

*Late Arrival**Thursday, December 08, 1994***SENATE***Thursday, December 08, 1994*

The Senate met at 10.00 a.m.

PRAYERS[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**LATE ARRIVAL**

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have been advised that the following Senators will be a little late for today's sitting: Sen. Dr. the Hon. Lenny Saith, Sen. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Sen. Prof. John Spence and Sen. Muntaz Hosein.

**APPROPRIATION BILL
(BUDGET)**

[Third Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [December 06, 1994]:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Russell Huggins): Mr. President, I do not know what I have done to deserve such a good turn-out, but I should like to start by saying that after the tongue-lashing my good Friend. Sen. Wade Mark received yesterday I must say that I have never seen him so quiet and so well-behaved. As a result of which, the Senate seems to have lost some of its luster. I have no problem, whatsoever, with waiving my rights to protection from Sen. Wade Mark.

I should like to open my contribution on the 1995 Budget this morning with the Civilian conservation Corps, principally because it is a programme which addresses the youth, and also because it came in for some scathing remarks, first from Sen. Wade Mark, who suggested that it was an exploitation of our youth, and I think it was Sen. Carol Merritt, who seemed to make a similar suggestion, but more on the question that they were being paid some \$4.90-odd to do a day's work.

You will recall that the Minister of Finance in this 1993 Budget speech in the other House indicated that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, in its commitment to generating employment, proposed to allocate the sum of \$15 million to the Civilian conservation Corps to undertake a programme of re-

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afforestation throughout Trinidad and Tobago. The Minister of Finance stressed that the intent of the programme was to impart important skills to participants, while contributing to the conservation of the environment. I now wish to report that the corps commenced operations on June 4, 1993, and so far, three cycles of training have been completed and the fourth is in progress.

Cabinet, in Minute 287, dated February 4, 1993, agreed to the establishment of the corps under the management of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force to address the following national and sectoral issues:

- (a) The creation of temporary employment for unemployed youths.
- (b) Training and development of young person with low levels of literacy skills, thereby equipping them to be better able to seek employment.
- (c) Environmental protection.
- (d) Initiation of action to combat the growth of socially undesirable behaviour among youths.

The programme was expected to impact on the following national sectors, and has, in fact, done so as indicated. In the forestry resources sector, 80 acres of land has been re-afforested and 6,000 plants of forest species have been produced.

In the parks, recreation and tourism sector, there has been an enhanced image at the La Brea pitch lake; creation of new recreational parks; introduction of training programmes for tour guides and establishment of nature trails.

In the community development sector, there have been several community-based projects and arising from this experience, the proposal to establish co-operatives by the corps to use the skills of trainees.

In the environmental protection sector, there have been several beach beautification projects; the de-silting of the Courland River Basin and a turtle-protection project.

The Technical and administrative support was provided by the following Ministries and departments of Government: The Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine resources; the Ministry of Trade and Tourism; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Local Government. Although the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force was mandated to manage the activities of the corps, guidance was given by a steering and a working committee.

On an annual basis the activities of the corps are organized into cycles of three-month duration. The first two weeks of each cycle is devoted to induction training. The remaining 12 weeks is spent on project execution, under the supervision of Defence Force personnel. The period of induction training represents a direct attempt to initiate attitudinal change in the trainees and equip them with the basic skills required to execute the projects.

Projects-oriented training relates to nursery operations, agricultural operations and crop maintenance, tour guide training, wild life education, forest fire suppression and control, soil conservation techniques, building or restoration, use of natural items for craft production and operation and maintenance of small engines.

In these areas, on-the-job training is generally conducted during the course of each cycle. Each trainee is not exposed to all the areas listed, but rather only to those areas which relate to the respective projects. In some instances, depending on the nature of the project, a trainee could be exposed to more than one area training, including survival training.

At its inception, the Civilian Conservation Corps was organized into five regions: North-West, North-East, Central, south and Tobago. By the second cycle, however, the South region was further subdivided into South-West, South and South-East. Since commencement of operations on June 14, 1993, three cycles of three month duration have been undertaken in the respective regional divisions and the fourth cycle is currently in progress.

A total of 5,385 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 years have been employed on various projects.

10.10 a.m.

Personnel of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force in administering the corps, provide the required supervisory services to the trainees in the day to day operations of the activities and programmes of the Corps.

In effect, two officers and 71 other ranks from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force are deployed.

An examination of the financial report of the corps since its inception, reveals total expenditure as at June 30, 1994 in the sum of \$9,897,984.91. This is detailed as follows: stipends at the rate of \$30 per day per person, \$7.006 million; capital expenditure, \$1.7 million, and recurrent expenditure, \$1.1 million.

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The military organizers of the corps in assessing the success of the programme have taken special note of public response to the activities of the Corps and in this regard they have confirmed that the programme has achieved acceptable results. There has been general improvement in the areas of discipline, responsibility and self-esteem of the majority of the participants.

The Corps has significantly enhanced the ability of the Forestry Division to replant and conserve the national forestry resources.

Approximately 10 per cent of all project activity can be regarded as on-the-job training since the acquisition of a marketable skill is involved. Such areas include plant propagation, forest fire suppression, nursery production, delivery of tourism services, the conduct of guided tours, small business development, and maintenance of small engines.

In assessing the success rate of the programme, reference is made to the four stated objectives of the programme:

- (a) The creation of temporary employment;
- (b) Training and developing young persons with low levels of literacy to better equip or prepare them to seek employment;
- (c) Environmental protection;
- (d) Initiation of action to control the growth of socially undesirable behaviour.

The Civilian Conservation Corps is at present essentially a youth employment programme, which provides some training to participants. The 1995 programme will seek to overcome its shortage of supervisory and technically trained support staff, strengthen the training aspect, establish the revenue-earning capability of the programme and implement a co-operative development aspect to accommodate graduates of the programme in paid employment in CCC generated projects. A proposal to incorporate activities of other youth organizations such as the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force into the programme of the corps is also being considered.

It is proposed to effect some adjustment in the range of projects which have already been undertaken to include the following:

- Restoration of urban recreational parks;
- Restoration of historical sites;

Beautification of grounds around established housing settlements; and
More urban projects.

One of the early urban projects that will be tackled is the beautification of the median at the Croisee.

Training to provide participants with some degree of self-sufficiency has always been a focus of the programme, and this thrust continues to be expanded. For example, an Employee Training Assistance Programme has been launched in the current cycle to enable trainees to obtain entry to short training courses administered by the John Donaldson Technical Institute. The programme is still forced to focus heavily on providing training for the participants in the acquisition of basic social skills. This is a major contribution which the programme is making in the field of youth training and youth development.

While pursuing the area of social skills training, it is not intended that the corps will move away from contributing to environmental conservation. If anything, other areas may be added, such as the enhancement of residential communities and the preservation of the national heritage. Such projects should be very welcome, particularly, given the intention to increase the numbers employed.

The 1995 programme, which has been funded to the level of \$15 million in Trinidad, and \$0.6 million in Tobago, aims to accommodate between 4,800 and 7,200 trainees and to address some important constraints which have been identified so far. Eventually, over the next three years, we propose to increase first to 7,200 trainees per year and then to 10,000 per year, provided the budgetary resources are available.

It is clear, therefore, from the reports we have had so far that the Civilian Conservation Corps programme is in fact addressing the objectives which were set by the Minister of Finance in his 1993 budget.

I will now turn briefly to the police service. I was a bit surprised that my dear Friend Sen. Carol Merritt seemed to have focused her attention on the health sector and, for once, has given the police service a much deserved rest. And, as my colleague just said, a clean bill of health.

Sen. Merritt: For now.

Sen. The Hon. R. Huggins: Mr. President, the restructuring of the top echelons of the police service is now substantially complete. The number of

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Deputy Commissioners of Police has been reduced to one and the number of Assistant Commissioners will reduce during 1995 from eight to six as senior officers proceed on pre-retirement leave, and their positions are not filled.

The number of Senior Superintendents of Police has been increased from 12 to 19 and this is the rank within the police service that will discharge the principal operational responsibilities. It is intended that Senior Superintendents will head divisions and branches of the police service.

We are currently engaged in a number of exercises intended to assure that police officers at various ranks are prepared for succession to these higher level positions, since it is clear that within the next three to five years a significant proportion of the senior personnel—over 50 per cent—will reach retirement age. This poses a major challenge of manpower preparation so as to ensure that the future management of the police service is not jeopardized.

At the same time, we continue to focus on the process of civilianization. Three of the four civilian managers are in the post and performing. The fourth, the Information Technology Manager has proved somewhat more difficult to recruit. Efforts continue to be made to fill this post. I should add that at present, interviews are taking place for the filling of 25 middle management civilian positions in the police service. It is hoped that when these positions are filled, that will release approximately 66 uniformed police officers to do the job for which they were trained, that is, police work and not, “pushing pen”.

10.20 a.m.

During the course of 1994, Cabinet took the decision that in order to address the problems of high risk areas, there should be established in some 16 locations throughout the country, police posts which would be linked to stations in the district.

These posts will be supplied with manpower from those stations and will bring to those districts a police presence that was unavailable to residents and give the public the ability to respond quickly to disturbances or to needs for investigation. During 1995 the programme for establishment of these posts will commence in light of the provisions made in the 1995 appropriations for this purpose.

Further, efforts are being made to cease the pattern of temporary, full-time engagement of SRPs. These officers have no suitable claims to superannuation and can be dismissed at short notice, but are often required to perform the same duties

and endure the same risks as regular policemen. There is currently under review a proposal for regularizing the status of SRPs who have served in this capacity for some significant period

The intention there is to remove all these so-called temporary full-time SRPs completely so that the SRPs would go back to what they were initially intended to do, to be a reserv force, and those who are suitably qualified would be inducted into the regular stream of the police service. Those who are not qualified will simply be allowed to retire.

With respect to the accommodation, we are reviewing the conditions of police stations, and apart from those stations announced for construction or reconstruction, that is, the San Fernando and Sangre Grande Stations—I do not see my Friend from Sangre Grande—the stations in Princes Town and Barataria/El Socorro, the rebuilding of the stations at Erin, Arouca, Maraval and Four Roads, Diego Martin is to commence in 1995.

What we will also commence in 1995 is a process of rationalizing the distribution and sizing of stations to reflect the changes and movements in population over the last several years, and the anticipated population growth and distribution over the next decade or so. As a consequence, we expect that in some locations there will be new, large police stations established, but these will be complemented by several police posts. Progress with the upgrading of the police fleet and the ensuring of police mobility will facilitate this new approach to policing which should yield, along with the community policing efforts, improved closeness between the police and the community and more rapid response by the police to the complaints of the citizenry.

During 1994 this Government took note of the complaints about the lack of mobility and the lack of resources being provided to the police service. For 1994, 29 new motorcars were purchased and 17 Land Rover jeeps were provided. Some of you, who entered the Chamber from Knox Street yesterday, would have seen about seven of the new jeeps parked outside.

I want to make it clear, as a result of a concern that was expressed to me yesterday, when the Government purchases these vehicles they are turned over to the Commissioner of Police. The Government has no responsibility whatever for the operational aspects of the police service. The Government is not to take blame if one of those vehicles does not find its way to the Sangre Grande Police Station or to the Erin Police Station. The decision to distribute these vehicles appropriately lies with the Commissioner of Police.

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As the Minister of National Security, I can only urge that one be placed in Sangre Grande or one be placed in Morvant, as the case may be, but at the end of the day it is really a decision for the Commissioner of Police. And, it is important to note—I do not normally quote from newspapers, but I saw that in the *Guardian* of Wednesday, December, 07, 1994 at page three, the Commissioner has noted that there has been an increase in the mobility during the year, and this was one big step in the police being able to maintain patrols throughout the country.

In addition to providing those new vehicles we had also identified 120 vehicles for repair. At the end of 1994 we would have repaired 105 of those 120 vehicles at a cost of \$1.622 million and I think 59 of them have already been sent back into service. So, there ought to be no complaints from the public when they call on stations, that they do not have vehicles, and if they get such complaints they can write to me and I will deal with it.

In addition, there has been a complaint by the police service that bandits have superior weapons and are better equipped in battles with members of the police service. I should like to mention that in 1994 steps were taken to upgrade the weaponry of the police service at a cost of approximately \$1.36 million. I can now safely say that all of those police officers who belong to the Service Support Unit and the Rapid Response Units that go out there to deal with serious crimes, are now better armed and equipped than the bandits. This was also confirmed by the Commissioner in the interview as reported in the *Guardian*.

We are, in fact, taking steps to improve the resources of the police service, and I guess that by the end of 1995 crime should be a thing of the past [*Laughter*]. When I say crime should be a thing of the past there is something that you also have to remember: that there are people in this society who are intent on being criminals and that is something we seem to lose sight of; that there are people in this society regardless of what you do will be criminals.

Just as there are some people who, regardless of what you do, would become lawyers and would continue to be lawyers right to the end; and Opposition Senators and Opposition Parliamentarians. There are people who will always be criminals. One has to understand also, that when a criminal leaves his place of residence and goes out to commit a crime, he goes out there in the belief that he will not be apprehended. When I say crime will be something of the past, I do not mean that crime will be totally eradicated. No country in this world could ever eradicate crime totally. Regardless of the size of their resources, that is impossible.

We have already seen steps taken to bring the crime level down at least to a manageable level, and the Government is doing all within its power to provide the police service with the wherewithal to deal with this problem.

Yes, you would see a murder here and there and a robbery here and there but I think that no one can deny that the efforts being made by the police over the past few months. After some good prodding they have taken a serious step towards dealing with this problem of crime.

10.30 a.m.

If I may quickly turn to the prison service and one aspect of it which seems to be making the news as much as crime. That has to do with prison transport. That is in fact a problem. The Government, being aware of its responsibility for the protection of the rights of the citizen, looked very hard at the question of prisoner transportation. Towards this end, a decision has been taken to contract out prisoner transportation. This is nothing new. It is being done in the developed countries of the world.

Towards this end, tenders have already been invited for the contracting out of prisoner transportation. The way this is going to work is that some private contractor would have to provide vehicles to certain specifications, would go to the various prisons on a morning, or whenever required, with an entire fleet to take the prisoners to court wherever it may be, at San Fernando, Point Fortin, or Mayaro; await the prisoners there, and then return them to the prisons at Port of Spain or Golden Grove.

In this way we believe that we would be able to deal with this problem of prisoners not being taken to court on time and all of the constitutional issues that may flow from that. As I said, tenders have already been issued, and I think they close around January 15. The intention is to address Port of Spain and the East/West corridor area on a trial basis for about six months and see how it operates before we extend it to the rest of the country.

Sen. Ali: May I ask the hon, Minister to tell us whether these contractors would be provided with police escort, and whether it is an exclusive contract, for example, if the state may want to escort their special prisoners or witnesses as the case may be?

Sen. The Hon. R. Huggins: The contract to transport the prisoners is not intended to be exclusive. There would be certain high risk prisoners and the police service and/or the prison service would continue to deal with them.

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However, I do not foresee in the very near future the Government being able to provide the type of resources that are necessary in order to maintain an efficient prison transport system. It is extremely costly to provide that. The exercise that we have done shows that it is much cheaper to contract out that service than to try to perform it ourselves. This is based on the studies that we have done in the United States on the basis of systems operating there, and in the United Kingdom. I could say that the problems that relate to the prison service are well in hand and that should be a complaint of the past in due course.

Insofar as the defence force is concerned, between 1995 and 1997, emphasis will really be placed on the improvement of accommodation provided for the defence force as well as to bring the defence force battalions up to their required strength. It is expected in 1995 to award a contract to complete the dormitory facilities at the Teteron base. Many of you may have seen a steel structure standing there. I have been told that that has been standing there for 22 years.

The decision has been taken to complete that structure principally because there is an absence of proper accommodation for the female members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. In as much as it is the intention next year to bring 25 women into the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, facilities must be provided for them. We would also be doing refurbishing work at Staubles Bay, and a new coast guard facility will be built at Point Galeota. The new building at Camp Ogden, which I am told has been under construction for the better part of seven years, is finally due to be handed over on December 16, 1994.

As I mentioned earlier, the intention is to increase the battalions of the Trinidad and Tobago defence force up to full strength, principally because the Defence Force is going to be deployed more and more into assisting in the battle against drugs, as well as the protection of certain key government buildings. For example, we do not want the Senate to sit until 9.00 p.m. and Senators expressing fear of walking to their cars. It is the intention to have a 24-hour army security posted at the Parliament building and at certain other buildings, so we can then sit until 1.00 a.m. or 2.00 a.m. and feel relatively safe.

As I mentioned earlier, the intention is to increase the number of young people in the Civilian Conservation Corps. As this programme is run principally by the defence force, one would ensure that there is sufficient supervisory staff to deal with the wide range of activities which we intend to put into the Civilian Conservation Corps Programme. Each year therefore, from 1995 to 1998, we would be recruiting seven officers and 120 men into the defence force. I do not

want this to be taken as an invitation for letters to be written to me asking me to get Tom, Dick and Harry into the defence force. I stay very far from the recruitment exercises of the defence force.

Insofar as the fire service is concerned, that area has been one of the problem areas for the Ministry of National Security principally in terms of fleet availability. As you would have heard, a couple months ago, Cabinet agreed to provide the sum of \$58 million with a view to improving the equipment capability of the fire service. Steps have already been taken to acquire approximately 16 new vehicles, so that every fire station in Trinidad and Tobago would be suitably equipped to deal with any emergency.

10.40 a.m.

I want to make one point clear: none of these vehicles will be seen in 1995 because it takes approximately one year to build one. Those vehicles may not appear on the scene until early 1996. It is intended that the tender for the acquisition of these vehicles will go out by the end of this year.

We also intend to upgrade the response capability of both the Piarco and Crown Point Airports. As it is, there is much concern about the capability of those facilities.

We have also taken steps to regularize the personnel situation at the fire service where we have a large group of what we call temporary/full-time employees, and we have decided to make all of them regular fire officers after going through an appropriate period of training, so that the numbers will, in fact, be increased.

It is the first time that I have received a letter from a trade union or a worker representative association indicating that it now has no problems about which to see the Minister. I throw this out to my Friend Sen. Wade Mark.

I am sorry that Sen. Persad-Bissessar is not here because she raised some issues pertaining to the administration of justice and asked some questions as to certain provisions made under the Ministry of Legal Affairs. I think that one of the questions she had asked was: What was this "desk operating system" for which funds have been provided? I think the sum of \$300,000 has been provided in the 1995 Estimates and that amount is intended to be used in the Law Revision Commission which falls under the office of the Attorney General.

This is to facilitate the more rapid updating of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago so that attorneys would no longer complain of having to search all over

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for the laws. I know that there are many places where one cannot even find the amendments because the Government Printery may not have printed sufficient copies to enable all practising attorneys to get one. The whole reason behind putting this system in place is to ensure that there is a more efficient reproduction of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago to avoid the problems with which we are now faced.

I think Sen. Persad-Bissessar also asked the question as to what has happened with the computerization of the records at the Land Registry, since no provision appears to have been made for that exercise in the 1995 Budget.

The computerization of the Land Registry is being funded under an investment sector loan from the Inter-American Development Bank, hence the reason no provision was made for the exercise in the 1995 Budget. The objective of that programme is to undertake the institutional strengthening and modernization of the Land Registry of the Registrar General's Department to facilitate transactions in land.

Similarly, the computerization of records at the Registrar General's Department, Civil Registry, that is Births and Deaths, will be financed from funds provided for the establishment of a population registration system. This system is aimed at assigning each citizen a number which will uniquely identify him or her from birth to death and which will be used by all Government agencies. Hence the reason no provision has been made under the Ministry of Legal Affairs for that.

Under the heading "Judiciary—Personnel Emoluments" increases in the appropriations are intended to be used in the creation of four additional Justices of Appeal and supporting staff to create an additional court of appeal. It is also intended that the increase will address the staffing the proposed Arima High Court, Assistant Registrar and other support staff, and the filling of vacant clerical and other non-legal posts in the Judiciary. All of this has come out of the task force appointed by the Government to implement the recommendations of the *Gurley Report*. It is therefore incorrect to suggest that the Government has simply received this report and is doing nothing with it.

Insofar as the Ministry of Legal Affairs is concerned, the increased allocations are really related to moneys which were provided to that ministry for the purpose of filling, in 1994, the vacancies of State Counsel and so forth. Those vacancies, unfortunately, were not filled and the moneys were re-voted hoping that they would be filled in 1995. Just so that Senators will know how vacancies are filled, the responsibility for filling vacancies in the Ministry of Legal Affairs rests with

the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. The Ministry of Legal Affairs simply provides the funds for paying the persons who hold these offices.

Questions were also raised as to the increases shown in the allocation of the Ministry of National Security, under "Personnel Expenditure". The question was asked whether any of this money was intended to pay arrears. The only arrears in the Ministry of National Security that this money is intended to address relate to overtime by police officers, which is in the region of \$27.7 million. Of the increase provided, \$15 million is intended for the recruitment of new staff in the police service, prison service, defence force, fire service and the civilianization exercise in the police service. Of the budgetary allocation made to the Ministry of National Security, \$561 million of the \$724 million goes into personnel expenditure.

10.50 a.m.

I have attempted to give a brief insight into what is happening at the Ministry of National Security, and I can say that it is clear from the fact that very little adverse comment was made in the debate in this Senate on the ministry's performance, Senators are fast becoming satisfied with the work being done in that ministry.

I want to assure Members that in the short time I probably have remaining at the Ministry, I will ensure that the best methods are put in place so that come 1996 or 1997—whatever it is—when a new PNM Government takes over the reins of the country after the next general election, it would have a very firm base from which to work. And, maybe, when the next Minister of National Security stands here to speak he can start off with the words, "satisfaction guaranteed."

I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to contribute in this debate and I see that the good behaviour that began yesterday has prevailed and if it so continues I feel certain that we will have a very short sitting.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Everard Dean: Mr. President, having been padded-up for the last three days, and coming in to bat at No. 21 on the last day of the match I am a bit leg weary; therefore, I would take the wicket with some hurry "voops" and get out as fast as I can.

Sen. Daly spoke about kicks and kisses and I think that he had in fact performed better than Diego Maradona. In my contribution, I want to do a little kissing and act the role of Rudolph Valentino in this budget debate.

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The Minister of Finance has given us some good news about which he should feel justifiably satisfied. We were told, among other things, that the economy has grown by the appreciable rate of four per cent in 1994; that unemployment was on the wane, albeit only marginally so; that the current account would show a healthy surplus in 1994; that foreign exchange earnings had risen sufficiently to provide us with a three-month cover; that the foreign debt was under control; and last, but by no means least, that all this was accomplished with an inflation rate of about eight per cent.

When one of our senatorial colleagues was on this feet, somebody asked for an executive summary of his contribution. Let me tell you what you can expect from my contribution, Sir. Despite the lucid and impressive contribution made yesterday by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources on the performance of his ministry I want to touch a little bit on agriculture. Let me say, before I go on, that all compliments to the Minister of Agriculture on his performance in that Ministry. I also want to touch briefly on corporation tax, the small business development company, the expenditure in the social sector, privatization and possibly, some general questions on tourism.

As I indicated and as the Budget statement did, there was this GDP growth of four per cent with an inflation rate of about eight per cent. I want to make the point that these figures would mean nothing to the worker nor the man on the factory floor because he has not been able to see any real additional income in his pocket.

If all these indicators are correct, and I repeat, if all these indicators are correct, then the Minister and his Government must be complimented. Furthermore, Sir, I believe that the entire population of Trinidad and Tobago should be complimented, for as a people, we have shown much patience and goodwill under conditions that were strenuous and stressful. And if something is finally surfacing, then it is as much the fruit of your labour as it is mine.

But, Mr. President, the struggle is far from over—a point that was not missed by the Minister, who, despite his optimism, displayed an equal measure of caution, both in the measures that he announced, as well as in choosing the price of oil on which this year's revenue projections are based; that is the conservative figure of \$16.50 per barrel.

It was clear that over the last three years the oil price forecasts in the Budget were not that realistic. In fact, one can say that the "Mottleyonomics" of the period in determining the price of a barrel of oil did not work. Even at \$16.50 I

think we should not feel happy with that, because if the embargo is removed from Iraq, then Saddam Hussain would once more control the economics of the world as far as the oil price is concerned.

Mr. Hussain is already demanding that if he respects the conditions imposed by the United Nations, his country would be expected to revert to the production of three million barrels per day, as existed before the time of the embargo. There and then, there would be three million barrels of oil per day added to the production, so there is still a danger in this regard.

The tax relief given to both individuals and corporations is not vulgar, and in addition to being a timely reward for the decade of difficulties, is also an incentive to continue the struggle right through to the end.

11.00 a.m.

There is much good in this budget, but there are also some areas with which I have some misgivings and please allow me, Sir, to turn my attention to these. One of the areas is unemployment. As you would no doubt agree, unemployment is both a social and an economic malaise. The figures cited by the Minister are cold comfort to those who are unemployed or those who are poor and destitute. The truth is, notwithstanding the pretty message of the figures, the stark reality is ugly and grim.

In the first place, an unemployment rate of 18 per cent is intolerable by any standard. Secondly, even if it is an improvement on previous years, the global figure masks the fact that unemployment among the young—those 25 years old and under—is considerably higher than 18 per cent. I would ask Sen. Maloney—the self-styled leader of the youth in this Senate—to take note of that fact. Many of these young people, have never held a steady job in their entire lives and have grown to be very cynical and despondent over the years.

In fact, I think more than the young people are cynical. Long ago we used to trust people until they gave us a reason to distrust them; now we distrust people until they give us a reason to trust them. It is no surprise that many of the most dangerous criminals in our country today are of that age group and this is such a terrible misuse of what might be the most productive human resource in our society.

The Minister spoke a lot about dealing with this apparently intractable problem, but it was never directly addressed in his speech. Is it by returning to growth that the problem will be solved? Even the Minister admits that today,

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more than ever before, there is precious little correlation between economic growth and employment even in the developed countries where, in the Minister's own words, "the standard maxim has now become, how can we do more with less labour?"

If this is true—and I have no reason to believe that it is not—then we may find ourselves in the proverbial “monkey pants” where, in the midst of growing economic prosperity there will exist side by side intolerable levels of unemployment and poverty. This may prove too much for an already fragile social fabric and the explosion that might follow could irreparably damage everything we are striving to build. But surely there must be some employment generated if the growth experienced in 1994 is sustained in the coming years, and the Minister seems very confident that this will be the case.

However, even in the most fortunate circumstance, such employment as is directly generated is almost certain to be of the highly skilled type. Therefore, for our unemployed brothers and sisters to be absorbed at all by it, they must possess the skills required by the various industries and enterprises that will be in the forefront of this process. Should they not possess these skills, then they should be prepared to undertake the necessary training and, even beyond that, to be prepared to retool again since today's technology is not standing still. From this point of view, the Human Resource Development Programme identified by the Minister can prove to be very useful, but it must not be as limited in scope as it is now—it must address the question of the appropriate skills required now and in the future, and actively seek to imbue our sons and daughters with them.

May I, in this context, congratulate the Minister and his Government on taking some initiative in the direction of trying to attract back to our shores those sons and daughters of the soil who have been making a life for themselves abroad. It is well-known that they are among the highest performers wherever in the world they might function, a fact that so frequently confounds the critics who often complain that the average Trinidadian or Tobagonian is of a carnival mentality; is lazy and non-performing. It will be a shame, however, if they are simply put in a job and emphasis is not put on the transfer of technology from themselves to those who at the moment do not possess these valuable skills. I imagine that they will have a fundamental part to play in the Human Resource Development Programme as announced by the Minister.

11.10 a.m.

The sad truth remains that we cannot expect this more or less high-tech kind of activity on its own to solve the chronic unemployment problem. Nevertheless,

if it does come about as the Minister predicts, there will be a spillover into other sectors, like construction, which would absorb some of the unemployed.

My great fear, however, is that even this would be insufficient, as the experience of other countries has shown. There remains the agricultural sector which, in addition to its potential for absorbing much of the unemployed, offers us many other possibilities. But, the measures announced by the hon. Minister are likely to hit the agricultural sector the hardest and may forestall the realization of its fullest potential. It is to this that I now turn.

The Government is committed to the total liberalization of the economy and, in his presentation, the Minister equates this liberalization with liberation, and he went on to define in his words what liberation means. I do not want to repeat it, because Sen. Maloney repeated it and said that it was the watchword of the youths of this country.

In preaching the liberation theology, the correct definition of that theology is that "liberation" also means the freedom from social, political and economic oppression as an anticipation of ultimate salvation. The source is the Oxford Dictionary. It is not my intention to address the moral issues that surround this thrust but I would be failing in my duty, both as a Member of this honourable Senate and as a private citizen, if I did not warn the Minister about the serious damage that such a policy can have on the agricultural sector and, by extension, the country as a whole.

Yesterday, Sen. Prof. Spence alluded to the fact that the negative list for agricultural commodities is completely dismantled, with the exception, of course, of chicken parts. Imports of such commodities are now subject only to a surcharge which itself will be progressively eliminated, and, eventually, only a much lower common external tariff will apply. One immediate consequence of all this is that foreign agricultural items will be more readily available on the local market at cheaper prices than before.

This, of course, is good news for the consumer but may spell the death of the agricultural sector of this country. I do not at all find this a desirable thing and I think that if any sector should continue to be protected in the new liberalized regime, it is the agricultural sector. Why is this so?

In the first place, this sector has never benefited from incentives similar to those given to other sectors; for example, the manufacturing sector. It has never really been given a chance to stand on its own feet and has suffered from neglect by one administration after the other. Poor Sen. Spence has been repeating that, he

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said, for the last eight years. That it continues to survive at all today is a small miracle in its own right, and the farmers of this country must be congratulated.

Secondly, whereas this country is being asked to liberalize its agricultural sector, some of the most developed countries continue to subsidize this sector—and one only has to turn to Europe. Indeed, if goods coming from abroad are relatively cheaper than locally produced goods when they arrive in this countries, this may be due in no small measure to the subsidies paid by the governments in the country of origin. Is this not dumping, Mr. President? Should not our local farmers be protected against this form of dumping?

Thirdly, this sector, over the years of the economic downturn, has absorbed much of the unemployed from other sectors and any negative effect on the sector will, therefore, have an immediate negative impact on employment, and, more generally, the fragile social fabric. It is inconceivable that the Minister, who speaks so eloquently about dealing positively with the unemployment problem, should be proposing measures that will inevitably do damage to a sector that is naturally helping to solve unemployment.

Fourthly, there is the whole question of food security to which this Government has so often declared its commitment. For obvious reasons, it is a very dangerous thing indeed to depend on others to provide the bulk of our nutritional requirements. Again, Sen. Prof. Spence spoke about the School Feeding Programme. We should, at least, be able to provide on an ongoing basis some critical minimum to protect ourselves against the vagaries of international geopolitics and to prevent ourselves from becoming hostages to a hostile economic environment.

It goes without saying that the less food we import the greater the saving in foreign exchange which we can use for other purposes. But in addition to this, there is the very real possibility of transforming the agricultural sector into a dynamic growth centre with potential for exporting its production. Five pounds of dasheen here and ten pounds there will not amount to much.

I do not hide the fact that this may prove to be more difficult than might appears at first blush, but we have to be given the time to work on it. One thing is for sure: it will not happen if in the short to medium term the sector is paralyzed as a result of the liberalization measures.

Mr. President, I now turn to some other aspects of the budget. From the outset I indicated that there were many things to be pleased about in this budget, and one such thing is tax relief to individuals. Those at the lower end of the salary scale

will welcome the measures which eliminate taxation on incomes up to \$16,000, while those at the upper end will be equally pleased with the lowering of the marginal rates on the highest bands.

It is the income earner who, over the years of austerity, has been called upon to make the greatest sacrifice and it is fitting that he or she is the one to benefit once it is established that the economy is once more on a growth path. At the same time, I think that the Minister and his Government should be commended on being cautious and not going overboard in the relief granted. Such action would have been full of risk for the recovery now under way.

11.20 a.m.

Government grants and subsidies never add up to enough. It is in this regard I think the Government and the Minister should exercise some cautious optimism about the future. I also have no doubt, that businesses would be pleased with the reduction in the corporation tax and I strongly recommend that they use these gains for reinvestment in the economy to ensure that the growth recorded in 1994 is sustained into the future.

I am at a loss for words to express my distress over the doubling of the business levy from 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent, especially as it affects small and new businesses. I understand fully the rationale behind it, and that is, to discourage the under-reporting of profits, but it risks being punitive to firms which genuinely do not perform well, which is more likely to happen in the case of the smaller and newer firms. May I suggest that the Minister make, at least, an exemption of such firms?

On the question of the Small Business Development Company, again, I would like to congratulate the Government on targetting the small business and micro enterprises sector as an additional vehicle for increasing economic activity and employment, and by extension, designating the Small Business Development Company the agency for granting "approved small company" status under the amended Corporation Tax Act and the administration of the Small Business Assistance Programme which will provide the establishment of a venture capital finance facility, training and technical assistance.

I make this contribution in support of the Small Business Development Company to do a number of things, because as you may be aware, the Credit Union League and the Small Business Development Company work closely together, particularly in the field of training; and individual credit unions are now

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signing agreements with the Small Business Development Company to become part of the Loan Guarantee Plan.

Sir, you will, of course, realize that there is a natural synergy between the credit union movement and the Small Business Development Company, as they have the same vision and philosophy when it comes to assisting micro-entrepreneurs and small businesses, whether members belong to the formal or informal sector.

A little about the expenditure on the social sector. I am pleased to see that despite the Government's emphasis on the role of the private sector, it has not given up its responsibility for the social sector, and I congratulate them on the allocation of 25 per cent of the Public Service Investment Programme to the rehabilitation of the social infrastructure.

I must warn, Sir, that caring for people is not synonymous with taking care of people. What I mean by this, Mr. President, is that "a bowl of soup here and bread there" is not what I would consider caring for people. I would consider that as taking care of people. My view on caring for people is to provide them with the wherewithal to buy the bowl of soup here and to buy the bread there.

A little thing about privatization. I am not going back to T&TEC, because I think my feeling on that subject is well known by everybody. While the Government may have won a parliamentary, or legal, issue I think there is a moral issue we must consider in the way that vote went. It would seem, that the Government is forging ahead with its plans to divest interests in the Utilities. Once again, I advise great caution in this area and ask the Minister not to forget that the short-run injection of foreign capital cannot be considered without taking into account the eventual outflow of funds in the form of dividend payments and concessions.

We heard about the "divest or die" policy and I am sure the Minister will respond to that. I also want to support the view of Sen. Prof. Spence that similar concessions, or even with a better bias, be given to the local investor with a view to becoming the preferred investor when divestment takes place.

A little word about the environment. The now fashionable concept of sustainable growth and development has not been ignored in this year's presentation and the hon. Minister has promised legislation to deal with the pertinent issues. In fact, a draft Bill is out for discussion now, and in my view this is long overdue, as no amount of economic growth will be worth the effort if we leave behind for the coming generations a degraded environment.

Two words on tourism. The boost to the tourism sector in the 1995 Budget comes, principally, under two headings—the removal of the 15 per cent VAT on hotel rooms and its replacement by a 10 per cent room tax and a loan shortfall guarantee programme. It would seem that both these measures are relatively mild when it is considered that all measures to date have not resulted in any real take-off of the tourism sector. Again, one can link tourism with agriculture because when the people come here they have to eat and we have many exotic fruits and vegetables that could be placed on the menu. We talk about tourism and the money to be spent on tourism, but in order to have tourism we must first get the people here.

In looking back a bit, when we look at the airlines that once upon a time brought people to this country—when we should have been taking the advantage then—we would realize that they are no longer here. PAN AM dead, Eastern dead, KLM gone; United Airlines gone, LAV gone; VARIG gone, ALM gone, BA gone, BWIA going! Who will bring these tourists to this country? Would it be the mythical flying horse, Pegasus?

We have to look at that whole question of BWIA again. It might be too late, yes—in fact, it is too late because I read on the newspapers this morning that the Minister of Trade and Industry, responsible for investment, categorically stated that the second offer would not be considered, because they want the money by the end of December, and not the next six months.

11.30 a.m.

Just a brief word on the tax insurance premiums. Apart from the obvious aspect of adding yet another source of revenue to the Government, it is not at all certain what the broader economic objective of this measure is. If anything, there is a risk in increased charges to the general public who, for all kinds of other reasons, have been facing stiff increases in premiums in recent years. Despite the claim that premiums have been going down, that is not statistically correct.

For those of you who may not know, I am involved with an insurance company and I have some idea of what it takes to keep that company afloat. In the circumstances, I would suggest that the Government and the Minister consider withdrawing that insurance tax immediately, because what would happen is that people would default and the already low coverage they are taking out, only because they are looking for some kind of replacement, may not be there at all.

Encouragement to returning nationals: I have already referred to this measure and I think that it is commendable, not only for the positive effects it will have on

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the national skills bank, but also because these nationals will bring with them their savings including, where applicable, termination and severance benefits denominated in foreign currency. It should, however, be monitored closely so as to avoid abuse, especially the provision for the duty-free importation of motor vehicles.

If you would permit me just to ask some simple questions coming from a simple person. I want to ask the Minister of Energy, when he is making his contribution, to tell us something about the efforts towards the promotion and conversion of fuel gasoline to CNG. You see, I am one of those persons who fell into the promotional trap. I installed two CNG tanks in my car at the low cost of \$7,500. Would you believe that in San Fernando where I live—I am not speaking about Claxton Bay, Couva or Point Fortin, so when the Minister answers, he would please leave that out—there is one station servicing San Fernando at the moment; it is somewhere opposite the fire station. At any time of the day one can see about 20 to 25 motor cars, lining up and waiting between 20 minutes and one hour to get a fill of CNG. Is it not a loss of good productive time? There is another one lower down, at the corner of Rushworth Street and the By-pass—if you know the area well—but because of something between T&TEC and National Petroleum, we cannot get the facility functioning on a regular basis.

Sen. Barnes: Mr. President, since I had not proposed to participate in this debate, perhaps I should just answer Sen. Dean. He is quite right. What happened at the second station was that there was an electrical fire in their switch-gear room which brought the entire station to a halt. It was unfortunate. It had nothing to do with the CNG; it was on the gasoline side—for many reasons, including National Petroleum and T&TEC I can tell you what happened at that station.

The owner decided to put in a standby generator. He asked nobody's permission. He put in a gasoline-driven standby generator in the room with the switch-gear. Needless to say, the inevitable happened. Now the whole station has to be re-wired. That CNG station will be put back into service. It is an unfortunate circumstance that one of the 14 stations down up could not function, but it is a temporary circumstance.

Sen. E. Dean: I thank the Minister for that intervention. I feel very pleased with that bit of information, because I can tell you, coming to town for the last four days, I had to buy my CNG in Port of Spain to go home and return the next morning. I am very glad that this matter is being addressed.

I want to get some clarification on the question of the removal of the tax clearance. In the Minister's Budget Statement, it says at page 28:

"The Income Tax (Miscellaneous Clearance) Regulations will be amended to remove the requirement for an Exit Certificate in order to travel. Yet another measure, Madam Speaker, to remove the existing bureaucracy. The Clearance Certificate which is required for purposes of tendering for Government contracts and other purposes will continue to apply."

This could only be interpreted, in my view, to mean that you buy a ticket, hop on a plane and you leave. But when you look at the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order for income tax on page 481, it says:

"(c) in regulation 4—

- (i) in subregulation (1), by deleting the words 'an Exit Certificate or';
- (ii) in subregulation (2), by deleting the words, 'An Exit Certificate or a Clearance Certificate' and substituting the words, 'A Clearance Certificate';"

No mention is made in the Budget Statement that there is still need for some kind of certificate to leave the country and I would really want somebody to explain the situation. This is misleading the average person when a public announcement is made that one does not need an exit certificate again, and it stops there. That is not the whole hog.

The other concerns of a general nature on health: Health-giving is an important service to this nation. I wonder what is happening in this area. To be attended to at the Couva Hospital, you could get sick only between eight o'clock and four o'clock; at the Mayaro Hospital, there is no doctor; two children have lost their lives at the Scarborough General Hospital because of the inability of the doctors to deal with the situation.

I read in the newspapers recently that \$12 million in expired drugs was dumped. Who is going to pay for that? You and I. Is there an investigation in place for that? Somebody's head should be rolling by now. Twelve million dollars in medicine dumped, and people have to sit in the casualty department for hours, and when they come out with a prescription they have to find the money to go to the drugstore! That is wholly unacceptable, and I call for some action in this area.

11.40 a.m.

On the question of the Ministers' salaries, just let me state that in my opinion the Ministers of this, or any other government, are top managers with even greater

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responsibilities than managers in the private sector, and I believe they should be paid the best salaries in order to discourage corruption. They should get that money as quickly as possible.

I want also to turn to the Civilian Conservation Corps. Sen. Maloney did make some reference to the youths being involved and called on all of us to be part of the process. As he said:

"I want to add that the process starts here with every one of us. Each one of us represents various interests and must understand the role, even as Independents."

Casting a little pebble there, Mr. President.

"We represent business interests, credit union movements, the religious and many other different sectors."

I thought I could not allow that to pass.

The Minister of National Security expounded the virtues of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and, in fact, it would be leading up to the formation of co-operatives by these young people in the future. I want to place on record that as a corps operator myself, I have been invited and, in fact, lectured to the Waterloo district of the Civilian Conservation Corps; a fine bunch of young people and I am doing my part in this regard.

My time is running out, but let me just close by saying that like the Minister of National Security, I have seen the decrease in crime in this country over the past few months. Probably, it was a good thing that the Prime Minister became the Minister of National Security to put that in place. Sen. Huggins cannot take credit for that.

I wonder, by extension, if the question of offering the post of Special Advisor to the Commissioner of Police still exists. Having done such a good job, and having been praised so highly by our dear Minister, I am sure that they will reconsider that offer.

I share the Minister's optimism about the future, but I am much more measured—and bless him for it—in my tones than he is. We have made tremendous sacrifices over the years, and I think that for the first time we are seeing—at least in the figures enunciated by the hon. Minister—the positive consequences of these sacrifices. The population as a whole, I am sure, will share all the positive hopes and aspirations espoused by the Minister.

I sincerely hope they will be realized because I think that we are a proud and resilient people and we will see this task through to its completion.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Deodath Ojah-Maharaj: Mr. President, the Minister of Finance indicated to the nation in his Budget Statement that he was bringing good news to us. I want to assure the nation that as of now, under a PNM administration, we can expect good news for the next 10 to 15 years for the minimum. *[Interruption]* Sen. Nanga says 30 years. It means that there is no provision for those who are talking in terms of the alternative.

Mr. President, you will appreciate that after my colleague Sen. Ainsley Mark spoke, you mentioned that a truce in terms of the crosstalk was in effect. I would like to make an appeal to my colleagues opposite that there be a lifting of the truce for a short period to give them the opportunity to raise the points from time to time, depending on the situation. It appears as though they are declining the—

Sen. Barrack: Mr. President, I just want to say that we on this side are a disciplined bunch and we intend to abide by the rules and Standing Orders of this Senate, and we would speak when our time comes.

Thank you very much.

Mr. President: One good thing is that hope is never lost. *[Laughter]*

Sen. D. Ojah-Maharaj: Mr. President, I must commend my colleague Sen. Ainsley Mark on being able to instill some discipline on the other side. I think he has achieved a great task on behalf of this nation, and he must be commended.

Previous PNM administrations supported the housing development programme in fact, it initiated a very large housing development programme, before demitting office in 1986. During the period 1962 to 1986, over 50,000 units were built.

The house building programme was interrupted during the period 1987 to 1991 by the NAR that came on the scene with the "one love" theme. There was a shift in focus from the provision of houses to the provision of services lots. The price of those lots, provided by the last administration, was between \$15,000 and \$25,000 which was too high, of course, for the low-income earner. This resulted in the increase of squatting in the country.

In 1986 when the PNM demitted office, there was a squatting population of approximately 8,000 on state lands. Between 1987 and 1991, there was an increase from 8,000 to 50,000. That aggravated the whole problem of illegal structures all over the country which we are determined to regularize.

11.50 a.m.

We intend to focus on the regularization of squatter communities and settlements by providing the basic infrastructure for the squatter settlements. That is, on state lands. In terms of squatting on private property, the Ministry of Housing through the NHA—and Sen. Capildeo would welcome this news—will provide free of charge technical and legal assistance to squatting communities wishing to negotiate settlement on private lands while, existing squatter legislation will be streamlined and upgraded.

That is to say, the amendment of Act 20 of 1986 is nearing completion. It is now before a sub-committee of Cabinet and will be introduced in Parliament within the next few weeks. We hope on this side that when that legislation is brought to the Parliament we would get the support of the Opposition benches to get this legislation through and to give us the authority to regularize squatting communities.

Sen Barrack has a motion on squatting, and therefore, I expect that when this amendment comes to the Parliament we shall get their support.

The Project Execution Unit of the Ministry of Housing has regularized squatter communities in the following areas:

Bamboo Settlement No 3.	Warden Road, Point Fortin
Maturita Triangle	Blitz Village, Pleasantville
New City, Valencia, Zone 8, Arima	Malick Phase 1, Morvant

The settlement at Bamboo No 3 is completed in terms of infrastructure work. Senators are invited to visit that community to see that the infrastructure work involved drainage, a proper road system, bridges, electricity, water supply and more importantly, a sewerage system.

Would you believe Sir, that when we were attempting to regularize Bamboo Settlement No 3 we ran into some problems with certain politicians who were ill-advising the residents? In fact, in 1983, I was involved in Tunapuna when the then Government was about to regularize the Pasea area. It was an agricultural community. The Ministry of Agriculture issued what was known as temporary leases to the residents. The Opposition politicians then went in and discredited the leases and told the people, do not worry with that, that has no teeth. But that process had to take place because the area had to be surveyed and divisions had to be made, and especially when putting in the infrastructure.

As an act of good faith, the Government issued temporary leases to the residents to signal to them that it was serious about regularizing their positions. It handed out temporary leases and asked the residents to indicate their willingness in terms of what they had occupied. Some people were living there for 20-30 years and they had inherited those properties from their parents. Some of the properties were houses, some were agriculture plots, they had to indicate what they occupied so that the survey could take place.

The Opposition went in and discredited the temporary leases and the residents were led, as usual, to march up and down the place, unnecessarily. When we got to the people and indicated to them exactly what the nature of the exercise was, they realized that they were being misguided, and they pulled back. Today, that community, opposite Cannings on the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway is now well-established with all the infrastructure. Thanks to the PNM Government.

If the people at that point had followed the directions that certain politicians were giving them, they would still be living in squalour. We hope that when we start this regularization programme we will not experience the same problem that was experienced in Bamboo and in other communities.

In terms of the squatter regularization, tender documents have been completed for Bagatelle, Diego Martin, Soogrim Trace, and Upper Leon Street, Laventille.

In 1994, NHA worked on 23 sites to regularize 5,000 squatter houses, a total of 7,800 squatter households are being regularized. In 1995, the NHA will continue the programme to regularize some 1,500-2,000 squatters in the following areas: Fairfield Estate, Princes Town—200 lots. This will interest Sen. Barrack—Maracas Valley, St. Joseph—22 lots; Lawrence Young Road, Longdenville—100 lots; Wallerfield, Arima—recently the sod was turned for the putting down of the infrastructure there. Anyone going up to Sangre Grande would notice that work is now apace in terms of developing that community and putting down the infrastructure.

Regularization will also take place at Dundonald Hill, Long Circular—800 lots; Morvant Old Road—14 lots; Madras Settlement, Cunupia —22 lots; Dam Road, Point Fortin—170 lots; Guayaguayare—30 lots; Las Cuevas—310 lots; Ackbarali Trace, Arima—100 lots; River Estate, Diego Martin—600 lots; Five Rivers—171 lots; Alexis Street, Morvant —170 lots.

12.00 noon

That is to say while we are moving to regularize squatting communities, at the same time we are moving to stop any further squatting. In our 1991 manifesto, we

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enunciated what we were going to do in terms of housing and settlement. Our vision in this area is clear. PNM governments recognize and continue to recognize affordability as one of the most critical problems in the shelter sector and have accordingly adjusted our pricing policies. I repeat this: We recognize that affordability is a problem and therefore the pricing of the units has been adjusted.

As a result, under the NHA programme the selection of lots now takes place at an intermediate stage between downpayment and final payment. In the programme offered by the last administration, the selection of the service lot, was done after the completion of the infrastructural work. What is happening now under this administration is that one would select the lot, before the infrastructure is put in place, at a minimum cost.

The beneficiaries would pay only 50 per cent down on the land only. While under the last administration the beneficiary had to pay \$7,500, now the price is \$3,500 for the land. This is intended to encourage beneficiaries to make incremental payments before the construction of the house. What happened under the IADB assisted programme was that under the last administration, the lot price ranged from \$15,000 to \$30,000, in order to obtain deeds of title and qualify for construction loans.

Under this administration the payment required to obtain a deed has been reduced from \$15,000 and \$30,000 to between \$5,000 and \$12,000 incremental payments. One is issued the deed and can then approach the TTMF or any other mortgage company and get a loan while the infrastructure is being put in place. When the infrastructure is put in place, the cost of infrastructure and the remainder of the payment on the lot is consolidated with the mortgage and therefore the beneficiary would pay over a 30-year period for the land and the building. It means to say that on those service sites construction could begin very early by these beneficiaries.

Early next year, we anticipate that there would be a construction boom in terms of housing development in the country because of this policy. Earlier this year, Cabinet approved a \$30 million construction programme which is now in progress. This programme is expected to yield 246 two bedroom and three-bedroom units in the following areas:

<u>Areas</u>	<u>No. of Units</u>
Strikers Village	52

This project is on stream.

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Bon Air	61
This is expected to be finished by the end of this month.	
Bien Venue	30
River Estate	35
Charlieville	17
La Horquette (Glencoe)	31
This contract is due to be awarded later this month	
Nadire Street	20

This is a total of 246 units. We are hoping that beneficiaries would move in by Christmas.

The first joint venture between the Government and the private sector was initiated earlier this year at the New Valencia housing project. The agreement with the private developer was to design/finance/construct and market 100 units. I am happy to inform the Senate that so far this project has been a resounding success.

The developer has been able to offer a two-bedroom core house on 4,500 sq. ft. of land at a market price of \$89,000. To date the project is fully subscribed even though the units are not fully completed. In fact, so far 19 units are ready for occupation, and from all indications those 19 families would move in this Christmas at New Valencia.

As we intensify housing development in this country, we foresee in 1995 that the following sectors would be stimulated: sand and gravel aggregates; the cement factory would definitely get more work; brick manufacturers: cupboard and door makers, transport, heavy equipment; the sawmill industry, the steel industry and the furniture industry.

Several years ago, the PNM administration entered into a joint venture with the National Union of Government and Federated Workers for housing development at Lopinot and Pleasantville. This formed the National Union of Government and Federated Workers Construction Company for the construction of housing units at Lopinot and Pleasantville.

In 1993, the Government made a final payment to complete its commitment to this long-outstanding agreement because the project was stopped when the last administration came into power. That the Government did not maintain the

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commitment in terms of assisting with the infrastructural work. Under the agreement, the Government previously provided funding of about \$20 million for the infrastructural development of 387 lots at Lopinot and 425 lots at Pleasantville. The major obligation of the union's construction company in this particular area is to build 812 housing units on the developed lots.

We were recently informed by the union that the infrastructural works have been completed. It is expected that the labour movement would now respond, as agreed, and begin construction of the 812 housing units at both sites as soon as possible.

12.10 p.m.

I now come to Government's accelerated housing programme. In September, 1994, Cabinet approved the implementation of an accelerated programme of housing construction by the NHA during the period 1994 to 1996. This programme is based on a three-pronged approach involving the following:

- high density apartment construction under the Public Sector Investment Programme;
- high density apartment construction through turnkey arrangement with the private sector;
- mortgage housing through joint venture with the private sector.

You will notice, Mr. President, that this Government has recognized the critical role of the private sector in the construction industry and has made adequate provisions for its inclusion in this programme of accelerated housing construction for the period 1994 to 1996. It is a partnership programme between the Government and the private sector.

I would like now to deal with the high density apartment public sector programme. Under the Public Sector Investment Programme, the following projects are in various stages of implementation:

- the Almond Drive, Laventille project when completed is expected to yield 112 apartments. The actual mobilization on site is expected to be December, 1994.
- the Ramdial Mahabir project, Phase I, when completed will yield a total of 48 apartments. The actual building work is 90 per cent completed and the total project is scheduled to be delivered by March, 1995. Phase II of this project is expected to yield 48 units. Contracts were awarded in November, 1994 and the construction completion date is November, 1995.

—the Cook Street, John John project is expected to yield 25 units. Contracts have been awarded and construction date is expected to be April 1995.

—Alexis Street, Morvant, project will yield 25 housing units.

In addition to these two other sites have been identified, namely, Mount Hope and Barataria. When completed, they are expected, collectively, to yield 129 units.

On the completion of the projects I have listed, a total of approximately 387 housing units would have been added to our housing stock. The sub-programme is being implemented jointly by the Ministry of Housing and Settlements and the NHA. Assuming that an average of five temporary jobs are created per unit construction, the proposed employment generation under this segment of the programme is estimated to be approximately 2,000 temporary jobs in the construction sector.

I will now deal with high density turnkey arrangements. Recognizing the effort under the PSIP hardly constituted an adequate response to the need for rental accommodation, and given the Government's tight fiscal situation, the NHA has invited proposals from suitably qualified developers to undertake design projects under turnkey arrangements. These proposals have been evaluated, and contracts are expected to be awarded before the end of this year.

Joint venture mortgage housing: The following sites have been identified for joint venture arrangements with the private sector:

Mayaro	Rio Claro	Debe
La Romain	Palo Seco	Point Fortin
Sangre Grande	Belle Garden, Tobago.	

These sites have already been developed and they are vested in the NHA. Private developers will be invited to construct and market the units. The strategy in terms of getting the units to our is that the developer, not the NHA, will market the units. This has proven to be very successful in terms of the Valencia project. The developer conceptualized and put in place a very aggressive marketing programme and before the completion of these 19 units, there were down-payments on the whole 100 units. It means that the marketing strategy is proving to be very successful. The applicants are qualified by the developer in terms of their capability to access loans from the commercial banks, he liaises with the commercial banks or the mortgage institution on behalf of the applicant, the application is assessed and the loan issued to purchase the house. It is very

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important to note that the developer will be paid when the units are sold, not before.

This programme of accelerated housing construction which will be completed by July, 1996 and is expected to yield some 4,000 housing units and generate 20,000 temporary jobs. We are not saying permanent jobs, but temporary jobs in the housing construction programme of the Government. In addition, under the IADB-assisted Settlements Programme, some 4,200 houses are to be constructed during the same period. Sen. Wade Mark apparently used this figure, but he stopped at the IADB-assisted programme, saying that we will provide only 4,200 units. I would like to inform him that, in addition, under the IADB-assisted settlements programme, some 4,200 housing units are to be constructed during the same period. Therefore, overall, the construction thrust over the 1994—1996 period is estimated to be approximately 8,200 units, not 4,000, and generate some 30,000 temporary jobs.

The programme I have outlined surely indicates that the Government, in terms of its housing programme, intends:

- (1) to provide shelter for the population, which was not done by the previous administration;
- (2) to get the construction industry moving again; get the quarries moving again—they have been dormant for about 10 to 15 years—and get heavy equipment moving again, which has been one of the main concerns of the Deputy Political Leader.

Sen. Prof. J. Spence: Would the Senator give us the assurance that in reactivating the quarries, there will not be another moonscape as there is now in Valencia.

Sen. D. Ojah-Maharaj: I should mention that I was informed by the Minister of Energy that as at this time consultants have been brought in and studies are being done. He is here and can correct what I am saying. The Minister states that as soon as he receives that report, a thorough study will be made of it and then Government will regularize the whole question of proper quarrying on state lands, taking the environment into consideration.

12.20 p.m.

In addition to the housing programme, next year we are also going to see a boom in construction in the public sector programme to be administered by the Ministry of Works. The Minister of Works recently indicated that a minimum of

\$300 million will be spent; a European Economic Community loan of about \$108 million for road rehabilitation in the north/south area is guaranteed to start next year. Another \$420—\$480 million Inter-American Development Bank Road Rehabilitation Programme is expected to start next year.

In 1993, \$60 million out of the \$250 million Agricultural Access Roads Programme was spent, and another \$60 million is to be spent for 1994—1995. We hope to keep this ticking over about \$60 million per year. In the energy sector, thousands of persons got jobs with the building of the Nucor methanol plants. The proposed Liquefied Natural Gas plant would directly create 3,500 construction jobs.

A \$400 million drainage and development programme will begin next year in west and central Trinidad. The programme will be funded by a loan from the World Bank and the ministry has already received \$60 million to do the studies and designs necessary before accessing the larger loan. The Minister in a statement said that he was optimistic that the negotiations and preparatory works will be concluded in time for the loan to be drawn down in 1995. He also noted that in the past Government took as long as five years before it could draw down on a World Bank loan. However, work on the drainage loan started in November 1993 and nine months later, the Government had already received a designs and study loan. The World Bank indicated that if the Government continued at this speed they would be able to get the loan in 1995. The time period to conclude an IDB loan has been reduced from six years to three years. Thanks to the reform programme being done by Sen. The Hon. Gordon Draper.

There were serious inefficiencies in the Governmental system that caused the bottle-necks. Much communication is required between implementing ministries, but the necessary smooth flow of information did not take place, this is why the Government has been setting up units comprised of persons from all ministries to deal with these roads. There are regular fortnightly meetings with the team of engineers involved in the drainage programme, also ensuring that problems do not hold up the programmes for 12 months before the Minister finds out about it. A team of engineers has been brought together to work exclusively on accessing these loans from the World Bank and the IDB.

As its borrowing capacity is limited and because it does not have the surpluses it had during the oil boom to invest in construction, the Government has had to find innovative ways to stimulate the construction sector, which has been tied-in to take up the slack until other sectors can create longer-term sustainable jobs.

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That is to say, that efforts are now being made to provide temporary employment until other sectors can provide sustainable jobs.

Another strategy is the operate-on-lease initiative where developers bid on Government tenders to construct office buildings which they will own and lease to Government. The new head office plan for the Ministry of Works has already gone out on tender and construction will begin next year. The building would cost \$30 million, directly employ 300 persons and be rented on a 30-year lease to the ministry.

New office complexes are also planned for Princes Town, Arima and San Fernando to consolidate the local government offices such as the Warden's Office and Licensing Office into one building. The Ministries of Education, Social Development, and Health are all being targetted for new office buildings and a \$75 million building is also planned for the Ministry of National Security. The \$70-\$80 million Performing Arts Centre is in the design stage and is to be fast-tracked through the new Urban Development Corporation.

What is happening is that next year we are going to see, through this administration, the creation of at least 30,000 temporary jobs. We are going to see a reactivation of the construction industry which takes in all the sectors related to construction. Therefore, next year is going to be a very important one in terms of the development of the infrastructure of Trinidad and Tobago.

I would like to invite Senators on the Opposition benche to take advantage of the opportunity to work with the Government, especially in the regularization programme of the squatters, to co-operate with the Government; to not get involved in activities that would stultify those projects, but to allow us to operate freely in terms of providing the population of this country with the much needed shelter. Sen. Wade Mark identified that there is a shortage of 100,000 houses. He is correct. Government is targetting to provide between now and 1995 a minimum of 8,000 and as we go along, we are hoping to increase that programme in 1996-1997 to 10,000 or 15,000 as we get back into office.

As the Minister of Finance said, the good news would continue to come from this side of the Senate. The population can be assured that a PNM Government is committed to the total development of this nation—both Trinidad and Tobago; that next year is going to be a very successful year in terms of housing and construction, and I invite everyone to share in that vision of the PNM.

Thank you very much.

12.29 p.m: *Sitting suspended.*

1.30 p.m: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. Junior Barrack: Mr. President, I am delighted to have the opportunity to be part of this 1995 Budget debate; at the same time, I consider the responsibility placed upon me in this Parliament with the utmost reverence.

At this time we are no longer at the crossroads wondering where to go and unscientifically casting lots to determine direction. That was yesterday. Today, we are streaking down the strait, of misery, unemployment, illiteracy, economic degradation, loss of economic independence and near national collapse. While we are going on jammed in, we hear the voices of hypocrites, deceivers and traitors, as they say "We have simply got it right." What have we got right? Is it the right mixture of fraud, lies, corruption and nepotism? [Interruption]

Mr. President: Sen. Barrack, the first rule in unparliamentary language—please leave out the word "lie". There are a thousand other ways of saying the same thing.

Sen. Barrack: Is it the right mixture of fraud, fibs, corruption, nepotism alienation, patronage, victimization and arrogance? On the very day on which Sen. Ainsley Mark poured his diatribe on Sen. Wade Mark—

Mr. President: Sen. Barrack we have already ruled that "diatribe" is an unaccepted word; please use an other way to describe them.

Sen. J. Barrack: Mr. President, he poured his venomous condemnation on Sen. Wade Mark in this Senate—two daily newspapers which are normally associated with the ultra right conservative forces in this society took time off to make some interesting observations, I shall come to them shortly.

Firstly, let me deal with some of the statements made by the raving semi-demagogue. He was referring to Sen. Wade Mark when he said that some people are prepared to break down when they have not built anything in their lives; while others can send their children to foreign universities Sen. Wade Mark would have to send his own here; and that during the summer holidays when Sen. Wade Mark's child is looking for work, if the child is qualified and even if Sen. Ainsley Mark's partners object, he would put in a word on behalf of Sen. Wade Mark's child. And they laughed! That was Sen. Ainsley Mark on Tuesday, December 06, 1994 as he became delirious with rage bordering on lunacy. What else could account for that outrage? Sen. Wade Mark at no time—I would quote his statement—attacked the personal integrity of Sen. Ainsley Mark. He spoke of a

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company which was given a contract to dispose of the assets of National Fisheries. Let us look at *Hansard*.

"Sen. Wade Mark The recent sale of National Fisheries Company to a Taiwanese firm tantamount to a national scandal. What were the evaluating criteria used by the firm of Mark, Castillo and Toney for the disposal of this company?"

One will see that is a question and it was supposed to be that people who had that information would give it to us.

"Mark, Castillo and Toney was assigned the role of liquidator. It is our understanding that a group of nationals bid d offered the best prospects for long-term development of our the deep-sea fishing fleet."

No personal attack.

"Notwithstanding, the Taiwanese firm was given National Fisheries on a platter.

And he went on:

"The United National Congress would like to find out the process and evaluation criteria involved in the selling out of National Fisheries to a group of foreigners. The whole process appears

to be undemocratic, secretive and corrupt."

No personal attack.

We proceed:

"The Government's entire programme of privatization is clothed in secrecy and is terminally flawed. The "fire sale" approach would not in any way strengthen our national capacity to sustain long-term growth."

And this has been the approach to the sale of the people's assets.

BWIA is another national outrage. We wish to serve notice that a UNC Government will review and, if necessary, revise every single transaction entered into by this sell-out Government, involving the sale and disposal of the nation's capital assets.

"Mr. President, we would like to know the amount of fees paid to the firm of Mark, Casteilo and Toney for this smelly and suspicious transaction involving the sale of National Fisheries."

1.40 p.m.

Nowhere in this statement can there be seen any trace of a personal attack on Sen. Ainsley Mark. It is puzzling that this Senator can get up and make those wicked statements against our leader of this side of the Senate. If Sen. Wade Mark asked questions, he is justified to do so. Let me quote from the Express of December 7, 1994—apart from making a statement as to how Government found it difficult to pass the T&TEC (Amdt.) Bill, it states:

"The Government's success in getting the bill passed in the Senate, therefore, must be taken in the understanding that no one is quite satisfied with the explanations offered on its behalf."

It is the very reason why Sen. W. Mark asked questions concerning National Fisheries Company Limited—and which he has every right to do—and he did it in a most respectful manner, considering the record of the PNM. It goes on:

"The unwillingness of any Independent to give the Government the benefit of the doubt owes to the importance of the divestment exercise, and the unsatisfactory way the Government has been going about it."

Further justification for raising this point in the Senate! It goes on:

"Those public utilities and state enterprises were purchased with taxpayers' money, and not only for profit-making purposes. As such, if the Government decides they have to be divested, the public ..."

As was in the case of Sen. W. Mark!

"demands to know how the decision was arrived at, whom they will be sold to, and the precise meaning of the fine print in the deal."

This is not Sen. W. Mark speaking. It is the newspaper I called "ultra right" a while ago, for the very reason that they, too, consider that there is need for a certain level of openness or transparency in the disposal of the assets of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

"In the case of T&TEC, there remain many outstanding questions about the justification for its divestment and about the deal being negotiated with Southern Electric/Amoco."

The final part of this quotation:

"Their stance was a timely reminder that the Government, and far less the party that controls the Government, does not own the assets of Trinidad and

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Tobago. They are merely the custodians of those assets. In the case of the state enterprises and public utilities, every taxpaying citizen must be considered a shareholder of those corporate bodies, and should enjoy the same rights."

Precisely why my leader had to ask those questions for which he got a sterling denunciation from Sen. A. Mark. But Sen. A. Mark must know that if one is a pigeon in the same coop one would be numbered among them. The PNM has a history of corruption. It is well documented.

Mr. Valley: Where?

Sen. J. Barrack: There have been cases in court we tried to recover assets which were stolen from Trinidad and Tobago. Former Ministers of governments of Trinidad and Tobago were involved in kickbacks, and shady dealings. That is no secret. When this country went through its traumatic period in 1990, the business before the House of Representatives was the Tesoro scandal in which names were called and Ministers were implicated. We cannot forget that! How could we? Unless we have short memories.

I have never heard Sen. A. Mark condemn the actions of previous Government Ministers and those who have been found to be corrupt. He has never condemned them! He has never said a word that these acts should not have happened and that these acts were wrong. He has not disassociated himself from the PNM that went before. When the hon. Senator on this side raised very pertinent questions concerning the sale of our national assets, he got up and spoke about the Senator's children and family, which is a most disgusting affair.

Sen. Ainsley Mark called himself a professional, and he was supported by Sen. Martin Daly, but, Sir, what professional would descend to the gutter of debate to drag a fellow Senator's family into it in order to heap ridicule on him? I was relieved that although Sen. A. Mark made reference to Sen. W. Mark's child, he did not include his spouse and his parents. I did not know where else he would have gone. It was a disgraceful display in this Parliament.

What is wrong if Sen. W. Mark's colleagues can afford to send their children to universities abroad and he can only afford to send his here? What is wrong with that? Does Sen. A. Mark not know that the children of the young people working in any fast food outlet in Trinidad and Tobago are not likely to be able to buy books for their children to send them to primary and secondary schools, and even to give them the necessary nutritional requirements so that they can study and be able to obtain university degrees?

Sen. Merritt: That is the reality.

Sen. J. Barrack: It is only a fortunate five per cent of the parents of Trinidad and Tobago who can send their children to the University of the West Indies. Most of them reeling from the series of conditionalities imposed on us, the burden of the economic programme placed upon us by this Government, are unable to send their children to school. I sat here and heard that kind of denunciation. But, Sen. W. Mark is a modest man.

Mr. President, implied in the statement was the opinion that the University of the West Indies is substandard relative to foreign universities, and that it was for poor people like Sen. W. Mark who cannot afford better.

1.50 p.m.

Sen. Ainsley Mark's statement that Sen. Wade Mark did not build anything, but is willing to break down, I say to Sen. Ainsley Mark—he is not here—that statement is a slap in the face of men like Tubal Uriah 'Buzz' Butler, the true "Father" of this nation, who devoted his life in a crusade to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Trinidad and Tobago and people everywhere.

It is a severe denunciation of this man—because, like him, Sen. Wade Mark is a trade unionist—who was not a university graduate but whose single act of sacrifice gave workers the right to say to their employers, "Give me a little more of what I help you to make; give me enough so I can live in dignity. Give me a little so that I may secure a life for my children."

It will be recalled that in true PNM fashion, that great man, Uriah But was jailed for squatting in 1966, under the PNM regime, which I have never heard Sen. Ainsley Mark condemn. In 1977, or thereabouts, he received the Trinity Cross, the country's highest award, for all the things for which he was condemned, persecuted and jailed by the Guardian and by the political and economic elite—we hear no one say anything.

Sen. Ainsley Mark is not marked for greatness. Great men do not behave that way. At best, he may be a footnote in history. It is brothers like Sen. Wade Mark who have the greatest opportunity to be among the immortals of history, because he is appropriately aligned for greatness; and through his valiant stance against injustice and the protection of the rights and freedoms of Trinidadians and Tobagonians—even if history does not record it, even if he is unable to send his child to a prestigious university abroad, even if he does not build a business such

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as the one of which Sen. Ainsley Mark boasts—we in this country are becoming increasingly indebted to him for his sacrifice.

Mr. President, as you can see, Sen. Wade Mark also has modesty not to blow his own trumpet. He has not stood in this Parliament beating his chest like an irate gorilla, performing the primordial right of territorial sovereignty. Hats off to Sen. Wade Mark! Senate Minority Leader—friend, father, defender of the small man; patriot.

Mr. President, I will now turn to another important area.

Mr. President: Senators, I know it is difficult, but please, let us observe the silence that is asked for in the Standing Orders. Let the Senator continue to make his contribution without interruption, as I hope all Senators will be able to do.

Sen. J. Barrack: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I feel so protected.

Sir, the lack of an appropriate philosophical perspective of this particular Government will forever prevent it from approaching and solving the problems of our country. I am one of those who are of the opinion—and the United National Congress is also supporting me fully in this—that in order that a society may be governed effectively, there must be some criteria, some immovable goal; some place to which all arrows point; something to say whether we are performing or not, whether we are going forward or not.

When I speak about that in the context of nation-building, I cannot be talking about a five-year plan. A nation cannot be run by a five-year plan—it must be by a goal, an objective that is much greater—more permanent. That is why I have tremendous reservations about the Government's position on having a philosophy called pragmatism. I am yet to have that term properly defined.

Let us examine what pragmatism might mean. There was a young man who exported some cocaine to Miami recently. He was caught and the reason he gave for participating in that kind of illegality was that his business was down, he had to make some money and, therefore, he entered the trade to do so. It was not going to be for a long time—only until he got sufficient money to help him to deal with his business, which was floundering.

That could be called pragmatic thinking. The young man saw that it was necessary for him to raise money to achieve a certain objective and he went about it by the available means that he saw. Pragmatism in that context has no morality and a nation cannot be run by a philosophy that is devoid of morality. "Anything goes" cannot be the philosophy of a nation that is in transition, and needs to be built.

One must have a correct philosophical perspective on man. Who is man? What are the requirements for man to live in a state of dignity and happiness?

Sen. Capildeo: Not money.

Sen. J. Barrack: Pragmatism, must be qualified at all times by the overriding philosophy of man and where he is heading, and in the context of a government and nation building. Therefore, it is very short-sighted—and I was hoping that Sen. Dr. St. Cyr would have dealt with that matter, because I know he has the depth of competence to do so, but he did not elaborate.

When we examine the sale of the national patrimony, we must take it in its overall philosophical context and perspective for nation building. If Government is operating in a piecemeal fashion, if it is going about the sale of our national patrimony, institution by institution, instead of dealing with it from an overall perspective, how can we say that that is good?

2.00 p.m.

I am not saying that a man cannot be pragmatic. If a person's religion forbids him from drinking alcohol and there is a medicinal cure for the individual with alcohol in it, the individual will be excused from taking alcohol. That is being pragmatic.

But he is still held constrained by the overriding philosophy of not drinking alcohol for the other ills that it may cause.

If we are going to deal with nation-building, if we are going to deal with Government's divestment programme and if we are to understand anything about it, we must question Government's philosophy. What they have been telling us is that they are not governed by philosophy. I heard the Prime Minister say so; yesterday the Minister said it, and they continue to do it.

Mr. Valley: Mr. President, I think the hon. Senator is somewhat confused. Never did I say, nor my Prime Minister, that we are not governed by philosophy; we might have said we are not governed by ideology.

Sen. J. Barrack: Mr. President, it appears as though the Minister does not understand the meaning of the word “philosophy”. You see, all philosophies are ideas, and whatever philosophical perspective a man might have—let us take, for instance, marxism, is also ideological. If you are a Christian and your way of life is governed by the Christian mores, that is also your philosophical perspective.

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This is the context in which we have to question the divestment programme of the Government. We have to ask the questions: Where are we going? How would the sale of national assets contribute to the long-term viability of our country? How would the sale of national assets deal with what we have projected for the next 100 years? We must know that. If it is a pragmatic intervention, when will we be able to reverse it? If it is that it is forced upon us like the man who has the disease and has to drink alcohol but his religion forbids him, we must know why they are taking it now and when they are going to stop.

These are some of the questions on which this Government has been silent. There seems to be some kind of "underhandism"—the new philosophy. We in the United National Congress will not let up on this matter. We will pursue it to the end. That is why Sen. Wade Mark is so right when he says that when the United National Congress government comes into power, in the near future, whenever an election is called, it will examine every transaction that has taken place under this Government and if there is cause for men to "make jail", they will make it.

Within the context of the Government's philosophy, I would like to turn to a matter that is most important, in my opinion. The more I look at it, the more revolting it becomes. Take for instance, the policy framework upon which this Government came into power in 1991 and the programme that it is following from 1992 to 1995—chalk and cheese. On the one hand, we have people making profound statements, condemning the government which was in power at the time, and on the other, we have them making similarly profound statements, praising them. Is this the pragmatism of which we speak?

In 1991 when the PNM wanted to come into power, it told the nation that the policies of the NAR were wicked and ruthless, that Robinson was a wicked man, that he was raping the country and they were selling out Trinidad and Tobago's patrimony, but today, the very people in this Government and the Minister of Finance are telling you that the NAR were on the correct course; that they made a little mistake in 1990 and 1991, but, "we have got the boat back on keel and we are going down the road correctly." Absolute hypocrisy!

When I heard Sen. Callendar—he is sleeping; too much verbal blows—

Sen. Callendar: On a point of order, Mr. President. I want to inform the Senator that I am not sleeping; I am being affected by the noise.

Mr. President: If you direct your contribution to the Chair you will not attract any responses.

Sen. J. Barrack: Thank you, Sir.

When Sen. Callendar was making his contribution—I had to deal with something that he said in it earlier—I do not know why, but they believe Sen. Wade Mark is a "bobolee"; they all want to beat him. He said it was necessary for the PNM to change; that there are movements and the PNM must change and change, is inevitable. Sen. Ainsley Mark made the same comment.

In response to Sen. Prof. Spence, the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry got up and said that the words of the Prime Minister in 1990 and 1991 are the same as they are today; he has not changed. One is saying that we must change because it is inevitable, and another is saying, no, things must be permanent and immovable.

Let me quote from the present Prime Minister's 1990 Budget contribution, on January 2, 1990. This is what he had to say concerning the NAR's policy:

"To crown it all, as the pièce de résistance, Mr. Speaker, in they bring the structural adjustment loan which requires that they scrap the negative list, and remove the last bit of protection left for our local manufacturers. All of this madness in the interest of some mythical entity called 'Free-Trade'."

Do you hear what they call it? That was 1990. So they are saying one thing then. There is a way of contradicting yourself and being correct.

2.10 p.m.

He went on to say:

"...'Free trade'. Mr. Speaker; something that does not exist anywhere else in the world, and they want to perfect it here."

He is talking about the NAR.

"In today's dog-eat-dog world, free trade is a myth..."

This is the present Prime Minister.

"and effectively means access by others to your markets..."

Boy, these people brave, yes. Mr. President, do you see what we have to put up with in these times?

"...while your products are blocked from entering theirs."

This is in 1990, when the Member for San Fernando West wanted to become prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago; fibbing to the nation. He continued:

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"There is no such thing as free trade.... Only in theory are import tariffs, as opposed to negative listing, a satisfactory mechanism for ensuring greater competitiveness among local products."

I am devastated.

"In order to protect our local manufacturers therefore, the PNM insists that the Government must move speedily to put the following measures in place:

1. stringent anti-dumping legislation;"

Where is it? Three years now, where is it? *[Interruption]* I know what the Minister wants to say. The Minister wants to say that it is with the World Bank. The World Bank has interrupted and intervened and said, "Bring the anti-dumping legislation because we want to see it." Why did the Minister not tell the World Bank, "Listen, I want a relaxation of the implementation of the tariffication of the Trinidad and Tobago situation until we can get our anti-dumping laws in place? Why did he not say that? No excuse!

Mr. Valley: Mr. President, let me remind the hon. Senator that anti-dumping legislation was passed in this Senate about one year ago.

Sen. Merritt: It has not been proclaimed.

Sen. J. Barrack: Mr. President, the regulations, I am told, are with the people at the World Bank. *[Interruption]* If there are no regulations the Act cannot be put into force. So, it is as if one did not have them.

- "2. trade restrictions and protections similar to that obtaining in developed countries with regard to packaging, labelling etc.; and
3. detailed health and quality standards for imported goods."

I want to know who is checking on that right now. I do not understand this Government at all.

That is how it is to be achieved—say that it is bad and then act as if it is good. It is not lying, apparently. Sorry, Mr. President. It is not being contradictory; it is a means of using the philosophical perspective available called pragmatism. It was pragmatic that the Government got the confidence of the people when they went to the polls in 1991. Before that, they were saying—

Mr. Valley: Mr. President, if the hon. Senator—

Sen. J. Barrack: I am not giving way unless it is a point of order!

Mr. Valley: It is a point of order. Mr. President, the Senator is quoting the Prime Minister selectively. I wonder whether he would want to continue his quotation, at least to the next paragraph

Sen. J. Barrack: Mr. President, can you rule on this? I do not know what to do.

Mr. President: My advice to the Minister in the Ministry of Finance is—I do not really want to say it—to take note and when you are replying you would deal with the matter at that stage. Allow the Senator to make his complete contribution with whatever faults you may or may not find. You can put everything into place when you are replying.

Sen. J. Barrack: Mr. President, thank you very much. Again, you have come to my rescue from an invasion of my time.

As I was saying, as is the case with the Budget, it is a policy that is going to do grievous harm to this country. They say things that are not there and then do things that are completely contradictory to what they were supposed to be doing. These things are causing people to lose faith in the country. People are becoming despondent. It is reflected in the spate of crimes and the ruthlessness with which they are carried out.

I urge this Government, and the Minister of National Security, and others, to come together as part of the measures for securing Trinidad and Tobago and stop using this kind of contradiction. Stop it! We will all be better off, without it.

Mr. President: Senator, just a reminder. Your time has passed, you will be allowed another 15 minutes.

Sen. J. Barrack: It went quite quickly, Mr. President. *[Interruption]* When one is enjoying oneself.

Sen. W. Mark: Would the Minister please stop interrupting the Senator?

Sen. J. Barrack: Mr. President, I would like to make a quick comment on what has been said all through this debate, that the United National Congress is obstructionist. I say so in the context of the very wonderful news that the Minister of National Security brought to the Senate today. He spoke about equipment for the police service; having them fitted with all necessary requirements to make them efficient. That is good news. I want to remind this Senate that it was the United National Congress that stated emphatically that it was not obstructing the PNM Government from supplying the necessary equipment and machinery, or hiring the necessary personnel to make our country safe.

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It was a great hoax. They went around the country saying that if the Bail Bill was not passed crime would increase; if we did not deal with the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill dealing with the reformation of the police service, crime would increase. At great risk of public condemnation the United National Congress, true to its philosophical perspective, knew it had to stand its ground. It told this Government that nothing prevented it from supplying the police service with its equipment.

We were beaten in the press for days and months on end. The Drugs Bill has been passed. I want to know how many persons have been arrested under it. And, how many properties were confiscated? Because, that was always there in the 1991 Act, and the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill has not yet been passed.

How is it that this Government suddenly gets the power—when the UNC was supposed to be obstructing it—to fulfil its mandate to the police service? I want the country to take note of that, because it is part of the Government's pragmatism.

2.20 p.m.

With regard to the concept of obstructionism, I would like to say a few words on that as well. In our parliamentary tradition, which is based along the line of argument—the debate system—even the Westminster system is based on the concept of dialectics. If the government brings a particular motion or a bill to Parliament, the Opposition will examine that bill and find the flaws in it. When the Government and the Opposition come together, there should be, in the final analysis, a better bill and a better Act, when it is passed. Those who know it will know that that is part of the Socratic method as well.

It is the same concept that is used in the courts. If they do not want it, change it, but that is what is used there. We have adopted a system that tells us the Government will come to the Opposition with a Bill to be passed in order to carry out its day-to-day requirements and those of the country. It will bring those things to Parliament. The Opposition is there. It has its part to play. Call it antithetic, if you wish, but that is why it is called Opposition. We are going to examine these areas, and when we come together, that synthesis should be better than the thesis and the antithesis.

It has to be ignorance on the part of those who condemn the Opposition for doing its work, and of the way in which the Parliament is designed to function, because nothing else can have them attacking the Opposition for doing its duty.

I had two matters to raise, one on squatting and the other on drainage. Unfortunately, I have two motions on the Order Paper in my name which will not permit me to deal in-depth with these matters. Can I deal with the drainage problem here, Sir?

Mr. President: Are you talking about motions on the adjournment?

Sen. J. Barrack: No, Sir.

Mr. President: If it is a substantive motion you would have to leave it until that time comes.

Sen. J. Barrack: I will leave it until that time and I know my erstwhile Friend, if he has the time, will deal with some of those areas for me. I see that time is slipping away so fast. In closing, I want to say that the PNM must take full responsibility for the state of our country today.

Mr. Valley: We do.

Sen. J. Barrack: We spent over \$100 billion from 1970 to 1984. The PNM is responsible for looting Trinidad and Tobago as though it was a foreign country and they were Francis Drake, Morgan and those other guys.

When one sees our youth and the spate of crime that is gripping our country at present, when one sees the thousands and thousands of people unemployed, going in search of a job that is non-existent, one has to blame the PNM 100 per cent. This Budget does not say how much it would reduce unemployment but unemployment as it relates to investment capital can be laid squarely on the doorstep of the PNM.

I have said this before, and I will say it again, one former PNM Minister took over \$500 million. He went to Canada. The effect of that on the balance of payments was colossal, because it was taken against our foreign exchange. It is called capital flight, and what happens is that every dollar taken out diminishes our ability to have more available on the local scene for our investment. Most of the money that we are borrowing now that goes with a conditionality, could have been avoided if these men had stolen the money and kept it in Trinidad and Tobago. *[Laughter]* But they chose to take it away, and that was the greatest danger. Double indemnity.

Not only that, but we have been criticized for the way we speak about some members of the private sector, and it has been used as a piece of propaganda against our party, that we are against business. We must remember that during the

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period when we had plenty, those businessmen who had the wherewithal to invest took their money and banked it in Miami. We have now to relax our monetary policy in order to get back some of it. That capital flight, orchestrated both by some individuals in the private sector and members of the old PNM, has so jeopardized our future that Trinidad and Tobago is like a beggar, cap in hand, walking from country to country after squandering its wealth, and all of that because of one group of unscrupulous and corrupt individuals, the PNM.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister and Minister responsible for Public Administration and Public Information (Sen. The Hon. Gordon Draper): Mr. President, clearly mine is the task of returning this Senate to sanity, of returning this Senate to the business for which we have gathered this afternoon. I assure you that as far as we on this side are concerned, we have really come here to talk about the journey that this country is making to growth, development, and prosperity; and we will not be sidetracked by the meanderings of those trying to get us into points of irrelevance and innuendo.

Suffice it to say, however, with regard to the comments made by the last speaker on Sen. Ainsley Mark, it is clear that the words which Sen. Ainsley Mark himself used yesterday to describe that behaviour are also appropriate today, when he noted that we are really dealing with an Opposition which is reflecting a state of frustration and desperation—a desperation and frustration that manifest themselves in internecine battles.

2.30 p.m.

We are clearly dealing with an Opposition where we see clubs within parties; parties within parties; an Opposition which is clearly trying to carry us backwards into old days; days that this country has longed placed behind it and days to which the PNM would never allow this country to return. I think it is also a manifestation of the fact that while PNM education policies very clearly produce much quality in our society, every so often we do find a point of deficiency which is why we need to return to redress some of those things in our education reform.

Today, we are really here to deal with the issue of the Appropriation Bill and is my wont on these occasions—I choose to use this occasion to reflect on issues within the public service reform portfolio and public administration generally. I am sorry that my good Friend Sen. Michael Mansoor is not here, because he raised a number of questions which I would take as my own point of departure. For instance, he asked how we were doing in public service reform and how well-

managed is the public service. He spoke to us about the importance of establishing performance standards; concerns with implementation, and asked whether there were really strategic plans and whether they could be made available.

Sen. Carol Mahadeo touched on the issue of attitudes, and if I heard her correctly, urged us to continue the task of working to change some of these attitudes in the public service. These are some of the elements that would form my contribution. I would go on to outline some of the other plans, programmes and projects which have been ongoing as part of public service reform and then speak about where we go in 1995.

We are asked: Are there strategic plans? I think over the last two years at varying times in contributing to this Senate, I have made the point very clearly that the plans exist. Indeed, in a sense, Sen. Mansoor contradicted a little of what he was saying, because having raised some skepticism about the evidence of plans, he went on to recognize that there was evidence that several strategies are in fact working. It seems to me that that ought to be testimony that we do in fact have plans, implementation programmes which would allow measures which the Government is putting in place to bear fruit.

Let me say up front that we too, like Sen. Mansoor, have some concerns about implementation; the speed, structure and process of implementation. It is for that reason the Government has been moving to do different things to deal with that issue of project implementation.

In earlier contributions—the Minister of Education, for instance—reference was made to the movement towards establishing project execution units within some of our line ministries. We have recognized that if we are to ensure the execution of the range of projects which we have before us, we need to put in some, if not all of our ministries, dedicated professionals whose task is implementation of projects. We have been moving towards that.

This morning Sen. Ojah-Maharaj made reference to the fact that the time lag between identification of projects and actually accessing loans has now begun to be lessened. He pointed particularly to some of the projects in the Ministry of Works. I would say to you and the Senate, that is a manifestation of one of the things which this Government has put in place to speed up the task of development and particularly the task of project implementation.

We have also recognized that while over the years, we have spent much resources in training and developing people in project implementation, because of

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the nature of the public service structure, at times we have lost these skills within the public service. By that I mean that we do not now have a dedicated career stream in project management and project implementation. There are economists and sociologists who are sociologists and economists by training, and also by virtue of their employment in the public service, who receive specialized training in project implementation and management, but who because they continue operating in their economist or sociology stream may find themselves transferred and therefore not being used in a dedicated way in project management and project implementation.

Over the last couple of years, we have trained about 160 of our public service professionals in project management. They are all in the public service, but they are all in other streams in the public service. Some time ago, Cabinet determined that one route to treat with this deficiency was the development of a specialized career path in project management. As we do that, working along with the already established project execution and implementation units, we believe that we shall see greater speeding-up of the implementation and execution of projects.

I get back to the issue of strategic plans. It is interesting that just yesterday I received an invitation from the staff at the Industrial Court. I want to read a paragraph from that invitation. They are inviting me to something they are having on December 14, called, A Day of Celebration. The second paragraph states:

"We have chosen this day to celebrate our achievements, to evaluate our weaknesses and strengths and to chart a process towards progress and continued achievement of our vision of a more efficient Industrial Court as envisaged in our strategic plan."

This is just one example of a recognition that the strategic plans are alive, working and public servants are gradually beginning more and more to own these plans and to recognize the importance of managing by these plans.

I take a point that Sen. Mansoor raised. I think last year, Sen. Prof. Spence raised a similar point when he was asking about the publication of administrative reports. The point is that we do need to find a way to get all the elements within strategic plans, voluminous as some of them are, translated in some form which can be made available. We continue to search for that. Let me point out, however, that if one looks in the *Medium-Term Policy Framework* itself, one would find some of the key elements in the strategic plans of varying ministries and departments.

Page 47, speaks very specifically about issues relating to public service reform. One would also find a listing of the principal strategies and measures that we have planned for the period under review until 1997 and the time schedule. In short, this document, in my view, is also a manifestation that ministries and departments within our Government have in fact embarked on a process of planning establishing objectives against which our work is proceeding and against which we could be measured.

As I said, I take the point that I know Sen. Prof. Spence and Sen. Mansoor have made from time to time and that is that we do need, perhaps, to address some other ways to make some of this information available. I say that much of it is already in here, in a form which would allow individuals to have a sense of where our varying departments and ministries in the public service are going.

As part of our public service reform programme, we have established a vision of moving the public service to being one which embraces a strategic planning culture. We are not there yet, but we are along that road as well. I give the assurance to hon. Senators that that process of strategic planning is alive and well in the public service and that we do, in fact have before us tangible manifestations of that work.

2.40 p.m.

The direction that we have taken with regard to establishing a new career path for persons involved in project management and project implementation underscores, in fact, one of the critical areas of public service reform in which we have engaged over the last three years. That is reforms more generally in the human resource management area. Clearly, that example alone—and there are others which we can cite and I will from time to time—points to the need for us to develop within our public service the human resource management approach which is appropriate to our challenges in this time of the century. As I indicated in my last two Budget contributions, we have also begun along that road.

We have identified the critical need to deal with the structure of the human resource management function. I indicated in my contribution last year that we will be moving to develop human resource management units within line ministries, recognizing that part of the challenge we face is decentralizing decision-making in that function, as indeed we have to do in other functions to speed up decision-making to ensure that managers can manage within the line ministries, and to ensure that decisions are made closer to the point of service delivery.

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We ask: “Where are we?” The Minister of Education indicated that, in January this year that Ministry had put in place their human resource management unit. That is the first. Others will follow. Our target is for all these units to be in place in the public service by June, 1995. Also, the Minister of National Security this morning alluded to some of the developments in the police service where their own human resource management unit has already begun to take shape. The Ministry of Health has also received Cabinet approval for the top structure of the human resource unit in that ministry and they are currently advertising for staff to fill that department.

If one looks at the proposal for the Ministry of Education, it speaks about establishing a unit which will include a division responsible for planning, one responsible for organization, development and training, one responsible for personnel management and administration and one responsible for industrial and employee relations. In short, the whole gamut of human resource management functions has to be in place in line ministries to facilitate the management of people in the public service. I can say to you that where we are now will allow us to achieve our target of having these units in place in 1995.

Alongside that development, I also indicated in my last year's contribution that we needed, as well, to deal with the issue of the centralized agencies, recognizing that the Personnel Department needed to be restructured, that there needed to be a greater linkage between the work of that department and the work of the DPA which services the Service Commissions Department; and that work is proceeding parallel with the establishment of human resource management units. Again, we see 1995 as a point of implementation of that new structure. In a structural sense, in terms of how we organize that function, our public service reform work is well on track.

We also recognize—again as I indicated in my last year's contribution—that one of the critical elements in our public service now has to do with the fact that we continue to operate with an antiquated approach to classification in the public service, a classification system which was put in place in 1966. I said to the Senate, approximately one year ago, that the firm of KP&G Peat Marwick had been contracted through the Central Tenders Board to conduct a job evaluation exercise, the end result of which would have been the reclassification of public officers and the development of a new compensation management system in our public service. Indeed, the Minister of Finance himself, in presenting the Budget, alluded to the importance of treating with issues relating to compensation, as one

recognized that as a critical part of attracting and retaining quality staff. We ask: Where are we with regard to that job evaluation exercise?

I had indicated in my last contribution that we spent most of 1993 in sensitization work, ensuring that public servants at all levels were aware of what the job evaluation exercise was about, and that was as important as a preparation to collect some of the base data about jobs from public servants.

Over 1994, there were a number of concerns raised by various associations representing workers in the public service because we recognized that we were dealing with associations from the police, fire and prisons services, in addition to the Public Services Association, and that all these associations had in turn to be consulted, to have been able to raise concerns, and we have taken these concerns, by and large, on board.

As at today's date I can report to the Senate that with regard to the teaching service, that critical first phase of data collection is now 80 per cent complete; with regard to fire, and prisons, we are now just over 70 per cent complete, and indications are that by the end of December this year, we should be about 70 per cent complete with regard to the police service. The public service remains somewhat behind with about 20 per cent completion.

We are in a position to begin, early in 1995, to carry the task forward with regard to the teaching service and the protective services, and I think that we must in passing pay tribute to the associations representing workers in those agencies of Government for their understanding, willingness and ability to embrace this particular aspect of public service reform.

That job evaluation exercise would allow us to develop a basis on which we can move to a new system and formula for compensation management. One of the elements of that new system must be rewards for performance. In fact Sen. Carol Mahadeo, while not saying that specifically in alluding to some of the attitudes which she perceived to be somewhat different across sectors, may in a way be pointing us to the importance of being able to link rewards to performance.

But we cannot do that in a vacuum, we cannot do that without a system; we cannot just drop that into the public service overnight. It has to be developed patiently. The systems and the building blocks have to be in place, and that is what we have been doing over these last few years. The job evaluation work is one critical piece of that foundation.

But there is another, I also indicated in my last contribution that we were moving to introduce a new system of performance appraisal which would clearly

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allow us to establish performance standards for all jobs in the public service and that we would be in a position, therefore, to reward people against those standards.

I want here also to make a link back from that system to the strategic plans of which I spoke a while ago, because there is a linkage. The strategic plans provide the broad objectives and directions for each ministry or department against which individual objectives can be established and against which, therefore, the performance of individuals can be assessed and rewards paid. That is the system which we are putting in place, but we need to do it step by step, piece by piece. So that when my Friend Sen. Carol Merritt very glibly said to us yesterday that the promotion system is causing a difficulty in education and leaves it like that, it is a manifestation of an inability to understand the process through which one has to go to move from identifying the problem to getting its solution in place.

We accept, and we have said that we are moving to a system where promotion and reward will be based on performance. In fact, the Minister of Education was also at pains to speak about that, when he commented on the new management system. But alas, some of us who come with prepared texts, at times do not listen.

2.50 p.m.

I will say again, Mr. President, that the performance appraisal system which will be put in place in 1995, throughout the public service, would also allow us to make that linkage between performance and reward, and would allow us to move to that point where promotion can truly be based on performance.

Over the last year, over 1,200 of our public servants have been trained as trainers in this new area and they in turn are now proceeding to train others within the line ministries. Again when we ask the question, "Where are we"? the answer is that we have, in fact, moved from where we were one year ago and are in a position now to move towards implementation of that new system; a system which Members here may recall started off as a pilot in the Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources and is now on the threshold of being put into the entire public service.

But, if all of these things—

Sen. Mahadeo: Thank you very much. Mr. Minister if I could be enlightened as to the question of increments. Increments were frozen some years back which caused some frustration among public officers. I would like to get some clarification as to whether in fact the incremental system would be taken out thawed out and put back into effect?

Sen. The Hon. G. Draper: Mr. President, as part of our settlement of arrears with public servants, we indicated that the Government would reintroduce increments in 1996 but it would be done on the basis of this new performance appraisal system. One has to go through an appraisal period, and at the end of that period, which we see now as 1995, when people will be appraised formally with a new system, on that basis, increments can then be paid in 1996 and that is a commitment of the Government.

I was about to make the point, going back to a point which Sen. Mansoor's posed about management in the public service, last year I also indicated that we have recognized the need to put into the public service new management skills, really to deal with a new public service. We recognized that it was, and still is as at this time, quite possible for an individual to reach the most senior levels in our public service without having been exposed to management training, in a time when we are managing multi-million-dollar accounts, at a time when the public service is in such a critical place with regard to the nation's development.

We began since 1992, a programme of management development activity and the Minister of Education alluded to the spread of that activity to principals and vice- principals. We have also done that for senior persons in the protective services as well as in the public service. Indeed, yesterday we had a graduation ceremony for some 200 public servants across those services who have successfully completed in 1994 that management development track. That now brings us to somewhere in the region of 400 persons who have been exposed to high quality management training in our public service over the last 2 1/2 years.

I am also pleased to advise the Senate that the first management development programme in Tobago began this year, 1994. The first group of persons from Tobago will finish early in 1995 and that programme will continue and become a normal part of life in our public service. We cannot just talk about putting new systems in; we also have to talk about ensuring the skills are there to manage that new system.

But we have to talk, as well, about being able to know whom we have; we have to talk as well about being able to find these skills very easily. And so I signalled again, in my last year's contribution that a critical element in this whole human resource management reform activity would be the development of a human resource information system in the public service.

We had indicated at that time that we had introduced into the public service a first phase information system developed by the National Information System

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Centre. Having looked at it and evaluated it we then opted to use another local software which we felt was more appropriate to the public service.

As a consequence, Trinidad Systems Limited was awarded a contract to provide a pilot project programme in the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance has just under 3,000 employees; therefore we felt it was large enough to allow us to test it, but small enough so that the project could be manageable.

That programme also had to go through some discussion with workers, the unions had some sensitivities about data collection. I am pleased to report that as of this date the data capture activity has been completed and the consultants are working now towards developing some of the organizational charts, reports and so forth. Their anticipation is that by mid-1995 the system would be fully functional and therefore in a position to begin transporting it out to other ministries.

In the meantime, the consultants have already begun working with the Service Commissions Department who undertook a pilot programme to capture data relating to the Teaching Service Commission. So that while we are developing that information system in the line ministry we are at the same time working at the centre, and therefore would be in a position to start exchanging that kind of information across the public service. Again, when we ask, "Where are we, Mr. President? "this is where we are as far as that particular activity is concerned.

Let me say some things which, perhaps, will touch on what Sen. Merritt said, an issue which Sen. Mahadeo also raised. Again, in a very glib way, Sen. Merritt said absenteeism is a problem, but when one has the responsibility of managing a country in transition, one cannot just throw one's hands up in the air and say, "absenteeism is a problem." That is a luxury only the Opposition can enjoy because they do not have the responsibility for managing the affairs of the state.

The issues of attitude that Sen. Carol Mahadeo raised and that issue of absenteeism really says to us that we need to examine a whole range of possible factors which may impact on what appears to be a problem of absenteeism. It may have to do with stress. It may have to do with burn-out. It may have to do with a range of dissatisfactions. The attitude issue may also be compounded by persons who operate—in their view—in inappropriate physical environments, with inappropriate information technology. All of these issues, therefore, one would need to deal with if one is to arrive at a solution to what, simplistically, would be described as a problem of absenteeism.

That is why the work that we have been doing has been holistic in nature, recognizing that we have to change many things at one and the same time, and it is the collective change that ultimately will produce the desired result. So it is, in fact, in managing the entire country why so many reforms are proceeding at the same time, because we cannot fiddle with one part of a system without fiddling with the other; there is an interdependency of systems.

The Minister of Education yesterday alluded to one of the things which again were pilot tested in the Ministry of Education, to deal with some of these people problems which could manifest themselves in absenteeism or inappropriate attitudes. The minister of Education at the end of his presentation, noted the successful introduction of an employee assistance programme in that ministry, a programme which allowed training to take place as supervisors, a training which allowed members of that ministry and their families to access high quality professional and counselling services.

3.00 p.m.

I am pleased to advise this honourable Senate that yesterday Cabinet, in reviewing the results of that pilot programme in the Ministry of Education decided to expand it and the first place for its expansion will be the Ministry of National Security.

So that we have now established an implementation team in that ministry with a mandate to put in place an action plan which will come back to Cabinet by the end of January for putting a full-blown employee assistance programme into the Ministry of National Security.

It is interesting that in looking at some of the recommendations coming from the consultant after the first year's review, to see that the consultant talks about the importance of looking at career development as one of the things which could deal with problems of burn-out in the teaching service. Again, we come back to the importance of the human resource management framework; the structure and the systems are recognition that we cannot continue operating as we have done in the past. Therefore, the pilot employee assistance programme, the pilot has worked well, and will be expanded in 1995 to the Ministry of National Security.

We have also been working at the legal environment. As this Senate is aware, there is currently a Bill treating with constitutional amendments to deal with the Police Service Commission, but we have also been able to draft amendments to the Civil Service Act, and I am sure particularly the Independent Senators would

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be pleased to note that alongside that draft there are draft regulations. So that we have both amendments to a Bill and draft regulations.

The intent of those amendments is: to clearly delineate human resource management which was done in the past; to decentralize elements of that function into line ministries and allow permanent secretaries in turn to be able to delegate some of their functions to others. It also builds-in to the legislation for the first time, very clearly, the new performance appraisal system that we are putting in place.

That Bill is currently with the Legislative Review Committee of Cabinet and we anticipate that in 1995 we shall be in a position to bring it to this House. While we have done we have continued to do work relating to all of the other service Acts and regulations, but we need to be clear on the umbrella before we finalize all the other service Acts and regulations. That work, therefore, will continue during 1995.

One of the things that we attempted to do, perhaps to treat more squarely with the concerns of Sen. Carol Mahadeo in terms of service and attitudes, recognizing our own vision of having a public service which is oriented to quality service, was embark over the years on customer training work, recognizing that one element in the puzzle could be training. In 1993 we trained 300 facilitators who in turn went on to train others, and trained a total of 1400 public servants. In 1994, we trained a further 44 facilitators who went on in turn to train just over 1200 public servants. Small numbers, perhaps, but the departments which were identified were critical and we believe that that was one step towards providing better quality service to the public. We will continue to do that.

I am sure that Sen. Mahadeo's senatorial neighbour Rev. Teelucksingh—and I rather suspect my teacher Prof. St. Cyr—will also agree that in this matter of salvation and change it takes time. It is not one word that will bring the sinner home, but many sermons. We intend to continue the training, because we believe that that is one important ingredient in producing better quality service by our public service.

Let me also say that as part of it—and it links back to something else I said—we shall need to deal with supervision. We shall need to deal with rewards; with discipline, and codes of conduct. We shall need to help managers feel more comfortable in the exercise of disciplinary authority, much of which has already, in fact, been delegated by the Service Commissions Department.

Interestingly, in trying to treat with one aspect of the disciplinary issue in the public service, the service commissions themselves recently conducted a series of training programmes to help those persons who must appear before disciplinary tribunals in leading evidence. A recognition that much of the problem that we face with regard to the management of discipline in the public service has to do with the unwillingness and/or inability of persons who manage to deal in that disciplinary kind of environment where they face legal minds, legal luminaries and therefore, some of the training had to be done in that regard.

We also recognize that part of that puzzle has to do with ensuring that public servants work in environments that are conducive to productivity. Over the last year, therefore, the Government has had to find new accommodation for some 19 Government offices. Improvement work has been done on 35 Government offices—a number of them such as revenue offices, post offices, police stations out in rural communities—recognizing that we cannot now put everybody in new accommodation, but that we could bring things up to a liveable condition if we spend some money on rehabilitation. We did that during 1994 and will do it again during 1995.

I think Sen. Huggins spoke about some of the developments with regard to police stations, and Sen. Ojah-Maharaj alluded to the development of administrative centres in different parts of the country. The Public Sector Investment Programme will point to the fact that the work on the Tunapuna Administrative Complex will begin early in 1995. That complex will house a range of Government offices and a magistrates' court. Cabinet also agreed to the development of a similar centre in San Fernando and Nipdec, as project managers, have already invited, and in fact, received bids from a number of private sector developers who are prepared to come forward and work with Government in the provision of more suitable accommodation for our public servants.

Beyond San Fernando there are plans to develop such centres in Arima, Chaguanas, Princes Town and we will continue to move to other areas all in that bid, on the one hand, to pull services together and, on the other, to ensure that our public officers can, in fact, work in decent accommodation.

I think Sen. Ojah-Maharaj made the further point this morning as he talked about this public sector construction activity, that clearly the other impact of this activity in 1995 and the ensuing years will be jobs in the construction sector. Not only are we dealing with providing appropriate accommodation, but we are also dealing with what we ourselves acknowledge to be one of the critical areas of concern in the national community, mainly the issue of employment.

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We also indicated that the Industrial Court will be constructed to house a Recognition, Registration and Certification Board, as well as the Integrity Commission. A decision was taken, in fact, to go back to the drawing board even after the first designs for the court had been developed to maximize that space, and in so doing to put two other floors on, which will allow us to accommodate two other critical arms of the public service. Mr. President, these are all critical elements of our work as far as accommodation is concerned—a critical piece in our public service reform agenda.

Hon. Senators may also be interested to note that one of our historic buildings—Whitehall—has also been earmarked for restoration, and funds have been provided for that, in fact the work has begun and will continue through 1995. The Cabildo, that old seat of Government will also be restored as part of our own concern with the cultural and historic life of our country, as well as ensuring that some of these buildings are returned to former glory. Under the umbrella of accommodation as part of our public service reform work we have in 1994 proceeded apace, and that pace will quicken in 1995 as this journey of reform goes on.

3.10 p.m.

Then there is the issue of information technology—I had indicated in my last budget contribution that we had a consultant working with us in this area of information technology. In fact, there was another Cabinet appointed committee which looked at the business of information technology at a macro level.

That work is continuing. The public service reform consultant, working with the ministries and departments, identified a number of priority applications in the information systems area, some of which have, in fact, already been alluded to during the course of this debate.

The Minister of National Security this morning in response to a question posed yesterday, talked about the population registration system and pointed to the fact that provision has been made in the Public Sector Investment Programme under the Ministry of Health for further work in that area which is the unique identifier system. That has been one of the priority applications identified by us as part of our reform activity.

The human resource information system of which I have already spoken was the second identified.

The third has to do with the movement in financial information systems. While we have moved a long way, in terms of our human resource management

reforms, we now need to place more emphasis, which we will in 1995, on the business of finance and accounting and associated reforms, and information systems in that area would become a key element in the reform.

The fourth priority application identified related to electronic mail and a registry system, and we have also indicated in an earlier contribution that the Office of the Prime Minister was identified as a location for a pilot document imaging system. That system is now in place—the installation is 95 per cent complete. It will do electronic mail transfers within that office. It will serve as a pilot project, and, ultimately, we would be able to bring electronic mail to other ministries and departments in the public service—all of this ensuring that we have a public service that is modern, that is in keeping with the technological age and that can deal with the imperatives of development at this stage.

Sen. Huggins talked about some of the developments in the Judiciary. I just want to add one piece to that because, as we have indicated here from time to time, we have moved in that place to introduce computer-aided transcription techniques. That requires significant training. It requires a significant mind shift from the old methodology of reporting to a new computer-based methodology. While some persons have been trained in that and another batch is now being trained at the John Donaldson Institute, the Government continues to look for mechanisms to speed up the process of providing, not only the courts but also the Parliament, the Industrial Court—Sen. Mahadeo was concerned about technology in the Industrial Court—a recognition that there are other places that can utilize this technology.

Our quest, therefore, was for a mechanism to fast-track, if you will, the training of persons in this technology. Cabinet, a couple weeks ago, agreed to an approach which will see us invite private firms to tender, giving us a commitment to produce for us, over a three-year period, 100 trained CAT technicians. We believe that the system is preferable, more cost-effective than the existing system and would allow us to move to that kind of technology in our court and other systems at a much faster rate than the current system now allows.

Sen. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. President, I thank the hon. Minister for giving way. He said that there are some who are trained. How many are actually trained now? And, how many are being used in the courts at present?

Sen. The Hon. G. Draper: Mr. President, the first set of people who came out of the training are at different stages in their competence. I am not sure of the actual numbers who are at different places in the court system, but I can get that

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information for the hon. Senator. We have another 25 persons currently in training, but all of the projections coming out of the court say to me that that speed of training will be insufficient. I shall be happy to give the hon. Senator the exact numbers, perhaps, next week.

The point I am making, however, is a commitment to intensify the training and to ensure that we can, in the shortest possible time, put that technology in place in the public service; and there is provision for that.

Last year, in my contribution, I indicated that one other place for decentralization to improve decision-making and management would be the Central Tenders Board—the procurement system in the public service. I indicated then Cabinet's acceptance, in principle, of a direction which said that we would locate within line ministries the function of procurement. But again, in managing change one needs to ensure that persons who would be affected by that change are involved in the process.

The Government spent significant time in working with the staff of the Central Tenders Board in fine-tuning and working through that proposal in moving towards the development of desk manuals, and also understanding the need to develop career tasks for supply managers in the public service. That work with the staff of the Central Tenders Board has now been completed and we anticipate that early in 1995 the committee working on the implementation would report to Cabinet on a clear time frame and action plan for the decentralization of the procurement function.

While we have done these things which cut across systems in the public service, we have also seen—and we have heard in this place—work proceeding within individual line ministries. The Ministry of Health has been proceeding with its reform. The Ministry of Education, as we have heard from the Minister, has been proceeding with its reform, and it is on track. The Minister of Finance, in the Budget Statement alluded to some of the significant reforms taking place in Customs and Excise. In the Inland Revenue Department reform has been taking place. In the Ministry of Trade and Industry significant reform has been taking place. I can continue the list. Each individual ministry has been proceeding on its own time-table for change which affects it, which is different from the system change which I have been describing for the last few minutes.

About a month ago the Ministry of Works and Transport had, through the Central Tenders Board, a contract awarded for a management audit to be done for that ministry geared to looking at structures and systems, for improving the efficiency of that ministry.

Within the Office of the Prime Minister, we have located a Permanent Secretary with responsibility for dealing with concerns and complaints by public servants, issues of temporary officers, and acting appointments. These things which require dedicated slugging to work through the Service Commissions and the Director of Personnel Administration are now receiving the attention of a Permanent Secretary.

3.20 p.m.

We have also seen, coming out of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the establishment of an outplacement unit which will serve as a pilot for ministries and departments which may require to place and redeploy any officers who may be separated.

Then, of course, there is the settlement of the public service debt. Again, you see, we had Sen. Carol Mahadeo—sorry, Sen. Carol Merritt, the other Carol—my apologies, my profoundest apologies!—Sen. Carol Merritt saying to us that as she looked at the settlement relating to debt of public servants, it was a far cry from what Government said it would do. Again, there was no real research.

Let me read the PNM manifesto relating to the public sector pay issue:

"The PNM will settle this issue by:

- paying public servants their correct salaries and thus stop the accumulation of arrears."

March, 1992 we did that.

"- entering into negotiations with the representative unions with a view to arriving at an amicable arrangement for the payment of the arrears, bearing in mind the general acceptance that the arrears cannot all be paid in cash at this time."

We have kept to our word; we have continued our discussions. With one union we have arrived at an arrangement and that had to be budgeted for and that we did. In other words, there was a manifesto commitment which we kept in 1992; we continued with dialogue and we are now in a position to keep the rest of that commitment in 1995. But, Mr. President, the journey continues and as we look at public service reform in 1995, in fact, coming out of discussions with the unions and the public service implementation committee, we have now identified a number of areas for continued focus.

Clearly, many of the issues I raised which are in progress will continue and will be a critical point for us in 1995: the human resource management issues—

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the range of which I have outlined. Increased focus on information systems, information technology, finance and accounting. Even more emphasis on training and, in particular, training in human resource management. A hard look at revenue areas and work which needs to be done to maximize revenue collection. A hard look at service delivery, recognizing that we need to do that work to ensure that our public gets quality service from our public service. These will be areas of focus for us in 1995.

In the same way that, as a nation, we can now build on the foundations of these last three years, public service reform as one component of that whole direction and change can build on our foundations of the last three years.

And so, here we are on the threshold of 1995, indeed, on the threshold of a new century. On the one hand, with a Government, committed, demonstrating its ability to turn this economy around; a Government coming out of a party—sound, well organized, with a clear tradition and history of hard work and performance. That is one side of the equation and on the other. Mr. President, I had better continue.

In 1995, therefore, we stand at a place where this committed, PNM Government, having proved itself, can plant a flag on this milestone in our journey of economic growth, a flag based clearly and squarely on performance criteria of growth, some reduction in unemployment; performance criteria relating to stability in our exchange rate; performance criteria relating to modernizing our economy to deal with the reality of a competitive world.

We can plant that flag, but we do it with a clear recognition that much more needs to be done. We do it, clearly recognizing that at this stage there can be no turning back. We do it, clearly recognizing that the fiscal and monetary discipline which brought us to this point cannot, and will not, now be compromised. We do it, Mr. President, recognizing that as we continue this journey, there are many that we will need to embrace, to help: the unemployed, the youth, in particular, which is why there are programmes geared to help them at this stage of the journey.

But we are here, confident in the ability of this PNM Government as the only party and government that can carry this country through the challenges of the next century. It is for this reason that I can stand here confident in what we have done, confident in this milestone; confident in this place that we rest in this journey; confident in our future, Mr. President, a PNM future—a future moving us more and more to growth. I can stand here, therefore, and say to this Senate and to the nation that this Budget is a clear manifestation of a Government on track. It

needs to be commended. The Minister of Finance needs to be commended and I heartily urge all to do so.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh: Mr. President, you will recall that on more than one occasion, I referred to the Government as *my* Government or *our* Government. I do so again, but if sometimes I am firm or seemingly uncharitable in my analysis or criticism of the Executive, it is because I take very seriously the view that there is an urgent need at all times for *our* Government, any government, to be faithful, committed and diligent in their stewardship. In fact, I believe that good government is best achieved, not merely by the authority of the few, but through the collective wisdom of the many.

Since the hon. Minister of Finance presented the budget statement for 1995, there has been a continuous analysis of that Appropriation Bill, both by the national community and the Parliament. I doubt, at this late stage of the game, if any of the concerns went unnoticed. One feature of the debate is our apparent belief that there is some virtue in repetition. My indulgence today in any repetition is, primarily, for emphasis.

I must congratulate the hon. Minister on acknowledging the significance of any message of hope and optimism to an otherwise depressed population. Our people have been so badly bruised and battered by the demands and exactions of past Budgets, that even the Minister's "good news" message is viewed with some suspicion in certain quarters. In fact, if there were good news in recent Budgets there was always a price tag attached and somehow or other the man-in-the-street is asking about this "good news" Budget: What is the catch in this one?

May I repeat that several persons suspect that the Appropriation Bill, 1995 with its "good news" has the disguise of an election budget? Several more of our citizens, though, welcome gladly even the smallest of relief measures in the Budget, and I identify with this group. In his introductory remarks, the hon. Minister foresaw that "the worst of a long and arduous journey nears its end". Maybe, in a sense, yes, the hon. Minister is correct, but I warn that the next stage may be even more strenuous because economic recovery is only meaningful and beneficial when we begin the task of moral reconstruction, ethical resuscitation and social transformation. These are basic if your dream city, the global city of the Caribbean, is to be more than mythical.

We must respond expeditiously to rescue the thousands of unemployed citizens who live on the edge of frustration and poverty in our land. Let me repeat

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what I have said some time prior to this day—that we still must find a place for those vagrants, these representatives of broken humanity, who litter the new promenade in Port of Spain and in other cities too! Find a home for them, is something that I will always be calling for until one is acquired.

3.30 p.m.

I am disturbed that McDonald's could find a home in Port of Spain, but there is no room in the inn for the broken mass of humanity who continue to eat from the garbage bins and the garbage pails outside the fastfood outlets.

Further, we must continue to find resources to check the phenomenal spread of the drug culture. We must now put into action a plan to rescue an anaemic educational system, and we must continue to address the social devastation of the structural adjustment policies which have scarred minds and bodies more than Pharaoh's whip.

Looking at the challenges ahead of us, there are so many sections of the Appropriation Bill which show a Budget of voiceless and faceless statistics, sometimes oblivious of the real problems out there; a glass bubble Budget limited in its appreciation of some of our most severe social difficulties.

You would have noticed that the hon. Minister, in almost six pages of the Budget, outlined some of the features of that popular economic ideology whose influence seem almost inescapable for us in Trinidad and Tobago. In those pages he repeatedly employed the term "global" or its derivatives. At least eight times it was used. Within the past days, several Senators in their contributions expressed concern about the playing field for global trade and economic alliances.

We advise, and strongly warn, too, that Government must be cautious and not rush headlong into the currents of trade liberalization without proper appreciation of our limitations, and we ought not to be so naive as to think that in the emerging world economic order, we shall be treated like equals with our partners, preferred or not, on a level playing field.

GATT or no GATT, we already experience unfair competition with developed countries of the North and the European Community, most of whom have the most protected markets in the world. They have made the playing field themselves and have already chosen the advantageous positions.

The current economic policies of globalization to which we are drawn, may for now be inevitable, but let us be advised that they also produce global exploitation, stifling human expression and subjecting developing countries to untold hardships.

However painful the consequences, we still have to struggle for a playing field that is level. Let us get on quickly with our unfair trade practices legislation; anti-dumping legislation; let us continue to protect and nurture those fledgling industries and continue to protect our agricultural sector, and our manufacturing sector that are indigenous. Whatever the cost, we need to protect them.

We are dismantling tariff barriers left, right and centre and the door to open competition is flung wide to the forces of a global economy which seems capable of eliminating or absorbing all competing forces.

I now turn to another item in the Budget, one touched on by so many Senators—the external debt, mentioned in the first paragraph. The external debt has been like an albatross around our necks. The hon. Minister shares the good news that our debt is reduced and our payments are on schedule. But alas! there is little comfort in the news, for at present the external debt still stands at a staggering US \$2.1 billion. We have been hearing about intermission in 1995. That is deceptive. Will Government tell us how much of further loans are expected to be added in the next two or three years? Appendix 16 of *the Review of the Economy* shows our external borrowings for 1994 as being \$1.3 billion.

Did we not get approval to borrow from the World Bank \$500 million to improve national drainage; and another \$390 million from the same institution for WASA's replacement of water mains? And of what other loans does the population need to be informed? Loans come and meet loans, and that is no good news. Certainly these projects need attention, but the good news about payment of external loans is very transient. Why tell us to search for light at the end of the tunnel when we are not even in the tunnel as yet?

There is undeniable evidence that Government will keep this nation enslaved to the foreign financial institutions whose conditionalities have already shredded our nation's social fabric. Good news, you say!

The good news concerning Government's divestment programme is not welcome news. So far, all my colleagues in this debate have expressed serious reservation about this programme. On page 8 of the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister announced that the divestment of state enterprises accounted for US \$377 million. A good question the nation is going to ask tomorrow is: What was the money used for? To service the foreign debt? To support the social safety net? For financing URP, or absorbed in the Consolidated Fund? So what is the good news here?

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Willing buyers and co-operative partners! In December, 1994, one half of T&TEC is to be sold; January 1995 it will be BWIA; then National Flour Mills. The *Trinidad Guardian* of September 18, 1994, at page one, quoted Gerry Hospedales, head of the divestment team. He listed so far, Fertilizers of Trinidad and Tobago (Fertrin) and the Trinidad and Tobago Urea Company Ltd. The final purchase price paid by Arcadian Partners is US \$175 million.

Also listed was Trinidad Cement stock Units; Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging Ltd., Farrell House (1975) Ltd, National Poultry Co. Ltd., National Fruit Processors; four assets in Petrotrin are also down for divestment. To what use was this money put? So far, according to that report, it is TT \$1.1 billion. It is not very good news, since we will borrow later again and then have nothing to mortgage. That is the sadness about it.

Listen to the kind of business proposal and strategy we find in the good news budget. It states at page 13:

"WASA will be restructured to ensure a successful transition to private sector management in 1995. We propose to spend \$50 million over the next three months on emergency repairs at WASA. Further, beginning in 1995, we propose to spend US \$65 million or TT \$390 million on water mains replacement financed by the World Bank. By April 1995, we expect that the new private operator will be on board at WASA..."

3.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I would like you to pardon my ignorance; the ignorance of an unlearned inquirer. I most respectfully submit that to spend a total of TT \$380 million to upgrade this utility and then the next day invite a private operator on board, leaves that lucky operator to think we must be a nation of morons! *[Interruption]* Why will I commit an offence? Why is it an offence if I ask how much will the operator contribute after we have spent such a fortune to make such a salubrious economic climate for him?

On another matter, who is this Edward Acker, fortunate to buy 25.5 per cent into BWIA for a paltry sum of US \$2 million? What is his track record in the airline business? What are his credentials? Was this Mr. Acker paid US \$250,000 as a consultancy fee? I stand to be corrected and informed.

The hon. Minister shared real good news with us on page 5 of the Budget Statement. He informed us of the steep prices in methanol production and sales on the world market. The hon. Minister spoke of methanol as being up in price by

109 per cent in 1994 over 1993 prices. *The Review of The Economy* at page 14, informs us of very profitable increases also in the production and price of urea and ammonia. This has to be a windfall for the lucky owners or partners of methanol, urea and ammonia! It has to be a fortune!

Is it unfair that I or any one of our citizens should ask: How much or what will be the total annual income from this windfall? Furthermore, by how much will this little struggling nation, whose natural resources have been so richly utilized, benefit? Or, is the Government going to tell us that this is commercially sensitive data? Will we continue on our merry way, in the light of that, comforting the unemployed Trinidadian who lives in the Point Lisas area—and who grew up there catching crabs in the swamp—by telling him what a lucky man he is, to dream the coconut vendor on his donkey cart, then bet a dollar on donkey in the Government sponsored play whe, and win handsomely—only \$24—and we keep him there as a \$24 jackass, while millions are shipped away from his very doorstep?

Mr. President, oh the play whe and lotto; blessed by the Government, but these games have now become the new opiate of the people.

Who shares in the real good news of the prosperity of this land? Indeed, we all say thanks to the foreign investors who have confidence in us to come here, but the question we should like to ask, and we will always ask is: Is there an equitable and reasonable share for our nation in the development, farming and use of our rich natural resources? We are not so hand-to-mouth, Sir. God has blessed this nation and we have to be better stewards and keepers of the little prosperity He has given.

Another issue of great significance in the Budget is the Minister's delightful announcement of governmental action in preserving the environment. Yes, the Environment Management Agency is a splendid plan for 1995. But at present the nation cannot view the environment as defenseless in terms of laws. We already have legislation which can be invoked to protect the environment. For example, can we enquire why the Town and Country Planning Division sits idly by while certain land developers for residential housing interfere with, and sometimes change, our natural water courses? They make enormous profits and they leave behind flooded communities.

What has the relevant ministry done in the last few years with those quarry operators who continue to pollute our rivers and streams, and over-exploit the quarrying areas? They did nothing, or very little. What is the ministry doing in

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response to the many who continue to destroy our eco system in their wanton burning of forests for cultivation?

On yet another matter in the Budget. I certainly agree with those who ask the question as to whether Government gets value for the money it spends every year. I have a word to add. It is certainly not good enough to make vast allocations of taxpayers' money, and not have proper, reliable and efficient supervisory mechanisms to monitor spending; to look at tendering estimates and ensure that they are realistic, and when the job is done, to be certain that payments are justifiable. This is something of which our Government must be cognizant. We just do not need to allocate, budget money and write out cheques to various ministries without calling for good accountability.

For example, we certainly need an investigation into the present road repair programme. It has just started. Listen to this; \$50 million was allocated to the road repair programme in 1994, and we were told by the hon. Minister that a further \$25 million will be allocated to restore approximately 50 km of road in 1995.

Mr. President, you use the roads as most of us do with our vehicles. Have you seen some areas which were restored? I wonder if we have spent the \$50 million already for 1994? Next year it might be \$75 million, based on the calculations in the Budget. Have Senators driven on some of the areas restored? And it is only a one-year programme so far? A few days after the restoration of some of these roads, they need further restoration.

Who is checking out the contracts of the last few months? Who examines the jobs, and cuts the ribbon where new barber-green is so thin that old surfaces show after the rain falls the next day? Fifty million dollars, and the Government cannot find a few millions to buy a house in Port of Spain for those who have been sleeping under the stores and shops for years and who will be there getting wet this evening.

Who pays from Government funds, without proper certification, suppliers who deliver mud instead of gravel to patch potholes, but the Ministry of Works and Transport which is billed for the good stuff? Who supervises? Who checks on Government spending? The road repair programme must be the most expensive patch job in the history of road repair and road building in this country.

3.50 p.m.

On this same point of Government getting value for its money, I refer to a report on page 1 of the *Trinidad Guardian* of October 30, 1994, where the hon. Minister of Works and Transport is quoted as saying:

"Government has solicited approval from the World Bank for a \$500 million loan to improve national drainage."

I made reference to that, but listen to this one, in the context of accountability and getting value and work for the money they budget for and distribute to the various ministries and departments. The Minister of Works continues:

"Work on the project will begin by September, 1995."

Listen to this, Mr. President.

"The Minister says that the World Bank has given us \$30 million already for designs and to complete studies for all the drainage channels in Trinidad and Tobago.

We have already invited consultants to give us proposals."

Causing greater alarm for me, was when Sen. Ojah-Maharaj in his contribution quoted a bigger figure. He said \$60 million for studies and designs. One article says \$30 million, the hon. Senator says \$60 million. I will play with \$30 million, the smaller amount.

On the business of the \$30 million, would you be displeased with me today, if I show disgust that designs and studies only, cost an unbelievable \$30 million? These must be the highest paid consultants in the entire global village. Please allow me to say, and this is my understanding of this expenditure of the \$30 million or \$60 million—it is frightening if it is \$60 million. That kind of money is not a gift from the World Bank for studies and designs. I talk about loan meeting loan; this is what is going to happen. This is another one, and this is only first payment for designs. What is it—\$400 million to follow? Thirty million only to tell us why certain areas are flooding in this country. Forgive me, this is an invitation to corruption and irresponsibility.

Will our Government ever get value for that kind of expenditure? This is the burden of this part of my contribution; that \$30 million consultancy, or \$60 million to make it worse, needs more than clarification. Why should we have the costliest projects in this nation being monitored and supervised by the Government with checks and balances that could be so easily rigged? I cannot understand it. Maybe I shall never understand it, but I think we need to enquire.

I would really like to endorse the call by Sen. Dean to the hon. Minister and the Government to withdraw the punitive six per cent insurance tax. We are not fooled. The consumers in Trinidad and Tobago know already, even before they

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saw a copy of the Budget—some of them may never read it, but the man in the street knows that insurance companies will not be paying the six per cent insurance tax. Do not try to fool the consumer. He has to pay it. We have to pay it.

The “good news” Budget is telling us that in personal income tax we will now have a reduction, but on the other hand we have to pay increased premiums on motor vehicles and houses. That good news is short-lived anyhow.

Sen. Rahael: I do not know whether the Senator was here when I made my contribution the day before yesterday. I indicated then that there is a reduction of 15 per cent on insurance premiums, and that the six per cent, therefore, will not have an impact on the consumers or the business community in the coming year.

Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh: Thank you, very much. I know the Senator cannot speak for all insurance companies in this country, but I would also like to add to that. From time to time within the last few years, we the consumers have seen in the newspapers, advertisements running something like this: 'You are invited to buy this item, and you do not have to pay VAT.' This is precisely the mentality I am looking at and enunciating. You are inviting me to buy something and trying to fool me by saying that I do not have to pay VAT, but your price regime was so adjusted a long time ago. So I am paying VAT and you are misleading me. This thing has been going on for a long time. You are registered to pay VAT as a businessman and still you are telling me am not paying VAT so come and buy your product. It is the same kind of mentality that will cause, maybe, somebody to say, the insurance companies will be in charge. They are going to tell me that but listen, we are talking about a very educated, aware and intelligent population who know full well that if an insurance company tells them that the price will go down, they will still have to pay the six per cent tax. And that comes from me, and the consumer. Maybe long time you could fool people with that argument, but no longer.

4.00 p.m.

I repeat. That is so very vital for our Government. The Government must try to do everything within its power to get value for the kind of money we have allocated in our Budget for the running of this country.

Mr. President, you have heard enough from all of us, so I will make a closing comment. When will we stop defrauding our Government? When will we include integrity and honesty in our daily living and accept this as our native land, the land that we love the most? I close by wishing you and your family and also the Members of this honourable Senate, parliamentary staff, the media and all our

beloved people, a very peaceful advent season and grace to meet the opportunities and challenges of the new year.

Thank you.

The Minister of Culture, Community Development and Women's Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Mr. President, thank you for this opportunity to make my contribution to this Senate on this 1995 Budget, and to continue the good news.

After listening to some of the contributions, I recognized more and more the importance of the ministry for which I am responsible, because it is the ministry that is people focussed and people centred; each division—community development, culture and women's affairs. Since the Budget was cast in a way that emphasizes human resource development, more and more there is a greater responsibility for me as Minister to deliver much of what the hon. Minister spoke about in his Budget.

Before I do that, I remember last year, when I was about to speak on the three divisions, a former Senator asked: How could you begin talking about culture first? Well, I had a particular reason for it. He is not here today, but clearly I wish to begin my contribution by focussing on what I consider to be a very important division in the ministry and one that looks after a little more than 50 per cent of the population. Someone asked: Why? I can probably use a quotation to say why:

"Only if women are actively incorporated into public life can their societies benefit from the important contribution that women can make, not only to meet their economic, social and cultural needs, but also to contribute as full-fledged citizens."

I would like to go back a little to the creation of the party to which I am so proud to belong. Almost four decades ago, this party recognized the importance of the contribution of women to society. Almost four decades ago, this party put in place special machinery to focus on the women

The party has been criticized because of the fabulous Women's League we had and which we continue to have—criticized in all ways. It amazes me that four decades later, some people have now come to realize the meaning of that focus and have just started to focus on the women of Trinidad and Tobago.

We take credit this evening for the women in Parliament; for the fact that the parties have recognized that they need to bring competent women when they put

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women in this position. I do give that credit to my colleagues in this honourable Senate. I wish to go back a little again.

The focus which we had at that time was on dealing with the women's position; the need to bring the women into the development process; for training them for educating them in all areas, politically and otherwise; for removing any obstacles that might hinder their development of the women. The focus was for the sake of the woman. When we look at Trinidad and Tobago and around the world, I am happy to say that our women have done well, but we need to do better, and that is why the division is here— because we have work to do to sensitize a number of people as to the role of the women. When we go out of Trinidad, and we notice what is happening there, we can say that we have really gone ahead of many of the larger countries.

I have had the opportunity to spend three weeks in Sweden looking at the women in politics and the efforts of the Swedes to get their women into the decision-making process. The Swedish Parliament has 46 per cent women, but in order to get that, and in order to get anybody in Sweden to vote for your party—and they have a system of proportional representation—the list must be made up with the name of one male, one female and continue like that. That is how Sweden got their women into Parliament. Competent or not, as long as one can show a list in which there is almost an equal number of women as men, then the party would be considered.

In Argentina where we went recently, they had to legislate—30 per cent of the parliamentarians must be women. They have the quota system. I am pleased to say that in Trinidad and Tobago we do not wish to have any of those systems, and we wish to be here because we are competent. I really feel proud that the party which I represent had brought that method of selection forward and at no time at all would we do anything else.

Let me just go back a bit to show what has happened. Quite recently we were involved in preparing a draft report on the status of women in Trinidad and Tobago. Each country has been doing that. When we looked at where we are and what this party has done, we should appreciate the competence of the women. When this report is published it will be seen that in our public life—for example, I was pleased when we were putting together our participation in local government bodies. We looked at the Mayors and there were just three in Trinidad and Tobago and two were women, who were chosen not because they were women, but because they were competent.

If one goes through some of the research that we found, one would have seen how interesting it is. A couple years ago, for example, none of our mission heads were women; now there are five. Four out of the 10 foreign service posts are held by women. If one goes into the public service one would notice that at the highest levels, Chief Personnel Officer, the Director of Personnel Administration, the Secretary to the Cabinet, the Auditor General, Permanent Secretaries in the Ministry of Finance, Youth and Sport, Consumer Affairs and Local Government, are all women. That just tells us that we have recognized that our women are competent and that they should be given jobs at the highest levels.

4.10 p.m.

The party from which I come quite recently had an advertisement out for the post of Chief Administrative Officer—an open invitation—where a number of people applied and were interviewed. The person who got the job, I am happy to say, is a woman. It was based on her qualifications. She has a first degree in management and a masters degree in Organization Theory and Human Resource Development. She was the most qualified, and therefore she was given the job.

It disturbs me therefore, after all that demonstration effect and the hard work which we have put in, to see almost four decades later, a new women's arm of a political party being formed, with almost a mandate of "we are not walking behind, we are not walking in front, but we are walking at the side," and I say to those people, release the women so that they can take up their rightful place, even if they are out front.

Four decades later, we cannot still say we are not walking this or that way, or position women on any particular "side". We have moved from a state of women in development and we have gone on quite clearly to gender equity. That is why some people still ask whether or not we need to have a women's affairs division. There is still work to be done we still keep the focus, but we are happy about where we have reached.

What is worse and a little disturbing is that the focus of the party when we started it four decades ago was on women. It was not anything cosmetic. The reason was not to defend anybody's image—neither men nor women. That was not the purpose for any women's arm. The focus should be on the women, I dare say, and I hope that even though women have come together seemingly for other purposes, their concentration will be on developing the women and not really coming forward to defend the image of a man.

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When we moved together, from 1956 to now, one of the things that this party did was to keep the women involved on the international scene. It was important because by so doing we were able to assess our position. We were also able to see what was being done in other countries so that we could move on. This national report that we are working on—the Status of Women Report—is a draft which was prepared after some consultation in Trinidad and Tobago.

Next year, as you probably know, is the Fourth World Conference in Beijing. Ten years ago we had a platform of action for women and that conference in Beijing will assess what has happened to women within the last ten years. Every country in the world, consulted and worked on a report. Then the Caricom region got together and prepared a report on the status of women in the Caricom region, Trinidad being an integral part of that.

Then as a group we went on to Argentina where we did a regional report on the status of women in the Caribbean and Latin America. Again, we were able to inform that report. It was completed recently in Chile. That method was conducted throughout the world and in March of next year, that regional report will form part of a draft report in New York, and that draft report will be taken to Beijing again where we will have further discussions.

The report which comes out from Beijing—that 10-year plan of action—should be able to inform the work of the women throughout the world. That is where we are, Trinidad and Tobago having taken a great part in what has happened. At the end of it all, the recommendations from the international report will certainly form some part of the work of Division of Women's Affairs.

In gathering the data for this, we had certain difficulties. I think that Sen. Merritt did allude to it, about the lack of disaggregated data. The data was not disaggregated. We had difficulty in identifying the proportion in the statistics of male and female in a number of areas, especially in the agricultural area. We had a suggestion from the FAO where they did a gender disaggregated database on human resources in agriculture and in that document they noted that the need for data on women is grounded in the UN goal of equality of men and women. Appropriate data is needed in the measurement of the situation of women, in the examination of the effects of economic growth on women and in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and development programmes aimed at achieving equality. Data disaggregation is extremely important for policy formation.

As a result of that, together with the IDB, we have been able to recruit a consultant who is now abroad, but who will be with us for two years. Some time

from now when such research is done, we shall be happy to identify the male and female statistics, even by age groups, which will inform policy at all levels of the Government.

When we did this report, we looked at eight critical areas, and I am happy to report that some of the critical areas which were asked of us by the United Nations were already part of the work of our division. One critical area was the promotion and protection of women's human rights. For those Senators who can remember, there was a convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination which we had signed and quite recently, as a Member of the Commission on the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, we brought the Convention of Belem Do Para. This convention was held in June, 1994, and I shall read part of it:

"For the purposes of this convention, violence against women shall be understood as any act or conduct based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women whether in a public or private place."

There is so much which has been said about violence against women. Yes, we had the Domestic Violence Act, which we will talk about, but we have also been part of the promotion of this convention which, when we look at it very closely—it is now in the Attorney General's office—the signed convention will then be laid in Parliament for ratification. I hope we will do so quite soon. A number of people have been calling the division asking us—

Sen. Persad-Bissessar: Thank you very much hon. Minister. I am very happy to hear that the Government is committed to keeping women in development and in participation. I should be grateful if you would mentioned the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, that UN convention which was ratified by the NAR government recently. Can you give us specific steps which have been taken by the Government since then to implement the terms of the convention? It is one thing having it there.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: I will deal with that as we talk about those conventions and the strengthening of the Women's Affairs Division.

4.20 p.m.

This second convention that we are talking about here—let me go on very carefully—

Article 2 of the Convention states:

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Violence against women shall be understood to include physical, sexual and psychological violence:

- a. that occurs within the family or domestic unit or within any other interpersonal relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the woman, including, among others, rape, battery and sexual abuse;
- b. that occurs in the community and is perpetrated by any person, including, among other, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or any other place; and
- c. that is perpetrated or condoned by the state or its agents regardless of where it occurs.

I am hoping that we would sign this convention quite early and have it brought to this Parliament for ratification. Members will have the opportunity then, to discuss this convention to the fullest and with the help of Senators opposite I hope that we shall sign this convention so that we could put it in place.

We had a women's division that had not been as strong as we would have liked it to be. And for Sen. Persad-Bissessar's information, we have now, with the help of the IDB been able to get a grant fund for institutional strengthening of the Women's Affairs Division. That has brought us about six consultants. We have put in a director and a deputy director and four project officers, that is in addition to what we have because the staff has been quite small and the kind of effect we would have liked to have had previously was not possible. We have started bringing more staff within the last two months.

Therefore, when one is talking about putting the conventions in place and working them, that would be part of the strengthened Women's Affairs Division. I am really happy about it because we needed that kind of support.

What happened before is that we had dealt a lot with the NGOs who had been in the field doing this and we tried to facilitate some of those NGOs financially to do some of that work. We will continue to work with the NGOs but we have the opportunity now to do some of the work ourselves because of the fact that the IDB has been able to give us some of that grant fund. That is one other area in which we are working, the whole question of violence.

We are also dealing with a project from the Rape Crisis Centre and I am pleased to let Sen. Carol Mahadeo, know—and she probably would wish to tell Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt—what we are doing with the \$25 million and to what extent we using the NGOs.

The project that came from the Rape Crisis Centre is a community caravan which would take them to 40 communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Strange enough, the project is one that would be done by the Ministry, the Rape Crisis Centre and the coalition for Women of which Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt is a part. In fact she signed the covering letter to the same project and offered their assistance. So it is a joint project which would take us through the communities for the next three years. It is a sort of living residential caravan.

The caravan bus will be going to various communities working on the whole business of violence, and I daresay with the competence of those NGOs, together with some funding from the Government that project would certainly succeed. I know that the Senator was quite concerned about working with the organizations and that is one way in which we are going to work with the NGOs.

In the report we have also looked at the position of women in terms of employment, and much has been said about women in the informal sector and whether some of the jobs are sustainable or not. I am as concerned as you are with that sustainability, and we have, therefore, worked out what we consider to be certain mechanisms to ensure that these jobs are sustainable.

One of the things that we have done is to employ one of the graduates of the University of the West Indies as one of our project officers in Agriculture who would overlook the projects for the women in that particular area. What we noticed—as I said last year—is there they were quite a number of women who were involved in the informal sector. What they lacked was not only the financial support, but also that kind of business sense and management capability.

We have been trying to work out with the Trinidad and Tobago Co-operative Credit Union League, a programme that we feel will benefit the women of Trinidad and Tobago in that way. I daresay that we have been able to come to a decision as to how such a programme would operate over the next three years. I hope that the league would stay with the programme. We would start with three communities—in Fyzabad, Plum Mitan, and I think Paramin. We would take about 90 women from each of the communities. We should be able to go to as many communities in Trinidad and Tobago as the league has the technical resources to continue.

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The league would in turn take these groups of women, pull them together in co-operatives, train them in management and leave them with functioning businesses. The whole funding for the project will come from the ministry, which is part of the money which the Government has allocated to us, and I am really happy about that

There were also a number of women who we found from our own training programmes who could have done better if they had been brought together in these co-operatives or in small businesses. The Government has now given a little more than \$6 million to the Small Business Development Company and this would help with funding. Before to this, these people were unable to get funding because they did not have the security and so forth.

One of the things we identified from this report was that the access to credit for some women was denied for one reason or another, and I believe it was because they did not have the security. Now that that money is there, we are hoping that these women would now get themselves together with the technical help from the ministries to form themselves into these small businesses. These are just two of the areas in which we have been working with the women.

Sen. Mahadeo: Thank you very much, hon. Minister.

It is very welcome to hear that you would no longer be seeking collateral for the women who would be entering the small businesses. Am I to understand that?

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: One of the things that would be happening is they will have that the technical assistance will be there with them and that is the reason we can do it this way. The technical assistance from the Ministry or whichever of the agencies we employ will stay with the groups until the groups are functioning and they can hold their own. Funding was a problem previously and this is one of the reasons.

We have identified through this report again, increasing number of female-headed households and when one talked about poverty—I know a number of people who were looking at that particular area. The Women's Affairs Division had to look at what can be done to these numbers of females who head their households so that they could get into some kind of economic activity which was sustainable.

We have been trying to get the export centres—those centres that one sees around the country—in shape. Unfortunately for the first year we had to do much work on the infrastructure, because some of them could not be used as there was

no water nor lights connection and there were a number of problems. We are now trying to pull them in place and they will be managed on our behalf by the Small Business Development Company, and those single women who are heads of households who received some kind of training in one of the skills will occupy them.

Some of them may probably come out of our own training programme or they might have got their training from other places, but they are going to be there working with the master-craftsmen. We are sorry that we had to delay that project for a while, but that should start in January because this month we ran a pilot project in some of these centres to see exactly how it would work, to see what facilities were there and what was needed, and I think we should get that one started. Again, it will be a continuous programme with these women.

4.30 p.m.

We have also been looking at another area, the Unemployment Relief Programme. As you know, some money goes into that and there are special programmes for women. When it started we accepted the programmes which were there. But after one reviewed it, it was felt that something more could be done for the women on programmes.

Therefore, in some of the areas we have tried some of the pilots, as you have heard through the entire Budget debate, so many jobs are going to be coming, for example, in the construction industry. We might say to ourselves, how many of them will go to the women? Because a large number of the women do not have the kind of skills that are necessary, partly because the training had been; discriminatory in some of the areas which we are trying to introduce in some of the schools there was still the traditional areas of the male or female kind of training, some of which we found a little discriminatory.

Therefore, even through that programme some of us decided to let the women work as tradesmen assistants directly with competent tradesmen whenever they were there, in a particular skill, which they repeated, to see how they will work. And what has happened? I am happy to say that in those areas the women did remarkably well.

Mr. President: I believe that the Senator is likely to take her normal time plus the 15 minutes extension and it is just about the half-way mark of the combined time, since the Standing Order requires us to break at this time, I will suspend the sitting for approximately half an hour. The Senate will resume at 5.00 p.m. and the Senator will continue for another half an hour.

4.33 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: Mr. President, while I would like to continue, especially for the benefit of the male Members of this Senate, our programme of activities for the Women's Affairs Division, I think time is against me. However, let me make it clear that although I talked about the focus being on the women, it does not mean that the Division does not focus on men. In fact, the Women In Development (WID) will soon be changed to Gender and Development (GAD), with its starting point being both men and women—if that is any comfort to the men.

During the interval, someone asked about the number of Senators that are in the party with us and why the female proportion is not greater, and I said that there is another problem in that there is reluctance on the part of some women to enter the political field. Therefore, together with UNIFEM and the Women's Forum of Sweden, a programme is being mounted to see to what extent women can be encouraged to actively participate in politics—that is in the decision-making aspect of government. That has nothing to do with the political party. When the programme is mounted by the Women's Forum, it would be for all women and will cut across the political line.

I would like to look at other areas within the ministry and to respond to Sen. Mahadeo who was also asking questions on behalf of Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyattt, about that \$25 million and the whole position of the social safety net. In particular, she asked about the Retired Experts Programme.

Sen. Mahadeo: Mr. President, I asked that question on my own behalf.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: Mr. President, I thank the hon. Senator very much for an opportunity to respond. Yes, these organizations were approached, and I do not want hon. Senators to think for one moment that they will not be used. Clearly, the ministry does not have that capability and that was not the decision of the Government.

For the benefit of Sen. Merritt, let me say that instead of going ahead into battered homes and building new ones at some time, the division will now support some of the NGOs that run those homes. I think Sen. Mahadeo has raised that, too. They are very specialized and they have been doing it for years, and if we want to increase their capability we could do so by giving them that extra funding. All of that is coming out of that social safety net—that \$25 million. It is much more than what hon. Senators are seeing.

In terms of the Retired Experts Programme, we have approached those organizations—as they may have indicated to the hon. Senator—and in the new year we are hoping to start that programme. That programme will take care of some of the young people from the junior secondary schools—particularly that area—and even some from the primary schools who may need that kind of holding bay while their parents are at work, or who probably need that extra help. We are focussing on community centres or any other suitable place for that and the programme will be instituted shortly. So that there is no need for fear in that one.

In terms of the Geriatric/Adolescent Partnership—Sen. Mahadeo mentioned it—I sat all night thinking what other word I could use instead of geriatric. When the hon. Senator said that it was a bit offensive, I got worried; but probably she could help me. I would like to keep the acronym GAP because it is bridging the gap between the elderly and the youths. If Sen. Mahadeo can come up with something, I would certainly use it. They all have their buttons stamped "GAP," but I know the Senator could try something that will help me.

I was a bit surprised when the hon. Senator said that she was seeing the young people on the television helping the elderly, who were not their relatives yet, at the same time she felt that they would not help their grandmothers or the aged at home. I cannot see that being so but the ministry would look at it because that was the purpose of it. We thought they would start at home; in fact, we thought they were doing it at home and not outside.

Nevertheless, for this year, for the end of that programme—because there are still some funds remaining from the 1994 programme—within a week or so, those young people will be working with the elderly in their homes during the Christmas season, doing the things for which they were trained—shopping, getting them prepared; particularly the elderly who live alone. That is where these young people will be involved. They usually get a stipend but they will be doing something that they have grown to love.

The whole programme will start again next year. We will shift a bit from the communities we have worked in this year because we feel that there are a number of young people who could carry the community and move to some other community. As I said before, that was one of the successful programmes which we had the opportunity to run within the ministry.

In terms of the relief centres, we are working on the Spree Simon building as one. It has been there, it needs completing. I do not think because a structure like

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that has been built the Government wants to carry this project on permanently. The project is not just a feeding centre only. Yes, there are some centres where a person can get a meal if he or she needs to get one free of charge, like soup; yes, there would be subsidized meals; yes, there would also be counselling in that area. There would be a library for some kind of development with a second-hand bookshop and other things within it.

It does not necessarily mean that persons will be kept on a soup kitchen programme for the rest of their lives. People have welcomed the facilities which we have started, but we will go into other areas which we have already identified. A number of the churches have asked us—the Baptist Church, Revival Time Assembly—quite a number of churches want to be a part of the programme—and it is not just feeding because they have the facilities also for that. We are moving in that relief centre programme and I hope hon. Senators will understand the depth of that programme with the funding coming from the Government but the programme executed by the non-governmental organizations.

As part of the Community Enhancement Programme which was started this year—where we had our community education programmes—I am pleased to say that there were over 4,000 persons being trained in that programme this year. We are continuing that training programme and some of those—

Sen. Mahadeo: Mr. President, I do not want to interrupt the Minister all the time for her to lose her train of thought. Going back on the relief programme, the NGOs, which already have their buildings and their schedules and so forth—the hon. Minister of Finance had indicated that he would be allocating a certain amount of money to provide more buildings, and I had asked whether the buildings that are already there could not be expanded and refurbished so that more people could be attended to, rather than spending that allocation for 1995 on putting in new physical infrastructure. That money could go into the expansion of existing facilities, benefiting more people and there would be more help for them.

5.10 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: Thank you very much, Senator. I think we are on the same track. That is what is happening with the Spree Simon building, which is being refurbished and if we had more time I would have been able to talk about some of the other buildings that have been used. The facilities I am talking about are those which people have given over to us, for example, the church I talked about was moved to new quarters and has asked whether we can use their old building and they would set up facilities to cater for all those who live in Marabella-on-the-line, and so forth.

So we are not actually putting up new buildings; we are doing some refurbishing, putting in needed equipment and any other help to get the programme started. Part of the community enhancement programme would have dealt with the neighbourhood watch programme which we are doing with the Ministry of National Security.

That programme was launched in June, 1994 and some bumper stickers can still be seen around which say "Take Control." The groups are being formed very quietly. Someone asked recently why he did not know what is happening and had not heard much about it. But you see when groups like that are formed—anything to deal with crime and that kind of thing,—one does not really make a big thunder about it.

In the particular communities, the police and the community development officers are working together with non-governmental organizations to develop these neighbourhood watch groups. I understand there are about 92 of them started so far, but there is much work to be done still and Sen. Mahadeo is one of the people who concentrated on this area.

With respect to the "community cops" part of the programme, Sen. Mahadeo, I really like to see my "cop" pass and wave to me. That is what we call the "friendly cop"—they wave to the children in the area. I hope that you will talk to your "cop" and find out what is happening because he is part of this neighbourhood watch programme and part of the community enhancement programme.

Finally, I want to look at the community centres construction programme because these are the focal points in the community. We had some delay with this programme of building the new centres, but now that NIPDEC has taken control of the project, we have started again and we are starting on 12 of those new centres. We have \$19 million from the EEC for funding for that, and we have been working on renovation of other existing centres.

Let me just say something to some of us who have influence in these community centres. The division is mindful of the fact that a number of people would like to have community centres built in their areas, and we have also noted that some people have been virtually putting up community centres without reference to the division and in some cases they are not really uniting the community. They could easily divide a community and before a centre is established either by private company or NGO, we would wish, as a ministry, to liaise with those persons.

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First of all there is a policy as to where these centres should be established; there is a new policy on what should go into a community centre. Formerly, it was just an auditorium. Now there must be some training rooms because the purpose of the community centre is quite different. It must be uniting the community. So the location is also important. Community centres have to be staffed; equipment must be put in by the Government, and therefore when one builds a centre all on one's own and then just goes to the Government and says, "There is a centre there, I need a fridge, stove, chairs..." and all the other things that should have been put in and have not been, then there are many complaints from the community. So we ask that you liaise with the division so that we can have these centres built and functioning properly.

The community development officer should also be out there before the centre is built to help work with members of the community for whom it is to be built. The Self-Help Commission is also a part of the Division of the Ministry, and whereas, a number of us have benefited a great deal from that commission, we are putting a new board in place. We are concerned that a self-help component is always retained, that is, where the members of the community do part of the work—give of their labour—rather than sometimes it might be that the material is there, and the community fund paid labour to do it.

That really destroys the whole purpose and concept of self-help, where people feel that; "We have done it ourselves and we are a part of it." We know that there are some communities which can afford to pay, so that sometimes the Government accesses the funding, only to see that there is paid labour. That really destroys the whole concept of self-help, therefore, we are hoping that in this new year what we have worked so hard for over the years will be retained—that component of the community working together.

Finally, I need to look at another division of the Ministry which is the Division of Culture. There are two major planks of understanding on which Government policy in respect of culture and the arts rests. The first is that Trinidad and Tobago does have a unique contribution to make to world civilization—a contribution that will grow in strength to the same degree that we consciously nurture and facilitate the growth and development of the varied forms of cultural expression that have taken root in this country.

The second plank, is the plank of understanding that culture is an economic resource through which can be produced and delivered, a broad range of cultural goods and services, the careful marketing of which can generate a healthy financial surplus. That is what the division would like to concentrate on for this

year. This is the kind of thinking also, Mr. President, that the delegation from Trinidad and Tobago brought with them to the recently concluded Seventh Meeting of Culture Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, hosted by this country in Port of Spain.

That was the kind of thinking that informed the entire planning process that we, as host, engaged in preparation for organizing and managing the meeting. It informed our marketing, public relations and management strategies. More importantly, it informed our design concepts.

For that meeting, which was held recently, the logo was a drum set against the background of a computer; and our theme for that conference was: "*Let our Culture be the Rhythm of our Development.*" The forum of Culture Ministers not only adopted the design and theme immediately, without reservation, but at one point during the conference, the representative from UNESCO

pronounced it to be "the perfect expression of the time we live in". Indeed the theme was described as both "timely and relevant" and Nicaragua, which is the next country to host that conference, asked to adopt the logo and the theme. This is the first time in the history of these conferences that there were a logo and theme put together. We are very proud of the theme we used, because it really informs what we intend to do at the division.

It will not be too grand for me to say that through this logo and theme, Trinidad and Tobago has given the world a new and different perspective on the complex matter of development, a perspective which is so dynamic in its simple form and so rich in its deep substance, a perspective which is clearly present in the underpinnings and interweavings of this entire Budget, a perspective which hon. Senators will do well to keep in mind, as we look beyond the mere words and numbers of the 1995 Budget to find the very soul of the administration I have the privilege to represent in this Senate.

5.20 p.m.

The budget calls for a moving forward at a beat and in a harmony that is entirely ours, a development fashioned by the needs of our people with the creative responses of our people.

As we call for "our culture to be the rhythm of our development," we can see, and clearly hear, the hows, the whys and the whos of such a unique achievement in the Budget. I wish to submit, first of all, that it is culture in its generic sense which can do the most non-partisan job of placing this Budget in its proper context.

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The Budget points us wonderfully in the direction of development, a direction in which this administration has most aggressively been going, as it shoulders the responsibility of not just leading, but providing leadership, not just holding office, but using that office for the good of the entire population.

Armed with the Budget of 1995 and using it much like we would a compass, we can find our way to a clear and well laid out location of development which the hon. Minister of Finance has pointed out to us. I speak for the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs. It is not by chance that "Culture" stands in the middle of the portfolio.

"Community" and "Women" are two major areas of the development of our country, with "Culture" standing between—holding them together, as it were—showing the way in which other areas of Government's responsibility can be anchored, held together and made to develop properly. We can probably think of culture as a super highway; not the super highway of information that everybody talks about, but the super highway of culture.

Look at the many feeder roads that will not only flow out of this highway but will also provide access to it. There is a feeder road of ethnic expression; a feeder road of events, and that feeder road is structuring and breathing life into events which make it possible for the thrust of this administration into events tourism.

Indeed, it is this unique brand of tourism that would answer the question: What am I coming to Trinidad and Tobago for? It is this brand that will fuel the construction of new hotels in Trinidad and Tobago and keep commercial airlines filled and flying in and out of both Trinidad and Tobago.

There is also the feeder road of outward-bound projection, projection of Trinidad and Tobago, culture being the most effective means of getting our name out there, spreading the good news which this entire Budget is based on, distinguishing ourselves so that we are remembered when the time comes for business to be done, deals to be negotiated, terms of trade and other agreements to be discussed, bonds to be raised, loans to be secured, positions to be occupied and the general place of regard to be seized. It is our culture that will get us the right kind of attention as we take our seat at the table amongst other important nations.

During 1994, the work in culture emanating from my ministry proceeded at a richly productive pace. We opened the year with what was undoubtedly a highly successful carnival staged by the National Carnival Commission. We then moved to the "Coming-of-Age Exhibition" and the "Pan-in-Art Exhibition". Throughout the year the ministry continued this ongoing programme. We were able to source

\$2 million of audio equipment from the Japanese Government for the National Museum.

In respect of our national musical instrument, the steelpan, we were able to establish a "Pan in Schools" project, and we now have equipment for 12 schools. We were able to provide that \$3.5 million to Pan Trinbago for their mission of Pan Vestco, and \$.5 million for research in the steelpan. We are continuing this year to assist with unemployment by running a programme among steel bandmen and women in both the North and South, teaching them the crafts which are associated with the pan—welding, tuning, banner making, whatever it is. Those programmes are now going to be in place. We wish to continue that throughout the year, so that in terms of the pannists themselves, they would have acquired skills.

We are also moving to a \$2.5 million steelband project development in which we are going to be working with all the steelbands and providing them with the necessary pan theatres. Those pan theatres will not be just an area for playing the music, but also an area for personal development of these pannists. I have been speaking with the president and members of the executive as to how best they can use some of that money to develop the panmen themselves. They have their own problems in terms of health and they are trying to arrange some kind of area for counselling, so that talented pannists can survive and not fall off.

Also very important during the year, we saw the Grand Stand return to the Government. As you know, before 1986, we had our "Best Village" competition at the Savannah, and then it was removed. It is only this year we were able to return to the Grand Stand in fine style. The National Carnival Commission is now in charge of the buildings on the Savannah and the Ministry of Agriculture is still seeing about the lands and we are trying to see what best we can do to maximize that as a cultural area.

We also found ourselves blessed with some money from UNESCO with which we are going to put in place computerized equipment for technical support for the establishment of a cultural information network for Trinidad and Tobago. In this way, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica which are in the pilot project with some other Latin American cultures will be on a network. We shall be able to draw and retrieve data from all those countries and similarly we shall be able to store and retrieve data in Trinidad and Tobago. This is a new project which has just started, and as I said before, it is a pilot project and Trinidad and Tobago happens to be a part of it.

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I need not say how important the Culture Minister Conference was to us this year, especially in the light of the fact that we are now going to be the headquarters of the ACS. This was a meeting of 15 Latin American and 14 Caribbean countries. We felt that it was important for us to host it here. We have learnt several things from having this conference in Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, not only did we cement again the bonds between Latin America and the Caribbean, using culture—the sub theme for the whole conference was "Regional Integration." and I am sure that had been carried through.

At that meeting our Ministers and technical officers were so impressed that, as you recognize, next year we will be hosting CARIFESTA, and we are expecting to have many more participants coming from outside this region to CARIFESTA 1995. We are happy to see that the Government has again found it possible to assist in the hosting of CARIFESTA, something which a large number of our artistes are extremely happy about.

During the year, also, we had spent some funding with trying to keep carnival alive throughout the year, in terms of pan festivals, in terms of the "King and Queen of the World" competition, and although it was not a financial success, it was already there and we felt it necessary that we carry through the project, because it had been advertised internationally and there was no way we wished anyone else anywhere to stage the first national "King and Queen of the World" competition. Therefore, the Government, to some extent, supported the Carnival Bands Association so that they could complete the project.

As I said before, if there was any failure in the project, it was from mild local participation. Although on the final day, the Saturday, a number of our citizens joined in the street parade, the competition itself was not a financial success. But the fact remains that we had done what we thought was right; we had kept the carnival alive; we had kept that first competition in Trinidad. It would have been a shame to know that any other country in the world would have hosted the first "King and Queen of the World" competition.

That is, as brief as I can put it, the work that this ministry has been doing. As I said before, it is people-focussed. I do not think any other ministry has touched so many people, because in each area, we have been dealing with individuals, with groups; we try to satisfy as many of the requests as possible. Sometimes, financially, we are not able to do it all, but we are happy that those who relate to us feel quite satisfied with the work we have done.

5.30 p.m.

I have listened to the contributions in this Senate over the past few days, and I have not heard any adverse comments—probably Senators have been very gracious and kind—But somehow I tend to believe that they are happy with the work the ministry is doing. It is the kind of ministry that should be non-partisan and we do hope to get the support of all hon. Senators as we try to serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Hydar Ali: Mr. President, in my view the most fundamental statement in the Budget delivered by the hon. Minister of Finance is in the second paragraph of page 1 which states:

"By the end of 1994, we will have exceeded our economic growth projections by 100 per cent, realizing a 4 per cent real growth rate for the year, the highest since 1981."

That statement has been challenged inside and outside of this Senate I think, as disputed by Sen. Wade Mark, others have used various indicators to prove their point, or to disprove this statement.

I, myself, cannot really verify this. My training requires that I have a formula; when I get that formula; I need some figures to substitute. I do not know what those figures are and I would then come out with an answer which might be four per cent. In the absence of that kind of information and knowledge, I would have to accept the now hypothesis that the Minister's statement is correct. I will only accept the alternative hypothesis, which is not to agree with it, if there is compelling evidence stating otherwise. I really have not heard that. At the same time, I cannot attach prophetic epithets to the Minister as a bearer of good news.

During this debate, the Minister of Education intervened and outlined various programmes that are being undertaken by his ministry, and some of those were referred to by the Minister with responsibility for information today. One of those was early childhood care and education which he said was being referred to as pre-school care in education.

I thought when this was first—I would not say introduced but—made popular, it was to cater for working parents to have somewhere for their children. I still hold the view that that is what it should be and should not be a substitute for parental input and responsibility. When, after years, adolescent turn to crime we spend much time talking with the family and we tend to ignore the very formative

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years of the children's lives into which the parents have no input. That is just my view.

The Minister also spoke about the Bachelor of Education Degree, which for the first time produced graduates in 1994. There was the very complimentary remark that there were 14 First Class Honours out of approximately 35. When someone gets a First Class Degree from any university that person usually thinks about going higher up. This is why I ask the question: Have these 14 people gone back to their primary schools? Or are they seeking higher degrees or going elsewhere? This is one of the problems with education, that when one does well, one tends to try to get some additional qualification.

Another recent innovation within the ministry is on-the-job training. This seems to be working rather well—from the reports I have had—at the primary school level. I am a bit concerned about this term "master teacher." I have heard the term "master in other disciplines, but it is rather strange that he has confirmed that that is, in fact, the term. I have also confirmed, afterwards, that that term has been used in the Faculty of Education for the past two years.

These people who are undergoing this on-the-job training have no guarantee of jobs and I think there ought to be some guarantee for them. They ought to be told what are the possibilities of their gaining jobs at the end of their training. This year I think on-the-job training started in the secondary schools, but I do not think it is working that well.

First of all, there is no corresponding master-teacher which means that there is not that direct supervision. An on-the-job teacher simply gets two classes, five periods each; about \$10.00 per week and there is no supervision. The principal is like a time-keeper or foreman; if the person comes, he will be paid and if he does not then money is deducted from his salary. I think one needs to look at that a bit more carefully so that it comes in line with the primary school on-the-job teachers.

I was very pleased to note that criteria other than seniority are now being used, not only in the public service, but also in the Ministry of Education. A writ respect to a criterion like management training, if it is going to be used for promotion then I think the people who are eligible for promotion ought to be given that opportunity. I am not saying that it is not. After I made this point, I heard from the Minister responsible for information that they are, in fact, being provided with that. I am very pleased to hear that they are being promoted on the basis of some criteria which they have the opportunity to follow.

I have some other general comments on the education system. For years now there has been no recognition for teachers who acquired additional qualifications. Many teachers have gone on their own and acquired additional qualifications. Recently, there was an outstanding example of Corporal Wayne Hayde, "Watchman", who took time off to pursue his Bachelor of Science at the university followed by an external Llb degree and then two years of LEC with all his accumulated leave. There are many people who have acquired degrees in the teaching service that way, and they are not remunerated in any way or given any sort of promotion.

There was a promise when the Diploma in Education programme started about 20 years ago that successful graduates would be given some sort of promotion. That has never materialized. There are many people with higher degrees in the teaching service who are not recognized. In other words, if three teachers come into the teaching service one with a Bachelors Degree, the other with a Masters degree and the third with a PhD or other qualifications, they all start at the same level.

There are so many graduates with Masters in the teaching service that the current teachers' training college is going to be staffed mainly with people with higher degrees; no first degrees.

5.40 p.m.

Again, in education, there is a statement on page 17 of the Budget Statement that was already referred to by Sen. Prof. John Spence which deals with scholarship winners. I do not agree with everything that he said. In particular, I do not agree that it should be abolished.

I feel that some people really need the scholarships. That is why nowadays some of them—and I have known some who have repeated simply to win a scholarship to do something as medicine. I do not think it should be abolished. For some reason, it does add prestige to a community and a family so I am not against that. What I am against, and where I agree with Sen. Prof. Spence, is that those people should go to the University of the West Indies for their first degree.

I am not saying that because I work there, but I have seen many of our graduates do well at UWI. When we write recommendations for them they go on to do their Ph.D.s and so forth. Unfortunately, they do not come back. Nothing is being said about whether there are going to be stronger ways of getting these people back into the service, nothing is being said about scholars who go abroad, graduate and are unable to serve. Some do come back, but I think there is a

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stipulation that you must stay here for about three months, then if you do not get a suitable job, you can go back. I know of one national scholar who has done that. He waited until October and there was nothing so he returned to England and we have lost him.

Also, I find it rather strange, as Sen. Prof Spence does, when someone is offered a scholarship up to the Ph.D. level. Look at it differently; you are offering somebody who has just completed his A levels a scholarship to do the Ph.D. To do that one has to do a first degree and on the basis of that then one would proceed to a higher Sen. Prof. Spence said, usually if someone has done well in his first degree at the University of the West Indies or elsewhere, he gets some sort of funding to complete his Ph.D.

I am really concerned whether this policy is tied in with the fact that every year, including, this year so many people have been awarded scholarships; they have topped the schools, they have topped the island in various subjects, they have not taken up their scholarships simply because they are abroad. If you notice, every time a request is made to interview someone, the newspaper article would say that the person has gone abroad because she/he gotten a scholarship.

Nowadays people take the SAT Examinations and based on that they are able to get partial scholarships. Most of these people get partial scholarships simply because they have done well in their SAT exams and they take this scholarship. I would like to know for example, how many this year and in the past few years did not accept and whether others got their scholarships instead. Prof. Spence informally said we get it, the money goes back into the public Treasury. I wonder whether others should not get it, because that is something that ought to be considered.

Before we leave the UWI scene, like so many people who talk about having attended UWI—I have attended UWI. Members of my immediate family have either attended or are attending UWI, and I hope the others, if they do well enough would also be attending UWI. And I also hope that Prof. Spence will still be there to provide that education for them.

I want to use an expression which I picked up from Sen. Martin Daly: I want to strike a discordant note here in relation to scholarships. There has been some concern recently about the award of these scholarships expressed via a letter in the newspapers, and recently very publicly, by a principal at a prize-giving ceremony this year at a school in Port of Spain. One wonders—and I think someone should answer this question—whether the scholarships are awarded purely on merit.

The reason that people ask these questions is that nowadays one does not simply get an A, B, C or D; with their grades one also gets a profile. So, if one does three subjects and gets a one profile in all which is public knowledge—and looks at another person who does not get a 1 profile in all his subjects, one wonders why the person with the one profile in all the three subjects does not get the scholarship.

What is the criterion used? Is it the actual mark that is used? It is possible, if one were using averages that one could get a bare one; a good one, or a high one. So, it is possible that people with the same one can do better than the others, or somebody with a few twos can do better than someone with only ones.

Until we know this, these concerns are going to be expressed and perhaps, more and more, especially where so much is at stake, in the sense that now the person who comes out first in his area is going to have that glorious chance of going abroad to the "best universities." I think those were the words used. There is going to be a lot of competition for that. If it is not cleared up people are going to say all sorts of things. I would not like to hear somebody compose another calypso as was done on the Common Entrance Examination, before this thing is settled.

While we are on education—it is traditional from what I heard over the three years I have been here; people have traditions, agriculture, etc—I usually spend a few moments looking at the allocation for the University of the West Indies. Under direct university services, I want to make the following comments. The triennial estimates approved by the campus grants committee for the St. Augustine Campus for the three years, 1993-1996 are as follows:

1993-1994, \$80 million; 1994-1995, \$95 million and 1995-1996, \$105 million. The Government provided only \$77,782,415 in 1994. So, there was a slight shortfall of \$2.2 million. The shortfall was increased, however, by approximately \$3 million because there was no provision for the in-service in education programme. Perhaps, I should just make a comment about that in-service in education programme.

This is the second year running in which there is not a special allocation for the in-service in education programme. If one looks at the the *Draft Estimates*, there is still that section which deals with the in-service diploma in education. There is no allocation for that now; there is a lump sum, but this was not increased correspondingly to cater for the amount that would have gone for the in-service in education programme. However, in 1994 the shortfall is \$17 million to

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which the non-provision for in-service in education, again, of \$3 million, makes it approximately \$20 million short.

Let us turn to the arrears to UWI. The arrears to the University of the West Indies as at July 31, 1994 were approximately \$267 million. The Trinidad and Tobago Government has paid arrears as follows:

1993—\$2 million; 1994—\$28 million—that makes a total of \$30 million. If one adds up the arrears UWI owes to the Board of Inland Revenue, the sum of \$49.5 million, the total arrears due to UWI is \$267 million minus \$79.5 million which is made up of the \$30 million arrears, plus the \$49 million due to the Inland Revenue Department, and that makes a total of \$187.5 million.

Mr. President, these arrears are very important to the people at the university. The Government has agreed to the payment of these arrears over a period of seven years starting in 1993. There is a condition attached to a \$50 million loan that was granted by the ADB for expansion and the condition is that these arrears be paid out over seven years.

I think the university should honour this. There is a lot of noise near my office there. When people complain about the noise, I say that is music because, for the many years I have been there nothing has been built. Only at the southern end where people had the greatest influence with the Government in those days. There are some terms to describe those people but I will not mention that here. The only expansion was in engineering; nothing north of the campus. When I hear this noise it sounds as the pan, good music.

The provision of \$69.5 million in 1995 including the \$49.5 for PAYE arrears is only \$20 million. This \$20 million creates the shortfall of \$20 million in the provision for direct university services for 1994 as mentioned earlier. One can readily say that the Government is not providing for any arrears in 1995.

I turn now to the subsidy for Mount Hope medical students. There was no provision in 1994 and the subsidy amounted to \$8.8 million of which the Government paid \$6 million, leaving a balance of \$2.8 million which is still to be paid before the end of 1994. The university is pleased with the provisions of \$8.9 million in 1995.

The other point concerns the student loans scheme. There have been two pieces of legislation recently to facilitate this but the matter is still not yet settled. The sums involved are for 1993—\$6.6 million and 1994, \$5.6 million making a total of \$12.2 million. The banks have advanced about \$.05 million representing

10 per cent contribution to the loan scheme by students for 1993/1994. The banks have not, however, paid interest on this \$.5 million although they have held this money since October 1993. Now, there is legislation. It has been passed in both Houses and I think whatever is left to be done so that the banks can complete their responsibility should be done, because it is causing hardship on the students.

If one looks at the Budget Statement on page 16 under "Human Resource Development" there are two proposals to produce a skilled and educated citizenry. The first which was already referred to by Sen. Muntaz Hosein, will establish a Skills Development Programme for heavy industry and advanced technology. I want to turn to the other.

The second proposal is the one that concerns me and I quote from page 16 of the Budget Statement:

"Again, in association with Software Plus, Inc., a U.S. Company and others, we will support the training of local programmers in the United States in furtherance of our goal of additional job creation with higher intellectual content."

Something is probably wrong here. We are going to send people to the United States to be trained as programmers. Notice, no amount was put there. Why is it necessary to send people abroad to be trained as programmers? UWI produces 50 graduates per year in Computer Science which includes programmers. I assert that many of them can become teachers; or I make another assertion because I have heard this from an impeccable source.

5.50 p.m.

If the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Affairs was here today, he would have been able to confirm that—our graduates out-perform foreign trained programmers. If one does not believe this ask the banks, the insurance companies and the conglomerates. I was shocked to learn that people have been sent to Washington to learn Word Perfect and Lotus 1, 2, and 3. [*Interruption*] I am learning here so I would provide the information later on, or in due course.

The Government was not able to call out some names because of the sensitive nature, national security. I cannot call names even in a second case. People who have come to train our locals have had to be trained here first, and then they went on to do their job for which they were asked to come down. Later, I would give the hon. Senator the names of the firm and the trainers.

I am trying to give an idea of the competence that is available. Computing staff at UWI get calls every year from firms asking for good computing graduates.

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Computing staff at UWI have written textbooks published by Cambridge University Press which are used here and in the United Kingdom. Does one need to be convinced that we do not need to send people abroad to become programmers? It is probably for something else.

I was glad that the Minister of Culture mentioned the steelband. Had she attended the seminar at UWI to which she was invited a few years ago, she would have seen a programme on the steelband written by UWI staff members, which depicted the history and instruments of the steelband. That programme also teaches panmen how to read music. Do you think a foreigner could do this for our national instrument? No. He cannot do that.

I continue quoting from page 16 where the Minister of Finance says:

"yet another milestone in our march towards an enlightened and liberated citizenry operating in the global city of the Caribbean."

I want to focus on a few other areas where I have noticed some inconsistencies. If one were to look at page 9 of the Budget Statement one could read in part the following section: The Way Forward—The Policy Agenda for 1995. The Minister said:

"...to place more emphasis on investment in people, particularly in health and education; and to devote more resources to the improvement of the social and economic infrastructure."

That is not isolated. If one reads the *Medium-Term Policy Framework*, one would see similar statements. I would like to quote from the Budget Statement again. Page 13 states:

"Social Services

We recognize in particular the need for better access to reliable and high quality health care, and an adequate level of educational and vocational opportunities...

In the area of health, the emphasis will shift from secondary to primary health care and will incorporate a blend of public and private participation in the delivery of health care services."

When Sen. Rooks spoke, he objected to shifting from secondary to primary. I would not deal with that again, but I would like to ask a question about the blend. Health care would incorporate a blend of public and private participation. I would like to know the ratio of that blending. How much public and how much private?

I would like to know how much it would cost me. How can so much emphasis be placed on a statement relating to health, and then in the area in which I live there is a hospital which would be closed down? A definitive statement has not been made as to whether a new hospital will be put up there, or whether it is going to be one of these new polyclinics.

A couple of years ago I remember—perhaps it was last year—when I was looking through the development programme, mention was made about a feasibility survey that was done. I am afraid that I do not know the cost of that survey. It is recommended that a hospital be built there. I read in the newspapers about several demonstrations and Councillor Mohammed who is the Chairman of the Public Health Committee of the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation was quoted:

"He referred to a document circulated by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health in May 1992, which dealt with 'the feasibility and design for a new Couva District Hospital' and said that the document recommended a new hospital for the area...

The document pointed out : "The new facility is intended to provide Level 1 service in the area of general medicine.."

There are some words that I cannot pronounce so I would not read the whole article. That is the idea. It has been part of the policy of the Government to establish a hospital there. This article claims that the hospital has been there for 100 years. That is not all.

There is another facility, the Accident and Emergency Unit which is now open between 8.00 a.m and 4.00 p.m. The Minister was begging the Leader of the Opposition and others to get a doctor to extend the service. I do not think that is good enough. Dogs bite people after 4.00 p.m.; children fall from trees after 4.00 p.m.; one's parents tend to get ill after 4.00 p.m.; and the illness tensifies when it gets later, when there is nowhere to go. It is no joke. Everybody knows this. This is what happens. What are we going to do if such a facility does not exist? It is not that people are asking for a hospital to be established there. One is there already. Why have that dislocation?

I do not want to go into the other argument about being so near to the Point Lisas Estate, and what can happen. I remember my sister was involved in an accident. She worked for one of these firms that are now being divested, and their ambulance took her to the San Fernando Hospital because she could not depend on the facility there. Perhaps it was not there. There has to be a certain amount of

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credibility and consistency in what is said and done, especially when one is led to believe that, based on previous documents and statements, there was going to be, in this case, a hospital and an accident and emergency centre. To say now that the policy has perhaps changed and I do not even know if it has changed, because there is no proper statement—

I now turn to the area of gambling. Many people have mentioned it and it has now become—I do not know if before it was never an addiction, but it is certainly one now. What has happened is that “Whe Whe” has now been turned into “Play Whe” simply by changing the first word. In 'Whe Whe' a man used to come up at lunch time for the first drawing and park his car; the fellows would go around him at the back of a house in a trace put the mark in a matchbox, and put it under his foot, collect the bets and then pay off. I live in front of the house. Look at what has happened! That banker is now the state. *[Interruption]* Lock him up? I hope that these few people who have access to an electronic gadget will not be locked up; they are just doing what the Government is doing. They are an extension of the game.

6.00 p.m.

I would like to quote an article which appeared in the *Awake* magazine of June 8, 1992 and which was reproduced in *The Caribbean Muslim Standard* of October, 1994. This is just one example. You may know it. This is just to give you an example of addiction, especially where this game in particular is based on superstition and dreams and much nonsense. I would like to quote one paragraph:

"One day a man had a disagreeable surprise as he approached the Monte Carlo casino. A pigeon flying overhead soiled his hat. That day he won \$15,000. Convinced that the pigeon droppings were a favourable omen, he never entered the casino again without first wandering around outside in hopes of receiving another 'sign from heaven'."

People do the same thing here. There are all sorts of dreams and nonsense in playing this game. *[Interruption]* Whether one is a gambling man or not. I am not a gambling man, so I do not speak like this. *[Interruption]* I will tell you after.

I will give an example. When the state advocates something, it becomes lawful, it becomes all right. I have heard examples of Muslims lining up to play this game and turning to each other and saying: al Salamu alaykum. That does not make any sense. They should hide rather than welcome someone with an Islamic greeting.

When this form of gambling criticized, was the response of the Prime Minister was that the proceeds will be used to do something. I do not remember what it is. I would like to know what the Government will use the money for. I hope it is not used to build bridges because I will not go across those bridges. It is not a joke. I believe in that.

How does one make a decision on these things? We must ask this question. How is it that yesterday what the banker was doing was illegal and today, at the flip of a coin, we spend half an hour here and it is legal? I will just quote a verse of the Qur'an, Chap. 2, verse 219:

"They question thee about strong drink and games of chance. Say: in both is great sin, and (some) utility for men; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness...."

When I am told that the money will be used for something, that does not have any effect on me at all. Are we going to casinos next? Many of us who are innocent will think that that will never happen, but when we get an investor to build a hotel somewhere and he says that he will come only if we allow him to put up a casino, we would say, yes. When have we said no to anything they have asked for?

Things have changed. We talk about discipline now. There is no discipline. Long ago it was bad to talk about having a common-law relationship; now that is legalized. Homosexuality was never even talked about. But what is the position now? Things have changed. People make decisions based on the tide, not on anything else.

What really irks me is when I see an advertisement in the newspapers or on the television where someone thanks God for winning something that is completely against the laws of God. How can they do that? How can the people responsible for the lottery put up certain advertisements thanking God. Do you know that there might be others who pray to win? There is another being they should pray to when one is dealing in these areas. Not God! He is referred to very often here. It is certainly not the God that is spoken about in the Constitution. Trinidad and Tobago is founded on principles that recognize the supremacy of God, not that god.

I am wondering—I am not being facetious at all—if perhaps tomorrow cocaine will be legalized. What does it take to make it legal? Just spend a few minutes running through a bill here and then it becomes legal. It is just like how "whe whe" was illegal before. Take out one "whe" out and put "play" in and it becomes legal.

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What is to prevent something like cocaine from becoming legal? All it takes is for somebody to come up with a bright idea that it should be legal, pull out some obscure article from some obscure journal and say there is so much good in it, and then it becomes legal. Convince all these fellows, threaten their jobs, demote them and so forth and then they will agree. These are serious consequences, Mr. President. I do not want to spend all my time dealing with all the repercussions of its addictive nature and how teachers are taking time-off to place bets and students are doing the same thing. I will not deal with those things.

I move on now to other areas. I am very pleased that there is an environmental thrust not only in the Budget; before that there was the draft Environmental Management Bill and we have been told of another bill, the Urban and Regional Planning Bill. I was pleased to hear the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources talk yesterday about doing everything to preserve the wetlands, and the ecology of the Nariva Swamp and elsewhere.

That is why I could not understand why Sen. Stanford Callender could not answer the question as to whether Angostura Holdings, in the developing of Tobago, were going to destroy some wetlands. We understand that hotels, some condominiums and a marina will be built there. We do not have to wait until the Bill is assented to before we take action. If these things are wrong, there must be some way we can correct them.

I do not want to go too far when I can get some examples at home. I pass the Caroni factory every day and I was pleased to see a picture in the newspaper, of something looking like one of the Caroni factories in operation. I read this article in the *Trinidad Guardian* of Wednesday, November 30, 1994. This is one of the environment articles written by Anne Hilton. I will just quote the first few paragraphs and then make my point:

"Why can't Caroni use natural gas instead of burning bagasse at Brechin Castle and Usine Ste Madeleine? That is what desperate residents downwind of sugar factories in TT want to know. The Point Lisas gasline runs right past Brechin Castle. Surely it wouldn't be difficult to run a line down to the factory and use nice, clean natural gas instead of dirty, filthy bagasse?"

Other exasperated residents suggest that Caroni use fuel oil to eliminate the nuisance of flyash from burning bagasse. Group Factory Manager Chandra Bobart smiled when he heard me repeat those questions.

'We already have a piped supply of natural gas,' he said, 'we can only afford to use it as backup because natural gas is very, very expensive.'

I was really surprised. I did not know that natural gas was very, very expensive. I did not even know that it was very expensive. I thought that it was cheap. I thought it was even free from the way we make use of it and almost give it away. Why can we not give Caroni Limited some really nice prices like what the firms at Point Lisas get—less than 50 per cent of the cost? Why can they not be provided with that so that when the people there walk they will not get their feet and everything else dirty. People cannot open their windows there. The ash flies through every space. You just have to be there for a few minutes to see the effect of this.

6.10 p.m.

I am really surprised, Mr. President; there is a supply there and it is pity that the Minister of Energy is not going to speak—

Sen. Barnes: I was in fact, Mr. President, not a bit surprised because I know that there is a natural gas pipeline there. On the other hand, if the bagasse in the factories, first of all, is free of charge and also incurs a cost to remove and store it, by comparison it does not really matter what price is charged for natural gas—one would say that it is expensive.

Sen. H. Ali: That was the other point, there is a lot of bagasse.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Perhaps, Caroni (1975) Limited should consider going back to making it into bagasse board, with good technology this time.

Sen. H. Ali: Thank you very much, Sen. Prof. Spence.

Most plants which were losing money were not mothballed, but this particular plant for some reason was; many people lost their jobs there and the place is really run down.

I would like to refer to the *Medium Term Policy Framework 1995-1997* which was written by someone who has a Ph.D. apparently, in literature. On page 28, paragraph 97 it states:

"Domestic transportation also will realise considerable improvement through the restructuring of the operations of the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC)."

I would like an explanation as to what that means. What does improvement mean in the face of retrenchment, reduction of services and increase in fares? For whom? A small population? That service is supposed to serve everybody. I do not see why these new buses cannot go to Toco and so forth? What is so special

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about the buses that they must run only on nice smooth roads? *[Interruption]* Get smaller buses, swap them! I really do not understand that statement. How is it that system could be more efficient. I cannot see that, Mr. President, and perhaps one of the Members on the other side would give an explanation. I do not want the hon. Minister to get up every minute.

Just a few further comments, Mr. President. Every time there is a flood and whenever garbage has not been collected there is this conflict between the Ministry of Local Government and the regional corporation. One is always saying that it is the other's responsibility. There are two arguments being used: One is saying that it is the responsibility of the other to clean drains and so forth; and the other problem which arises is that they do not have money. Then the Minister would say that money was sent down but the responsible bodies did not spend it, or that it was used for other purposes.

These problems are causing serious repercussions. I do not know what is the real problem, but the Government should find out what the problem is and correct it. This so-called conflict between the Ministry of Local Government and the regional corporations—I know there is someone—well he no longer holds that position.

I had similar concerns, like Rev. Teelucksingh, about WASA. In the Budget Statement we see \$50 million for repairs, \$390 million for water mains and another \$34 million for investment. After all this money has been spent what is the need for having someone come "on board," I think it is mainly about management. We recognized a long time ago that one of the problems was the leaking mains. WASA has this 50 per cent problem about the rate at which it loses water—I understand that the norm is only 20 per cent. If that is correct, I thought they would have been on their way. I cannot understand, if so much money is being spent to correct this situation. We recognize what that problem is; money has been allocated to correct that problem; why is it then when that is corrected now somebody is going to handle our business. *[Interruption]* It will go through because that is in the statement there. I think a similar report should be made to the Parliament as was done in the case of the road improvement fund, so one would know how many mains have been fixed and how much money has been spent.

My last set of comments deal with certain allocations. The first one is the Airport Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. If one looks at the *Draft Estimates* on page 226 one would see that in 1993 there was nothing allocated to the Airport Authority; in 1994, \$8,233,500 and in 1995, \$7,879,600. Just for my information,

what happened between 1993 and 1994—the Airports Authority did not need money in 1993; it needs money in 1994 the year of Pride and 1995. I am wondering if it is connected with some money that was used to do some clearing projects at Piarco.

I refer to a question that Sen. Daly asked the Minister of Works and Transport and Minister of Local Government on May 10, 1994:

"Could the hon. Minister state what funds are being used for the land clearing project that has commenced in connection with Project Pride?"

To which the Minister replied:

"Mr. President, I wish to inform this honourable Senate that the Hughes International Group has provided interim financing to start work on the PRIDE Phase I project while long-term financing is being finalized."

And a supplementary question to the Minister was:

"Mr. President, could the Minister indicate whether the Government has any financial exposure in connection with that interim financing?"

To which the Minister replied:

"Not to my knowledge, Mr. President."

Something must have taken place between 1993 and 1994 so that this money has could have been allocated. The Minister is acknowledging that something did take place there and he would probably make a comment:

Mr. Valley: Mr. President, perhaps I should deal with that matter now so that the Senator could avoid going down the wrong track.

Quite simply, in 1993 the Airport Authority collected the Airports tax and kept part of it; in 1994, the Minister of Finance said, no, no, give us our money and we would give you an appropriation.

Sen. H. Ali: *[Interruption]* attention to the measures in the *Draft Estimates* on page 133, sub-head 004, item 02: allocation to the Imperial War Graves Commission, I have asked some of the people sitting on my right but they do not seem to know what that commission is. Perhaps the Minister could tell us very quickly in his reply what that is about.

Sen. Huggins: Mr. President, this is a fund which is used to maintain the graves of those who served in World Wars I and II in Commonwealth countries.

Sen. H. Ali: The other comments relate to lump sum allocations. For example on page 174 of the *Draft Estimates* there is an allocation of \$429,856,800, to the regional health authorities. There are five regional health authorities, I would like to know, and I think it should be presented in the *Draft Estimates* how these funds are allocated. I would make a further comment when I point out other areas where this occurs.

In each ministry there are several non-profitable organizations and for each of them, there is a lump sum allocation. For example, on page 51 of the *Draft Estimate*, there is an allotment of \$415,729, in the Office of the Prime Minister. On page 173, there is an allotment of \$2 million in the Ministry of Health—this is the one that Sen. Rooks referred to—and on page, there is an allocation of \$8.9 million in the Ministry of Social Development. And finally, the other one I picked up on page 254, there is an allocation of \$1.174, million in the Ministry of Sport. Also—the Minister of Foreign Affairs is not here. Under the Status of Women Affairs Division, page 197, there is no allocation,

6.20 p.m.

SITTING OF THE SENATE

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Russell Huggins): Mr. President, I beg to move that the sitting of the Senate be continued until the third and final reading of Bill No. 2.

Question put and agreed to.

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Mr. President: Hon. Senators, please note that it is this Bill plus the other one on the Order Paper. Continue, Sen. Ali.

Sen. H. Ali: Mr. President, I was mentioning to Sen. The Hon. Yuille-Williams that on page 197 of the *Draft Estimates of Expenditure* there is no allocation for the Women's Affairs Division. Perhaps she can pass a note to the Minister to respond to that. My recommendation is that it is all right to give a lump sum allocation at the beginning of the year, but after the end of the year we should not see the same thing in the *draft estimates*—the lump sum. The money has been given out, so I would like to see in the *draft estimates*, a certain amount of money put towards that organization and so forth? I am not unduly suspicious when a lump sum is given and some private work is done with the allocation, but once it has been allocated under the revised estimates it should be put. This removes some suspicion.

Last year the Government made much of its social safety net in the allocation of \$1.1 billion, but it was allocated in a way that it was hard to keep track of it. In fact, if you add up the numbers there, I think you would get approximately \$6 million and there was \$4 million that was unaccounted for. I do not know whether there has been an account in this debate as to how it was spent. The Minister of National Security dealt with one head which is called the Civilian Conservation Corps; other have dealt with the others heads to know how much of it was actually spent.

My final remarks, Mr. President, may seem strange, but I would like to congratulate the Minister of National Security on the work he has been doing—it is a pity I had no influence and I was not here when he went through that little demotion. If I had influence I would have made a call and ensured that he did not have that period as understudy. With Sen. Huggin' advice and the Prime Minister's ability to get funds I think that is one of the reasons we are in this happy position now.

I thank you very much, Mr. President.

Sen. Jean Elder: Mr. President, once again I am happy to make my contribution to this important debate. At this point permit me to make some general comments on which I am very happy.

Firstly, the PNM Government continues steadfastly to keep faith with the people by ensuring to carry out its promises as stated in its 1991 PNM manifesto; that is despite attempts by negative elements to divert the Government from its goals. I must confess that because of certain experiences which I have had abroad, but particularly locally, I am a strong convert to privatization. Make no mistake about it; apart from the actual financial gain to be derived from divestment of state enterprises, millions of dollars would be saved as a result. A vivid example—TSTT We all can remember the millions of dollars that went to subsidize this body, and since it has been privatized, today its profits run into millions of dollars.

I am happy to note that the Government has also kept its promise to enable citizens to share, in a different sense, the commanding heights of the economy, by owning shares in various privatized organizations. I am positive that this would lead to a more vibrant and dedicated work force and more responsible worker organizations. I repeat, more responsible worker organizations, among other benefits, and I would urge Government to accelerate this move.

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The third point I would like to touch on is the abundance of locally grown foodstuff, and the attractive prices. Five to ten years ago the prices of locally grown foodstuff were astronomical, if they could have been obtained. Today, there is an abundance of good, cheap, fresh food in the market. One may argue that imported foodstuff is expensive and moreso for those of us with refined tastes, but now is the golden opportunity for us to push our "Buy Local Campaign."

I would like to congratulate the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs on the preparation of a five-year development plan for sport. This plan, a very comprehensive one, has been long overdue and should contribute greatly to the proper organization and structure of sport in. As an ardent sportsman, you, Mr. President, would readily appreciate the tremendous gains that can be made for Trinidad and Tobago through sport, in terms of finance, employment, tourism, leisure, scholarships, community development, character building, not to mention the most important, nation building.

In this regard I would like to endorse the recommendation that sport and physical education be compulsory in schools for all students, unless a student deemed medically unfit. This, to my mind, would reap great dividends, as opposed to young children being drilled from day one to pass the Common Entrance Examination, not to mention endless hours in extra lessons at fabulous fees even during vacation periods.

It is with much pleasure and satisfaction that I note some of the goals of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs for 1994 and beyond. Some of these are: increased participation in sports; physical recreation; leisure at all levels; rising standards in the pursuit of excellence through a more scientific approach to training; developing national youth and sport activities; providing support services which will give young people the skills to deal with life and responsible adulthood.

Again, one notes with satisfaction the decision to establish a national sport management commission, which, among other things, will deal with the development and promotion of elite sports in order to improve the performance of athletes at national, regional and international levels, also the establishment of a sport management programme at diploma level at the University of the West Indies.

6.30 p.m.

Mr. President, I compliment the Minister on the comprehensive programme of sport and youth activities which was effected in 1994. The year 1994 was a good

year as far as far as the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is concerned. There were sports festivals, coaching, swimming programmes, residential sports, school sports, specialized training, coach education and sport education for coaches and sports leaders. Trinidad and Tobago represents the Caribbean region on the management committee of the Commonwealth Youth Programme. More importantly, our links with the Commonwealth Youth Programme have made possible the training of young leaders and youth workers in our country.

The ministry continues to conduct on behalf of the Commonwealth Youth Programme certificate and diploma courses for youth workers. In 1994, 25 persons were drawn from various ministries such as the Ministries of Education; Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources; National Security; Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs; Social Development; and also non-governmental organizations participated in the certificate course. In respect of the one-year diploma in youth work, 20 youth workers participated in that course 1993/94. To my mind, much has been achieved in the area of sport and youth affairs.

I should particularly like to compliment the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs on the Caribbean Sport Conference which the ministry hosted this year; the recommissioning of the Arima Cycle track at a cost of \$606,732.00; and the commencement of construction of the all-weather synthetic international hockey facilities—the first in the English-speaking Caribbean—at a cost of \$6 million. So much for Sport and Youth Affairs.

I now deal with education. The People's National Movement in its manifesto said that it will specifically focus on education, and included accelerating the programme of pre-school education in conjunction with community-based non-governmental organizations. The party has done just that.

One notes with satisfaction that the vote for education for the fiscal year 1995 is \$1.1 billion—particularly in these trying times, this is a large sum of money. This is the sign of a caring Government. Some educationists define education as preparation for life. Others define it as life itself and bearing in mind the proverb "Prevention is better than cure," education in its true perspective is the major deterrent to crime and lawlessness.

I wish to commence with early childhood care and education. To quote the Education Policy Paper 1994-2003, page 41:

"The importance of the first five years of a child's life cannot be over-emphasized. It is during this period that character formation occurs and most authorities agree on the following:

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- (i) Significant personality development and the incipient formation of positive or negative attitudes occurs at this age.
- (ii) During this period and up to early teens, the influence of the family is by far the most significant influence on the child.
- (iii) Consequently, early educational intervention should be directed to the family as much as at the child."

The decision of the Government to increase and accelerate the construction of pre-schools is, therefore, a fundamental step in the education system. To nip juvenile delinquency in the bud, here is where we must begin. At present there are 700 Government pre-schools and 150 which are run by Servol. Also, there are quite a number of them which have not been registered with the Ministry of Education. One would agree that this is a step in the right direction.

The hon. Minister of Education has dealt adequately with primary and secondary education and there is no need for me to labour on these. However, I congratulate him on the provision of post primary facilities in 52 areas for students who were not awarded places in the Common Entrance Examination. These centres would, certainly, pave the way for late developers.

The National Training Board which normally performs the function of training persons in various skills, because of the voluntary separation exercise embarked on a programme from January to May this year, specially geared to training displaced workers in as many as 30 different areas, including, garment construction, repair of small appliances, PVC craft, hair styling, welding and community-based activities: 1,634 persons participated in this exercise. As a result, these graduates were not only made more employable but, in many instances, became their own bosses and, in some instances, employed others.

There is one gentleman from Laventille who took a small appliance repair course and decided that he would concentrate on the repairing of electric irons. Eventually he put a sign on his gate: "Irons repaired here." He told me that he never thought that there were so many irons in Laventille to repair. By repairing irons, he can put food on his table. As a bonus these classes were responsible for employing teachers to teach these skills.

Government continues to pursue its Adult Education Programme in 36 centres throughout Trinidad and Tobago—that is in addition to the National Training Board programme. One cannot under-estimate the importance of these programmes as there are many persons who, for some reason or other, were

unable to obtain an education or training in some specific area. As a result of these classes, they have made the grade.

There are 9500 persons participating in these classes at present, with 278 tutors. There are a variety of classes both academic and other areas like food preparation, home decoration, home nursing, handicraft, care of the aged. Women are now entering areas that were predominantly male, for example, vehicle repair, masonry, carpentry and plumbing, all of which are means of income generation. The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs referred to gender equity. This is a prime example where the women are moving into the areas of the men.

I was happy to hear that the School Feeding Programme was expanded to 64,000 meals five times per day at the primary level and 9,000 meals three times per week at the secondary level in addition, to 2,000 meals per day in the pre-school system. The sum of \$79 million was allocated to the School Feeding Programme for the year 1995. This is also a means of employment generation. The emphasis on the School Feeding Programme with the utilization of local produce means there would be more employment for farmers. In addition, there would be need for persons skilled in food preparation. There would be need for kitchen assistants and drivers to carry the school. All these are steps in generating employment.

The Government's plan for the employment of maxi-taxi drivers for the transport of school children is also a means of employment generation. This maxi-taxi system is an interim measure. The ministry is now looking at a more long-term effective system of transport.

I note with satisfaction that a pilot scheme on family life education has been developed, although it is in its embryonic stages. This programme encompasses both primary and secondary schools at 25 selected areas and pursues a syllabus comprising academic, aesthetic social and personal development. Hon. Senators would agree that this is a progressive step.

6.40 p.m.

How can one judge whether a budget has been favourably received, or in other words, whether the population is satisfied? To me, the main criterion is the reaction of independent criticism, not negative forces, not vested interests and surely, not those who oppose for sake of opposing.

In reading the local newspapers, chatting with the man in the street, and listening to others as I walk, one can hear words like "a good budget", "Mottley

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was good." Mr. Winston Dookeran said it was a good Budget; one other person said that out of 10 points, he would give Mr. Mottley 9, Mr. President, 90 per cent—and you will agree that is a high marking at any level. It would be almost impossible for anyone to get 100 per cent. Even Jesus, who did everything that was good—people went against Him. He was buffeted, spat upon and sacrificed. So getting 90 per cent is indeed noteworthy. I heard some people say today it is an election Budget and, Mr. President, you know what that means.

I am happy to associate myself with the Budget, as I stated before. It is a signal that the Government continues to keep faith with the people. I am positive that Trinidad and Tobago is on the road to recovery. We have worked hard, we have sacrificed, but we are seeing that our sacrifice has not been in vain. Let us, therefore, Mr. President, continue to work even harder, for there are signs of good things to come. I am positive—and I am speaking to the Opposition now—that if we work together, hand in hand, we will achieve.

Thank you. [*Mr. President*]

Sen. Ashick Hassim: Mr. President, like the rest of the country, may I express my personal congratulations to the hon. Minister of Finance on his 1995 budget presentation. For the great majority of citizens this presentation is like a breath of fresh air and a positive sign of the profound changes, will take place in this country in the years ahead.

Those who are unable to make the shift in their thinking and who continue in their pessimistic tradition of seeing ghosts everywhere, will have to be left behind. Those of us who have faith in our country and Government and who believe that we can together make our people prosperous and get the job done, will continue to rally with our leader and our Government. Everywhere in Trinidad and Tobago the view is that the 1995 Budget marks the beginning of a new era for our country. Evidence of this has been the widespread support for the Budget and the spirit of faith demonstrated by the citizens at every level.

I can very well understand the difficulties of Members of the Opposition who, obviously, have failed to understand the philosophy underlying the Minister's presentation and that is, less government and greater participation of citizens to run our affairs. When you are steeped in the tradition of opposing everything that comes from this side, you are blinded by reality and progress.

When the state controlled major sectors of the economy, we were accused of creating wealth and "jobs for the boys." When we begin divesting these enterprises, we are accused of "selling out the national patrimony." It would not

surprise me, Mr. President, if our efforts to make travel to and from Trinidad and Tobago more convenient, are seen as allowing citizens to be too free to leave the country. We might well be accused of allowing too high a gift allowance for those coming to Trinidad and Tobago.

Our Government's performance over the past three years has been nothing short of outstanding. Our ability to attract foreign investment is a vote of confidence in us. Our friends opposite, indeed, are saddled with innumerable problems. Part from their domestic political problems, they are unable to mobilize support for progressive measures contained in the Budget. My own feedback, coming from their constituencies, indicates widespread support for the Budget. They see more than the silver lining. They see a future ahead under this Government.

Our Government's decision to develop an industrial estate at Brighton with the prospect of large, heavy industries, has been more than welcome in an area that has been depressed for too long. The prospect for jobs, as well as infrastructural development of the area, is very real. We are a caring Government and committed to the development of all our people in every area of the country.

The 11.6 per cent growth, achieved in the agricultural sector during 1994 is a manifestation of the success of Government's policies for the agricultural sector. After two consecutive years of decline in 1992 and 1993, the trend has been reversed and there is growth in domestic agriculture of 2.9 per cent; export agriculture, 7.7 per cent; and sugar 28.5 per cent. The growth experienced in this sector has surpassed that of the petroleum, manufacturing and service sectors.

Together with the increase in production, the agricultural sector was also able to provide additional jobs for 9,000 persons, and now, together with the sugar industry, accounts for over 12 per cent of employment in Trinidad and Tobago. This has contributed significantly to the reduction of the national unemployment rate from 19.8 per cent in 1993 to 18.1 per cent in 1994.

In 1995, the Government will continue with its programmes geared towards increasing efficiency and competency of the sector. This is part of Government's overall policy to prepare the economy for survival and growth in a liberalized global market. The focus will be on enhancing the infrastructure, to provide the support for improved productivity, while protecting and conserving our natural resources.

The reduction in corporate tax from 45 per cent to 38 per cent, along with other incentives, such as wear and tear allowance for new buildings and capital

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improvements, reduction in stamp duty and capital goods, increased access to credit, and establishment of the venture-capital financing facilities, would provide the impetus for establishment of new food processing plants and expansion and upgrading of existing plants. These would provide additional markets for the farmers and the benefits of these guaranteed markets will bring welcome relief to all farmers.

While encouraging farmers to go for the expanded domestic market, the Government will, simultaneously, encourage the agricultural sector to produce for the regional and international markets. Our farmers have demonstrated the ability to produce various commodities of high international standard at competitive prices. There have been increases in the export of root crops, condiments, vegetables and fruits.

Our fishermen and floriculturists have not been left behind and increase in the export of cut flowers and sea food, fish and shrimp, has been unparalleled. Government is cognizant of the potential impact of trade liberalization on this sector; and while agricultural products have been removed from the negative list, there will continue to be a high tariff protection while the sector makes the necessary adjustments, which will allow effective competition with imported products.

Liquid milk, whole chicken, beef, veal, mutton, goat, vegetables and fruits will enjoy protection through import surcharge. The need to offer further protection to the poultry sector is well recognized and while dismantling the negative list for most products, it has been decided to retain negative listing for chicken parts.

6.50 p.m.

The Government continues to provide protection in the form of subsidies to key sectors including dairy, rice, milk, sugar cane, cocoa and coffee. This is necessary as farmers continue to adopt appropriate technologies and management systems which will allow them to improve their efficiently and not depend on Government support.

The School Feeding Programme continues to have a triple effect providing a balanced meal for the school children of our nation; employment for those who prepare and distribute the food; and a market for the farmers who grow the food. The expansion of this programme should result in further growth of the agricultural sector.

The diversification of Caroni (1975) Limited will continue as the Government moves ahead with the recommendations of the Tripartite Agreement. We have already seen the impact of this divestment with the increases in production of rice, citrus and other commodities. This programme will see further increases in the production of these commodities in 1995 and beyond.

The availability of the physical infrastructure and information for domestic and export marketing is a key component in the development of the agricultural sector. The quality and volume of market information to the agricultural community will be improved through NAMDEVCO. The facilities at the wholesale markets in North and South Trinidad will be continuously improved to provide a better environment for marketing of agricultural products.

The Government is mindful of the need to develop the country's forest resources. The timber resources represent a significant potential for earning of revenue on both the domestic and export markets and the generation of employment. While we seek to maximize the returns from our forests, we are also mindful of the need to protect and conserve these forests. The reforestation programme and watershed management programmes will be continued in 1995.

The IDB funded rural access roads improvement programme will continue in 1995. This programme will allow easier access to farmlands and reduce the cost of transportation. It will make previously inaccessible lands available for production. Together with drainage and irrigation programmes, this should contribute to increased production of agricultural commodities and growth in the sector.

The growth which the agriculture sector experienced in 1994 is closely linked to the financial support provided by the Agricultural Development Bank.

I wish to quote some figures received from various subsectors from 1991 to September 1994.

	1991	1992	1993	(Jan – Sept) 1994
Crops	16.6	20.5	12.1	10.7
Livestock	8.6	5.7	2.2	2.1
Fish/Aqua culture	6.4	5.2	2.2	2.1
Ornamentals	1.9	2.4	1.7	1.4
Agro Industry	8.7	14.0	19.1	28.0

The total funding for the three years and up to September 1994 is \$171.6 million.

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Over the past three years, the ADB has approved over 4,000 loans valued at TT \$180 million for investment and operating costs. These loans have been spread over a broad spectrum of activities including agro-processing enterprises which are organically linked to primary production.

The thrust of the ADB has been to encourage farmers to produce more efficiently and better quality produce for both the domestic and export markets. Funding has been provided for adoption of appropriate technology which will allow the farmers to improve and expand their production. The bank's funding programme has been accompanied by technical and managerial assistance geared to make businessmen out of our farmers.

I want to make mention, of our thrust also in terms of small farmers. I have here some information on the financial support small farmers received. These are loans under TT \$25,000.

Out of 2,298 loans made in 1991, 1,986 went to these target farmers—86.4 per cent. In 1992, out of 2,375 loans, 2,086 went to these target farmers—87.8 per cent. In 1993, out of 1,411 loans, 1,279 went to that same target group 90.6 per cent. The overall percentage of these loans granted to small farmers is 88, per cent, which accounted for 5,351 loans out of a total of 6,084.

In granting loans, the farmers' incomes were looked at. In the three years here, farmers who enjoy income of \$1 to \$10,000 received 50.1 per cent in 1991; in 1992, 18.9 per cent and in 1993, 39.9 per cent. Between \$10,000 and \$25,000; in 1991 they received 32.3 per cent; in 1992, 37.8 per cent and in 1993, 28 per cent. Those earning \$25,000 to \$50,000, the percentage is 10.7; 25.2 per cent and 20.1 per cent for 1993. Those \$50,000 and over, have received 2.3 per cent. This will emphasize the number of people benefiting from our loans portfolio. In 1992 it is 7.0 per cent and 4.4 per cent in 1993.

I just want to give some information on small farms that exist in this country and have been very efficient in terms of the acreage between one and five hectares. We have in the rice subsector, 500 small farmers out of 5,110. In dairy, we have 2,450 out of 3,500 farmers and in pork production we have 220 small farmers out of 260 farmers. These small farmers are responsible for large amounts of the production in Trinidad and Tobago.

The bank has pioneered the development of a fleet of multipurpose fishing vessels designed to harvest the rich fish resources of our exclusive economic zone. With most of the catch being targeted at the foreign market, the country saw

the value of fish exports increase by 120 per cent from 1992 to 1993. Exports of fish and shrimp earned the country TT \$30 million in 1993.

7.00 p.m.

I wish to make some comments on the youth project as is mentioned in the *Public Sector Investment Programme 1995* at page 37. The Youth Agricultural Credit and Training Project—ADB is allocated 35 million ECUs and is supposed to commence in 1995. Project was conceptualized to assist in providing productive employment opportunities for young persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years providing them with some formal training in agriculture or a related discipline or with farming experience.

The enterprises which are initially being targeted are non traditional ones such as pineapple, plantains, apiculture and fresh juices which have the following common characteristics:

- good marketing potential;
- non-seasonal;
- can be cultivated on marginal soils or do not require access to land
- does not require intensive management systems;
- relatively low investment costs;
- acceptable rate of return—a 20 per cent IIR; and
- products have a reasonable shelf life.

Among the major problems facing young farmers, is access to land. The ADB has identified landowners with approximately 175 hectares of land who have indicated a willingness to lease or rent the land to young farmers involved in the project. As the project progresses, the bank feels assured that other landowners would be willing to make their lands accessible to the project. This is what is being done to assist young farmers.

As Government continues its programme to foster the development of the agricultural sector, and to generate employment, particularly among the youth of the nation, it recognizes that there are many enterprising young persons with the requisite training and skills who wish to make a career in agriculture but lack the financial resources. These I have mentioned earlier in my contribution.

These budding young entrepreneurs are often viewed as high-risk borrowers and cannot access credit through traditional funding programmes. In 1995, the

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Government will be implementing a youth training and credit programme for these young entrepreneurs. The programme, as I said, is costing 35 million ECUS and will be operated by the Agricultural Development Bank and will provide opportunities for over 1,000 young entrepreneurs to invest in agribusiness enterprises over the period 1995-1998.

As Government prepares the agricultural sector for development in a liberalized economy, it remains cognizant of the potentially negative impact on a large number of small farmers. It is because of this awareness that most of its programmes are geared towards the small farmers. The support programmes for sugar cane, rice, cocoa, coffee and milk have as their major beneficiaries, the small farmers.

The rural access roads programme, drainage and irrigation programmes and other developmental programmes will be of significant benefit to small farmers, and will alleviate many of the problems which they now face and which constrain their efforts to develop the sector. As I have just mentioned, we have been targetting over 80 per cent of the ADB's lending to small farmers.

The growth experienced in 1994 was not the result of any quirk of nature. It was not unexpected, and did not come as a surprise to the Government.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, I am sorry to interrupt my Friend, but since he has again mentioned the growth and his argument is very much predicated on that growth, I once again have to call attention to the *Quarterly Economic Bulletin* which gives a retraction in the agricultural sector for the first two quarters. I do not believe even a big surge in the third quarter—for which the figures are not yet available; I tried to get them from the Central Bank—could counteract that growth. Perhaps, the Minister of Finance can address that point when he is winding up.

Sen. A. Hassim: Mr. President, the growth in the agricultural sector is a direct result of a carefully planned and implemented development programme and the hard work of our farmers. They have demonstrated that with the support of the Government they can face the challenges they encounter. The Ministry of Agriculture, the ADB, NAMDEVCO, CARDI and other agencies have joined with our enterprising farmers to ensure the development of this sector.

As the sector faces the further challenge of trade liberalization the Government feels assured that those in the sector will successfully rise to the challenge. The Government will continue to provide the support necessary to facilitate the development of the sector. The implementation of legislation with

respect to anti-dumping and unfair trade practices will ensure that the country competes on a level playing field.

In 1994 the agricultural sector demonstrated its ability to be the engine of growth in the economy. This is just the beginning of the realization of the true potential of this sector.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Surendranath Capildeo: Mr. President, let me begin with Marcus Tullius Cicero, "Oh tempora, O Mores! O what times O what habits; Abiit, excessis, evasit, erupit; He departed, he withdrew, he strode off, he broke forth". O Mottley.

Where, Oh where, is the hon. Minister of Finance, Wendell Mottely Esq. He is not here. He departed, he withdrew, he strode off, he broke forth from the Senate at 3.30 on the afternoon of Wednesday 7, in the midst of the debate and we have not seen him since, nor has the Senate had the courtesy of an explanation. This debate really is an annual ritual in farcical futility. Why are we talking to ourselves?

Let me adopt the words of Cicero again: "Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, Patientia nostra?" "How long will you abuse our patience, Catiline". I will substitute "Mottley" for "Catiline." This is the second or third time this has taken place.

7.20 p.m

From the time the hon. Minister of Finance referred to the Goddess Lakshmi on page 9 of the Budget Statement when he said:

"Madam Speaker, accomplishing all this would require a balancing act beyond the competence of mere economists, who have only two hands. Rather, I believe that this is a challenge for Mother Lakshmi Herself—our four-handed Goddess of wealth, prosperity, love and enlightenment."

I knew this Budget was doomed. He really should have referred to Kali. Not Kali the terrifying Shakti of Lord Shiva, but Kali, the Kali Yuga personified as the spirit of evil. In playing dice Kali is the name of one of the pieces. It is marked with a single dot and is known as the Kali dice. It is used in games of high stakes with the result usually being total ruin and disaster for the loser. It is so ancient, it is referred to in the world's oldest known religious text, the Rg Veda in a hymn known as the Gambler's Lament.

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And how ironic, because I believe the hon. Minister of Finance is gambling with the future of this nation. When you examine the Budget Statement for 1995, carefully, you realize that this Budget is predicated on several false propositions. It is illusory and nebulous, and there is really nothing of substance or dramatic change. You get the feeling that some kind of hoax is being perpetuated on the unsuspecting. There is a strong whiff of intellectual fraud. You could go so far as to say, and I agree with my Friend Sen. Barrack, fraudulent philosophy. But, let me put it down to contempt.

There is a contemptuous arrogance, not only on the part of this regime as a whole, but in particular its Ministers who transform themselves into little Reich Marshall who believe they know it all and everybody else is stupid. The blind, stultified and fossilized approach to important national issues brings to mind the terrifying memories of the original Fuehrer and the Nazi party. But we do not have the making of a Hitler junior here. We are to be content with an imitation of Baby Doc Duvalier.

The Budget is a classic example of that attitude. For example, when you look at this Budget Statement, the words are so cleverly juxtaposed and designed to give you the impression on a superficial reading that tremendous events of a unique nature are taking place here because of Government's policies. On the very first page of the Budget Statement the hon. Minister says and I quote:

"The rate of investment is up, and we expect direct foreign investment in 1995 to reach an amazing US \$1.2 billion, practically US \$1,000 per capita. And we have been paying our external debt which is now reduced to US \$2.1 billion. The *Financial Times* has identified our country as a hemispheric leader in terms of readiness for the challenges of the new free trade environment."

Listen to the Minister—an amazing US \$1.2 billion." You would think this is a Miracle Ministries man. Let us come down to earth. Permit me to quote from a book which I referred to last week: John Naisbitt: *Global Paradox*, published by William Morrow and Company, 1994, at page 261:

The paragraph is entitled: "Investments Flood Back In"

"Private Investors are pouring money back into Latin America. From net outflows of \$13 billion in 1990, they recorded net inflows of almost \$26 billion in 1992. Mexico's net outflow of \$3.8 billion in 1990 is now a net inflow of \$15.3 billion. Argentina has gone from a net outflow of \$4.9 billion to an inflow of \$5 billion. Meanwhile, Venezuela, which experienced a drain of \$4.2 billion in 1992, enjoyed a net inflow of \$344 million in 1992. Even

Brazil, the region's biggest debtor, has seen a net outflow of \$7.4 billion reversed to an inflow of \$1.4 billion.

These remarkable turnarounds prompted economists meeting at the London-based Overseas Development Institute to declare that for Latin America the '90s would be "The Decade Of equity Investment."

Look at page 10 of the Budget Statement and you would see the Minister boasting of stimulating "the flow of equity and portfolio investments", as if that is something unique to this country. Bluff, intellectual fraud!

"Still, economists at the London conference argued that this surge in private investments is a mixed blessing. Warning that private investments are notoriously volatile and that any signs of economic improvement in the United States, Japan, and Europe could reverse Latin America's fortunes, World Bank officials discussed the situation with their usual cautious optimism. However, they did also point out the many irreversible benefits of current investment flows which bring to these developing economies new technology, management know-how, and worker retraining.

Additionally, export capacity improves access to markets. What's more, portfolio investment can lower the cost local companies face in raising capital. It's their job to be cautious, but the upward trend in Latin American economies is not likely to lose momentum any time in this decade. And may be not for decades to come.

Writes Roland Dallas, editor of *The Economist's Foreign Report*:

"The pattern is now unmistakable. In election after election, free marketeers win office."

That is not big news, as if something miraculous is taking place.

"Privatization starts. Ignoring the example of the 'Giant of the North,' budgets are frequently balanced. Inflation falls to still-imperfect, but reasonable, levels. Flight capital flies back. Exports flourish. Growth resumes."

No miracle. It is happening all over Latin America.

"Predictably some countries are doing better than others, but most are showing solid, sustainable improvements. Chile, which became the region's standard bearer as it steadily reduced inflation, privatized industry, and built a trade surplus, is on a continued course toward prosperity. Mexico is also a bright light on the world economic horizon. There is still work to be done

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there. The country still has a trade deficit to overcome, jobs to create, and inflation to get under control, but foreign direct investment continues apace and the ratification of NAFTA will turn this steady rain into a downpour.

When you get a Minister of Finance coming here and speaking as if he has created some miracle unique to Trinidad and Tobago, that is intellectual dishonesty and fooling the people. Such developments is taking place all over Latin America.

What has happened to NAFTA? Not a word in this document. Where are we? The hon. Minister glibly mentioned on page 4: NAFTA, ACS, MERCOSUR as well as bilateral trade agreements with countries such as Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela." But once again, everything is shrouded in secrecy. There are many unanswered questions. Where are we in negotiations? What is the time table? Do we have the capacity to negotiate the very serious terms contained in the NAFTA documents. I have looked at those documents.

Do we have the capacity? That is a serious question. Are our people being trained for eventual entry? Is the country aware of the negatives and positives? We get a lot of Ministers coming here and many people on the other side talking about what the ministry is doing. Are they being trained to enter NAFTA? What are the burdens of such a treaty? We do not know. This one does not know. Does anyone know? Once again there is only an arrogant silence, a contempt for the people.

Next, I turn to page 7 of the Budget Statement. The hon. Minister proudly says:

"This policy of fiscal consolidation, complemented by a more open trade and exchange regime, and a tightening of the stance of monetary policy, resulted in a substantial improvement in the overall balance of payments position to a projected surplus of US \$150 million in 1994. Consequently, net official international reserves are expected to reach US \$222 million by year end, while gross reserves will amount to US \$301 million or 3.3 months of imports. And this...is after making US \$579 million in debt service payments in 1994."

But nowhere has he said how much money they have borrowed for the last two to three years and how much they are going to have to pay back.

US \$200 million: It is rumoured that when money was running through this country like a dose of salts in the oil boom years, certain predecessors in title of the hon. Ministers, could put their hands on accounts which still exist far in excess

of that figure. In fact, there are merchants in this country today who could easily source such funding.

The trick is how, do we build confidence in these people to bring back their US funds and deposit them here in local banks? This is the reality. Until you build such confidence between the citizens and the state, all these foreign exchange figures are meaningless. There are many misleading and meaningless statements emanating from this Budget Statement. You really do not know where to begin.

7.20 p.m.

Perhaps I should quote Dr. Rudranath Capildeo on page 124 of the book *The Lotus and the Dagger*; compiled by Samaroo Siewah and published by Chakra Publishing House, 1994:

"Mr. Speaker, in politics magnanimity is the greatest wisdom, and generosity is the greatest of all virtues. So may I wish you, Mr. Speaker, and all Members of this House a happy and prosperous New Year, in particular the Minister of Finance.

To start on this budget is to start an argument which would be circular, so entry would be permissible at almost any point and departure would be permissible equally at almost any point."

This was said right here from this very chair on Monday, January 7, 1963, about 31 years ago. And nothing has changed.

Mr. Valley: Mr. President, it is impossible that that statement could have been made from the Senate. I am sure it was made in the Lower House.

Mr. President: Rudranath Capildeo was never in the Senate.

Sen. S. Capildeo: I never said that. I said the chair. Mr. President, the Minister's ignorance is amazing; no wonder we have such problems in this country. We are in the building, in this Chamber; in this chair it came from. I did not distinguish Senate. I understand what is going on.

Only on Wednesday we heard an enunciation of a new-found philosophy that government is a business and must be run as such. When one looks at page 2 of the hon. Minister's Budget Statement one sees:

"Second, and following from the first, in an exponentially accelerating reform agenda, rigid control from the centre is doomed to failure. It is

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absolutely necessary for our continuing success that we pass more and more control out to institutions, business and individuals. We therefore state as a basic tenet, our confidence that an enlightened and liberated citizenry will be self-motivated and will seize those opportunities which have the best chance of success in the extremely complex and rapidly changing environment.... A recurring theme in the budget presentation shall therefore be the development of an enlightened and liberated citizenry."

This idea that the government be run like a business has been effectively debunked.

Let me for the record quote Osborne and Gaebler on pages 20 and 21, of a book *Reinventing Government* published in 1992 by Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc,

"Why Government Can't Be Run Like A Business

Many people, who believe government should simply be 'run like a business,' may assume this is what we mean. It is not. Government and business are fundamentally different institutions. Business leaders are driven by the profit motive; government leaders are driven by the desire to get reelected. Business get most of their money from their customers; governments get most of their money from taxpayers. Businesses are usually driven by competition; government usually use monopolies.

Differences such as these create fundamentally different incentives in the public sector. For example, in government the ultimate test for managers is not whether they produce a product or profit, it is whether they please the elected politicians. Because politicians tend to be driven by interest groups, public managers unlike their private counterparts must factor interest groups into every equation.

Governments also extract their income primarily through taxation, whereas businesses earn their income when customers buy products or services of their own free will. This is one reason why the public focuses so intensely on the cost of government services, exercising a constant impulse to control, to dictate how much the bureaucrats spend on every item, so they cannot possibly waste, misuse, or steal the taxpayers' money."

We have been hearing queries all the time in this Senate.

"All these facts combine to produce an environment in which public employees view risks and rewards very differently than do private employees.

'In government all of the incentive is in the direction of not making mistakes,' explains Lou Winnick of the Ford Foundation. 'You can have 99 successes and nobody notices, and one mistake and you are dead.' Standard business methods to motivate employees do not work very well in this kind of environment.

There are many other differences. Government is democratic and open; hence it moves more slowly than business, whose managers can make quick decisions behind closed doors. Government's fundamental mission is to 'do good,' not to make money; hence c

Government must often serve everyone equally, regardless or their ability to pay or their demand for a service; hence it cannot achieve the same market efficiencies as business. One could write an entire book about the differences between business and government. Indeed, James Q. Wilson, the eminent political scientist, already has. It is called *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It.*"

I would spare him. I would not read that book for him.

"These differences add up to one conclusion: Government cannot be run like a business."

So that when they come here and pontificate and try to fool the people that they are on to something new; that they have just stumbled on the formula for national prosperity and the like; that just is not true. The Budget Statement reeks with suggestions like these. They are all false. In the same book on page 321 the authors are quite clear on the falsity of the so-called new paradigm.

"University of Minnesota political scientist John Bryson put it well, when we interviewed him several years ago:

In the past, we let markets work until they failed; then we responded with public bureaucracies. We're struggling to figure out a new way, somewhere between markets and public bureaucracy. So far, there's no theory guiding it. People do not have a real clear idea of why past practices are not working, or what a new model might be. So they cannot learn from success or failure: There is no theoretical framework people can use to integrate their experiences."

So to come and say that the Government must be run like a business; that it must privatize and that it must sell these state enterprises is just plain chicanery. The hon. Minister must know it is not practical or theoretical. He, his spokesman,

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and the people who devised the language in this Budget Statement know that it sounds good. The Government used that formula in 1991 and it won the election. It is using it again.

This Budget sets out four criteria upon which the future of this country is based. Let us examine them one by one. First, I quote the hon. Minister of Finance:

"Our businesses must be supported by a stable macroeconomic environment, effective government, efficient utilities, and a modern education health and security services."

What do we have here? An economic environment dependent on the volatile price index of the petroleum industry. A Government that is so effective that the entire country is in a state of despair with no utilities efficient, the education system a disaster, the health service a nightmare and security services destroyed. That is the first basis.

The second basis upon which the future of this country is based, and I quote the Minister again:

"A recurring theme in this Budget presentation shall therefore be the development of an enlightened and liberated citizenry."

What kind of madness is this? Just how stupid are we? The end result of more than 36 years of PNM rule has been the creation of a breed of citizen the likes of which have never been seen before, and I hope we will never see again. The kind of murders and criminal activities taking place this year alone, makes a mockery of the term "enlightened citizenry."

7.30 p.m.

Never before have we seen such gruesome, awesome, horrible, beastlike soulless crimes. Only today on the front page of the *Express* is the blood-curdling, horrifying story of a mentally retarded young woman raped and chopped to death with a Chinese chopper. This murder brings the number of murders up to 130 as at *December 8, 1994*. And on the front page of the *Guardian* there is the President of the highest court in the land saying:

"... If we remain powerless, nobody will have confidence in the administration of justice."

Well, I have news for the President of the Court of Appeal. In the eyes of the public, the court is no different from the Parliament—useless ornaments of a decaying, decadent and lost society.

Only three days ago this Senate debated the T&TEC Bill and the public is flabbergasted at what took place. We on this side are being bombarded with questions. How is it that Senators could speak out against divestment, get prime time on all three TV stations, grab front page headlines, and yet when the crunch comes, the Bill is passed? Senators abstain or vote against. I tell them I have no answer. I do not know. I refer them to the old Roman god, Janus, the two-faced guardian of ancient times. He is a god with a face in front and one at the back of his head.

Only yesterday we had this fascinating outburst from the normally sedate and imperturbable Sen. Ainsley Mark. He is not here now. I would ask him to get *Hansard* and read what he said. I have done so. There are very disturbing statements recorded therein. There are dangerous innuendoes. There was no reply to the legitimate questions posed on the takeover, but there was the revelation of a deep-seated feeling and emotion of which we were not aware. I would advise the hon. Senator to read *Hansard* and let me know if he stands by what is recorded there because serious consequences will follow. *[Interruption]*

Yes. We have the statement from the Prime Minister and now we have had another statement here in this Senate As I was. I would ask the Senator to read it and if he stands by it, let me know because serious consequences will follow.

And this is to be the global city. Global city of the Caribbean “mih eye!” This is a global city of hell. Liberated citizenry! What is wrong with this Minister? He has never seen so many poor people in Trinidad and Tobago in his life. None of them have ever seen it. Liberated to do what? Play Whe Whe and Lotto, snort coke and puff marijuana; break into Sen. Carol Mahadeo's house more than twenty times; assault and beat up one of our most distinguished citizens, in the gallery of her home. Former Sen. Louise Horne; at age 76; have enlightened children out of school peddling fruit and bric-a-bracs for a living and living dangerously on the highway. And there are Ministers coming here and trotting out all kinds of rubbish about community development.

Have enlightened prostitutes approach you brazenly in the early evening on Murray Street, Rosalino Street and Elizabeth Street with their pimps hovering in the background; have enlightened vagrants flood the suburbs of Newtown, Woodbrook, St. James, St. Clair, Federation Park and ELLERSLIE Park, after having been bulldozed from the Brian Lara Promenade. You notice that I speak about areas that I know.

Witness enlightened citizens on a daily search for food, eating out of garbage bags all over the city. Some of them have talent. They collect the garbage around

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the area and they bring it together and then they go through all of it in one, so there is a huge dump. See enlightened citizens sleeping under shop fronts in South Quay and Independence Square. Is this the global city of enlightened and liberated citizens where people eat, sleep, fornicate and defecate in public? What kind of madness is this?

Thirdly, I quote the Minister:

"As we extend short-term help to the poor and disadvantaged (the safety net) we must invest heavily in people, and the key word there is invest.

Somebody must be going crazy. Let me state here and now, we all know there is no such thing as a safety net. It does not exist and yet they persist in using the words to fool the people. It sounds good: There is a safety net. It gives people a feeling of comfort. They relax and say that the Minister has provided a safety net. All that has happened is that they have merely shifted funds around from the various ineffective, under-utilized useless Ministers and ministries. And just what are they investing in people?

The Minister speaks of education, retraining and health programmes. This man does not live here. He lives in Washington. Education, retraining and health programmes! The Green and White Papers on Education are a total collapse of the system. There are no such thing as retraining and health programmes! The hospitals are shut down; the people are dying, and the system is skewed. There are hospital managers attempting already—and they are not entitled so to do—to dictate the pace to the doctors. You should see some of the letters that they write, Mr. President; you should see the quality of language and the tone in which these letters are written.

These same hospital administrators, who would allow \$12 million worth of drugs to be thrown away because they are dated. How is that possible. And people come here and pretend that there will be a computerized programme to take care of that, as if they just came down to earth and saw this. They have been running this country for 36 years and there are still Ministers coming here and telling us about training programmes. They will train this one and that one. They will train our people into disaster.

The fourth one, Mr. President, takes the cake:

"Fourth, in a fiercely competitive world, effective government is becoming a critical comparative advantage. Therefore, the competence of government in

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administering the legal and regulatory framework in Trinidad and Tobago will assume added importance."

We just had the President of the Court of Appeal saying that law and order has broken down. This is tragic comedy!

"Speed of decision making has been mentioned time and again by investors as crucial."

The only speed in this country in decision-making is the fire sale of the property of the people. Sell it out!

"Therefore, public service reform must now be accelerated."

I do not know, but from the time I was a child I have been hearing about public service reform, and I am getting old and bald now and still hearing about public service reform, and that by 1995 things will get into place. In 1995 we will be hearing something about 1996. God help us!

"Trinidad and Tobago merits a public service keenly analytical, decisive and anxious to facilitate and guide our citizens."

I remember Eric Williams when he did not want to speak to his Permanent Secretary. He put him at a desk in a room and said, "Good Bye!" And these people tell me that they want to reform the public service?

"Furthermore, the long 12-year period of infrastructure degradation must now come to a halt."

For twelve years they have sat and watched the degradation take place and now they come with a Budget in 1994 and tell us it must stop now.

"To foster the emergence of a truly modern economy, we must now embark on a massive rebuilding of our infrastructure." Where did all the oil money go?

In the same places where the sale of our enterprises is going, that is where it went. If they had banked the money in Trinidad and Tobago, we would not have had that problem. *[Interruption]* Thank you, Sen. Barrack, good suggestion. Perhaps they could adopt it and start banking some of the moneys here now.

7.40 p.m.

"We started the road programme in 1994." For the last three months I have been travelling south of the Caroni three times per week on a mission, and I could guarantee that every road south of the Caroni is in dire need of repair and I am

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talking about Cedros, Fullerton, Siparia, Palo Seco, Princes Town, Rio Claro, Tableland—I have been all over, not a single road is road worthy. I would like to know where and when this money is being spent. But I see repairs going on in Westmoorings, Boissiere Village and recently I have seen them down-town.

The road repairs being done are cosmetic: they are not standing up and the Minister goes on boldly to talk about telecommunications. ‘We must tackle telecommunications’ but they have sold TSTT. Are they going to tackle the shareholders of TSTT? Are they going to invite new people to come in here? What are they doing?

“Ports and airports”. With respect to ports, I do not know about the Tobago contract. I do not know about the subsidized fast boat to Tobago, but airports: I do know we have a problem there—the problem of Pride. We still want to know the details of Pride. What happened? What went on?

We have a problem with drainage: the slightest rain and Port of Spain is flooded. The slightest rain, the whole of Central is gone. The slightest rain and Penal is a lagoon where one could plant rice. This is after 36 years of PNM Government and hundreds of billions of dollars. “Gas pipelines, industrial estates and most important of all, water. Clean pipe-borne water for every Tobagonian and Trinidadian. Water for the new industrial estate at La Brea, Brighton, and water for all those long suffering people in the deep South. Water for the new hotels under construction.

This is the joke of the century! Only 1.2 million people, after 36 years of PNM rule we cannot get a simple thing like water! We cannot get proper roads! We cannot get school places! We cannot get an ordinary health system to work for 1.2 million people! And the Minister comes in 1994 and pontificates we must do all these things.

Let me tell the hon. Minister in no uncertain terms—I wish he was here, because there is really no one on the opposite side who could answer these questions—for some time now, and up to today the legal and regulatory framework in Trinidad and Tobago has broken down. Public service reform is still in Sen. Draper's mind, somewhere in his head. The infrastructure of airport, drainage, water and so forth—to put it in local parlance—has "gone through.”

For all that the Mighty Midget dragon slayer says about roads, the roads in this country are in an almost irretrievable mess. It is potholes, potholes everywhere and not a pitch lake to be found. It is like clean pipe-borne water—

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leaks, leaks everywhere, flood, flood everywhere and not a drop from WASA's pipes. I really believe some madman wrote this section of this Budget.

This a Poohar budget, *[Interruption]* Sir—I will translate that for you, it means stupid, dotish, foolish—created, dreamt up, conceptualized and in the heavy, heady, spirituous, vaporised atmosphere of the comfort of a place, somewhere like Smokey and Bunty. This Budget could never have been written on a straight line; it is bound to stray and fall off.

I could go on and on Sir, but I want to take one sentence from a book by Michael Porter—I do not have the book it is too big and heavy— *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* published by the The Free Press 1990, at page 733 The sub-line is: "National Agenda in perspective. It states:

Each nation faces its own unique set of issues as well as its own opportunities and constraints in dealing with them. Yet there are clear themes that emerge from our look at each of the nations in turn."

What is the clear theme which emerges from this Budget? I will tell you—it is lack of trust. This Government does not trust its right hand with its left hand. That is why the Prime Minister would move into ministries, set up his deals and move out and the poor Ministers have to come here and face the music. It does not trust the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The clear theme is lack of transparency.

Questions are being asked and there are no answers to the questions. The divestment programme is shrouded in mystery and secrecy. Rumours abound. As far as ordinary people are concerned the whole exercise has the smell and taint of corrupt deals, deals, it is said, which would make Prevatt and O'Halloran blush with shame: Methanol, Fertrin, Urea, T&TEC, WASA and BWIA.

Unless all the facts are made known there is a cloud hanging over every transaction. People are not stupid; they are looking at the extraordinary rise in the lifestyle of several politicians. One just does not go around driving in a 1/2 million dollar vehicle without raising an eyebrow. I could do that, no eyebrow would be raised. That is what accounts for the lack of trust. People are seeing them in fancy cars and they are asking questions, and there are no answers.

I do not want to get caught up in Benjamin Disraeli's statement that "there are 3 kinds of lies: Lies, damned lies and statistics," but with the PNM old and new, nothing changes. Let me quote Dr. Rudranath Capildeo again 31 years ago at pages 132 and 133 of the book *The Lotus and the Dagger*.

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"I now come to the domestic scene. Here we have certain figures given to us, but what I must point out is that these figures do not really have any proper interpretation; because to have proper interpretation they must be related to population increase. That has been done in one particular place. It was done in a place where the Minister referred to the number of beds which have increased from 2.6 to 2.8 per thousand of the population. Now, that is hardly an increase to speak about and it is an infinitesimal increase. It shows the proper state of affairs it shows stagnation"

Ironical you know, he is talking about St. Ann's. He continues:

"So you see, this question of hospital development,..."

Irony, tremendous irony.

"in spite of the undeniable fact that new hospitals have been put up and there has been an increase in the number of beds (all that has been done) but as fast as the improvements occurred and appeared, they were swallowed up by the increasing demands on the services due to an increase in population."

The argument is as valid now as it was 31 years ago. Nothing changes with this Government. Mr. President, do you see the problem with statistics? It is worse. Time has stood still with the PNM. I continue the quote:

"What I want to say is that we in this country must see that there is also always in all human affairs an underlying emotional sentiment. The Prime Minister himself must know and he must realize that there is a secret and universal decay which is felt in almost every aspect of our public administration."

Thirty-one years ago and the statements are as valid today as they were then..

7.50 p.m.

"He must realize that though he himself retains the esteem of the general public he is gradually losing the esteem of pretty near the entire country. He must realize that these are dangerous situations."

There is a bunch of desperate people over there, they know it is a dangerous situation. It continues:

"This is the first Independence Budget which has been presented to the House. We had hoped that with this Budget we would have had a call, a call which would have released the emotional outlet, and the emotional strength of

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our people into some form of creation. That we would have been given some mammoth project which would inspire us, stimulate our imagination and give us the feeling of belonging to a new independent country. There is no such project contained in this Budget."

That was in 1963; the same thing applies today. There is no imagination, there is no stimulation, there is no emotional outlet for the people, there is no involvement of the people. In fact there is a total contempt for the people. It goes on:

"All we have is the old story, a dollar here, a penny there, four cents there, and something there. Nothing. No great imaginative construction work is put in this Budget. That is my simple basic criticism. If you are going to lead this country you have to lead this country emotionally. You may not like to believe it, but nationalism is as dead as a doornail."

These people have buried it now.

"You can no longer depend on that particular aspect to build up enthusiasm. People want to share in the excitement, the development of the latter half of the century."

We have come to the end of the century and the people have been left out of the business of Government.

"They want to play their part, they want to know what they are going to do, they want all these things for themselves. And when we find that more and more we are becoming dependent upon the position which obtains in external countries, we then have to drop all our old theories and go back to basic principles. "

And for Heaven's sake, how much more are we going to become dependent on external countries?

"It is an approach which exists in the most adult of sciences, mathematics. It has existed in practically every field of endeavour that when you come up against the wall that shows you complete loss, drop it all and go back to basic principles. What are the basic principles?

Prof. Spence—

"We have to provide food, therefore we have to grow food. We have to provide houses, therefore we must take local materials as far as possible to make houses."

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This Government is constructing towers in Westmoorings costing \$1 million for one flat.

"We have to provide transport,"

The Government closed down PTSC.

"therefore, we must build roads..."

We have the "Mighty Midget" saying that the Government is repairing roads.

"...and everything which we can locally to see that our transport is provided. "

We have killed transport in this country.

"We have to provide medicines, therefore we should try and put down a local plant, a small plant, in order to manufacture our own drugs. "

Thirty-one years ago we were talking about putting down plants to manufacture drugs. They have opened up the marketplace and plants are closing down now. They have importers—I understand that it is a very attractive business—bringing it in. One of the biggest money spinners in this country is Pharmaceuticals. When we get into power one of the first things we are going to examine is the importation of pharmaceuticals into this country. Who does it. We are going to look at the kind of money that they are making.

"All these things are doable. Go back to basic principles. Go and tell the people this is what you want and this is what you intend to push them forward with."

But the PNM, Sir, talk down to people, they do not talk to the people. Then people coming here to say that they are proud to be in this party for so many years because the party has done this and that. I would have hung my head in shame, because one just has to look on the East/West Corridor to see what this party has done to its people. And it continues:

"I am unable as I sit on this side of the House to help in forming decisions quite rightly, because that is the prerogative of the people on the other side. The best I could do is to give advice. I cannot, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House accept responsibility without power, and since I have no power I cannot undertake responsibility. People cannot come and tell me why don't you do this, and why don't you do that, for the simple reason that I cannot do this and I cannot do that. I certainly could give advice; I could certainly give help. I could even say in moments of conceit that this is what I would do if I

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were in charge, but those things are not given to me. All I can do is to advise the people opposite that we have a golden opportunity in our hands, and if we allow dissatisfaction to spread through the country as it is spreading through now—people do not mind being taxed, but tell them what you are going to do with their money. For God's sake give them an inspiration. Do that and you would get almost anything from them."

The words, Sir, are prophetic and they are applicable—31 years later nothing has changed.

We have sat here and listened to the hon. Ministers of Finance, Education, Agriculture, National Security, Public Administration, Community Development and Women's Affairs—and God knows who else we have listened to— but there is one rotten thread running throughout all the contributions. They have all forgotten that they are the cause of our problems! It is as if they have all just landed from the Moon or Mars and have now discovered Trinidad and Tobago. Let me remind them that this is the country that the People's National Movement has raped, ravaged and destroyed without mercy, but I understand their problem.

The PNM's policy has always been one of self-help at the cost of the country. They have played Whe Whe with the fortunes of our country and the lives of our people and the mark of eleven is on them—the Corbeau. This is a Budget of the vultures splitting the country into a great economic divide—the new rich and the great many poor. It is a very, very sad day for me.

Let me as a good Brahmin, close by wishing you, President, and your family, a holy and divine Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. Of course, I extend the same greetings to all the Senators and to the hon. Members, and to Staff of Parliament including the *Hansard* Reporters; who have laboured hard in this barren vineyard over the last few weeks. I really congratulate them.

I thank you.

8.00 p.m.

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. President, it is always a pleasure for me to visit the Upper House, coming back as it were to the place where I was born politically. In those days, there was a certain respect for everyone on both sides of the Senate. We had healthy picong, I understand you now have to have cease-fire here, Mr. President.

I thank all Senators who participated in this Budget debate for their contributions. Some contributions were excellent; others, for example the last one,

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indicated much more of the personality than a critique of the Budget. I think that is all I need to say with respect to that contribution.

There were a number of issues raised in the debate; most of them have been dealt with by my colleagues on this side of the Senate. However, there are some which I need to touch on. I think there are three critical issues remaining and some other responses which I want to make, if time permits.

The first issue is that big one of divestment. First of all, I think almost every Senator on the other side had something to say with respect to that. Sen. Daly made the point that divestment outside the energy sector is proceeding in a very disorderly manner. He said that he was involved in one divestment in the energy sector—I think it was the Fertrin/Urea transaction—and he can vouch that that one went very orderly.

I have not been directly involved in any of the divestments. As Minister, it is my duty to supervise all. I am not involved in any negotiations at the frontline in a manner similar to the way that Sen. Daly would have been, but, nevertheless I know what is happening. I have been involved. While Sen. Daly can vouch for the one that he was involved in, I can vouch for all; that every one of them has been conducted in a very orderly manner—and as I said yesterday I think it was—the fragrance is lovely, pleasing to the nostrils.

Sen. Persad-Bissessar made the point that there is lack of information on the divestment programme. *Mea culpa*; I think we are guilty. May I make the point that for some time now the Government has recognized the need for a document outlining clearly what is happening with the divestment programme, the rationale for what the Government is doing, building on the manifesto position. We started that exercise since 1992, revisiting as it were the 1970s position, that is, *Public Participation in the State Sector*, paper of 1973 and again in 1975, talking about the situation that existed at that time. I think it was Sen. Dr. St. Cyr who made the point that in the 1960s the state was a very reluctant investor, which was owing to the fact that the private sector was not investing the way one expected it to be involved at that time.

We did that work in 1992 and because of the nature of the work, and because it was being done by people who strive for perfection, it has been subject to a number of revisions. It is a need that was recognized very early, it is available, it has been before Cabinet for some time—getting to Cabinet, the size of the document, Members feel that they need time to look at it and they get overtaken by other more pressing matters. I am assured that the Government would be able

to lay this document within, at the most, one month in the other House and, hopefully, that would satisfy Sen. Persad-Bissessar's requirement.

The draft of the document—*Public Participation in Industrial and Commercial Activities Revisited*—looks at the situation that existed at that time, goes on to talk about the performance of the state sector, talks about the rationalization of the sector and provides case studies on every divestment that has been completed to date. I think Sen. Daly in the other debate asked for executive summary. It is all here. I assure my colleagues in the Senate that within a month they would have the document and, hopefully, that would satisfy that requirement.

Coming out of that overall discussion with respect to information on the divestment programme, the Government has taken a decision that on every divestment it would lay the documents in the Parliament library, so that Members can, at their leisure, review what is being done. This Government maintains that there must be a high level of accountability and transparency with respect to divestment. I can assure every Senator that there is transparency and accountability in the divestment process. The document points out the divestment procedure, the existence of the divestment secretariat and all of that.

Sen. Hosein: Mr. President, would the hon. Minister give way to a question?

Hon. K. Valley: Sure!

Sen. Hosein: Mr. President, am I to understand that the Minister is saying to us that we must accept his word that everything is fine? Is that the accountability we are talking about? We are not talking about accountability to the PA(E)C, we are talking about his word?

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, I am not saying that. I have given an assurance, and the people who know me would tell the hon. Senator that he can accept my word. I am saying more than that—that this document will be laid and he can review it. More than that, there is the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee which is chaired by a Member of the Opposition. Any one of these matters can be raised at that committee. The Opposition talks about accountability. There are institutions available and if they know how to use them, they could get any information they wish.

Sen. Hosein: Mr. President, I rise again to correct the Minister. He obviously is not aware that the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee has no power to subpoena documents or witnesses. In other words, there are no teeth; and the Minister is fully aware of that.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, I was the chairman of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee for some time and I got the information I wanted. If one knows what one wants and knows how to get it one can get it. They should not blame us for their incompetence.

Because it is current there has been much talk about BWIA and I want to spend a few minutes talking about that. It seems to me that, as a country, we know what we want but it seems that when we are getting close to that finish line we tend to get cold feet. Way back in 1991 a new board was put in place at BWIA with a clear mandate to restructure the company, to look for a strategic partner to divest the company along a certain line. That was under the last regime. This Government came into power and it is one of the boards that it did not touch.

8.10 p.m.

In 1991 Mr. Joe Esau was appointed Chairman of BWIA with Mr. Audley Walker as Deputy Chairman. Mr. Ian Bertrand, was then the Managing Director; Mr. Lennox Archer at CLICO, Mr. Collins, Attorney at Law; Mr. Steve Bideshi— This was the board appointed and, of course, there were union representatives. The only change on that board, as of now, is Mr. Bertrand who resigned as CEO and, therefore, no longer was a board member. We left that board in place because we thought the mandate they had was clear; we supported that mandate and supported the board in the execution of that mandate.

But we need, perhaps, to go a bit before that, because I think it was in 1980— after the formation of the new BWIA with the Act of 1978—the new BWIA really began operations on January 1, 1980. At that time the Government, in restructuring the company, wrote off some \$23.6 million capital deficiency and put the company on a new footing. Between that time and now, the company has accumulated a loss of some \$800 million. I think everybody knows the situation of BWIA. Members would know also that that board went out looking for a joint-venture partner as was their mandate, and I think it was about two years ago, in this Senate, that I reported on the fact that BWIA had extreme difficulty finding a strategic partner.

Just to remind hon. Senators, of some of the airlines that First Boston Corporation, which was the investment house charged with the mandate of finding a joint-venture partner for BWIA and the people at BWIA spoke with British Airways in July, 1991, declined; they spoke with them again in June, 1992; again declined, giving reasons which I do not think I need to go into British Midlands, July, 1991, declined; Continental Airlines, July, 1991, declined; KLM,

June, 1991, declined; North West Airlines, July, 1991, declined; Swiss Air, July, 1991, declined; United Airlines, June, 1991, declined, July, 1991, declined;

Mr. President, we go on to Delta Airlines, June, 1991, interested, but unable to pursue at the time because of focus on newly acquired Pan American routes; suggested revisit in 1992; spoke to in June, 1992; interested in alliance with certain conditions; Lufthansa, June 1991, declined; July 1992, spoke with, willing to reconsider; US Air, July, 1991, declined; revisited July, 1992, interested.

Eventually, Mr. President, as Members may recall, BWIA entered into a code-sharing arrangement with Delta some time in early 1993. So that there was this effort involving attempts to form a strategic alliance with some eleven different airlines, but all that was achieved from this effort was a code-sharing arrangement with Delta.

In the meantime, BWIA continued to run up huge losses. Over the last five-year period, for example, that is 1989—1993, BWIA's losses amounted to \$677.5 million, and Government had to guarantee foreign loans of US \$20 million and local loans of \$170 million, in addition to providing an advance of some \$37.7 million over that period. Further, there was an airbridge subsidy of \$66 million.

Quite simply, the point that is being made is that we know the problem that is BWIA. We know as a fact that the Government was coming to the point where, if we could not find an arrangement for BWIA, we would have had to consider seriously the liquidation of the airline—and that is the reality. One would remember also the Air Canada initiative. As a matter of fact, that is how we met the CEO of BWIA. When we were trying with Air Canada to have a joint bid for the LIAT airline, that fell through and so we brought that CEO on board at BWIA and I must say that he has effected some real changes at BWIA, cutting costs and so forth, putting the airline in a position that we could have spoken intelligently to the US investor, Acker, on the divestment.

It was in July of this year that we entered into a memorandum of understanding with Acker for the divestment of the airline based on certain terms and conditions—clear terms and conditions. But we went further—that memorandum of Understanding provided for an employees' stock ownership plan of 10 per cent.

The Government started discussions with the employees through their unions immediately; and I am pleased to report that only two days ago I had the pleasure of signing that memorandum of understanding with the union, giving them the right to purchase up to 25.5 per cent of the company, an amount equal to the

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shares that are supposed to be held by the Acker group, giving them a position in the company so that they can look after their interest. Getting them involved.

More than that, Sir, I met with the unions earlier today and I can tell you, unlike what Sen. Daly is saying, that divestment is proceeding in quite an orderly manner with respect to the interested parties: the shareholder, the employees, and the potential investors. We are not hearing any noise. We signed the memorandum of understanding. The unions are happy, the investors are doing their part, the Government is doing its part as shareholder; and when we realized that people were saying all kinds of things about the potential investor, we said, let us take care.

While First Boston has been associated with the transaction from day one, since 1991, we said, perhaps First Boston is now too close to the transaction; we ought to bring some new people in to guide the transaction from here to closing. Based on that, we asked Cabinet to give us the authority to have some new people in. So we brought in City Corp and the law firm that acted for us on the Fertrin transaction, with a mandate to maximize Government's interest within the parameters of the memorandum of understanding. This was on November 18, seeking approval of the Cabinet for the engagement of financial and legal advisory services to ensure the smooth implementation of the plan, but at the same time maximizing Government's return on the transaction—and we got that authority.

So that we now have City Corp and Skadden Arps, the law firm working with our technical team, the Divestment Secretariat—the people from the Investment Unit—talking with the unions. As a matter of fact they were supposed to be meeting with the union this afternoon at 6 o'clock to understand any concerns the unions may have; they have a meeting also with the House of Assembly in Tobago because, as you know, we are committed to tourism.

We have said that tourism is one of the five initiatives that we are pushing as a country, and that the tourism drive will start in Tobago. We have said that. So that we are interested in protecting Tobago tourism and our experts will be talking with the Tobago House of Assembly. While we can give a commitment that we will protect Tobago tourism, we cannot give a similar commitment to Dominica tourism, Barbados tourism, or St. Lucia tourism.

8.20 p.m.

I did not hear about John Bell when we were paying out \$800 million in losses; so that I do not want to hear about him today. If he wants, he must make

an investment in the new BWIA. That is how they must protect their interests. Only now the whole Caribbean seems to understand how important BWIA is. They did not understand that all the time when they were talking about Sunrise and Sunset and Carib Airways, and so forth. My obligation remains the looking after of the national interest, and that includes Tobago tourism, not Barbados' or St. Lucia's.

We are proceeding, and as in most transactions, whenever you are close, there are always those—somebody told me I should not use the word, nuisance; but you have it every time. You hear about PRIDE often. It is not only in Pride; it is in National Fisheries; it is in the Fertrin transaction; the same one that Sen. Daly said was squeaky clean. As a matter of fact, there is still a matter in court with respect to that transaction, because there is always someone, some smart-man—you know in Trinidad we have many of them—who believes that he can make a quick buck by getting an out-of-court settlement; so he starts "beating up the water," I call it; making a lot of noise, going to court, for God knows what—for some injunction!

This is happening in the Fertrin transaction—the same one that is squeaky clean—it is in court right now. We had it also in Printing and Packaging. There was a bid process; you would not put in a bid, but at the last moment after the deal is closed you are writing me and telling me how much contribution you make to the party. I do not want to know that! If you want to make contributions to the party, that is your business!

Hon. Senator: Who is that?

Hon. K. Valley: Who is that? Your Mr. "X." Go and ask him! You must find out.

Sen. W. Mark: Well you are here, tell me.

Hon. K. Valley: That is what happens, Mr. President. So they come with these things. It is in BWIA also. So that—Empire Capital Corporation—a document reaches the Prime Minister and before he even has a chance to look at it, it is in the newspapers, talking about some offer that is \$40 million more than the BWIA offer.

Let me make the point that there is no offer in this document to put any money into BWIA. As a matter of fact, this document is an unsolicited proposal for consultancy work that says "in six to 12 months we will come up with a proposal for the privatization of BWIA." Right now we are extremely close to the divestment of BWIA. In June we accepted a proposal for the divestment and the memorandum of understanding.

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This is asking for compensation of US \$100,000, plus a monthly retainer fee of US \$40,000 for the months two to six, for analysis, and so on. There is nothing here. This is for what? For what, at best, we have just finished doing. Because at least in that transaction, the people said clearly that they would take up 25.5 per cent of the equity and they would do certain things.

I am sorry—they tell me not to say it, but I have to say it—this is of nuisance value. We are moving along.

Sen. W. Mark: On a point of clarification, Mr. President. On the question of BWIA, could the Minister indicate whether before the transaction is closed—I understand December 31—he would grace this Parliament with all the necessary documentation, all the necessary agreements so that the Parliament of this country could have some kind of transparency and accountability in terms of this transaction before the deal is sealed on December 31? Would he be so kind as to make those documents available?

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, I can assure the hon. Senator that information would be available on the transaction. But the hon. Senator would know that he fought an election; he lost. He is in this House after losing the election; and Government has been elected to govern—the Executive—and we would carry out that executive function, at the same time providing information to the Parliament. Quite simply, however, we are not compromising on that mandate that was given to us to carry out the executive function in Trinidad and Tobago for a period of five years. That is what we will do!

Sen. Hosein: On a point of clarification. I have a concern about control of BWIA, and I raised it. I felt that between the Government and the employees, we should own no less than 51 per cent, because I believe that if we are interested in tourism, we should have control of BWIA.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, a valid point. In both the Acker memorandum of understanding as well as the memorandum of understanding with the union, the Government has said, quite clearly, that it is going to have a golden share which would reserve certain rights for Government.

We have learnt over the years that one does not need 51 per cent to have effective control over certain matters. That is one of the key areas that we have our experts looking at. First of all, we have to determine exactly do what we need to protect, and then draft the clauses to so protect. We know that. We have to go there protecting our interests.

After listening to all of these concerns—I remember the Prime Minister calling a meeting with the Acker people at his residence on Thursday night. The Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and I met with them for about three hours. At the end of that, we all felt comfortable. Those of us with a business background would know that critical decisions are really made from how you feel. That is why they say the people of the East would need to have dinner with you before they sign a deal.

As I said earlier, I met with the unions today and they told me that they had a meeting from about 6.00 p.m. to 11.00 last night with the Acker people, and after that meeting they felt extremely comfortable working with them. They told me that today.

Sen. W. Mark: I have to confirm that.

Hon. K. Valley: You will confirm it. I had a press release that they wanted to put out.

But I want to make the point that when one consider the vision, given what we want to do, given our initiative south, going into South America, using Trinidad Piarco as a hub, into Caracas, into Colombia, into northern Brazil, and understanding the plan that is for the new BWIA, using American Airlines to feed BWIA out of the United States; using Midland to feed the airline out of England; having that arrangement with Liat, we are convinced that we are moving in the right direction. We were in Antigua some time ago, and I can tell you at present they are working on a proposal to place Liat into the overall divestment.

I know Members may have fears because it is the nature of things, but I can assure people like Sen. Mansoor that it would be the same way as he felt with respect to the flotation of the currency. There were fears, but as Sen. Mansoor said today that he would admit now, those fears appear to have been unfounded—if I am quoting him correctly, reading his contribution. And I feel that way, as long as we are good enough to protect what we need to protect but I think I have spent sufficient time on BWIA.

8.30 p.m.

The second critical issue is with respect to the manufacturing sector—the removal of the stamp duty and so forth. Again, *mea culpa* according to the SAL we had certain commitments, as I said, when we came in to remove the negative list. We got certain deferrals and so forth, but we had to do it according to the loan conditionalities. I think it was Sen. Barrack who quoted the Member for San Fernando East in 1990 making the point quite clearly that—

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"Now that the Government has committed us to the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Loan, and the consequential scrapping of the negative list, there are certain mechanisms that must be put in place to protect our local manufacturers."

That is the point the Member was making. If one were committed to the removal of the negative list, there were certain things which must be put in place.

Again, I make the point that we are well aware of that. Members would recall that the anti-dumping legislation was passed in this Senate in 1993, and the regulations were drafted. Again, because of the loan conditionalities the World Bank had to view it, and they recommended a consultancy. Let us face it, as we move to international competitiveness, as a fact, we need persons who have been there before. A consultant from the United Kingdom came and looked at the draft.

After spending some time the consultant has opined that we ought to go with the regulation as is, but there are some changes which ought to be made. Nevertheless, even in the form they are, they would provide protection to the manufacturing sector. That was his advice.

We have taken that advice, and we at the Ministry of Trade and Industry are moving to have our anti-dumping unit set up as quickly as possible. So, for anti-dumping, the same for unfair trade practices. As a matter of fact, we feel that we are going to have action with respect to unfair trade practices even before anti-dumping.

On Monday of last week, as soon as the debate ended, I with some of my officials, met with the manufacturing sector—the president and other members of his team—because we know that they are concerned about this. We attempted to ask for a deferral, but it was clear that given the commitment, we need to get our house in order. We gave a commitment that we would be reducing surcharge and stamp duty; and rather than looking for delays which may affect overall confidence in getting the job done; our job is to ensure that the protective device is in place as quickly as possible.

As the Minister of Finance said in his opening statement here, at present there is a committee consisting of TTMA representatives, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Customs personnel, working with the mandate to come back to me on Monday to provide an action plan that would see policy on unfair trade practices in place, hopefully, by January 1, 1995. That is what we are working on.

We had the consultant here and he recommended the pre-shipment inspection and the TTMA is agreeable to that. They have sent me some information suggesting that that system has worked quite well in some other countries, such as Indonesia, where the statistics show: imports subject to inspection—US \$20 billion; additional tax collection—US \$397 million.

There are other areas of the world where there are similar programmes; in the Philippines, Peru and so forth. The cost of this system is supposed to be some one per cent of the imports coming in. We plan to exempt, of course, inputs into manufacturing and certain other things. That is what we are looking at. The feeling is that given the general reduction in duties and so forth, a cost of one per cent would not be burdensome on the manufacturing sector.

More than that, it is going to considerably ease the work that the Customs Department would have to do in Trinidad. In addition, it may make our job easier with respect to anti-dumping because the unfair trade practices measures would deal with matters such as misclassification, under-invoicing and so forth. I am sure Senators are much acquainted with these matters than I am.

While Sen. Barrack was speaking, I made the point that he did not complete the quotation of the hon. Member for San Fernando East. After outlining those three measures which he considered important for the manufacturing sector, the Member for San Fernando East, made the point that if these measures are put in place and adhered to, we are confident that our local manufacturers would, at least, have a fighting chance to survive. We know that and we are moving with speed to put that in place.

One met a commitment; one had to deal with that commitment and by the stroke of a pen duty can be reduced. The setting up of an anti-dumping unit or mechanisms for unfair trade practices cannot be done with such efficiency by the stroke of a pen; it takes longer. The consultant was required; that took some time, but I can tell this Senate that, hopefully, by January 1, 1995, at least, measures to combat unfair trade practices would be in place. That is what we are shooting for; they are working and they know they have my full support.

There are some other issues with respect to the non-oil sector. I think it was Sen. Daly or Sen. Mansoor who asked—the point was made also by Sen. Wade Mark—if we were abandoning the manufacturing sector. From what I have said with respect to the stamp duty one sees quite clearly that we are not. We want, of course, to expose them to international competitiveness because we believe that is going to put them at the cutting edge.

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This morning I had the pleasure of attending Nemwil's function. Nemwil has just been rated "A Excellent, Category V" from the internationally renowned A. M. Best Rating Agency. It is an insurance rating agency internationally recognized. Nemwil had their breakfast meeting at the Trinidad Hilton and their pride showed. It was really an achievement. We want more of our companies to move in that direction, because we can, in fact, engage the world. We are good! we produce Brian Lara! and, of course, on November 19 we had our revenge on the United States football team. Good things are happening and we must go for it! We must not be timid.

This Government is prepared to provide that leadership. We have been looking for market access. A while ago the Senator spoke about NAFTA. We are well advanced; we have finished our bilateral investment treaty—that was signed with the US; we have finished our intellectual property rights agreement—that has been signed also, and we continue to make the case that we are the next logical choice after Chile. That is our position. NAFTA is not an overnight thing.

8.40 p.m.

We have set up a standing committee; Sen. Wade Mark is a member of that committee, as a member of NATUC, not as a member of the Opposition—I do not know, but I am sure they can still communicate. If he wants to know whether we are being prepared for NAFTA, all he has to do is to talk with his colleague who is a Member of that Standing Committee who, I am aware, has been attending meetings. That committee has met on a number of occasions looking not only at NAFTA; their mandate is to look at all trade and related agreements as we move forward.

In 1995 we want to build on the Caricom/Venezuela and the Caricom/Colombia agreements. Those agreements talk in terms of the products which may come in duty free, identifying the products; or the products on which we pay merely 5 per cent stamp duty or 10 per cent duty. We are saying we ought to be doing it the other way around.

We ought to say what industries we want to protect and then say everything else is duty free. Because we do not know what the investor coming from the Far East may want to produce here to go into the Colombian or Venezuelan market. We want to have that freedom so that we want to engage Colombia. On our last mission to Venezuela and Colombia we had discussions along those lines, that we want an exceptions list rather than an identifier of products which may enter the market duty free. That Standing Committee would have quite a lot of work to do in the next year and I would expect Sen. Wade Mark to play his part well.

There is also the issue of the five per cent duty, and as I said in the other place—I do not think I would have the time to go into it here—after looking at it we could not remove the five per cent duty for a number of reasons. The Manufacturers Association has now accepted that fact and we have to see whether the 2.5 per cent rebate system is sufficient or whether we would need to massage that a bit, and we are looking at that. We have, however, maintained the Minister's Licence or we are proposing to, because, we have to go to the other place to have the continuation of that Section 56 Order.

As you know, we have been able also to make representation to the Minister of Finance, and with respect to non-competing capital goods the rate of duty would now be zero rather than the 2.5 per cent mentioned in the Budget Speech. The Minister of Finance took the point and we were able to convince him that, in fact, we should reduce that to zero.

Another issue rather quickly. Sen. Daly made the point also that other than the venture capital system, the Government was doing nothing with respect to wean, as it were, investors away from loan financing to equity financing. I do not know whether he was taken in by what I can only describe as a very unfortunate article in the *Express* sometime ago relating to the 15 per cent tax on dividends. The article purported that this was a further penalty on equity investment when it was quite the opposite.

What happens with equity investment, as the Minister said quite clearly, is that when one gets dividends one is entitled first of all, to what is called a dividend, tax credit, putting the receiver in a position to recover the tax which was paid at the company level, and that is why there is a 62 per cent gross-up provision or a 62 per cent dividend tax credit.

Given a tax rate of 38 per cent, when one gets a 62 per cent credit, one in effect, gets the tax which was deemed to have been paid at the company level. So one gets back a tax credit. Therefore, the funds are not taxed as yet. Really, ordinarily, he would have to bring that into his income and pay tax on that as his own marginal tax rate which, in the normal course of events, would exceed 15 per cent by far. It would be much closer to 35 per cent or what have you.

Therefore, to say that the individual receiving the dividends from a publicly quoted company would be taxed nearly 15 per cent after having received the dividend tax credit—there is a real plus for equity investment, the whole purpose of which is to stimulate the market, stimulate equity investment making or positioning companies to finance themselves via equity rather than debt in

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complete contradiction to what Sen. Daly was saying. That is the reality. I hope that unfortunate article—it was corrected already by Deloitte and Touche which had an excellent article explaining how we operate. But I think it bears repeating that it is a real plus for equity investment in Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to move on rather quickly to some other matters because I know a number of Senators had certain points and I want to deal with some of them. Revenue estimates by Sen. Mansoor. Let me say first of all, with respect to the revenue estimates, of course, one expects there would be growth in oil production and because of that there would be some additional oil taxation. That production is expected to grow from about 46.6 per cent. The information I have is that the production estimates for next year with respect to oil is to grow from 46,897,089 barrels to 50,392,750 barrels; so that there is the tax on that additional amount first of all.

In addition, they are telling me that the estimate for 1995 includes arrears from Petrotrin of \$164.7 million, and arrears from NGC of \$62 million, a total of \$226.7 million in 1995. So that they are talking about a 7.5 per cent increase in production in 1995 over the 1994 revised production figures. A 19 per cent increase in the 1995 production over the 1994 original production. That is in the energy area.

The non-oil area they are saying corporation tax is estimated to grow from \$638 million to \$869.7 million a variance of \$231.7 million. TSTT accounts for \$129.67 million out of that—they are making a lot of money there—administrative improvements and the factor of growth. So there is a tightening of the tax collection machinery which accounts in part for Sen. Dean's point. He was arguing about tax exit, what system would be put in place. Of course, you are putting more people in the net for value-added tax, so you are getting them in the system, and the improvement of your administrative machinery, would be a more efficient policing system to catch the 10 per cent or so who fail to pay their income tax rather than really interfering with the 100 per cent of us who want to travel on the tax exit certificate.

The growth factor, increased dividends from TSTT, administrative improvement. Then the Lands and Buildings Taxes, an increase of some \$27 million going from \$100 million to \$127 million and the explanation, collection of arrears—commercial buildings to be assessed and growth based on Government's policy through incentives.

Excise duty is expected to increase by \$43.1 million and that is based on estimated growth in the economy. Value added tax growing from \$1,305 million

to \$1,641.4 million, an increase of \$336.4 million. Again, they are saying that is an administrative improvement. A special exercise has been mounted to register more businesses and also to reduce the threshold from \$120,000 for VAT.

Import duties—\$405 million to \$812.2 million. That was a large increase, an increase of \$407.2 million. Part of the explanation there, is the fact that we expect more imports because of the reduction in stamp duty, but also administrative improvement through the ASYCUDA system, the fact that we would have unfair trade practices—and Senators would have seen what has happened in other places—the revenue gains and so forth.

8.50 p.m.

A stripping station was established. Steps are also being taken to reduce the incidence of under-invoicing via unfair trade practices.

There was also a specific question with respect to national lotteries. It has grown from \$78 million to \$200 million—I know the Senator was concerned about that—it is really taking money from other parts of the economy. The point is made here—remember that the game came in August, so that the \$70 million is merely from August to December, and in 1995 it would be one year. That is the revenue estimates.

Sen. Dr. St. Cyr spoke about the importance of productivity. I take that very important point. I think that is the orientation to take us into the future, rather than to create jobs which must be sustainable to make sense.

I move on to divestment on a case by case basis. While I am not ideological, I think I have to agree with Sen. Barrack that there must be an overall policy. That is what we attempted to do in the manifesto, first of all, to say that there was the concept of strategic and non-strategic companies. In the non-strategic company, there would be a process of ordinary divestment over time. Whereas if we deem the company to be strategic—even in that instance we can divest—in such a case, however, we want to maintain some level of control. One would see in T&TEC there is 51 per cent control, and in the case of BWIA, although we have 49 per cent, we are talking about the golden share concept. That is the overall policy.

From time to time, one would see in the White Paper—for example, my people at investment meet every other week; we look at the companies and we make a decision with respect to divestment. If Cabinet approves the divestment, it is decanted into the divestment secretariat which has the responsibility of taking the divestment through; removed even from the basic investment unit of the Ministry of Finance.

Sen. Daly made the point that the Government was no longer responsible for employment. This is not true. The fact that we do not feel we have to provide it directly does not absolve us from the responsibility to ensure that there is sustainable job creation. The concept of the facilitator is to, as my Friend would say—the same book he was reading, but he got only to page 21, then he started flipping the pages. The point that Osborne is making is that government must become more like business. That is the whole point, reinventing government, realizing how it used to do things and realizing now that it has to be done differently; that in government it must steer not row. That is what the Government is doing. The Senator must not read just part.

We are saying that, yes, we have a responsibility to provide transportation to citizens but that does not mean we have to own a bus company. We can set the rules of the game and have the controls at that level, and get the private sector involved. They can do that more efficiently. That is what we are doing with the generation at T&TEC or perhaps water, but it does not mean that we are absolved from the responsibility of providing the service, or for that matter, job creation.

We are providing certain incentives and we are looking for markets, knowing full well that a population of 1.2 million is too small. What we are trying to do is to have favourable market access in Latin America, so that the investor from the Far East can see Trinidad and Tobago as a favourable location from which he can enter the South American market.

I believe that we have clear competitive advantages down South. I say again, that we may not have a competitive advantage into North America, but we have a clear competitive advantage going South. I want to orient the business community and they are doing it. They are having their trade missions down South they are getting results and they are doing more of it. Next March we are planning to go to South Africa. I have only five minutes and I have to do it rather quickly.

Sen. Persad-Bissessar is not here, so there is no need to deal with the retail price index.

I move next to Sen. Ali on the Women's Affairs Division. The information is there. Recurrent expenditure is shown on page 192: \$241,619, and then on page 194, there is an amount of \$593,800. In addition under the capital expenditure programme, institutional strengthening of Women's Affairs Division, \$1.2 million. The total allocation is about \$2 million for the Women's Affairs Division. In addition, there is funding from the Community Enterprise Fund Care and Social Sector Programme. Of course, the Minister would deal with all of that.

Sen. Prof. Spence also had some issues. I wonder whether I can deal with them. I know he was contesting the figures with respect to agriculture and school feeding. First of all, let me deal with some of the issues raised. Prof. Spence asked why the School Feeding Programme was not being used to develop agriculture. I have a three-page document that explains it. I can give him the document. It says that basically there is an emphasis on local produce in the School Feeding Programme. I have only about two or three minutes left. I know that he was contending the GDP figures and I am sure he can talk with the Central Bank on that matter.

The other issue Prof. Spence raised is about citrus and Caroni. My officials informed me that really, Caroni sees that as part of the diversification programme. It is one of the nine products they are emphasizing and it seems that they are really not interested to have it farmed out. They have it as one of their products.

Sen. Prof. Spence: I was not really asking about the policy of Caroni (1975) Limited. I was asking about the Government's policy, the shareholder's policy.

Hon. K. Valley: The Senator may be aware that the shareholder is part of a tripartite agreement with the union and the company dating back to 1992. I am talking about recommendations coming out of that tripartite agreement which were agreed to by the Government. I am not getting it here, but that is what it is.

9.00 p.m.

Quite quickly, I just want to make the point that it is not true to say, as Sen. Daly claimed, that nothing is happening in the non-oil sector. Over the period January 1 to July 1994, the Ministry of Trade and Industry granted concessions for 190 new investments. As at this time, 116 of those new investments are operating, that is some 61 per cent. The 190 new investments were supposed to create new jobs the order of 3,418 so that by simple prorating, given 61 per cent is operating, one can assume that approximately 2,100 new jobs have been created with respect to those 116 firms.

The foreign exchange implications of earning potential is expected to be some \$392.24 million. Again, using the same pro rata basis, it is estimated that approximately \$240 million would be earned by these firms. The situation, quite simply, is that with the non-oil sector one seldom hears about the firm, quite unlike the methanol sector. Everyone knows when a methanol plant comes. The reality is that in terms of job creation, the non-oil sector is much more efficient in creating those sustainable jobs.

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The large investments in the energy sector, the methanol and so forth, really help us with respect to foreign exchange, but the small firm, for example, I think it was last week or two weeks ago that, the Pizza Hut invested TT \$600 million creating 75 sustainable jobs. Compare that to the US \$235 million methanol plant which has created merely 105 jobs.

Mr. President: You have a couple more minutes. I am giving you a stopping time. I would say about two more minutes.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, let me once more thank all the Senators for participating in this debate. Yes, I believe it was a good-news Budget. I think we are at the threshold of sustainable growth in this economy. There are still a number of things we have to do. We are not yet out of the woods. We are busy trying to provide an enabling environment. Growth and transformation require that enabling environment, but when we look at the success stories of the Far East, we will see that it is not a sufficient condition for growth. We need also to have certain strategic initiatives, and that is why one will find that the Government are busy looking at the tourism sector, the transshipment hub concept, air transport, seeking market access and all of these things, because we know that those strategic initiatives must come from our objective conditions, and we are using the fact of our strategic location to do certain things.

I thank you, Mr. President, and I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 63, I beg to move that the Appropriation Bill, 1995 be not committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Question put and agreed to.

Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be now read the third time.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Trade and Tourism and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to provide for the Supplementary Appropriation for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ending December 31, 1994, be now read a second time.

The other House met on Wednesday, November 23, 1994 to debate the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 1994, which seeks the authority for further issue from the Consolidated Fund of \$86,671,515 for meeting expenditure for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ending December 31, 1994.

It would be recalled that by Act No. 29 of 1993, a sum of \$10,100,247,578 was appropriated by Parliament for the year ending December 31, 1994. Because of unforeseen or uncertain circumstances, it has become necessary to seek approval to increase that original appropriation by \$86,671,515, which would result in a revised appropriation of \$10,186,919,093.

The supplementary appropriation of \$86,671,515 as detailed in the Schedule to the Bill is as follows:-

Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister—\$33,871,515

Acquisition of Facilities from Trinidad Turf Club and Union Park Turf Club—3,871,515

Hon. Senators would recall that in the 1993 Supplementary Appropriation Bill, which was presented in November, 1993, an amount of \$7,500,000 was appropriated as part payment for the acquisition of the facilities of the Trinidad Turf Club and Union Park Turf Club.

For the information of this Senate, details of the purchase of the race clubs' facilities are as follows:

Cost of Assets

\$38,540,273.00

Less (i)	Part payment already mentioned	\$7,500,000.00
(ii)	Indebtedness of Clubs to Board of Inland Revenue	\$6,617,444.15
(iii)	Indebtedness of Arima Race Club to the Comptroller of	

Another item is a part payment of arrears owing to the University of the West Indies in the amount of \$30 million. In 1992, the Government took a decision to make annual allocations to liquidate those arrear. The exact amount to be allocated in any year was to be influenced by the financial circumstances of the Government and the university.

As at July 31, 1991 the reconciled arrears to the university was \$150.7 million. A small provision was made in the *1994 Estimates* to meet part of the arrears. This proved to be inadequate, as the university wrote the Government indicating that it was experiencing severe financial problems to the extent that it was unable to meet its operating expenditure. A sum of \$30 million was advanced from treasury deposits to meet this contingency, on the understanding that this amount would be retired. The sum for which approval is being sought in this Bill will facilitate this transaction.

Hon. Senators should note that Government's indebtedness to the University of the West Indies as at July 31, 1994, was estimated to be \$245.8 million. However, this sum is still being reconciled. Payments made in 1994 by Government towards the liquidation of the arrears totalled \$34 million.

Head 28: Ministry of Health, for the sum of \$3 million to provide for the purchase of pharmaceuticals and food at the institutions where the original appropriation proved to be inadequate, and the Ministry of Health was experiencing difficulties in meeting its obligation to creditors. Accordingly, it has become necessary to seek a supplementary provision of \$2 million to meet the cost of drugs and other drug-related materials and supplies and \$1 million for food at the institutions.

The supplementary provision of \$1 million being sought will be allocated as follows to clear outstanding bills to suppliers:

Port of Spain General Hospital	\$400,000
San Fernando General Hospital	\$250,000
St. Ann's Hospital	\$250,000
St. James Medical Complex	\$50,000
Sangre Grande County Hospital	\$50,000
	<hr/>
	\$1,000,000
	<hr/>

The country has always been clamouring for a better health-care service. In an effort to achieve this objective, the Government took a decision to decentralize the provision of health-care-services and establish regional health authorities. The regional health authorities will have responsibility for providing primary health care for all residents of their areas. They will meet this responsibility by a combination of:

- (i) directly-managed primary care services; and
- (ii) services purchased from private sector doctors and other health professionals.

They will be charged with demonstrating the best use of their primary-care resources, including meeting ministry's policies and targets for chronic disease prevention programmes.

Head 42: Ministry of Local Government for an amount of \$12.4 million. In its effort to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness in the local government bodies, Government took a decision to reduce employment levels among its daily-paid workers. The reduction of the levels of employment involves the mandatory separation of all daily-paid 60 years and over and the voluntary separation of those under 60 years under the Voluntary Separation Employment Programme.

This exercise was scheduled for completion by April 30, 1994. Provision was therefore made for the payment of wages up to that date. As a result of delays in the separation exercise, all the daily-paid workers were not separated by that time and consequently additional wages are required for the period ending December 31, 1994. The additional sum of \$12.4 million, for which approval is now being sought, will be allocated as follows:

City Corporations:

Port of Spain City Corporation	\$1,390,000
San Fernando City Corporation	\$1,340,000

Borough Corporations:

Arima Borough Corporation	\$700,000
Point Fortin Borough Corporation	\$300,000
Chaguanas Borough Corporation	\$300,000

Regional Corporations:

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Diego Martin	\$850,000
San Juan/Laventille	\$1,100,000
Tunapuna/Piarco	\$2,100,000
Sangre Grande	\$970,000
Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo	\$760,000
Mayaro/Rio Claro	\$900,000
Siparia	\$780,000
Penal/Debe	\$560,000
Princes Town	\$350,000
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	\$12,400,000
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Hon. Senators should note that the Government is always seeking to improve the operations of ministries and agencies generally. With specific reference to the Ministry of Local Government, a seminar was held on December 6, and 7, 1994 at which a number of relevant issues were discussed including:

- the role, functions and responsibilities of the Ministry of Local Government and the extent of autonomy of local government bodies;
- the appropriate type and number of local government bodies and the organizational structure required for those bodies;
- the method of discharging those functions and responsibilities to ensure higher levels of productivity; and
- funding requirements.

Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport, for \$17.4 million. The reason for the supplementary provision under the Ministry of Works and Transport is similar to that of the Ministry of Local Government. With a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of this ministry, a decision was taken to reduce the levels of daily-paid through mandatory and voluntary separation programmes. The exercise was not completed by the scheduled date, which again was April 30, 1994. As a result, additional wages in the sum of \$17.4 million have to be paid.

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As with the Ministry of Local Government, steps are being taken to improve the structure and functioning of the Ministry of Works and Transport. Towards this end a comprehensive management audit is being undertaken and the results of this audit will inform the future direction of the ministry.

Head 44: The Ministry of Public Utilities for \$20 million. Provisions were made in the estimates of the Water and Sewerage Authority on the basis of the authority's anticipated revenue. The authority was unable to meet its targeted revenue, as a result of which it experienced serious difficulties in funding its operational expenses and meeting outstanding commitments to its creditors. Based on the authority's revised projections, an additional sum of \$20 million will be required to meet operational expenditure to December 31, 1994.

It should be noted that efforts are in train to bring a private sector operator on stream by April 1, 1995. This operator is expected to bring initial working capital in the form of a loan to be guaranteed by Government. It is anticipated that the operator will bring about improvements to the services being provided to consumers which would result in increased revenues, and therefore, reduce the reliance on the Treasury. I wish to emphasize that the additional funds for which approval is being sought are to meet inescapable commitments which any responsible Government would, of course, honour.

In conclusion, I wish to remind hon. Senators, that first of all, it is extremely late, but more importantly, the sum of \$86,671,515 as contained in the Schedule to the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 1994 will increase the original appropriation of \$10,100,247,570 to \$10,186,919,085.

Mr. President I beg to move.

Question proposed.

9.20 p.m.

Mr. President: I need hardly remind Senators that the debate on a Supplementary Appropriation Bill is strictly confined to the matter or matters for which additional expenditure is required.

Sen. Wade Mark: Mr. President, I, myself would want to be guided by the lateness of the hour. I had initially intended to go for the entire period of my time allotted, but I would try my best, within the confines of our debate, to compress as much as possible my extensive observations on these matters before us.

I agree and I think that the object of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill is to authorize supplementary expenditure of the sum of \$86,671,515 for the service

of the year ending December 31, 1994 under the various heads as outlined by the hon. Minister.

We have made repeated efforts to get the hon. Minister of Finance, or his junior Minister, to provide this Senate with more details of whatever is brought before us. We have received a document that provides us only with figures. We have just learnt from the hon. Minister the justification—and he provided us with some details of the rationale—for these increased expenditures. But we are tired with false promises from this Government.

We feel that the time has long passed when crucial decisions taken by the Government in an effort to deal with what the Minister called uncertain expenditure and uncertain circumstances, would be brought to us as is the case this afternoon, without any advanced information, until we listen to the hon. Minister's explanations, did we know the reasons.

We want to thank the hon. Minister for attempting to elaborate on some of these heads of expenditure. We recognize—but the Government apparently has failed to recognize—the importance of this Parliament and the role that we must play in policing and supervising Government expenditure.

We have always argued on this side that we require much more detailed explanations on expenditures, particularly, those that run beyond the budgetary arrangements, or the approvals that would have been granted to the Government. Therefore, the question that we have been posing and the area that we have been seeking to get some support on, is the establishment of the committee system. It is necessary that we critically review Government's expenditure, particularly those that are approved in the annual Budget of our country.

In the absence of this sort of arrangement, we would need some further clarification and explanation by the hon. Minister, given what he has presented here this afternoon. Under Head 13—Office of the Prime Minister—we are informed by the hon. Minister that as a result of the acquisition of assets of the Trinidad Turf Club and the Union Park Turf Club we, the citizens, have been asked to make certain payments. Certain advances have been made amounting to approximately \$3.9 million. But the Minister has not given us sufficient clarification on the acquisition.

We understand that with the acquisition of these two clubs, we would free up the Queen's Park Savannah and people would have more leisure time and more pleasure time. He also went on to indicate that the Union Park arrangement would bring new facilities—and he gave us an outline of those facilities that the

Government intends to establish. However, he did not indicate to this House how long or when these facilities would come on stream, whether it be 1995, 1996, or over an extended period of time.

The question we would like to pose to the hon. Minister, through you, Mr. President is: Was this acquisition necessary in the first place? Ought we to have expanded the kind of moneys to acquire these turf clubs—which we understand are very profitable enterprises? With this ring of privatization and theology of liberalization we are asking the question: Why should the Government of Trinidad and Tobago get involved in the acquisition of the assets of the Trinidad Turf Club and the Union Park Turf Club? What is the real basis for this, Sir?

On question of purchasing these facilities, we do not know whose interest the Government is serving or promoting. We would like to find out from the hon. Minister why we should purchase these assets in a period of financial shortages, particularly when, because of financial shortages the PTSC has been virtually closed down. Yet we find money to acquire the Turf Club and the Union Park Turf Club.

We need some clarification from the hon. Minister. Why must taxpayers be prepared to expend some \$38.5 million to purchase these assets? What is the rationale? What is Government's priority insofar as the acquisition of these assets is concerned? Are there not more pressing priorities? We would like the hon. Minister to provide us with some answers to these questions.

We would also like the hon. Minister to let us know under this particular Head 13—Office of the Prime Minister—as it relates to the acquisition of these assets, for whose benefit these facilities are being purchased. Certainly not for school children who are being forced to travel by maxi-taxis, or the elderly who are languishing on a measly sum of \$350.00 per month. What is this acquisition about, Sir? We have not had sufficient explanation by the Minister.

9.30 p.m.

What is the connection between the big shots in our country and the PNM in this arrangement? Why are people being treated differently in our country? Why, on the one hand does, the PTSC have to be closed down because the Government cannot allocate funds there but, on the other hand, it is acquiring the assets of two privately run turf clubs in Trinidad and Tobago? Where is the Government's priority? In whose interest is the Government running the country and the national treasury?

These turf clubs, I understand, make much money but, according to the hon. Minister, they still owe the Inland Revenue Department some \$6.6 million. And no one is jailed! If a small man owes money to the Inland Revenue Department, all kinds of garnishee orders would be issued by the Inland Revenue Department to recover the money. Here, there are two rich turf clubs owing the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the taxpayers of this country some \$6.6 million, and there is not a whisper—no concern!

These are some of the areas we would like the Minister to clarify. Why did the Government allow this amount to accumulate to \$6.6 million? The hon. Minister has not explained to this Parliament how that sum arose. It could not have been an overnight accumulation, therefore, it had to be something accumulating over a period; yet, we have not been given any explanation by the hon. Minister.

With respect to the same Head 13, the Minister explained that the Arima Race Club is indebted to the Comptroller of Accounts in the sum of TT \$1.6 million. Mr. President, you know when one goes to the Comptroller of Accounts, one goes for a loan. We would like the hon. Minister to tell us what arrangement the Turf Club entered into in acquiring this \$1.6 million—or maybe more. We do not know.

We were told here this evening that there is an indebtedness to the Comptroller of Accounts amounting to \$1.6 million. Was the money loaned? We do not know. Why was it loaned? That is a private club. How could a private club have access to public money? These are matters on which we want clarification. It does not matter how late it is, we stand firm on the public side and public responsibility comes before private duties so far as we are concerned.

These are very serious matters. Is the Government not guilty of public misappropriation? What has happened? Has the Government miscalculated its responsibility to the society? Was this a mistake? What has happened? We do not view this expenditure for which the Government is seeking our approval as a Parliament, as justifiable in the given circumstances.

We do not support the manner and style of acquisition. We do not support the financial arrangements that were involved in this transaction. We hope that the hon. Minister can provide us with answers to some of those queries I have raised.

I could have gone into further detail but, as I said, I do not want to detain the Parliament too long on this matter, but I am certain that I have given the hon. Minister sufficient food for thought in terms of responding to our queries.

Let me deal with UWI—because that is also under Head 13—and the whole question of arrears, and the \$30 million that was released to UWI. We understand that the Minister of Finance has indicated that the Government owed UWI approximately \$245 million at the end of July, but, as he said, they are still trying to reconcile this sum. We try to understand more and more the role that this Government is playing in promoting tertiary education.

While, on the one hand, the Government talks about promoting tertiary education, on the other hand, it continues to starve UWI of vital oxygen. The sum of \$245 million being owed to the University of the West Indies and the Government has released only a paltry \$30 million; it has acquired the assets of these rich turfite, but the Government cannot finance UWI! Where is the Government's priority? I am not being acrimonious this evening, I am dealing with the facts, and I would like the hon. Minister to indicate to us what is the Government's priority.

Mr. President, you would know that, as a Parliament, we have the responsibility to supervise expenditure. We want to determine whether we are getting value for our money. We want to know how our moneys are being expended—whether it is by UWI, the Ministry of Health or whatever ministry or government agency—we want to get some information. We have not had these explanations.

UWI, as you know, is in trouble, but we need to hear from the Minister what is taking place at UWI as well; whether he is satisfied that the funds we are releasing to that university as a taxpaying population are being properly expended; whether we are getting value for our money. That is what we are about here. We have to analyze these things very carefully. Value for money! Not "Valley," you know; value! We want to know if we are getting our worth in this regard.

The Government is seeking approval for \$30 million which, we understand, has already been released. So, this is a rubber-stamp arrangement. After the Government has done all its expenditures, it now comes to the Parliament at the eleventh hour to get our approval. We had the same experience with T&TEC and BWIA—agreements are signed their agreements and then the Government comes here to get approval. We are a rubber stamp, and we have no way of determining whether the Parliament ought to release these funds or not. What is the purpose of this exercise? It is a total waste of time.

Mr. President, I am sure you are bored with these exercises. It is a ritual, a monologue—every time we come here we go through the same experience, we

have to ask almost the same questions and yet we get no positive responses. Sometimes we ask ourselves whether we are just hitting our heads against a concrete wall. What is the sense? You have been here, you have listened, you know that I have raised these points repeatedly; yet, the Government does not pay attention to what we on this side of the Senate have to say. It does not! I have to raise these points because it must be recorded in *Hansard*—the record of our Parliament—that the Opposition always queried and the Government always refused to deal with our legitimate concerns.

9.40. p.m.

If we go to the Ministry of Health, Head 28, and listen to what the minister is saying, we believe that is a clear case of ineptitude on the part of the Government. It is poor financial planning. We would assume that any budgetary allocation being provided to any ministry—in this instance the Ministry of Health—must require a clinical and scientific assessment of the needs and requirements of that ministry. If such an analysis is executed one would then appropriate moneys to deal with those requirements and needs, but we have a “vaps” Government.

This is a “vaps” regime, but we are talking about health and we cannot play “vaps” with health. The Government is not really clinically analyzing its own allocations, so every year it has to come back here to get more funds.

As you know, Sir, the economic recession in our country has left in its wake a trail of sick, destitute and poorly attended citizens, and, therefore the turnover at the health institutions has increased. This is why I am saying that it is poor financially planning. What explains the fact that the Government could not have anticipated the expenditures for which they are now seeking approval, when they know that their policy has resulted in a sick population?

People are sick and destitute and most people go to the hospitals because they do not have the funds to go the private nursing homes. So this was a predictable expenditure. I cannot see the justification for this oversight on the part of the health planners—this expenditure could have been anticipated.

This new allocation is for things like pharmaceuticals, whereas \$12 million of essential drugs was dumped and nobody was reprimanded or disciplined! But they come back here for \$3 million from the consolidated fund, which they have already released, and they are seeking our approval. We need clarification of these matters.

You know that we are committed to accountability and transparency and we want these concepts to have real meaning, hence the urgency of our repeated calls

for the establishment of a parliamentary committee system. We have to ask the questions as parliamentarians, because as keepers of the public purse, we are the keepers of the public interest—the Opposition, not the Government.

Therefore, we want to find out from the Government whether these hospitals are being run efficiently and effectively. We should like to know whether there are monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that there is efficiency and a greater reduction in waste. If we had efficiency at our health centres and hospitals, no \$12 million worth of vital and essential drugs could have been dumped or, would have been allowed to expire.

We need value for our money. No food at the hospitals for the sick, no drugs at the hospitals for the sick, no beds, no bed-sheets. Prescriptions—I have had the experience where I took my “Mums” to the hospital and she had to get a prescription because she has an eye complaint. I had to take the prescription from the doctor because he told me there were no pharmaceuticals available. So I am paying taxes, but I have to go into my pocket and go to the private pharmacies to buy vital drugs for my mother!

That kind of thing is taking place every single day in Trinidad and Tobago and they are still asking for more money, yet the Minister of Public Administration, is supposed to be dealing with efficiency and efficacy in the delivery of services but things are going on as usual, “business as usual.” It is very sad, But I must say that corruption is rampant at these health institutions and we cannot escape from that reality.

When I speak, sometimes people feel I am dealing with personalities. I do not deal with personalities, I deal with programmes, measures and policies. Personalities are incidental. Whether one is black, white, yellow, green, or pink and I feel that one is abusing one’s authority or involved in corruption, I will level that person. I will assault that person. I will attack that person. It does not matter who that person is once he or she is involved in corrupt activities.

I am saying that at the health institutions in this country there is widespread corruption, and the Government needs to do something about it to safeguard our money. If there was no corruption, my mother would have been able to get pharmaceuticals at the hospital and I would not have to go and dig into my pocket to buy pharmaceuticals for here. How many of our mothers’ fathers, sons and daughters have experienced that same dilemma at our hospitals! I think these are some of the issues in the area of wealth we would like to bring out and try to get some clarification on.

I think that it is also necessary for the Minister to note that trained nurses are still being underpaid and what I would call “grossly exploited” by the Ministry of Health. Doctors are still being denied snacks at these institutions.

Mr. President: I do not think that is relating to the items of additional expenditure.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, we have an expenditure that deals with things like food at institutions; supplies and services, drugs and related materials. People have to deliver these things. It is the nurses and doctors who have to deliver—one cannot separate them, but because of time, I would not press.

If you would allow me, sir, I would go on to Head 42, dealing with the Ministry of Local Government, and the additional expenditure of TT \$12.4 million which the Government is seeking. The hon. Minister, who seems to be punch drunk with my personality at times, has to tell us here this evening why the Government is retrenching so many daily-rated employees, through its programme of separation.

The Minister indicated to us that this money had to deal with voluntary separation and clearly retirement. That is the basis for this allocation—they had to provide people with more wages because they had anticipated getting rid of thousands of workers by April, 1994, but their plans backfired and they could not get rid of these workers. Therefore, they had to come to this Parliament to seek approval for additional expenditure for certain commitments in terms of wages.

We must ask questions on this side: Is there any justification for this early retirement plan that is taking place? Would the work of the Local Government authority not suffer as a result of these retrenchments and large-scale separations in which this regime is engaged? Is the Minister convinced that the Ministry of Local Government is overstaffed? Has the Government done the kind of work to arrive at that conclusion, or is it a question of arithmetical balance? Is it just balancing books in undue haste to be transformed from an active player in development to a night watchman?

9.50 p.m.

What is guiding this Government’s thinking? We would like to know whether the Ministry is over-staffed. The Minister must tell us that. The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, and whatever—all kinds of things—divestment and sell-out—this Minister is on record as describing daily-rated workers in this country as lazy and unproductive

Mr. Valley: Mr. President, the Member is misrepresenting—I do not even know if he is misrepresenting—I do not even know if he is misrepresenting; I have never used words like that. I ask him kindly to withdraw those statements attributed to me.

Sen. W. Mark: It is in the *Hansard* record where this Minister attacked local government employees and he told this Parliament that his commitment is to get rid of permanent local government daily-rated employees and replace them with contract people. He said that! The reason, he was justifying, was that he could get more production from those people than from the permanent workers. The Minister went on to indicate in that contribution—I can get it from *Hansard*—he spoke about workers who went to work at five or six o'clock in the morning and by eight o'clock they had left. “What kind of productivity you were getting out of these workers?” He said that.

Mr. Valley: Mr. President, I would say again tonight, that that is so; they come at five and leave at six-thirty, but the Senator is attributing to me certain words.. He is saying that in this House I said that these workers were lazy and, whatever. I am saying I never used those words in this House or anywhere else. I am asking him most kindly to withdraw those words.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, with your guidance, if it would please him, I would withdraw those remarks, but what I would put on the record is that the implication of his statement as it related to daily-rated workers, led me to the conclusion that he was attacking and assaulting those workers, and describing them, not in terms of his direct words, but the implication could have been drawn from his statements. I would not pursue that matter, but the record would show. That is why they went to his constituency to attack him! That is why the NUGFW went into Diego Martin Central to deal with him

Mr. Valley: They were welcome.

Sen. W. Mark: They were welcome? Do you think they went there for joke, Mr. President? It was because of his assault on the workers Valley—Valley of death!

He has said on record here that he prefers to deal with contract workers. And that is in the *Hansard* record. Let him deny that as well.

We are asking the question: Are local government workers being separated whilst workers employed in the URP are being employed? More moneys are being allocated to URP and less money to local government. I do not want to get into

that because, as you know, that is not the subject matter here. All I can say is that we need to understand that this Government is attempting to destroy local government. This Government is committed to the destruction of local government! The first phase of the assault and slaughter against poor people in that area of the economy came in 1994, and they are coming back in 1995. Do not doubt it, they are coming, because they want to get rid of permanent daily-paid workers.

Therefore, we are arguing on this side and we are saying to the minister that he is strangling local government. I guess that is the way the PNM goes about completing their job; they have to get the job done and they are doing it.

What we would like the hon. Minister to tell us here this evening is what the objectives of local government are. These are things that we need to analyze carefully as a Parliament. If the Government is on a mission to destroy, it must tell this Parliament what is the real vision, the real objective.

If we go to Head 43 which deals with the Ministry of Works and Transport, it is a similar story—slaughter; retrench' separate, early retirement. Whatever name you cal it, it comes down to the same thing—it is retrenchment of workers. When the Government ought to be maintaining employment in this country, they are reducing it. This Government is creating unemployment in the country! It is an active promoter of unemployment!

The nonsense which took place at local government under the previous Head I mentioned is the same nonsense that took place under the Ministry of Works and Transport. Absolutely no vision! They are sending people home under 60, 50, but drains are still overflowing, still to be cleared. This is the Ministry of Works and Transport—it is over-staffed. It wants to get rid of daily-rated workers but drains are still clogged. Whenever it rains, it floods.

So we ask the question: why would this Government seek to retrench workers when there are so many problems plaguing our country, our economy and our communities? It is ideology! They cannot escape from it. This Government has drifted to the right. I believe that Minister Valley is more ultra-right than the Prime Minister of this country. I know the Prime Minister is a right-winger, but I know that this gentleman here is a garage salesman! He is a dangerous man!

It is the arithmetical approach to the whole process of development that irks me! Public expenditure must be cut at all costs! That is Minister Valley's approach—divest or die!

The real issue is the role of local government and we would like the hon. Minister to address this. What is the role of the local government in the process of development? I think he needs to clear the air on these matters. We are not clear on it.

Mr. Valley: That is obvious.

Sen. W. Mark: We want to know the duties, functions and responsibilities of local government. Not only local government, but the Government. Is it to merely balance the books in order to perform the role of night watchman, as I mentioned earlier?

If we had all the information before this debate began, my contribution would have been 15 minutes. The problem that we have in our Parliament is that all we get every year for a Supplementary Bill is “Head 13—Office of the Prime Minister; sub-head—04; Transfers; subsidies.” We get no information, “Minister of Information and Propaganda”—none! So what do they want us to do? I must be on my feet. I do not like to be long, but they force me, sir.

[Off the Record]

If I may go on to the last area dealing with Head 44—Public Utilities. The Government is seeking a supplementary appropriation tallying to \$20 million for WASA. But we know that WASA is in crisis. WASA, as you know from its mission statement, is supposed to provide the population with an adequate, reliable, potable supply of water to the people. It is to effectively collect, treat and dispose of waste water in our country. WASA is supposed to promote conservation and effectively manage the nation’s water resources.

But when one looks at WASA today, those things are not being done. We have to accept that WASA's failure is a reflection of the PNM's mismanagement and corruption, and we cannot escape this reality.

10.00 p.m.

The reason WASA is in trouble today and we have to provide it with \$20 million—as we heard earlier on that the Government is prepared to spend \$400 million of taxpayers money to upgrade WASA to give it to a company called Bi Water of England, or some white personality; a foreigner the Government will bring here to take charge.

Mr. Valley: Do you have something against white people?

Sen. W. Mark: No, I have a problem with ex-slaves who have not been fully liberated. I have a problem with that colonial mind-set! I have a problem with

that! *[Interruption]* I will not deal with that. I will deal with the Minister on the hustings. I am dealing with a very important matter and I would like him to remain quiet, otherwise I would quote Standing Order 39!

I want to indicate that as far as we on this side are concerned, political interference in the management of WASA is what has shaken and sunk this public utility. We cannot escape from it.

To support my point, in terms of WASA there is a Public Utilities Commission Report of December, 1992. On page 9—

Mr. President: Senator, I will repeat what I said. A debate on a Supplementary Appropriation Bill is confined to the matter or matters for which additional expenditure is required.

Sen. W. Mark: Yes, Sir.

Mr. President: It seems to me that you are dealing with a matter of policy for which no additional expenditure is required.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, if I may engage your attention for a second. If we are parliamentarians, and we are being asked to approve \$20 million, and we do not have any proper explanations coming from the Minister, as a Parliament we need to query issues. What I am simply attempting to do is show that waste is the basis for the kind of crisis that is taking place.

This \$20 million we are being asked to approve today is not necessary. I am saying that, as a Parliament, we have to scrutinize. We are to police the people's business. The Government has to explain to us why it wants this extra \$20 million! We must query it because it is not justifiable!

This is how I am developing my argument. It is not to get into policy matters. It is a question of trying to establish my responsibility as a parliamentarian to scrutinize and plod this Government to provide the necessary information to enable us to do our duty effectively so that the people could feel proud of our presence in this Parliament.

Mr. President, I would take about two minutes more and then wind up. I hope you will bear with me.

Perhaps when it comes to the question of WASA and its sale, and the Government comes to this Parliament with the Bill, I would be able to get into greater detail on this matter. For the time being, we would like to say that it is political interference which lies at the bottom of WASA's problems today.

This Public Utilities Commission Report on page 9 states that collection of outstanding rates has seldom been enforced because of a combination of broad policies and ministerial directions. Here it is that the Government is seeking approval for \$20 million for WASA and they cannot even collect outstanding arrears.

The reason they cannot is that when WASA goes to disconnect people's water, this Minister and other Government Ministers direct WASA not to do so. When the arrears continue and WASA falls into trouble, what happens? We have to come and approve \$20 million in terms of additional money.

Mr. President: For what?

Sen. W. Mark: For the Water and Sewerage Authority.

Mr. President: For what?

Sen. W. Mark: This is what the Minister has to tell us.

Mr. President: For someone who does not have that information—

Sen. W. Mark: For alum, Sir. The Minister says to buy alum for water, as an example. *[Interruption]* Did the Minister not say so?

Mr. President, I know it is late and I would like to wind-up my contribution. I did not want to go my full time and I really would not do so. Mr. President, you know me a long time now, and you know I am here a very long time now; and I will be here for a long time to come.

The fact of the matter is that I thought it my duty to raise these questions, so that the Minister could understand our concerns on the Opposition bench insofar as these expenditures are concerned and these additional sums that are being requested.

Mr. President, I am sorry if I detained you and my fellow colleagues unnecessarily, but for the record we must have our conscience very clear so that when we leave here, our position would have been placed on record.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Just for the record, you did not detain me, but I got the impression from our conversation that you were a bit hungry. It looks as though you are trying to prove a point to me about empty—*[Laughter]*

Sen. Hydar Ali: Mr. President, I just want to make one or two comments. My understanding is that the allocation of the arrears to the University of the West

Indies is \$34 million, made up of \$28 million towards the arrears and \$6 million to the Mount Hope subsidy. That is the point I made in my contribution to the Budget debate.

I was wondering whether the item number has changed also, because in the *Draft Estimates of 1995* the arrears come under sub-item 16, whereas I see here it is sub-item 17.

Those are the two comments I wanted to make, Mr. President.

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. President, I must confess that I find it amazing that an individual who faced the people and was rejected, and who got into the Parliament via the back door, so to speak, can lecture us on the rights of the citizen and representation of the people.

Sen. Hosein: Mr. President, on a point of order. I really cannot allow that statement to go into the record of the Parliament unchallenged. I do not think the Senator got through any back door. I am not aware that we have a front or a back door of the Senate. I think the Minister should withdraw that statement.

Mr. President: The point of order is sustained. The Senator was appointed by His Excellency on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition in accordance with the Constitution of the country.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, I was merely making the point that having faced the election, and having lost—

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, you have ruled on the matter and the Minister is actually challenging your authority! *[Interruption]* But the President has ruled on the matter! The Minister is out of place!

Mr. President: Senator, the Minister is not challenging the ruling. Continue, Mr. Minister.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, I was merely making the point that the Senator has no legitimacy in attempting to speak on behalf of the people.

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, I would like the hon. Minister to withdraw his statement. I am not here through illegal means. I was appointed legally by the Constitution and His Excellency! Why is the Minister challenging my appointment?

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, you are quite correct. All I am saying is that the Senator was not—

Mr. President: Senator, the point of order was raised by Sen. Hosein. I ruled and the matter is finished. Would the Minister proceed.

10.10 p.m.

Hon. K. Valley: Yes, Mr. President, to deal quickly with some of the issues raised by Senators. The first one is the issue of accountability. The agreement in the other place is that we are going to establish these committees and we are really waiting on the Chief Whip in consultation with the Attorney General to deal with the guidelines with respect to those committees. We are as eager to have those committees as the Senator appears to be. That is not an issue. We have said that on a number of occasions; if we could just get down to the work we would have those committees.

The other issue is that the hon. Senator wanted to know when Union Park and Queen's Park will be ready for use by the beneficiaries. Let me assure the Senator that with respect to Queen's Park, I know that, as a fact, that is in for 1995. They should start work there and I am assured that with Union Park, efforts will be made to have work started there as quickly as possible. The Senator asked in whose interest, arguing that perhaps we had no right to purchase these assets.

Let me just make the point that leisure is as important as work, and one has to provide healthy alternatives especially for our young people. One just has to visualize or appreciate the change that came to Port of Spain with the Brian Lara Promenade to understand how important a revitalized Queen's Park or Union Park could be for our people. On the other side, of course, the racing industry can be a growth industry if we can structure it properly, and by buying those assets and centralizing racing, one is providing the structure for growth in the racing industry. The debt to the Board of Inland Revenue of \$6.6 million, initially, was repaid; the arrears arose out of the collection when approved betting was increased sometime in 1984, I am informed, and the clubs had some difficulty in making the payments. Therefore, that is an old arrears situation that is now being written off against the indebtedness of the club.

Similarly, with respect to the indebtedness to the Comptroller of Accounts this dates back to the 1970s. It is not only a race club—Dominica owed us from the 1970s; Guyana and Antigua—everybody. In a time of plenty, loans were provided to various institutions, and this is being dealt with at this time by a write-off of the credit to the club. The Senator was also concerned about the fact that the \$30 million to the university was already given and that we were coming here to rubber stamp.

Let me make the point that that was done legally. It was provided via treasury deposits and the Member here, so he may as well read the document—the Constitution provides at section 113 that:

- (3). "If in respect of any financial year it is found—
- (b) that any moneys have been expended for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated for the purpose by the Appropriation Act or for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated by the Act;

a supplementary estimate showing the sums required or spent shall be laid before the House of Representatives and the heads of any such expenditure shall be included in a Supplementary Appropriation Bill."

That is what has happened, and perhaps, that answers also why really only the figures are supplied to Senators, because as a fact, in the Lower House one is aware there is the Finance Committee where all information is provided.

And you were correct—the Senator belongs to a party with Members in the other place and if he wants that information, given the ease with which he can access information that ought to be confidential, given that this information is available at the Leader of the Opposition's Office or from any of his colleagues downstairs, one would assume that he would have been able to get it with facility. Perhaps, it is easier for him to get "sneaky" matters; I do not know.

The other issue, the local government VSEP. Let me just say that the VSEP was by agreement with the union. It was not a compulsory plan. The Minister in charge of Public Administration met with the unions; they agreed to reduce the retirement age from age 65 to 60 and to offer those persons under 60, who want to go, a voluntary plan. That was done. I shall not go into the issue of the productivity of daily-paid employees. I think we should note the point made by Sen. Dr. St. Cyr that we ought to pay more attention, as we move forward, to production rather than simply employment. The Government is interested in productivity, not in providing jobs for persons to work for an hour or an hour and a half.

Objectives of local government: Just two days ago December 6 and 7, we had this seminar, and perhaps, the Minister of Public Administration can inform the Senator when next such a seminar will be held so that he could attend.

Sen. Hosein: I take the point the Minister is making that the Senate Minority Leader can get some information from the other House. How does he explain the

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information getting to the Independents? Year after year we have made this point. It would be very good if some notes could be attached. I think it would help everybody, rather than come here and haggle over that.

Hon. K. Valley: I am sure, Mr. President, as Leader of the other place, if that request is made I am sure that can be done. That is not a problem.

I think I have dealt with the issues raised in five minutes. I did not exceed an hour. With respect to Sen. Hydar Ali's issue, I do not know. He was extremely short so I could not look at my figures. I think that the \$34 million is separate and apart from the \$30 million.

Sen. Ali: I was saying that the \$34 million is made up of \$28 million towards the arrears and \$6 million towards the Mount Hope subsidy for students.

Hon. K. Valley: I do not think that is what it is. Looking at the figures, and I am pinch-hitting, but the information I have—Payments made in 1994 by Government towards the liquidation of the debt, \$34 million. What is being provided is \$30 million not \$34 million. I would just have to say honestly, I do not know. I would have to check that.

Mr. President with those few words, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 63, I beg to move that the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 1994 not be committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Question put and agreed to.

.Question put and agreed to. That the Bill be now read the third time.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed .

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister responsible for Public Administration and Public Information (Sen. The Hon. Gordon Draper): Mr. President, I feel I speak on behalf of the entire Senate when I ask that we express our appreciation to the staff of the Parliament, and *Hansard* in particular, for the work they have performed over these past few days. I wish to thank them.

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I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, December 12, 1994 at 10.00 a.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 10.21 p.m.