.

The Minister assured the nation that the moneys collected are being put aside and will be used for the purpose when the time comes.

According to my information, between 1989 and seven months in 1991, the Fund collected \$8,127,454; there were 136 sporting applications and 129 cultural applications; and for the six-month period ending June, 1991, a total of \$4.4 million remained in the Fund. I understand, however, that between then and August, 1991, there was \$3.694 million remaining in the Fund. It is interesting to find out what is the current status as far as disbursements and balance in the Fund are concerned, so that the nation will have an idea as to where we are in terms of the Sport and Culture Fund.

The purpose of the Fund, as we all know, as stated in section 4(b), is to enable grants and loans to be made to deserving individuals and organizations. But when

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. DEAN]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

one looks at the statements for 1989 and 1990, one would see mostly individuals and I wonder what has happened to those organizations that are responsible for different facets of culture in our country. I recall, also, that it was the late Prime Minister who in 1979, agreed to set up a national sports authority and, in fact, appointed Mr. Justice Maurice Corbin as chairman of that authority, but no other persons were appointed. Needless to say, that authority never saw the light of day. It is disheartening to note that all the efforts of the past to build sport and culture in this country are not being followed up in a manner that would benefit all of us.

My other concern, Mr. President, is with clause 4(f), which states that the Board will consist of:

- (f) two persons nominated by the Minister who have contributed significantly in activities related to Sport and Culture respectively."

Mr. President, how is the Minister going to determine those persons? I think this is an avenue that could be used for political patronage.

As you know, there are a variety of sporting activities in the country, ranging from athletics to netball, football, cricket and the list goes on. We also have a number of cultural organizations ranging from the Calypsonians Association to the Trinidad Folk Performing Company to the Little Carib, to the National Council of Indian Culture, to Pan Trinbago, and I do not care what anybody says, whoever is nominated, the others will voice their concerns and objections, because they will feel left out.

What I believe the Government should do is to facilitate—again, the word "facilitate" comes up—the establishment of some kind of confederation of sporting associations and similarly a confederation of cultural organizations, and by so doing one would not only get a true representation but also facilitate a greater cohesion of sporting and cultural activities, and maybe, get the consensus on who should use the stadium and for what purpose.

Mr. President, I also believe that in this day and age, it is repugnant for a Minister to decide and nominate persons to represent sport and culture respectively to serve on the Board without consultation with those organizations. As I said earlier, the proposed system leaves much to be desired and also clears the way for a partisan approach to these appointments.

Again, could the Minister tell us how the two persons mentioned in clause 4(f) will be chosen? Is it going to be in consultation with the different sporting

organizations or is it going to be a unilateral decision of the Minister, who in this case may very well be the Prime Minister.

The final concern I have, Mr. President, is that we seem to be using our best people at the desk rather than out in the field. Not because Mr. Crawford is here, but I think this gentleman has done the country proud and will be better utilized serving in the field rather than at the desk. I am sure there are others that other people can identify, so that, the whole question of dealing with sport and culture out in the field could be dealt with.

I just want to make one last observation. When it was indicated that some ethnic group suffers because of minority position, I recall quite recently that one of the great writers of the world, who is a Trinidadian, was awarded the Trinity Cross.

I thank you, Mr. President.

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Mr. President, I welcome the opportunity to make my contribution to this debate this afternoon and to support my colleague as we put before you the Bill to amend the Sport and Culture Fund Act, No. 31 of 1988.

As one who along the road had been actively involved in sports, being a sports officer myself at one time, and president of a national organization, this afternoon in supporting the amendment, I wish to concentrate my contribution on the side of culture, being the Minister with the responsibility for culture. I would like to spend some time trying to clear the air on some misconceptions about culture and my Government's policy.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. President, during the month of October this year, Officers of the Culture Division of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs, conducted a wide-ranging exercise through almost every district in Trinidad that served to put the Ministry in direct contact with Ramleela groups throughout the country in order to ensure that no Ramleela celebration would be without critical support from Government this year.

This exercise, which was carried on in close collaboration with the National Ramleela Council, mirrors, to a great extent, the approach that is normally adopted by this Government to ensure that cultural groups in every sphere of

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

cultural activity and regardless of their geographical location, are identified, brought into close contact with the operations of the Culture Division and duly serviced by way of technical and managerial advice and, in many instances, financial assistance.

Mr. President, this approach we used, as I am sure Sen. Kwabene will bear me out, worked for Carifesta as we moved from community to community. We used that approach this year with World Culture Day as we moved through each community. We used a similar approach with the indigenous people as we moved from community to community, and may I remind Sen. Hosein that Felicity gave us one of the best celebrations for our indigenous people. We move around Trinidad and Tobago. This approach that we have used over the years has allowed us to provide vital support:

- for drama, through the National Drama Association and its National Drama Festival;
- for parang, through the National Parang Association of Trinidad and Tobago;
- to steelbands and pannists in general, through Pan Trinbago;
- to Phagwa organizations;
- the Santa Rosa Carib Community of Arima;
- the Trinidad Art Society;
- the National Dance Association;
- Emancipation groups;
- the National Council for Indian Culture, principally through the Divali Nagar; and
- to numerous individual artistes, cultural agents and researchers who, from time to time, require such assistance and support for their efforts.

Mr. President, if one were to examine the process by which we finally arrived at an acceptable working approach to the provision of support for Ramleela celebrations 1993, such an examination would prove to be instructive in terms of the validity of the Sport and Culture Fund and the critical need to make appropriate amendments to the legislation under which that Fund operates.

Each year, with the limited resources that are made available within the budgetary provisions of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs to provide financial assistance to individuals and organizations in the field of culture and the arts, attempts are made to ensure that a broad range of cultural and artistic interests are served. Understandably, there would be many cases deserving of support that, given the limits on funding, may not succeed in accessing such support during any single fiscal year. The situation is worsened when one considers that applications for assistance have to be processed alongside all normal ongoing operations of the responsible Ministry.

Mr. President, there really can be no simple shortcuts to processing applications for assistance in the field of culture and the arts. Whereas, in other sectors of development—and I am sure Sen. Kwabene will agree with me—it is generally accepted that the true value of a project can be gauged on the basis of a strict cost/benefit analysis, the same does not hold true for programmes and projects in the culture sector.

Sen. Kwabene: Very true.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: It is our experience, over the years, that many culture projects would prove worthless when subjected to strict cost/benefit testing, yet emerge as having tremendous value in terms of their community enhancement potential and intrinsic capacity to uplift, enlighten and to ennoble us as a people. This we have proven, on countless occasions, when dealing with steelbands. Very often, taking socio-cultural benefits into consideration, a small steelband in a rural district proves itself to be of comparable value to a mega-band with its professional sound and high-quality finish in the urban areas. This, we further confirmed at our recent Ramleela exercise where we discovered, from firsthand experience and through valuable insights provided by the National Ramleela Council, that from a socio-religious standpoint as well as a cultural enhancement and community strengthening perspective, a tiny Ramleela celebration in a small rural community is just as deserving of critical Government support as the mega-events in Sangre Grande, Dow Village and St. Augustine.

The task, therefore, Mr. President, of targeting resources, processing several hundred distinctly different types of applications from groups and individuals for assistance, establishing appropriate frameworks for analysis and eventually channelling resources into meaningful centres of productive activity, is one that, of necessity, demands the existence of an appropriately designed Government

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

mechanism specifically geared towards meeting the many challenges inherent in such a task.

The Sport and Culture Fund is one such mechanism. Unfortunately, given the specific provisions of the legislation under which the Fund is expected to operate, the Fund has been rendered inoperable as a result of a division of ministerial responsibility for sport and culture when, in 1991, two new ministries were created, and for the benefit of hon. Senators, the Ministry of Sport and the Ministry of Culture have become two separate ministries. The Sport and Culture Fund which was established by Act No. 31 of 1988 had the following objectives in mind, and I wish, again, to read them into the record because we have agreed with these objectives—

- (a) to facilitate the provision of sporting and cultural activities;
- (b) to enable grants and loans to be made to deserving individuals, groups and organizations according to criteria prescribed by the Board;

I think it was Sen. Kwabene who questioned how these were to be done and it is clearly stated that it is according to criteria prescribed by the Board. I wish to say at this time that we have, for example, one of our students, Sherma Andrews, who has been given grants by this Fund. She has done, I think, two years at Berkeley College. She needs to continue and I think she has excelled. With this Fund being inoperable she cannot have her school fees paid as they should be and that is another reason we must support this service and get the money to the scholar. I think she was awarded a Carifesta scholarship under this Sport and Culture Fund.

- (c) to encourage the promotion of excellence in sport and culture;
- (d) to assist in the nurturing and development of human and technical resource capabilities in sport and culture;
- (e) to encourage self-reliance of groups, associations and individuals;
- (f) to facilitate the provision and upgrading of facilities of sporting and cultural activities; and
- (g) to facilitate the promotion of research and development related to sport and culture.

3.20 p.m.

As has already been quoted in this Senate, between 1989 and 1992, the sum of \$3,183,681.28 in grants was given to 50 organizations and individuals to assist them in planning and implementation of a range of cultural and artistic projects. I could give you a breakdown from 1989 to 1991. In 1989, 12 organizations benefited; in 1990, 18 and in 1991, 20. In 1991, the sum of \$1,775,936.42 was given to the 20 organizations.

Given these figures, it would seem that the absence of a functioning Sport and Culture Fund must have had a rather negative impact on the artistic community in Trinidad and Tobago. It is therefore absolutely necessary that we make the Sport and Culture Fund once more operable as a means of financing the developmental work that must be undertaken by our artistes, craftsmen and women, cultural researchers and our cultural agents in general. The amended Sport and Culture Fund Act, therefore, is a vital necessity for the successful harnessing of the arts and culture energies of this country in the interest of its overall development.

Mr. President, I would like to quote from a submission which I made in the House of Representatives, because at this time I find that some aspects of that submission are relevant today in this Senate. I would like to do this, particularly after listening to the contribution of Sen. Muntaz Hosein because it gives something of our policy, our direction, the basis on which we are operating:

"I would like to begin by holding up two current realities before this House; realities that, in my view, help to determine to a great extent, the kinds of decisions that must be made in respect of the Sport and Culture Fund and the amendments that have been proposed to the Act.

The first is the economic realities of our times. For quite some time now, in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the wider Caricom region there has been constant talk of structural adjustment measures; measures that manifest themselves in tighter budgetary requirements, very stringent fiscal measures and visible cut-backs on social sector spending and programming. It is now apparent that such measures are a fact of life and that all Governments that are serious about continuing strong social-sector programmes during this time of 'belt-tightening' will have to find alternative sources of funding to establish new social sector programmes in keeping with the demands of these times while still maintaining and servicing existing programmes that continue to have useful, positive effects on society.

It must, however, be noted that social sector programmes are not the only ones that must now face close scrutiny. Increasingly, Caribbean Governments are becoming more aware of the fact that even those development initiatives that, in the past, were regarded as automatic choices for funding support, must now be re-examined in light of current support, must now be re-examined in light of current notions of what, in today's world, developing countries can reasonably be expected to regard as viable options for development.

The Trinidad and Tobago Government, too, has not been exempt from being forced to re-think development options in this rapidly changing contemporary world.

The second reality is that of culture. The cultural reality that is Trinidad and Tobago, and perhaps, more importantly, current notions about the role of culture in development.

There was a time, in the not too distant past, when matters of a cultural nature, including the arts, were viewed as being rather incidental to development. Indeed, the culture sector was seen as providing society with certain niceties of life. The frills of existence; frills that, at best, would enlighten but that, most times, would simply entertain.

Within recent times, however, people in general, have become increasingly more aware of the central role that culture and the arts must play in the overall development process, particularly in the development processes and practices of developing countries such as ours. This new awareness seems to be mirrored in contemporary attitudes towards culture and the arts on the part of community groups, service clubs, private sector organizations and governments throughout the Caribbean region. Certainly, here in Trinidad and Tobago we have already begun to articulate not only a wider view of culture, but also a clearer definition of the ways in which culture and the arts might impact on other sectors of development.

In this sense, we are walking in step with other Governments around the world as well as with international organizations such as UNESCO.

It should be remembered that it was UNESCO which, during the 1970s, promoted worldwide debate on the question of "Culture and Development". The UNESCO effort, in this regard, grew out of a recognition by that organization that there were grave difficulties inherent in the kind of development strategies pursued worldwide since the end of the second world

war. In its brochure, *A Practical Guide to the World Decade for Cultural Development*, the organization states clearly:

'Despite the progress achieved, the results of the first two international development decades revealed the limitations of a development concept based primarily on quantitative and material growth.'

That was the kind of thinking that fuelled the great culture debates of the 1970s and early 1980s. Those were the notions that underpinned concepts of culture and the arts that were thrown up at the UNESCO conferences and symposia by the several eminent international specialists and government delegates who attended them during that period.

Certainly, it was in 1982, at the Mexico City Conference—a conference which was attended by many Caribbean delegates—that the old notion of culture was broadened to include notions of behaviour patterns, 'the individual's view of himself or herself, of society and of the outside world'. It was at the conference, too, that it was specifically emphasised that every society expresses itself through its 'way of living and being, through its perceptions and self-perceptions, its behaviour patterns, value systems and beliefs'. Understandably, therefore, delegates concluded that development, whose ultimate aim should be focused on man must have a cultural dimension.

These notions, of course, are of tremendous significance to us here in Trinidad and Tobago. Ours is a country rich in cultural diversity; a diversity that has its roots in strong, ancient cultures of the various corners of the world and that manifests itself in our very colourful spread of festivals, ceremonies and rituals, artistic disciplines and, perhaps more importantly, our warm, welcoming and naturally embracing lifestyle. In this sense, our culture is perhaps our richest natural resource.

It is for these and other such reasons that, as a government, we have placed heavy emphasis on cultural action as a central vehicle for the further development of contemporary Trinidad and Tobago."

3.30 p.m.

Our policy in this regard which has been clearly articulated on several occasions, lays heavy emphasis on the recognition and promotion of multi-culturalism and the development of the arts in general and proposes, among other things, to:

nurture and facilitate the growth and flowering of the varied forms of cultural expression in Trinidad and Tobago;
 provide avenues for the development of the economic potential of various cultural activities;
 encourage the marketing, at home and abroad of various culture products;
 establish, in collaboration with national non-governmental bodies, cultural research and documentation programmes;
 provide support (particularly in the areas of training and education) for all forms of artistic expression;
 provide support for and encourage the celebration of national festivals;
 encourage and actively promote cultural tourism in the form of events tourism;
 provide assistance and support to national, cultural/artistic organizations;
 encourage and support the development of national performing companies;
 actively promote the development and enhancement of the Prime Minister's Best Village Trophy Competition.

Our culture is a resource that needs to be nurtured and carefully husbanded as part of an overall development strategy for Trinidad and Tobago; that the rich tangible manifestations of our culture, the various culture products that we create on an ongoing basis, can serve as an economic resource that can provide much needed jobs and significant foreign currency earnings for this country; that in these difficult economic times of continued structural adjustment, there is a great need to find sources other than the coffers of the Treasury to finance programmes and projects geared toward the careful nurturing of the culture and the increased production of enhanced culture products.

An appropriately amended and consequently, once more, operative Sport and Culture Fund can prove to be the ideal source of funding and, if constituted as proposed in the amendment, the ideal mechanism for administering Government's financial support for Culture and the Arts.

Sen. Hosein: Mr. President, before the Minister takes her seat, I wonder if she can tell us how much money her ministry was able to give these Ramleela committees of which she spoke?.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: Mr. President, if the hon. Senator will hold for a while, I will come to that. I am glad he asked that question so I can give him the answer.

It must be noted that, given the fact that ministerial responsibilities are not indelibly written in the precise cluster of portfolios in which they are presented today, we have attempted to so structure the Board of Management as to ensure that, whatever division of ministerial responsibilities may take place in years to come, the Board would still legally be in a position to conduct the affairs of the Fund, thereby ensuring the continued presence of an adequate mechanism for providing funding support for the arts and culture of this country.

When I talk about being in a position to conduct the affairs, I would wish to go back to clause 4 of the Bill. I have heard mention in this honourable House this evening that the Prime Minister was to be in charge of this board. Clause 4 (3)(a) says:

"a Chairman to be nominated by the Minister."

And if one goes to the definition of Minister in clause 3(b):

"'Minister' means the Prime Minister or such other Minister approved by the Prime Minister."

I did not see any place here which says, the Prime Minister was taking control and chairing this board. My Bill—and I am sure it is the same which other Members of this honourable House have—says:

"a Chairman to be nominated by the Minister."

Minister, meaning the Prime Minister or such other Minister approved by the Prime Minister.

The Secretary is someone from the office of the Prime Minister. But there are two representatives on this board, one representing the ministry responsible for Culture and the other, the ministry responsible for Sport. I like that and I will tell you why. Associations will make requests to the Fund and this board must sit to consider them with representatives from Culture and Sport. We will identify the bona fides of these associations, because you know how quickly associations can spring up once there is a source of funding. So you are sure you know who are the bona fide artists, craftsmen, sports organizations, and suchlike.

Secondly, as had happened previously, some associations approach three areas. They would approach the National Days and Festivals Committee; the Division of Culture and the Sport and Culture Fund. When you go through the applications you will see—after all, if there is an opportunity to pull from three

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

sources, some associations do that. Here we have a kind of control where we could see that the funds are adequately distributed. In fact, even this year the National Days and Festivals Grant was with the Ministry of Culture so that we could see what was happening to the money which has been distributed around.

So with a representative from the Ministry on spot, we can say what has happened and how much money had been given to these associations. So it is necessary to have someone from each of the Ministries there. Then to have two persons who made contributions to sport and culture—again the word, "Minister" is there, which is the Prime Minister or any other Minister—people who have responsibility to make these two nominations.

In fact, I think at this time this is a good way to constitute the Board. I also want to say to those people who feel—and I think it has been raised in the House this afternoon—that there might be some bias, or political mileage, that the Division of Culture has been administering funds over the years to various organizations and so, too, has the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. I would like to go back a bit to tell you that there has been an equitable distribution of the funds. It would be difficult for me to read all for 1992 and 1993, but sad to say, I listened to Sen. Muntaz Hosein when he made his contribution, and he pointed out that one ethnic group was disadvantaged in terms of our allocation. Had I known such a comment was coming I would have brought a document with grants for all the organizations so that this House could see it, but I will surely send it to Sen. Muntaz Hosein so that he can have an opportunity to look at it.

Very quickly, let me look at some which we did in 1992, a cross-section, picking from one or two: The National Parang Association in 1992 got \$50,000; the National Dance Company, \$50,000; Santa Rosa Carib Community got \$30,000; the Trinidad Art Society, \$20,000.

I am just looking at different types of groups: Secondary Schools Drama, \$20,000; San Fernando Arts Council, \$25,000. These people get every year. National Drama Association, \$50,000. Those are some of the organizations, and there are several others.

We also look at individuals. Kennedy Walcott, the one-man artist, last year he put on an exhibition, he got \$3,000. We do not even leave out the individual who has something they would like to do. Les Efforts Dance Company, last year got

\$3,000; Columbus Church, I think one of them got \$1,000 for something they wanted to do. A new club which wanted to have some entertainment and they needed some extra money to get some drums, they got \$410.00; TAMA, for staging its emancipation last year, got \$15,000; the Bon Aventure Leela Committee got \$4,000; Rapso Rhythm Band wanted to go to the United States to put on a performance, got \$11,000; Carib asked for \$1,400; Writers Union of Trinidad and Tobago wanted to make a publication, they got \$5,000; the Astor Circle of Divine Life, \$3,800; Fonclaire Steelband had their celebrations and they got \$10,000. The National Parang Association got an extra \$10,000; the National Phagwa Festival got \$90,000, and the National Council for Indian Culture for staging Divali Nagar got \$200,000. If he said there is discrepancy on one side, I could give the broad outline for last year.

This year—and again, I am sorry I did not bring the details, but I am going to let Sen. Muntaz Hosein have them—the Les Efforts Dance Company, a small company which was invited to Venezuela and just got back, plus the Repertory Dance Company (Astor Johnson), each of them got \$10,000 to do that; the Arts Council got \$25,000; the Ramleela celebrations, there was a request from the National Council and we spoke to them and we said, "If you can have your celebrations as community celebrations we will try to give each celebration some kind of funding this year". This, we had not planned, but we did. We gave each one \$5,000. We gave the National Council an additional \$20,000 to help it. The Arts Society, now putting up their new building, was able to source a grant of \$100,000; the Divali Nagar that was on this year, \$150,000; COATT got \$10,000. This year was the year of indigenous people and we did it on a community basis, and as I said, forget what ethnic group was hosting them: we spent about \$360,000 which we distributed around Trinidad and Tobago for all the groups.

3.40 p.m.

For the World Cultural Day, we gave each group around the country \$8,000.

Sen. Hosein: What about the Pan Theatre? How many millions were given to the Pan Theatre?

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: Wait a while, I would come to that.

Sen. Hosein: Six million dollars; I know the amount.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: We have not funded that as yet.

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

Sen. Kwabene said that he felt sports should not be combined with culture. I also agree with that, and this Government, in its right senses, separated culture from sports. But, I am glad he saw what Community Development did, because if one noticed, we worked with the communities for the arrangements for all festivals, and officers of the Community Development Division were in the forefront working with officers from the Culture Division to organize those festivals around the country.

I liked what Sen. Kwabene said about the Women's Affairs Division—I thank him very much. We have now received a grant of US \$450,000 for strengthening the Women's Affairs Division and we are putting things in place because there is much that we need to respond to. I want to make the point that when we speak of "women's affairs", we concentrate much on gender issues in this division; it is not only women's affairs, but we would be looking at men and young men as well. *[Interruption]*.

What I am saying is that there are gender issues and we have to be sensible about the entire thing. Even within the public service reform we are trying to have an influence there. So that as we move around with reform, gender issues and sensitization are part of it.

Sen. Dean: Could the Minister say if these funds were disbursed without a board being in place? If so, what is really the purpose of the board?

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: I was just trying to indicate that people are afraid of how this particular board will operate. I was just trying to show that where funds were available to the Culture Division—and we were in charge of distribution—we did that without any bias. The money I am referring to came from the Culture Division. The Government would still allocate funds to the Culture Division for all normal programming, but as one listens to this, one would see there was no bias there towards one ethnic group against the other. In fact, one might say the opposite of what Sen. Muntaz Hosein was saying.

I was just indicating that one should have no fear with the board. If we could have made disbursements without all those restrictions or anybody looking over our shoulders to tell us "why not this" and "why not that"—what happens when there is a board in place and people apply to the board? I am just trying to reassure this Senate that there will be no bias with the dispensation of the funds towards any particular ethnic group, and I was referring to what happened in the division for which I am responsible.

Sen. Kwabene talked about the fact that there was no national centre. He also spoke about the fact that we have to use the National Stadium. Let me assure the Senator that so far the division has done the brief for the performing arts centre, which has been accepted and is now with the architects for designing the new performing arts centre. I am quite sure the Senator would be happy to hear that we would have that one on stream.

In answer to Sen. Muntaz Hosein, we have received funding of about \$19 million for building new community centres. What the Senator heard about was the East Port of Spain Cultural Complex, one of the areas in which we are building one particular type of facility—at an estimated cost which he saw in the press—but the plans are still being designed. What would be done is not just a showpiece for performances only, but a training centre, a place where there will be income-generating activities going on. As I said before, there is so much music coming out of that area, and in recognition of that, we have decided to place this facility there. We also hope that it will be a tourist attraction because there will be much going on in this part of the country, and why not? Sen. Hosein talked about recognition, and that is one way in which we gave overall recognition.

Someone talked about the national awards as part of the recognition of the artistes. I did not agree with the Senator, because I thought that culture had its fair share in the national awards this year. I was happy to see the kind of recognition going that way. If I had known that Sen. Hosein was going to talk in that line today, I would have walked with the list of all those who received national awards in terms of what he said about one ethnic group. I was happy to see a tutor of mine from teachers' college, Dr. Isaiah Boodoo receive an award for art; I cannot remember the name of the tassa builder who received an award; Sundar Popo for his contribution; and who would forget the master potter for his contribution, as he came forward. Those were only four in one particular ethnic group. I dislike having to look at things in this light, because it was never designed to be done in this way, but sometimes, one has to bring things forward when people do not seem to want to see what is happening.

Let me assure Senators that my mission is not to look at the ethnic groups as they come through, we are here to develop culture. I had the pleasure of being at the Ramleela celebration and my Ministry's officials were at almost every Ramleela celebration. We were at the Divali Nagar. We do go to all the celebrations, and we are contributing and supporting also. When one talks about

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

next year for events tourism, one would see where all our cultural activities are going to be focussed around the world.

What is distressing is that these cultural organizations tend to work quite well with the Ministry, and are happy and feel a part of it; and when one goes to the functions one is warmly welcomed, yet, we find that there might be Senators on the other side who try—let me not say to destroy—but who say things that are not really true. I would like to go along with you as you go to some of the festivals and functions. As I said before, I would let Sen. Hosein have a list of our disbursements of funds to all the organizations and hope that he will change his opinion and come back to this honourable Senate and say that he now looks at it in a different light.

Sen. Hosein: How soon do you think I can have that list?

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: You would get it as soon as possible.

We really want to put things together because we need all of this. If we are selling Trinidad and Tobago and the cultural products, we need all. I want to state that although we have spent so much money on the indigenous peoples, when they came they were eternally grateful for what we had done. I am quite sure the Senator must have attended one those functions.

Finally, I would like to refer to the museum. I am glad Sen. Kwabene talked about it, but in this whole urban development one must know that the museum is coming. We have plans for the museum's development, and I can assure Senators that this Government looks at issues like museum development, as we look at our archives. I said some time ago—and somebody had criticized the archives—that we have spent quite a sum of money on it and we are trying to bring these things back; this cannot happen overnight, but we are moving in the right direction.

I liked what Sen. Kwabene said about the heritage—I cannot remember exactly how he said it in terms of our youth—but one of our national service programmes for next year, which we are going to put on stream, is this whole question of the national heritage and getting our youths involved in its appreciation. That will come on stream next year. We had done some work with the archives this year; we had spent some money on restoring parts of the archives; we used university graduates to do that work moving from one area to the next and we are going to continue with that.

This is my contribution and I hope that the honourable Senate would see the necessity for the Sport and Culture Fund; that it will also see that there is no bias in the dispensation of funds; that this Government is serious when we said in our manifesto that we want each cultural voice to be heard, and we truly wish it to be heard. Therefore, I am sure that Senators would not vote against or abstain but support the amendment to the Sport and Culture Fund Bill.

Thank you.

Sen. Carol Merritt: Mr. President, my contribution would be very short. I just want to get some clarification from both Ministers involved; because we have two Ministers covering the two areas, sport and culture. One of my main concerns, in looking at the amendment is: why is it that the Prime Minister has to be responsible for the functioning of the fund? Why can the two Ministers not collaborate and operate that fund effectively? This is one of my main concerns. The Prime Minister, is supposedly a very busy person and, in fact, I think that he should leave the functioning of this fund up to the two Ministers involved; the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs and the Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs.

3.50 p.m.

The other matter that I looked at in the Bill is that the Prime Minister would approve a Minister and also that they did not upgrade the fund. There were no specifics as to the Minister that he would appoint. He needs to be a little more specific in order to avoid ambiguity. Other colleagues looked at it and they were confused as to which Minister the Prime Minister would appoint to head this Fund.

The other concern is our National Stadium. I am hoping that with this new Fund, the Minister would put aside some funds for the National Stadium especially its score-board which has not been functioning since 1990. Also, that they would look into specifying the use of the stadium because, from the inception of the National Stadium in 1982, it was specifically said it was for sporting events but what we are seeing presently, as was mentioned by my colleagues who spoke before me, is that more and more cultural events are taking place at the stadium than even athletic or football events.

The reason I am so concerned about the stadium is that at the inception of the stadium advice was given about the type of footwear to be worn on the track and field. That advice has not been adhered to, and for a number of years persons

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. MERRITT]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

wearing all types of shoes dance and prance on the track and on the football field when shows are held at the stadium. That football field is very sensitive to prancing and dancing or misuse because of the way it was constructed. Many Senators might not know that there is special drainage on that field and when it is misused the field is left in a terrible state. Some years ago there was a function there called "Fund Aid." There were about 10,000 or 20,000 persons at the stadium on a Sunday afternoon and it was raining and there was untold damage done to that football field. As a matter of fact, for a number of months no sporting events could be held at the National Stadium. So I am calling on the Board of the Sport and Culture Fund to look into the proper maintenance and management of the stadium and the types of events that are held there.

The other concern that I have is the scoreboard. It is a very expensive piece of equipment which was bought from a company in Holland. In 1982, the computers that were bought to go along with the scoreboard were already obsolete. I think that the computers down at the National Stadium for the operation of the scoreboard need to be modernized or upgraded. Also, I do not know if the photo-finish machine, which is another piece of expensive equipment at the National Stadium, is still in operation. It was an important piece of equipment that was bought. It was very useful for the hosting of athletic events. As a matter of fact, I do not know whether the Hampton Games are still in existence. I am hardly hearing about the Hampton Games or the NAAA games which were formerly held every year around April or thereabout. Maybe an investigation needs to be done on what is happening with those pieces of expensive equipment that were purchased. There needs to be some more stipulation on the maintenance of the stadium. Also, we should try to and avoid misuse of the stadium. I am very concerned about the stadium because it was established for our athletes and our footballers to have a place where they could perform effectively. We are not seeing that presently.

November 19, I could refer to that. Again that would open up a can of worms or some sores or wounds that are not yet healed. To begin, for the November 19 event, there was an uncovered area just annexed to the covered area that was made into an area for \$50.00 seats. That area was fenced off for the November 19 event and \$50.00 tickets were sold to patrons. There were numerous malpractices which took place for that event which need to be investigated. Like my other colleagues I am asking for the re-opening of the investigation into the November 19 scandal. Many persons are still hurting because of what happened on that day. People who

purchased their tickets had to be turned away or sent across to the Oval. I can tell you exactly what happened at the Stadium because I operated the scoreboard on that day. Maybe it was a blessing in disguise that we did not win that match because a number of persons would have been crushed or killed on that particular evening.

The third point I wish to raise concerns the Minister of Community Development, Culture, and Women's Affairs. Last year, the Prime Minister afforded the opportunity to the steel pan movement to name the steel pan our national instrument. The steel pan is our national instrument, but today we still have laws in this country that make it illegal to play the steel pan outside of the carnival festival.

4.00 p.m.

We only have to look at the Summary Offences Act, Chap. 11:02 section 64(2) and we would see what I am speaking about. It is illegal to play the steelband, our national instrument, outside of any carnival festival. These laws need to be amended or updated. If we are really serious about the steelband movement, the money that was allocated to the steelband movement by the previous government should be submitted to Pan Trinbago. I think it is in dire need of it to advance the steelband movement. *[Interruption]*

Sen. Yuille-Williams: I thank the hon. Senator for the opportunity to respond. I know that \$7.5 million was left for the development of the steelband. I have been in constant contact with Pan Trinbago. In the first instance, we had offered \$3.5 to Pan Trinbago, but I must tell this hon. Senate that we said it is money and they must come with their proposal of what they are going to do with this \$3.5 million. We are just not going to hand \$3.5 million or \$7.5 million to them and say move off with it. If it is for steelband development, in fact we can give it to any other movement where steelband development is concerned.

Pan Trinbago has been moving around and looking around. I must say that just last week Wednesday they came with two worthwhile proposals; one on their investment organization and another one on the history. We are now looking at them and as soon as we find that they are feasible propositions, they would be funded.

I do not think that Pan Trinbago has a problem with \$7.5 million. In fact, the Chairman of one of the Committees which made those proposals said that he did not have a problem with the amount of money that we offered. Remember, you

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

just cannot take funds and hand it. You must be accountable, but we asked that they send in their proposals, how much would be needed and then the funds would be disbursed. I think Pan Trinbago is now working on that. Yesterday they sent me a second proposal. In a short time, I hope before the end of the month, they would qualify to have the money.

I am as anxious as you are. Remember we say it is the national musical instrument and I am as anxious as you are to get that point across.

Sen. C. Merritt: I hope it is not only words, Minister, and that you would seek to get this done.

My last point to the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs is that there is a sporting facility at Maloney Gardens, where construction had begun since 1988. With the new PNM Government coming into power, the construction of that facility has stopped abruptly. There is a foundation and material at that location. At present, the material is overgrown with grass. Some of the trenches that were built around that foundation are open and collecting water. Any day you might hear that some child in Maloney was playing there and fell in and drowned.

I am seeking clarification, if they are going to restart the construction of that facility; close the trenches or do something with the spot there. The sporting facility is important to that community.

Thank you.

Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh: Mr. President, the object of the Bill before this hon. Senate seeks to clarify one aspect of the administration of sports in Trinidad and Tobago. Permit me to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs certain related matters which deserve immediate attention and can no longer be deferred, since it is the opinion of many citizens in our nation that sport is in crisis.

Ours is a society plagued with numerous problems, in the midst of which we seem to be producing a people evolving into an uncaring, unfriendly and unneighbourly community. Our violent and gruesome crimes the upsurge of murders which is now the highest on record for many years, reflect a growing insensitivity and disrespect for the rights of others. We are on the verge of becoming a neurotic society; a community of the insane.

Can we counteract this? This has been our search for many a year. Can we counteract this and begin the process of healing by developing a philosophy of

play? We need to lead our people to be more sports conscious; providing for them adequate opportunities for recreation and sporting activities. I believe a community at play can be a healthy community; maybe a sane community too.

We have become so business-like and serious about our various problems that we have not been playing enough. I am not talking about the two days when we play the devil on the streets. That is not the philosophy of play I have in mind. I believe that government must give the appropriate support, inspiration and maintenance needed for the development of sports in Trinidad and Tobago.

Several of its disciplines have been suffering over the years. Mr. President, have you ever thought that it is possible that certain sporting disciplines in Trinidad and Tobago have been privatized? Is it possible? Sometimes I get the feeling that individuals almost run certain sporting organizations to the ground. Government's intervention is absolutely necessary. We need to find ways and means of rescuing certain sporting disciplines from the clutches of certain forces and individuals. It has happened for too long.

I was really disturbed some months ago, when the ladies under-21 hockey team had to go to Spain. It was most disturbing to have a newscaster on the television, almost in the form of a commercial, begging for a certain amount of money. He was speaking on Monday and said that by Wednesday of that week they needed to get so much money to send the ladies under-21 team to the World Hockey Tournament in Spain.

This is a very common example. It has been happening so very often. It is a feature which shows that the administration of sport in Trinidad and Tobago is operated, some times, on the basis of a decision by crisis. No wonder why in certain sports, even at Caribbean level we are no longer a force to be reckoned with because our ad hoc decisions reveal that we do not have any real national policy for sport. We really need a national sports policy.

Our success in sports in past years has been based on individual effort, where, particularly in the early stages, there has been very little support from government or community for those who have emerged as our sporting heroes.

Look at the back pages of the dailies. The sports pages, I mean. They are most depressing; almost as depressing as the front page in the newspapers. It is an indication that something is wrong with sports in our country. Look at some of these newspapers and you would see the nature and quality of the sports news. I

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. REV. TEELUCKSINGH]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

read about Australia, India—there are pages and pages—New Zealand, South Africa and anywhere else in the Caribbean and I read very little or nothing about sports in Trinidad and Tobago. This is indicative that sports is on the decline.

I am not blaming the reporters. There seems to be nothing to report and this is why they have to fill those sports pages with items of sporting activities from overseas.

4.10 p.m.

What about the television? It is most disgusting and disturbing. Sometimes what we call prime time, meaning that one has been out all day and comes home and would like to see something on television. Hours and hours of sporting activities, sport which is not even played here and which I do not know anything about, is dished out to our community. Does it tell me that we have no local sports to televise and nothing to give to our people? The answer could well be, yes.

I wish to bring to the attention of the hon. Minister of Sport and Culture certain other matters which deserve immediate attention and should no longer be deferred. Sports at the primary school level is almost a myth. That is so very important. It is very important, at that level, for the development of a child's personality. The groundwork for sports must be laid in the primary schools and at present it is virtually non-existent. Sport is limited in Trinidad and Tobago at school level to the glorifying of cricket and football, which is seasonal. You visit any of the primary schools, whenever there is an afternoon of sport. Teachers will tell the children, "Just go out and play." And you will see the children running on the playing fields, if at all you see them there. That is what sport has dwindled into—just go and play.

What about coaches? What about trained personnel? I am not seeing those programmes in the primary schools. Where are the coaches and where are the instructors for these young people?

Do you know that in some primary schools you cannot even find a table tennis racket, far less a cricket bat? It is very sad, but I think that there needs to be some kind of collaboration between the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Education. I wonder what kind of citizens we are creating in that children have mastered the Common Entrance, moved on to college, university and later on the work place, hardly able to understand and appreciate even some of the basic sports. Our children and young people have been trained only to be

academic giants and we are not encouraging them to specialize and learn about some of these basic sporting disciplines.

Another area we need to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister is the need for Government to embark on a programme to promote sport in the rural districts of Trinidad and Tobago. Anytime you hear about sports, people from Point Fortin, Fyzabad and Rio Claro, everybody, must come to Port of Spain. Sport is centred in the city and rural sports in Trinidad is almost non-existent; even sports in San Fernando is on the decline.

I spoke to someone who is responsible for the management of Skinner Park and it has been said that there are more fetes in Skinner Park than sporting activities. This is what is happening to one of the premier sporting venues in the south city.

Hon. Minister: *[Inaudible]*

Sen. Rev. D. Teelucksingh: That is precisely what I was speaking about when I talked about the philosophy of play. I am talking about another kind of philosophy, one which is higher; not that kind of play.

I am absolutely certain that the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs knows that, particularly in rural communities there are no training and sporting activities for girls. If you have to learn netball at all and you live in Tabaquite or Rio Claro, you have to go to San Fernando.

Another area requiring serious consideration is the need in Trinidad and Tobago for night sports. There has been hardly any night sport in many communities, long before this present situation with the increase in crime. The same set of people whom we are saying are scared of criminal activities are the ones who go to these parties and fetes. I want to tell you of some people who are out regardless of the problems there. The only kind of night activities in many communities of Trinidad and Tobago is to be found in the beer gardens and the liming spots on the bridges. Can we cater for that particular group? They are out anyhow. Youth engaged in sport may be just one of the alternatives to counteract the attraction to criminal activity.

Finally, why are the services of those who excelled in sports in Trinidad and Tobago and who understand local conditions not utilized? Where are the incentives for them? Where are the job opportunities? I remember speaking to two who can be well listed among our sporting heroes, who referred to the

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. REV. TEELUCKSINGH]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

opportunities in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs as almost dead-end jobs. They are not attractive at all. Working conditions are bad. I agree with Sen. Dean in his observations about some of our sporting heroes whose services we employ in the Ministry—that they should spend more time in field work rather than an office in Port of Spain.

I really believe that sports can revolutionize the dynamics of our society and it may hold the key to some of the answers for which we have been searching.

I close by encouraging the hon. Minister and all on her staff to help us as a nation to tap the resources that are latent in our people and that sport can awaken and develop.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Sen. Martin Daly: Mr. President, I would be very brief, but I cannot let this opportunity pass without making certain observations about this amendment.

The amendment proposed will have the effect of diluting the representation on the board of the persons who know the most about the two activities, sport and culture, because in the parent Act, in the section which is being repealed, there are four persons nominated by the Minister who have contributed significantly in activities related to sport and culture.

4.20 p.m

I think it is a retrograde step to dilute that independent representation from four persons to two, particularly, as the Government's presence on the committee is being enlarged. I would ask the Minister, if it is—I am not very good at sums—that the optimum number of the board is thought to be eight, then I would ask the Minister to consider, even at this late stage—I am not going to propose it—proposing an amendment that we have three persons nominated by the Minister.

I have not looked at the new Minister's curriculum vitae to see whether he has any proficiency in sports and, of course, I am not close enough socially, to know whether he is good at sports or not, but I assume that he would take advice from the two Ministers concerned.

I think it is a retrograde step to unbalance the committee in the way that is being proposed by this amendment. I would ask the Minister to consider accepting three persons instead of two who represent some kind of independent presence. If you appoint people with no track record in sports or culture as some form of

patronage, then it would be obvious to the public that you have appointed persons who are not very distinguished. I do not like the way in which the balance is being altered to the disadvantage of the more knowledgeable and more independent members of the proposed board.

Of course I am extremely unhappy that this is being placed under the Office of the Prime Minister, but I gather other persons have made some reference to the fact that the amendment of "Minister", now means "Prime Minister or such other Minister that is approved". If the intention is for the Prime Minister to approve some other Minister, then why keep this? What that tells me, is that the Office of the Prime Minister wants to keep a hold on the relevant Minister, thereby again diluting the independence of this Fund. Make no mistake, this Fund can clearly be used as a means of patronage. That is my greatest unhappiness and that is why I am registering my protest.

You can get grants according to the criteria prescribed by the board and I do not know what those criteria are. I would ask the Minister to give us an undertaking that when the Fund is set up with the reconstituted board, that those criteria would be published in advance of one penny being advanced to anybody under this Fund. Again, I am going to leave it to the Minister and the Government that these criteria be published in advance.

An ordinary advertisement in both the daily and weekly newspapers would suffice. It will certainly be a big improvement on the gloomy advertisements that are appearing. One occupies two pages in the newspapers today; and it would really be very nice if we could now have an advertisement in the newspaper that is positive, helpful, optimistic and, indeed, considerably shorter and does not represent a litany of excuses for something. It would have that advantage as well, if you advertise. Not only would it satisfy my concern about patronage but it will give us a little relief from the kind of gloomy advertisements occupying two and three pages of today's daily newspapers. That causes me to be very concerned.

I understand from my colleagues that the question has already been raised, where is the money—the existing fund—that is set aside? It does concern me to know where that money is because I noticed under section 7 of the parent Act:

"The Minister may, by Notification, designate a bank to act as the financial agent of the Fund;"

I certainly hope that if it is a citizen's bank that is going to be used, it will be one that will meet the exigencies of the circumstances.

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

Mr. President, through you, I ask the Minister not only to consider three persons in order to restore the balance of the Fund but also to publish the criteria when they are settled and to give us a few more details of precisely where this money is. I certainly hope it is not merged with the Consolidated Fund or in some place or other because, as we know, merged, sometimes mean submerged. I am concerned about that.

The reason I would support the amendment, subject to the observations I have made, is that I believe setting aside a fund for sport and culture, if it is properly administered, would help us to deal with the problem of delinquency and crime among youths and that, of course, is why I support it. It is a very noble objective. It is just that governments do not seem able to release a little creative energy in independent people and they always want to balance the board totally in favour of the Government or to have a minister—we do not know who it is going to be—who might be approved by the Prime Minister.

I accept that a Sport and Culture Fund, properly administered, would help us with some of the problems that the local constabulary do not seem able to deal with. For that reason I would support it. But the fact is, Mr. President, it must be properly administered and we must be satisfied that there is some degree of independence about the persons who are administering the Fund, that there is some degree of knowledge and competence in the relevant fields among the persons who are administering the Fund and that is why I think it is a retrograde step to dilute the balance of the board.

Those are some of my concerns, Mr. President, and I cannot vote for a piece of legislation that simply has a waffle about granting loans to deserving individuals, groups and organizations according to criteria prescribed by the board. I am very uncomfortable with that and the antidote to that is to publish the criteria.

I have raised some of my concerns which—small though they are—will determine how I might approach this piece of legislation. In fact, Mr. President, but for recent events, I might have made a very stirring plea to the Government to get on with the establishment of the Sport and Culture Fund and turn it into a sort of marshal plan for sport, but maybe that is not such a good thing to say today.

With those few remarks, Mr. President, I would give my qualified support to the legislation.

Mr. President: I do not think we have any more speakers on this side and I doubt very much the Minister would be able to reply in three minutes, so I think it is an appropriate time to take the break.

Before suspending the sitting, however, although the gentleman in question is here as an official advisor to the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, it is not very often that we are graced with the presence of an Olympic gold medalist in this Chamber. We must acknowledge our heroes and I want to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Hasely Crawford in the Chamber this afternoon. [*Desk thumping*]

4.28 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Hon. Jean Pierre): Mr. President, it was very encouraging to hear such wide-ranging contributions to this debate. I thank all hon. Senators for their contributions. It seems as though sport and culture is going to be the concern of all the citizens, and I think that is the way it really should be because, as I said earlier, sport and culture brings people together and bridges communities.

Many of the contributions focussed on the criteria under which the Fund is operated. There is a booklet entitled *A Guide to Sport and Culture Fund*, which states clearly the goals and objectives of the Fund, the criteria for assistance from the Fund and procedures for applying to the Fund. Clearly, applications to the Fund will be determined by the very specific guidelines outlined in the booklet. This booklet has been publicized and will be made available to future applicants. For example, on page 4 (2) states:

"(2) Competitions and tournaments, productions and exhibitions, festivals, physical training and coaching meetings, workshop seminars and conferences are expected to indicate project profile which will include:

name of the event, programme of activities or agenda, dates of event, venue, participants, terms and conditions of participation, their previous records."

It is all in the booklet, even the criteria—"General criteria for assistance to the Fund—page 2 D, I will just read 4, 5 and 6:

4. Assistance will be given to ventures which are deemed to be of benefit to the community or the nation as a whole.
5. In respect of the project for which funding is requested, organizations, groups or individuals must submit detailed budgetary proposals, including anticipated income and expenditure."

Sen. Daly in his contribution talked about accountability. It is all there.

"6. Applicants must also provide evidence of efforts to raise funds."

So when Sen. Teelucksingh talked about the hockey team asking for help to go off to the games, we also ask the sporting organizations to help themselves. If they do not help themselves at the last minute they will go on the media and try to solicit those kind of funds.

"Fund raising shall include donations, sponsorship, appearance fees and gate receipts."

So this will cover some of the questions raised by hon. Senators. It is clearly outlined in the booklet which is available at the Ministry of Sport and Culture.

Sen. Roi Kwabene talked about the Prime Minister and other Senators also questioned why the Prime Minister. Minister Yuille-Williams responded to that. In addition to that, I want to say, we are not looking at sport and culture for 1993, 1994 or 1995, we are looking for continuity. So per chance, if ministries are to be changed around there would always be a Prime Minister, so this is what we are looking for, continuity. That was the brainchild of our Prime Minister.

Sen. Ali spoke about inadequate facilities. I am sure hon. Senators have read recently where the Ministry announced that it was going to improve existing facilities. There would be four new sporting facilities, one in Central, South, East and the other one in Point Fortin. We are also looking at the refurbishing of the Velodrome at Arima and at the installation of the new synthetic turf for hockey. Lastly, the national sporting organization would have a home, instead of when management changes yearly, the Ministry does not know whether to send correspondence to the secretary in Point Fortin, Port of Spain or Arima. So there would be a home for our national sporting organizations.

Sen. Muntaz Hosein started his contribution with gloom and doom. I do not think that was really fair to our sportsmen and women. He said that in the past our sportsmen did not do very well, but I have here some very outstanding achievements.

Sen. Hosein: On a point of order, Mr. President. I think the hon. Minister is misquoting me. I never spoke of doom and gloom for the sportsmen, I spoke of the record of the Government.

Hon. J. Pierre: It is still doom and gloom that the hon. Senator talked about. Let me tell him, however, that our sportsmen and sportswomen have done very

well. In the past, bodybuilding—Christopher Forde, the late Mike Hercules; weight-lifting—Lennox Kilgore; track and field—our own dear Mr. Hasely Crawford and the Minister of Finance, a silver at the Olympics and a gold with Mr. Crawford; cycling—Roger Gibbon. I could name many more—football we have been doing well; cricket, swimming, boxing and my own dear sport where we did very well, netball.

Then he spoke about the shortness of the speech. I think what the hon. Senator could not believe was that he was able to be properly informed by the concise manner of my presentation. I thank Sen. Hosein, nonetheless, for his helping the boxer he spoke about. But he is not alone or unique in that situation, because I am sure that all Senators, in some way, have contributed to an athlete or someone in the steelband movement or whatever cultural activities.

Sen. Hosein also talked about priority given to sport. As I said, we are going to process all applications received and all citizens have that privilege, as I said, once they meet the criteria.

Sen. Dean gave us a definition of sport and culture, but as we all know, there are so many different definitions of sport and culture, but basically it is the same.

5.10 p.m.

Sen. Dean talked about the national body, but I do not know if Sen. Dean was in spirit at our Ministry, probably, a month ago and was observing what was happening on our drawing board. But what we are in the process of doing is that we are still trying to name the national body, either Commission for Sport, or Sports Council for Trinidad and Tobago and that would be both for sport and youth of Trinidad and Tobago. On the national policy, quite recently, Mr. President, we had both Mr. Hasely Crawford and an officer from the National Gas Company going off to Europe to do some networking to get our national policy in place. Thus, Mr. President, we are on track and making things happen.

Sen. Dean also spoke about our top sportsmen and sportswomen behind the desk and not out there in the field. Let me tell Sen. Dean that a good manager can also delegate, as we are doing. In our Ministry we have very good athletes who can operate on the field and at the desk, because they delegate and yet they know when is the precise time to go out. We have Mr. Hasely Crawford, the Acting Director, who will go out occasionally; we have Mr. Eddie Hart; and yours truly. We go out and make things happen for our citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Sport and Culture Fund (Amdt.) Bill
[HON. J. PIERRE]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

Sen. Merritt talked about Minister Yuille-Williams and myself collaborating. The collaboration is there in many things but, as I said earlier on, besides the efficiency of operating the Fund, we are also thinking specifically about the continuity. We are also looking at sport as an industry. We cannot say that we must stick to what happened in sport in 1970 or 1980. We are looking forward. We have to keep abreast of the world and to do that we have to look ahead and ensure not only that our athletes are able to perform well, but also have a livelihood from their performance. With sport as an industry, it will also help to create jobs. That is coming.

As regards the use of the Stadium for sport alone, I do not think that will be able to generate enough funds for us to maintain it. We are not unique in that, Mr. President, because at Crystal Palace, Madison Square Garden, Jamaica—you name it—even the newly built gymnasium in Barbados is used for both cultural and sporting activities. But it must be managed properly; and we are putting in place situations where we will have the proper covering and the right personnel to manage those facilities.

Sen. Merritt also spoke about the sporting facilities at Maloney. Again we are not working in isolation. We are working together with the Minister of Housing and Settlements. Whatever housing development is taking place or already there, we are looking to see how we can bring the kind of social meeting of the people.

Sen. Daly also spoke about where the money is, but I said earlier in my contribution when I was presenting the Bill—he was not here, but I will repeat myself—that the money is safe. Sen. Daly, the money is safe.

Sen. Daly: Where?

Hon. J. Pierre: In the Central Bank. It is not being "merged" but you know what is happening? It is also gaining interest and will be used specifically for sport and culture. As you suggest we are going to put in place knowledgeable and competent people to direct the Fund. The balance on the Sport and Culture Fund, at present, is \$4,807,000. *[Interruption]*

Mr. President, as the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, I can say that I am sure we are going to view the concerns expressed by all in this honourable Senate this afternoon, and we will go back and do whatever we need to make them comfortable and develop sport and culture as we see fit for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Senate in committee.

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

Clause 4.

Question proposed, That clause 4 stand part of the Bill.

Sen. Daly: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that clause 4(f) be amended to read "three" persons, instead of two.

Mr. Chairman: You want to move an amendment to change the composition of the Board?

Sen. Saith: I can assure Sen. Daly that the representatives of the Ministry can, in fact, be independent minded people.

Sen. Daly: I did not hear what he said.

Sen. Saith: I said although it says representatives of the Ministry of Sport, they can, in fact, be independent minded people. One does not have to assume that, because the Ministry of Sport puts somebody on the Fund, they will not be independent minded.

Sen. Daly: I see. I will not proceed.

Amendment withdrawn.

Clause 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

Senate resumed.

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

5.20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith): Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, November 23, 1993 at 1.30 p.m.

Birthday Greetings

Mr. President: Before putting the question, I am sure that Senators would like to join me in extending birthday greetings to our beloved Leader of Government Business in the Senate. *[Applause]*

Also, Sen. Muntaz Hosein has obtained leave to raise the following matter on the motion for the adjournment—the increase in the incidence of dengue fever in the island.

Dengue Fever (Increased Incidence of)

Sen. Muntaz Hosein: Mr. President, the increase in the incidence of dengue fever in Trinidad and Tobago is cause for alarm. The present statistics regarding dengue fever in Trinidad and Tobago will show that in 1992, an average of 53 cases per month was recorded. Of these, there were 642 clinically-diagnosed cases. For the first eight months of 1993, there has been an average of 71 cases per month. There were 574 clinically-diagnosed cases.

You will see from these statistics alone that the rise in the number of cases of dengue fever is quite alarming. One might want to conclude that, perhaps, we are getting to the point where we are reaching epidemic proportions.

Let us examine what some of the experts had to say. With your permission, Sir, I would like to read from the *Express* of Tuesday, November 2, 1993. It features that “Dengue could reach Epidemic Heights” and I quote.

“It is a fact that for most of the year the Insect Vector Control Division (IVDC) has operated without Temephos, a chemical used to kill the larvae of the *Aedes aegypti*, the mosquito which transmits dengue fever.

It is also true that in the first eight months of this year there have been 574 reported cases of clinically-diagnosed dengue fever in the country (65 laboratory-confirmed). In the 12 months of 1992 there were 642 clinically-diagnosed cases reported (116 laboratory-confirmed). The director of the Public Health Laboratory, Dr. Merle Lewis, was quoted last month as saying that ‘if things keep up’ dengue fever could reach epidemic proportions in Trinidad and Tobago.”

It continues, Mr. President, and I quote again:

“The *Aedes aegypti* is entirely domestic, living and breeding in close proximity to man and preferring to feed on human blood. The mosquito

prefers to lay its eggs in standing collections of clear water, and is therefore well adapted to breed in the artificial water-holding containers found within and around households."

You see, if we look at the examples in different areas in Trinidad and Tobago, we will come to an appreciation of the real problems we are facing.

First, I would like to tell you something about the areas called Barataria and El Socorro South. Some people are familiar with that area. I know, my good Friend, Dr. Saith, is going to be in that area tonight although not where the mosquitoes infest because he would not want to be in that area. He will be further up.

Barataria and El Socorro South, across the highway, are littered with overgrown bushes, clogged drains, absence of spraying which is something of the past in those areas, for every time you call the Insect Vector Control Division, all you are told is, "Well, we do not have any chemicals, therefore, we cannot spray."

The mosquito infestation in that area is so bad that you would find it strange if you went down there about 5.30 or 6.00 o'clock in the evening, to see all the people wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants, and you would think that you are in some far off country, perhaps with a cold climate. But it is nothing like that. It is that they are afraid of the mosquitoes. Some dress like nuns; some like priests. They cover their entire bodies.

The mosquitoes there attack in swarms. It is not one biting you. As a matter of fact, about two weeks ago, I was in that area talking to a gentleman. It was about 6.00 p.m. Mr. President, a swarm of mosquitoes covered his entire left ear. It is that bad. They attack you like the African bees, in swarms.

If we were to look a bit further north, to Santa Cruz. In Santa Cruz, there are many cases of dengue fever and there, too, there is the incidence of overgrown bushes on private property, but the mosquitoes in Santa Cruz are not many in number. There are just a few, but they are quite selective. Those are the mosquitoes that spread dengue fever. That is the problem with Santa Cruz. It is not a problem of quantity, it is a question of quality; the wrong quality mosquito, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

My third survey took me to San Fernando, the posh Gulf View area. I think Dr. Saith knows that area very well. In the Gulf View area, the main problem is lots of overgrown bushes—the same problem. In addition to that, there are many holes in these empty plots of land, not to mention the large holes in the roads. You

Dengue Fever (Increased Incidence of)
[SEN. HOSEIN]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

would be surprised to know that these mosquitoes are breeding in the road. There was a short street, only eight holes and on that street, there were four cases in one week in that area of Gulf View.

Sen. Rooks: Include Palmiste in that.

Sen. M. Hosein: Not Palmiste. No.

Hon. Senator: He lives in that area, you know.

Sen. M. Hosein: Well, I do not know. Sen. Rooks tells me it is the same problem that he has at Palmiste. So we will add Palmiste to the list.

Mr. President, there are problems for the householders as well. You would find on practically every grocery list of those of us who go to the groceries, some kind of insecticide for killing flies and mosquitoes, particularly mosquitoes. And you know that householders now are having difficulties with making ends meet. You have to buy these aerosol insecticides and there seems to be very little quality involved here. I do not know whether it is that the mosquitoes are so much smarter or whether the quality of the aerosol insecticides is poor.

In the old days, we used to use something called "Flit" and that used to do the job very well. It did not smell so good but it used to kill the mosquitoes. Today, we use all kinds of sophisticated types of insecticides, but they are not doing the job.

5.30 p.m.

I remember going to the grocery and buying the discount brand. I believe I paid something like \$7 or \$8. I thought they were all the same so I would buy this one. I used it, but with little effect. Then I thought, "well okay, the next time I must buy the most expensive brand". So I bought the most expensive one I could find—I think I paid around \$20-plus. To my surprise, when I sprayed inside the bedroom where there were about three mosquitoes do you know what happened? The mosquitoes just simply "steups" and went about their business. It is as though the spray had absolutely no effect.

It is all well and good to make fun of things like this, but some people die from dengue fever. A Senator was explaining to us at the tea break that his wife is down with dengue fever. I had a call from my sister who lives in Barataria, she is down with it also. So this is a serious matter and not something to play with. These are just people that we know but what about all the others of whom we are not aware? The statistics are very clear.

Let us examine the problems at the Insect Vector Control Division. I would like to quote from the *Express* of Tuesday, November 2, 1993. It states at page 30:

"Using a clinical approach, the 750 field officers working with the Division attempt to cover each of the households in Trinidad and Tobago at least once every three-month cycle. Dr. Chadee says it is estimated that each officer covers between 30-35 households per day.

Where and when spraying takes place depends on the time of year, the house index (the percentage of houses examined in the area that have *Aedes aegypti*), how much of a nuisance the insects are, and the level of disease transmission. The IVCD also responds to public calls for assistance."

I could concur with that particular point because I had to call them on two occasions on behalf of the people south of El Socorro and they did respond. On the first occasion, the response was that they had no chemicals. The second time around they did respond.

I continue to quote:

"But the Division has to deal with limitations other than shortages of chemicals. Its efforts to touch every house in the country are often upset because so many homes are empty during the workday.

Three vehicles are available to carry out spraying exercises in the entire country..."

Three vehicles to do spraying in the entire country. No wonder they cannot reach the areas they ought to be reaching. In a country like ours, I think three is very small and we have to try to increase that.

"Operating every day, five days a week, takes its toll on the vehicles and on the Division's 40 hand-held machines. Weather conditions—wind, rain, humidity—often prevent the foggers from operating when they are needed most."

So you see, there are major problems within the Insect Vector Control Division and Government must look at their priorities because this is the health of the nation, and they must try to give the Insect Vector Control Division much more money to buy their chemicals to do the spraying to enable people to live a life free of dengue fever.

Dengue Fever (Increased Incidence of)
[SEN. HOSEIN]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

I think we must talk today about people with property who are allowing it to be overgrown with bushes.

Mr. President: You have one minute to wind up.

Sen. M. Hosein: Thank you, Mr. President.

There are too many properties of this nature and the law is very clear. Perhaps the penalties ought to be revised to provide for harsher penalties. Those who are charged with the responsibility of carrying out the law are probably not doing it, because we are seeing too many properties left unattended which is a major problem.

I wish to ask the Government to beef up that area and try and get that done. They should also spend more money in educating the public of their responsibilities and what they can do to help themselves. I hope that the Minister will tell us what he is doing to help the country eradicate dengue fever.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): Mr. President, it is, of course, a great pleasure to visit your Chamber. I would have liked to have visited under very different circumstances, but I suppose I have to answer wherever my Ministry is presumed to have failed. In this particular case, I must agree with the Senator opposite that there is a serious problem with dengue fever in Trinidad and Tobago. His figures are a bit dated so I shall try to present the up-to-date figures.

There is, at present, an increase in the reported cases of dengue fever. Today there are 2,269 clinically diagnosed cases. The number of laboratory confirmed cases is 188. This represents an increase over the 1991 and 1992 figures. The 1992 figure for clinically diagnosed cases is 116 to be compared with 188 in 1993. There has been a sharp rise in the number of cases since the seventh four-week period. The check is done in four-week cycles. The cases appear to have peaked in the tenth four-week period and have declined since, from a high of 828 in the tenth cycle to 490 in the eleventh cycle.

It should be noted that the greatest number of cases occur at approximately the same time each year during the rainy season. Fortunately, there have been no deaths reported that are linked to the dengue fever.

The Ministry has responded to the situation and the following measures have been taken: First, control of the vector. The index of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito

is measured in specific areas throughout the country, and based on the indices the Insect Vector Control Division of the Ministry of Health embarked on a dengue fever response programme. The programme involves area-wide spraying, intra and extra domiciliary as well as perifocal residual spraying and the focal treatment of infested containers. Priority is being given to zones in which laboratory confirmed dengue fever cases exist and those where the *Aedes Aegypti* indices are high.

The Senator dwelt at length on the resources available to the Insect Vector Control Division. The situation is that the Insect Vector Control Division has an establishment of 195 monthly-paid staff and 646 daily-rated workers, mainly sprayers. In 1992, the provision for this Division was \$22.39 million. In fact, I met recently with the trade union which represents these workers and there is a demand to hire another 180 workers, notwithstanding the problems we have with respect to insecticide—that is, we do not have money to buy insecticide. Any other organization would have reduced the staff, to enable it to buy the insecticide that is desperately needed. But with Government, one has to stick with the establishment, notwithstanding the very large sum of money which is being spent, \$22.39 million in 1992, on wages and salaries for this Division. We are strapped for funds but we do not have the flexibility to do away with some of the labour to enable us to buy the insecticide that is needed. So we are labouring under problems with respect to the supplies.

It is important to note that the Division in its programme has attained limited success due to a number of factors, but the most important of which is the lack of the necessary support by householders. The *Aedes Aegypti*—and the Senator mentioned it in his contribution—is a domestic mosquito living in close association with man. It infests man-made or natural containers; no high bushes; no clogged drains. It lays its eggs in containers with relatively clean water, found in or near human dwellings. It does not matter whether there is an overgrowth of bushes, the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito is a domesticated mosquito and does not deposit its eggs in clogged drains, as the Senator implied in his contribution.

5.40 p.m.

Householders, therefore, have an important role to play in the control and eradication effort by removing or destroying discarded containers and covering water storage containers on their premises. This is the safest method for the elimination of the breeding sources as it does not involve insecticide

Dengue Fever (Increased Incidence of)
[HON. J. ECKSTEIN]

Tuesday, November 16, 1993

contamination—when the Insect Vector Control does the job, there are side effects. The recommended method of getting rid of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito is through action by each individual in his or her home.

In terms of public education, the staff of the Public Health Laboratory and the Health Education Division have already intensified public education programmes advising on the source reduction activities required to reduce the population of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito. The programmes involve the use of mass media, lectures at schools and community and social groups, one-to-one communication between individual householders and field staff of the Insect Vector Control Division; and, of course, my contribution here this afternoon.

The curtailment of the present dengue fever outbreak is dependent on the immediate reduction of the *Aedes Aegypti* population. It is the only way we can control the dengue fever problem that exists, and this can only be done through a combined effort. I am not saying that the Insect Vector Control Division does not have a role to play—it has a very significant role to play—but as I said, we need the support of the public. The Insect Vector Control Division has already intensified its own insecticide application programmes and the public is now urged to assist by reducing sources of breeding places both on their individual premises and in their communities.

Mr. President, this is surely a case of not what the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito can do to you, but more importantly, what we, through deliberate action, can do to decimate the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito population.

Thank you.

Question put and agreed.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.46 p.m.