

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, July 11, 1995***SENATE***Tuesday, July 11, 1995*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

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

Mr. President: Hon Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. Capildeo from sittings of the Senate for the period July 19 to July 26, as he will be out of the country.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have been advised that His Excellency the President has appointed Mr. Sankar Mahabirsingh a temporary Senator with effect from July 10, 1995 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Sen. Russell Huggins.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sen. Sankar Mahabirsingh took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

OPUS DEI PRELATURE (INC'N) BILL

Bill for the incorporation of The Opus Dei Prelature (Trinidad and Tobago) and matters connected therewith, brought from the House of Representatives [*Sen. Michael Mansoor*]; read the first time.

PAPERS LAID

1. Audited accounts and financial statements of the Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the year ended December 31, 1994. [*The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Chaguaramas Development Authority for the year ended December 31, 1993. [*Sen. Dr. The Hon. L. Saith*]
3. Audited accounts and financial statements of the Trinidad Nitrogen Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 1993. [*Sen. Dr. The Hon. L. Saith*]

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION
Accounts of State Enterprises
(Examination by PA(E)C)

35. Sen. Everard Dean asked the Minister of Finance:

Would the Minister state what mechanisms have been made to facilitate the submission to Parliament of the accounts of state enterprises which have been audited by an auditor other than the Auditor General, and the examination of those accounts by the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee referred to in the Auditor General's Report (Page 676 subsection 10:07) for the year ended December 31, 1993?

The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. President, since September 1992, except in cases where it is mandatory to appoint as auditor the Auditor General, state enterprises have been given the option of any firm of accountants recognized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago to appoint an auditor.

This option is exercised by the shareholders at the annual general meeting. At the same time, the Minister of Finance was authorized by Cabinet to cause to be laid in Parliament the annual audited accounts of state enterprises in which the Minister of Finance has a 25 per cent or more shareholding.

Section 119(8) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago states:

"The Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee shall consider and report to the House of Representatives on—

- (a) the audited accounts, balance sheets and other financial statements of all enterprises that are owned or controlled by or on behalf of the State."

For companies whose audits have been conducted by auditors other than the Auditor General, the Investments Division of the Ministry of Finance submits copies of their financial statements and auditor's report to the Clerk of the House who completes arrangements for laying these accounts before Parliament.

The House of Representatives refers the accounts to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee for consideration and reporting in accordance with section 119 (8) of the Constitution.

Sen. Dean: Is that contradictory to the provisions of section 116(3) of the Constitution where the report should be submitted by the Auditor General?

Oral Answer to Question

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

Hon. K. Valley: Mr. President, the answer to the question is no. Section 116 of the Constitution talks about the establishment of the office and functions of the Auditor General. Section 119 talks about the Public Accounts Committee and what ought to be laid before the Public Accounts Committee, and we are in accordance with that section.

Sen. Dean: Mr. President, with the greatest respect, the Auditor General's Report—

Mr. President: Senator this is question time. You cannot argue the case. If you need more information you would have to put it in the form of a question.

Sen. Dean: Thank you, Sir. I am so guided.

NATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY (VESTING) BILL

Bill to vest the assets of the Board of Industrial Training and the Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality Training Institute in the National Training Agency Limited, to repeal the Industrial Training Act, Chap. 39:54, and to provide for related matters [*The Minister of Planning and Development*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate. [*Sen. Dr. The Hon. L. Saith*]

Question put and agreed to.

1.40 p.m.

SUGAR INDUSTRY CONTROL BOARD (REPEAL) BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley): Mr. President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to repeal the Sugar Industry Control Board Act Chap. 63:03, be now read a second time.

This has become necessary as a tidying up exercise. It is not a fundamental problem. At this time in Trinidad and Tobago there exists a Sugar Industry Welfare Control Board which came into being in 1966 under Act No.14 of 1966.

As you may recall Sir, in 1966 the sugar industry in Trinidad and Tobago comprised a number of independent private companies. At the time it was the view that there needed to be a central co-ordinating and representing agency to

Sugar Industry Control Board (Repeal) Bill
[DR. THE HON. K. ROWLEY]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

deal with the enhancement of operations in the sugar industry as a whole. That was the genesis of the Sugar Industry Control Board.

However, by 1975, the vast majority of these private sugar companies had found themselves in serious financial and operational difficulties, and the state intervened to bail out cane farmers and the sugar cane industry—bought out all these failed private businesses and created one company which is known today as Caroni (1975) Limited. By and large that is the general picture. Orange Grove Limited was a separate state company which legally was not part of Caroni (1975) Limited. Strictly speaking, Caroni (1975) Limited represents an amalgamation of all the private sugar interests, which eventually became a state-run company.

The state then took on the responsibility from central administration, and from the national Treasury and other support from the state machinery, provided to the sugar industry the assistance which the Sugar Industry Control Board was envisaged to provide to the industry in 1966. Therefore, a certain measure of redundancy was attaching to the Sugar Industry Control Board. Over the years the Board became more and more ineffectual in meeting that original mandate of 1966.

However, it remained as an institution, and in 1987 the Government was attracted to this situation and decided to look at it. During 1987-1990, this business matter was subjected to the analysis of a committee appointed by the Cabinet at the time. Recommendations were made to the then Ministry of Planning. All along, the bottom line as far as those recommendations went was that there was no real further role for the Sugar Industry Control Board.

Recommendations were made then that the board be wound up and the necessary cleaning up be done. There were some differences of opinion as to how this ought to have been done. It was passed back to the Ministry of Planning to carry out the Cabinet directive and to comment on it. It went back and forth. The end result is that the agreed position of winding up the agency was not effected.

When the present administration came into office, meeting this situation and wanting to get a complete picture of the situation, we too sought to examine the situation in its entirety. A committee was appointed in July 1994 and supported the positions of the previous analyses. Therefore the present Cabinet took the decision to have the Attorney General draft this piece of legislation to wind up the Sugar Industry Control Board. It has now come to Parliament having fallen in line with the legislative package.

If I may go through the clauses of this Bill, I want to draw your attention to clause 3 which is seeking to have the effect of repealing the Act.

Clause 4 seeks to empower the Minister of Finance together with members of the team of officials appointed by Cabinet to expedite the disposal of the assets of the Sugar Industry Control Board, to undertake certain duties with respect to expediting the winding up of the affairs of the board, and to require the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources to lay a copy of the report of the dissolution of the board before both Houses of Parliament.

I mentioned a moment ago that a certain amount of redundancy had attached over the years to the mandate of the board, but the board had a secretary in place and some assets. Insofar as we are talking about winding it up, this Bill seeks to treat with the disposal of those assets. I can tell you that the assets in terms of cash are of the order of approximately \$400,000 on which Caroni Limited has laid a claim for works done for and on behalf of the board.

There is also a point of view from some members of the Cane Farmers' Association that some of those moneys should be used to improve some of the access roads. The board also owns a couple of roads in certain areas, some of which we expect would pass into the regional corporations. Basically those are the assets.

I think there was the Norman Girwar scale which was destroyed by fire many years ago, but in the books it is recorded as an asset of this agency. It is the proper and appropriate disposal of these items that this Bill seeks to deal with and to report back to Parliament as to exactly what is happening in these matters.

Clause 5 would provide validation of all acts done by the Chairman on or after January 1, 1987 because in the bureaucratic maze that I outlined a moment ago, two things have happened. The Chairman had remained in office to continue the operations, small as they might have been, but we are asking to validate actions of the Chairman retroactively.

In examining this agency, we also discovered that there was a requirement that the secretary should have been sanctioned in a certain way by the Minister at the time. That was not done. We are asking in clause 6 to validate the appointment of the secretary and all acts done by the secretary after April 23, 1986. It is a cleaning up Bill. It is not an earth shattering piece of legislation.

As a matter of fact there are small items of liability to be discharged by the board which cannot be now discharged. My information is that the account of

Sugar Industry Control Board (Repeal) Bill
[DR. THE HON. K. ROWLEY]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

cash to which I referred earlier on is frozen. On the passage of this legislation we will then be able to thaw out that account to treat with the disposal of the remnants of the Norman Girwar scale, tidy up the books, dispose of whatever assets are in the small kitty and report to Parliament. The Sugar Industry Control Board would cease to exist and the interest of the sugar industry, as has been the case since 1975, would continue to remain with the state under Caroni (1975) Limited and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.

Sen. Ali: I wonder if the Minister would throw some light on the project mentioned on page 5, clause 4 (1) (d) in which there is talk about a project that would benefit the cane farmers in the event there is a surplus in the disposal of their assets.

Dr. The Hon. K. Rowley: Mr. President, I mentioned briefly that there is a small amount of assets. How those assets are disposed of—Caroni (1975) Limited did work for the Control Board. The board has a bill to pay which Caroni are open to negotiating even though they lay a claim to all of what is there.

1.50 p.m.

On the other hand, there are the cane farmers who believe that some project with respect to road improvement, some of the cane hauling areas or any similar project might benefit them. So, as we seek to dispose of the assets, if it is found that some of those moneys can be properly used to improve a road or a drain, that is the project we are talking about. It is not a specific project. We are opening a way to assist cane farmers to use some portion of that money directly in their service insofar as we are able so to do. In short, it may be that all the moneys will not go to Caroni in settlement of the Caroni claim. If we go that way, then what little is left can be put to some project.

Question proposed.

Sen. Surendranath Capildeo: Mr. President, in our life there is nothing as bitter as sugar in Trinidad and Tobago. We have a continuing legacy of the sweetness of cane being mired in the muck of rank exploitation and corruption, inhuman working conditions, crass state indifference, bureaucratic bunglings and political ineptitude of the highest order.

In a country which is rooted in the furrows of the cane fields, we have failed our people abysmally in not correcting the historical wrong. If ever there was an industry which we should have rescued and made palatable, it is the sugar industry. For all of us, without exception, came to live here because of cane.

But in keeping with our preoccupation with nonsense, childish triviality and infantile pranks, we leave the plantation system of the colonial days intact and we indulge in our version of republican democracy by removing dragons from the top of the Red House and attempting to remove Speakers otherwise. We investigate exclusivity in Chaguaramas and continue with that sort of puerile behaviour.

Mr. President, in addition to the Bill before us, there are four other existing laws relating to the Sugar Industry. There is the Production of Cane Act, the Sugar Industry Special Funds Act, the sugar industry Labour Welfare Committee (Inc'n) Act and the Cane Farmers Rehabilitation Board Act. A perusal of these pieces of legislation would show that for some 18 to 20 years, the legislative framework of sugar has not been changed. So, once again, a golden opportunity to revise our laws and to bring the industry into the 21st century has been lost.

In fact, in 1978 Prof. John Spence—I wish he were here—submitted a report in which he said that these laws were no longer reflective of the conditions which exist today. For example, the Production of Cane Act makes provision for a class of cane growers called sub-contractors. Such a class no longer exists, but the law has not been amended. It calls for the yearly quantity of cane sold by farmers to be changed. Again, no amendment was made to the law. There is provision in the Act for the establishment of a cane farming arbitration board. There is no arbitration board and no amendment to the law. Absolutely nothing has been done. I can go on and on.

Let us look at the Bill closely. It deals with a 30-year old piece of legislation which has never been fully implemented. Let us begin with section 9 of the Act.

"The functions of the Board shall be such as the Minister may from time to time assign to it and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, include—"

I would like to reduce the debate to as short a time as possible [*Interruption*] I would like to get on with the public holidays debate. You will not put me off course.

And here are the listed functions:

- "(d) issuing licences to cane-weighers;
- (e) establishing and maintaining a register of cane-farmers;
- (f) advising on the exercise of the powers in relation to the fixing of quotas under the Sugar Quotas Act;
- (i) prescribing the standard to which canes must conform ..."

Sugar Industry Control Board (Repeal) Bill
[SEN. CAPILDEO]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

There are large parts of the Act itself, the parent Act, which have not been implemented after 30 years.

We have heard complaints from the farmers that different standards apply to cane farmers—and Sen. Hydar Ali is well aware of that—as opposed to the large company. There is one rule for them and another for the poor farmer.

The hon. Minister referred to a Cabinet committee appointed in 1987. I think it was a Mr. John Rankin who chaired that committee. What has happened to the report of that committee? We were told that the committee made several recommendations, the bottom line of which was that the Act should be repealed. The end result was that the farmers were effectively sidelined in determining what was known as the NPQ, the Negotiated Price Quota. So that the previous administration, having studied the Act and appointed a Cabinet committee, did nothing about the Act, save to sideline the farmers from a voice in the price of cane.

2.00 p.m.

What is the position today now that this Bill is seeking to repeal the Act? Will there be an alternative statutory authority to take over the functions of the board? Or will the formula used to resurface roads in the Ministry of Works today be implemented? That is to say, a set of fly-by-night companies surfacing overnight to service what is being done by this board and having little millionaires in the tradition of O'Halloran and Prevatt surface.

What has happened to the tripartite report which impacts directly on this board? What has happened to the recommendations? Why have we not heard about it? How are the interests of the farmers going to be secured once their board is abolished? There are millions of questions which arise out of this to which there has been silence.

Let us look at the celebrated clause 4(1). This is an extraordinary clause. This is what is suggested in the Bill:

"Within six months of the date of the commencement of this Act the Divestment Secretariat of the Ministry..."

Fancy words, Mr. President. That means sell out:

"with responsibility for Finance (Investments) in conjunction with a Cabinet appointed Committee shall—

- (a) arrange for the appointment of the former auditors of the Board, Price Waterhouse, to prepare a statement of affairs of the Board..."

Again, I make the complaint. Here we are in this august Senate Chamber discussing a Bill pertaining to a board; the Bill refers to a proposed statement of affairs but we have no statement of affairs of any kind whatsoever to read in conjunction with the Bill. So we are speaking in the dark—again. We do not know what the assets of the board are. We are told that it is something in the region of \$400,000; really it is \$378,000. We do not know the contingent liabilities, we do not know anything at all about this board. We do not know what the cost of the preparation is going to be, but we are told that the board has:

- 4(b) "meet the cost of the preparation of a statement of affairs and any other work pertaining to the distribution of assets..."

We have no idea what that is about.

- (c) "apply assets of the Board to meet the debts and other commitments of the Board..."

We do not know the assets, we do not know the debts and the Senate is asked to vote on such a Bill. The farce of this Parliament does not extend to the debate in the other place; it extends here today.

Then the classic, clause 4(1)(d):

"in the event of a surplus of assets over liabilities, utilize such surplus in a project that would benefit the cane farmers;"

O God! them farmers would die from heart attack.

The hon. Minister referred to roads being built He is right. There are 14 major roads built with funds. What is going to happen? Will the board be compensated for the expenditure on the roads? Will that compensation be given to the farmers? Or will Caroni (1975) Limited merely take over the roads? What is going to happen? How is it going to work? We do not know.

We talk about compensating the cane farmers. In 1982, the price of cane was US \$42.40 per tonne. In 1994, the price was US \$21.35 per tonne. And we are going to compensate the cane farmers. We are being asked to discuss and sit almost in judgment on a Bill and we have no facts and no figures.

Then there was a committee appointed by Cabinet to look into the question of fraud in the affairs of Caroni (1975) Limited, and that committee, I understand,

Sugar Industry Control Board (Repeal) Bill
[SEN. CAPILDEO]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

said that Caroni (1975) Limited was consistently regarded as a den of corruption, abuse, misconduct, collusion and total disrepute. What has happened to that report?

In 1991, Caroni (1975) Limited appointed another tribunal to investigate fraud in the weighing of canes. Fraud was found to be rampant in the weighing of canes; what has happened? All we get is a Bill to repeal the Sugar Industry Control Board. This Bill is an indication of the slipshod, stupid, careless manner in which the state approaches sugar. For years the sugar-cane farmers have been crying out for a programme of land reform, but cane, like the rest of agriculture, is doomed in this country.

The hon. Minister referred to another report in which I am very interested and I would ask him to kindly make it available to us. That report, I think—correct me if I am wrong, hon. Minister—says that a committee was set up some time last year and that report, more or less coincided with the report of 1987, with the understanding that the only way out was to repeal this Act. I would like to see that report to see what else is in it with respect to that Act.

When one is dealing with legislation of this nature, one cannot come to the Senate and deal with it in isolation, excluding all the other pieces of legislation and all the facts which would lead one to come to the conclusion that an Act which has been passed by this Parliament must be repealed. It is no wonder that John Public looks at this Parliament as a joke; as a place where fun and games take place.

Mr. President, the repealing of an Act is a very serious affair. It means removing from your statutes an Act which our predecessors thought important enough to put on our statutes. When the Government comes to do that, it must come justified and with all the information at its command. I say, Sir, that this Senate is bereft of any such information.

We come to the *creme de la creme*, clauses 5 and 6. Mr. President, I do not know if you have read these clauses. How could this Government expect anybody in his right mind to sit and say, yes, I agree with clauses 5 and 6. I will read clauses 5 and 6:

"5 Notwithstanding anything contained in any written law, it is declared that all acts and things done, purported to be done or omitted to be done by the Chairman of the Board on behalf of the Board on or after January 1, 1987..."

And we are in July 1995. We have had reports which I have referred to, which spell out that there have been corruption and mismanagement in the industry. The quote continues:

"under or in pursuance of the powers conferred by the repealed Act are deemed to have been lawfully and validly done or omitted to be done and are not invalid by reason only that the members of the Board resigned from the Board on January 1, 1987 and no legal proceedings or other action of any kind shall be entertained in respect of or in consequence of such acts and things."

2.10 p.m.

The Senate is being asked to pass law validating things which have been done from 1987 to 1995 and we do not know what they are. We do not even have a report which would tell us what is the position now with the board. We have absolutely nothing. We will be told to go to the Parliament Library and we will see annual statements filed. It is an insult to the intelligence of the Senate, Sir. Clause 6 which deals with the board is worse. It says:

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any written law, it is declared that the appointment of and all acts and things done, purported to be done or omitted to be done by the Secretary of the Board..."

Am I to validate what a secretary does and I do not know what has been done?

It goes on:

"are deemed to have been lawfully and validly done..."

I am being asked to retroactively validate what the secretary of a board has done from April 23, 1986 to July 11, 1995. The only way this kind of drafting can appear in our laws is if there is an appendix attached to this law which spells out what has been done by the board and what has been done by the secretary, so that we can go ahead and validate what has taken place. We are being asked to validate what we know not of. I have great difficulty in swallowing that. In fact, this is one case in which a secretary will be sitting in judgment in his own cause and a board will be sitting in judgment in its own cause, giving rights to people sitting in judgment in their own cause elsewhere. Agriculture, as I have said before, is doomed in a country in which its present leaders are interested only in gas, the production of which could come from the land or from within their own bowels.

I thank you, Sir.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley): Mr. President, I gather that there is some urgency to get on to other matters and, therefore, I would want to indulge in facilitating that process, so I would not take too much time in putting the bona fides of the state with respect to some of the comments made by the Senator. Clearly, the Senator has a way with words for his own entertainment, but when he speaks about crass state indifference he could not be talking about the sugar industry.

The intervention of the state in purchasing the assets of private farmers to bail out cane farmers and the sugar-cane industry can, by no stretch of the imagination, be termed crass, state indifference. Having acquired the estates, the state then proceeded to use substantial portions of national resources towards the sustenance of the sugar industry.

Across the world in small developing countries the sugar industry has been in difficulty for many a decade. In our own Caribbean region sugar industries have died, folded up. In Trinidad and Tobago sustenance is provided by the state. Today, when one talks about an industry which should have been rescued—to use the words of the last speaker—I would say that it was an industry which was rescued by state intervention. Had it not been for the state's intervention there is a very good chance that today Trinidad and Tobago would not have had a sugar industry.

Mr. President, I am glad that the Senator made reference to the tripartite team. The tripartite approach was an initiative of this Government, meant to further rescue the sugar industry, and I assure the Senator that the provisions of the tripartite team are alive and well and the industry today is in the best shape it has been in since 1975. It has never been in a better shape since it has been run by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Senator said that sugar cane is doomed. Let me assure him that that pessimism is totally unfounded. In fact, we are on the threshold of expansion of the sugar industry in Trinidad and Tobago. With respect to the tripartite, after proper dispassionate analysis, we had set the size of the industry in this country at 120,000 tonnes in terms of acreage, cane farmers and so forth. That was based on our local consumption and our export arrangements by way of the quotas that we had abroad.

Having taken that position in 1992, I am pleased to tell this Senate that this year Trinidad and Tobago, for the first time in a very long time, has been able to

export more than its quota, to take up shortfalls of other Caricom countries to the tune of almost 10,000 tonnes.

As a result of rescuing the industry and putting it in the position in which it is today; as a result of developments in Europe where Portugal has access to the European Community, making the Community's requirement for sugar larger, we are now in a position—if all goes well, and we are almost there in terms of international negotiations and agreements—to have an increase in our quota of the order of approximately another 10,000 tonnes, and that means approximately another 5,000 acres of cane, employment and economic activity.

Mr. President, as you would know, recently the Chancellor of Germany went to Poland signalling Germany's support for Poland's access to the EC. We anticipate that sometime in the not too distant future, if all goes well, if Poland accesses the EC, it will bring further enhancement to the ECs' requirement for sugar, and that might have an effect on Caroni (1975) Limited where we might have an increase in quota. As of now, we have moved the size of our industry up from 120,000 tonnes to 140,000 tonnes of raw sugar, and the prospect is that it could go even higher.

Quite contrary to the view expressed that the sugar industry in Trinidad and Tobago is dying, it is alive and well. However, there are a number of inefficiencies still existing in the industry and we are resolute in our commitment to remove those inefficiencies, not the least of which is overstaffing. We are proceeding to put the industry in a position—as we committed ourselves in 1992—to be viable and profitable and thereby guarantee its long-term sustainability. We are almost there; we are ahead of schedule with respect to our production targets.

As per the tripartite arrangement, we had anticipated the production of 112,000 tonnes in 1995. Last year we produced 127,000 tonnes as a result of extremely favourable weather conditions; this year we had the worst drought on record. Even so, we fell three per cent below the target of 120,000 tonnes. It is not correct to say that the industry is doomed or dying.

I could go on and on but I got the feeling that we would want to talk about other matters this evening and I think I have said enough. I hope to allay the worst fears of the Senator who made the comments a while ago.

Just one matter with respect to the validation. The Senator has made the point that we are being asked to validate the acts of the chairman and the secretary and we do not know what they have done. Let me just tell the Senator what they have done. I am short of bringing a diary here of the day-to-day activities.

Sugar Industry Control Board (Repeal) Bill
[DR. THE HON. K. ROWLEY]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

2.20 p.m

They carried out the normal mandate of a chairman and a secretary. The reason why those clauses are in there is for legal cover, since the appointments to these positions were not completed by way of actions taken. I mention the secretary, who should have been sanctioned by a Minister, and that sanction was not done. So now we are saying, legally, maintaining of the secretary was not properly sanctioned, but the actions of the secretary were the functions of any secretary.

In terms of lack of information, I know of no other information I could provide to the House other than that the secretary carried out secretarial duties as per the mandate of such a secretary. So even if this Senator had asked for information, other than normal secretarial duties, I would not have been in a position to provide that because we know of no act but, however, the legal cover for the assent to the offices is what this clause is about.

I want to end on the note that the legislation referred to including this one—the Senator mentioned two or three other pieces. I simply want to say, Mr. President, that for everything there is a season; this is the season of the economics of cane, those pieces of legislation are largely obsolete, and, in fact, on examination would be found to be warranting total repeal. We have gone past those things.

There is no case to be made for the legislative framework of sugar. One has to talk now of the economics of sugar and that is not in legislation; it is in the economics. If it makes economic sense, it will survive; if it does not, no legislation will save it, and in fact, Sir, as we move away from that, if you go to that package, you will see reference to quota of canes.

In 1995, we have just spent \$3.5 million on two items which I call core samplers— modern technology in today's sugar world, and to treat with buying cane on a quality rather than a quantity, basis. That is where we are at in the sugar industry in the world and we are modernizing the industry here, not by legislation but by the economics. We are doing this in keeping with the cane farmers through their organizations and the voice of the cane farmer; the interest of the cane farmer is being well served and protected by the environment of the Cane Farmers' Association. I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Senate in committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

Senate resumed.

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

PETROLEUM (AMDT.) BILL

Order for second reading read.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Barry Barnes): Mr. President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to amend the Petroleum Act, Chap. 62:01, be now read a second time.

Sir, the purpose of this amendment is quite straightforward. It is to give the Minister the authority to fix the price at which compressed natural gas can be retailed in Trinidad and Tobago. The parent Act governs petroleum operations of Trinidad and Tobago and covers both crude operations and natural gas operations. Within that Act there is section 31 which defines petroleum products and places upon the Minister, in consultation with the Minister of Finance, the obligation to fix the price at which petroleum products can be sold.

In 1969, CNG simply did not exist. It is a natural gas; it is not defined as a petroleum product so we now have the situation where it is being offered as an alternative motor fuel at the retail stations in Trinidad and Tobago, and, as I understand it, legally, the Minister who fixes the price of motor fuels does not in fact have the authority to fix the price of CNG, and this is what we are seeking to amend.

Without wishing to delay the Senate, Sir, perhaps I could take the opportunity just to update the Senate on the progress we have made in the introduction and development of CNG in Trinidad and Tobago as an alternative motor fuel.

Hon. Senators will remember that as part of the 1992 Budget, Government announced a programme authorizing NP to proceed with the installation of a number of CNG stations for the purpose of encouraging the use of compressed natural gas as an alternative motor fuel. Hon. Senators will also remember that at the commencement of that programme, there was in fact, one CNG station operating in Trinidad as a pilot project, and there were two stations that had been

Petroleum (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. THE HON. B. BARNES]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

constructed and ready as at August 31, 1991, but for administrative and operational reasons, had not been put into operation.

We authorised NP to proceed to install, at that time we had said, ten additional stations. We have to understand that it was a chicken and egg situation. At that time, as far as we knew, there were just 57 vehicles in Trinidad and Tobago that had been converted to CNG. To encourage conversion, we need to have the availability of the product first, so that people know they can get it, and after that we can get the conversions going.

The programme of installation had a few delays, but was largely completed by the end of 1993, and in fact, although we authorized NP to proceed with 10 stations—that would have been 10 plus 3 to give 13 stations in all. I genuinely believe that NP did not like the number 13 so they installed 11 additional stations and made it 14 in all. They did the 11 additional stations within the budget of \$11 million, so we had 14 CNG stations operating by the end of 1993.

Let me also explain that CNG was a new technology to Trinidad and Tobago, and there have been teething problems. There were things that needed to be done, such as instructing our licensing officers, who have the responsibility for inspection of the vehicles, to make them familiar with CNG equipment and its installation so that in inspecting the vehicles, they would have been able to know which installation passes, and which does not pass.

There was the need to familiarize service station operators and indeed eventually the general public. There was also the need to set clear CNG specific licensing regulations, which are finally enacted and published as Legal Notice No. 196, I think the date is October, 1994.

2.30 p.m.

I think that all of us saw, two weeks ago, that, in fact, we now have a fifteenth CNG station. Amoco, applying under the regulations for what was a consumer own-use outlet, wishing to convert their own vehicles and wishing to set up an installation within their compound, was persuaded instead to set it up just outside the compound so that it would extend the availability of CNG fuel to the general public.

I make the point that at Galeota where the station is, there is a cluster of oil service companies established there for the particular purpose of responding quickly to the exigencies of offshore oil operations. There are a number of vehicles there that are moving back and forth from San Fernando, and so forth,

and this CNG outlet set up now outside the fence and therefore able to serve the public, extends the range of CNG availability in Trinidad and Tobago. Certainly as we go on and we extend the natural gas transmission system, the possibility exists for further expansion of availability, perhaps into La Brea, and so forth.

I want just to say to this honourable Senate that as of the end of June 1995 we had moved from 57 vehicles converted at the start of the programme, to 2,517 vehicles.

We now have 15 CNG stations across Trinidad and Tobago; we now have five companies that are offering CNG vehicle conversion services, which have been inspected, and which have proper equipment; which have standardized equipment and are, indeed, strategically placed—Freeport, Claxton Bay, Port of Spain, Laventille, Chaguanas. The rate of conversions is proceeding slowly in a way, averaging about 70 vehicles a month; with a similar growth in CNG demand that is now 400 barrels a day on average out of a total of 11,000 barrels a day motor gasoline demand. I will merely say that in setting up the original programme, when the technical officers of the Ministry of Energy devised the programme, their own projection was that there would be 5,000 vehicle conversions at the end of a five-year period which would then require the commencement of a second phase, because at a 5,000-vehicle conversion, there would be a considerable back-up at the CNG stations and you would then need to extend the CNG network further. If we work on that basis—we are just about halfway there—so that the programme is continuing.

I will just also add that in looking at who has converted we see that is the taxi drivers, the van salesmen, the people who are doing the long haul, and indeed some Members of the Senate and the Parliament who have fairly long periods of driving. For a number of us the lack of stations close to where we live or work remains a disincentive.

Having said that, I do not know that there is very much more that I could add. It is a fairly straightforward amendment, merely authorizing the Minister, in consultation with the Minister of Finance, to be in a position to fix the price at which CNG can be sold at retail outlets in Trinidad and Tobago.

Sen. Dean: Mr. President, before the Minister takes his seat, would he tell the Senate whether he is aware that the station by Amoco, as he mentioned, has been given to a group of people to manage? Is the Minister aware of who those persons are?

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: I was there at the opening and I was told that it was the Amoco Employees Credit Union that has been authorized to manage it. In fact, I congratulated them on their initiative. I think it is a very good development.

Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh: May I make a query also? On the matter of the high cost of conversion kits, I would like to ask the hon. Minister two questions. The first is: Has he had any discussions with motor vehicle dealers to explore the possibility of having factory-installed conversion mechanisms in vehicles? The second question is: Has Government considered a waiver of the duty on these kits that are coming in from Argentina, Italy or Brazil? They are very costly, I understand, because of the duties imposed by Government.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: To take the first question first, we have not only searched among the motor car dealers; at the ministry we are making a number of contacts. There is, as far as we know, only one company in a very limited way that is, in fact, manufacturing vehicles with CNG tank and fuelling systems. That is on an experimental basis and for many reasons— left-hand drive etc—it is not really relevant in Trinidad and Tobago. So that is the first part of the equation. Such vehicles are simply not available where our people are purchasing vehicles.

The second part is, yes, some consideration was given to looking at the import duties. Quite frankly, we are caught in a double bind. Each installation that NP put in was \$1 million. The Amoco station, incidentally—and one understands why: we put in ours at existing gasoline stations; AMOCO started from scratch. Their published statement was \$2.4 million. If you want vehicle conversion, you set up a price to encourage conversions among people who are doing a particular mileage.

But if you reduce the cost to the level where somebody driving between here and the office would be wanting the conversion, then a considerable pressure would come to expand the CNG network. We have 210 gasoline stations, and if we had to put in a CNG station in each one, that is \$210 million, which we simply do not have. So the programme has been set in a way, and the prices have been set in a way so that the taxi drivers, the long distance drivers, etc., would be encouraged to convert in this first phase. When we come to the second phase where we have got a wider availability of gas—a greater extension of our transmission systems—then other considerations would apply. It is a phasing process, and that is the only answer I can give. It is a very long answer, incidentally.

Sen. Rooks: Mr. President, may I ask the Minister if they have been considering taxis putting in gas as against putting in diesel engines? Diesel engines are being put in right, left and centre and they are not being maintained. The fuel puts out vast quantities of black smoke when the engines are not looked after. But they are, as I understand it, better than gas for mileage as well as cost. I do not know what the Minister has on that.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: It has been brought to the attention of the Ministry of Energy that, in fact, what is happening is that there is now the importation of second-hand reconditioned diesels, which—apparently, because of the waivers on diesel engines for a different reason—are coming in at a relatively cheap rate. There is very little difference—I am speaking from memory—\$1.10 as against \$1.05 cents per litre between the price of CNG and diesel, and you are getting reconditioned diesels apparently creaming off some of this market. It has come to our attention. We are looking very hard to see what is going on there. For some of the reasons that Sen. Rooks has advanced, I think there may be a very real reason to do something about it. But time will tell.

Question proposed.

2.40 p.m.

Sen. Wade Mark: Mr. President, this Government is clearly on its deathbed. It is in the throes of a crisis and we are seeing manifestations in the presentations here today.

We have to recognize that this Government has absolutely no policy on energy. We are dealing with a Bill to amend the Petroleum Act in order to empower the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to fix the price of compressed natural gas.

I want to make it very clear that we have been looking at the Government's actions and activities in terms of its manifesto, its *Medium-Term Policy Framework* and its *Draft Energy Policy*, and we see that and there is absolutely no serious, co-ordinated activity in the area of energy. We see CNG as an element in Government's energy policy.

As I said, the Government does not have a clear policy on CNG. It does not have a policy on energy. We have a Green Paper that has been published since November, 1992—we are now in July, 1995—and like the Government, it is lying low. This paper has turned from green to grey. There has been no response, no discussion, no policy, and the Government would leave office very shortly without putting into effect its much vaunted policy document.

Petroleum (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. W. MARK]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

There is no standardized or co-ordinated pricing policy in this country for natural gas, as an example. We ask the hon. Minister: What are the real objectives of this new CNG pricing policy? We would like to know if it is designed to help the Government raise revenue. When CNG was low-keyed in Trinidad and Tobago, it was extremely cheap—even though, as the hon. Minister said, we had one or two CNG stations—at around \$0.66 or thereabout, and as soon as the Government constructed new stations and announced some kind of position in order to encourage people to get into CNG, it zoomed to over \$1.00. Today, in Trinidad and Tobago, CNG is sold at about \$1.05 per litre.

We would like to know, for instance—the price is reasonable at this time—as one Senator asked earlier, what attempts are being made by the Government to encourage the vehicle-owning population to convert their vehicles from the lead-filled gasoline used in Trinidad and Tobago, to the much cleaner, environment-friendly fuel called CNG. We are not seeing any signs of progress in that area. We are not seeing the Government taking any deliberate policy measures to encourage citizens. It is a big joke for the Minister to come and tell us that in 1991 we had 57 vehicles converted to CNG, and at the end of June we had 2,517 vehicles, and we have moved from one CNG gas station to 15 such stations.

Mr. President, you know that in Trinidad and Tobago we have over 200,000 cars on the road. Plenty vehicles.

Sen. Capildeo: Plenty Volvos.

Sen. W. Mark: Volvos, Troopers and all sorts of cars. Fellows are buying cars like they are going out of style. It is the first time I have seen, in the term of a government, Ministers buying two new vehicles in one term. It has never happened under any other government. These people are buying cars like they are going out of style.

The point I wish to make here is that if we continue as we are going, we would not be able to convert our vehicle-owning population until the 22nd century. If we are taking five years to convert 5,000 vehicles, virtually, when are we going to convert our vehicle-owning population to CNG?

In New Zealand, there is a progressive policy to convert those vehicles that are now lead-driven to CNG-driven. It is being accomplished with some degree of rapidity. Also, I understand that in the United States of America they have also given themselves a time frame—up to the year 2025 or thereabout—to at least convert their motor vehicle population to CNG, because apart from its being environmentally friendly, it is also a cheaper source of fuel.

Therefore, we believe that the Government has to recognize that there is the need for us to really speed up this process. Petrotrin is in so much trouble because of the fact that a large percentage of its crude oil has to be converted into local gasoline and diesoline instead of going on the export market.

One of the things we believe the Government needs to take into account—and the Minister of Energy probably was at the ministry at that time, or may be he had just left—is that in 1985 a policy document was prepared at the former Ministry of Petroleum and Mines. That document directed the then Chambers administration to engage in a mass conversion transportation arrangement whereby vehicles, particularly those in the public sector, would be converted from the lead-driven gasoline now used, to CNG.

We do not know what has happened to that document. What we do know is that nothing has been done by this regime to follow or implement that particular programme.

The Government just does not know what it is about with this question of the fixing of price. On the one hand it tells us that it is about freedom. It wants to promote a free market oriented economic society; it wants to liberalize and deregulate the economy, but whilst it is seeking to deregulate and liberalize the economy, on the other hand, the Minister is seeking again to have the authority to fix the price of CNG.

In the public utilities of our country, whether it is T&TEC or WASA, there are utility commissions established in an effort to regulate prices. The question here is: Why is the Minister still seeking the authority, in an age of liberalization? I do not agree with that, and I am saying this is where the Government is heading. Why can the Government not establish some regulatory mechanism to oversee the implementation of this particular policy, this question of fixing a price.

I do not understand it. The Government wants to have its cake and eat it at the same time. I do not understand what it is about. It talks about deregulation, yet it is seeking to control at the same time.

We believe that CNG is a very environment-friendly fuel and it ought to be encouraged. We think the Government is moving very slowly in converting, and in encouraging persons to convert their vehicles. Yes, there are difficulties. We know there are some difficulties in the process, but if the Government offers the necessary incentives to vehicle owners, we are of the view that the Government and the country can, in fact, save much vital foreign exchange in this land.

Petroleum (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. W. MARK]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

2.50 p.m.

Complaints are coming from the gas station owners that their CNG operation appears to be unprofitable. That is something that we need to look at as well. Some gas station owners have threatened to close down their operations because of the non-viability of this particular operation. If we are to encourage people to get involved in this exercise, there has to be a reasonable price that is offered so that they can have, not abnormal and super, but a reasonable return. That is an area I think the Government needs to address as well.

We have looked at the Government's *Medium-Term Policy Framework 1994 to 1996*. The Minister some time ago told us, that the establishment of the CNG station by Amoco at Point Galeota is not going to destabilize the monopoly that NP has today. But when we look at that document on page 56, we see that one of the objectives of this Government is to deregulate the distribution of petroleum products. It deals with principal strategies and measures planned for 1994 to 1996.

I was not surprised when I read in the newspapers—and the hon. Minister was there, in all smiles, cutting the ribbon to officially open Amoco's Compressed Natural Gas station at Point Galeota. I think, shortly, the Government will open up the stations to maybe, Mobil, Exxon, ESSO and Texaco. Petrotrin is appealing to get into this market as well, through its General Manager, Mr. Awang.

The *Guardian* of June 29, 1995 it is headlined "Amoco opens CNG Station at Galeota." The report states:

"Amoco Trinidad Oil Company Limited yesterday opened its own Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) station at Point Galeota.

The station which cost some US \$400,000 almost TT \$2.4 million and took 75 days to build, will be managed by the Amoco Employees Credit Union, which is a fund which will hire staff and manage the finances of the station.

Amoco will be responsible for the maintenance of the equipment at the station.

The station, located just outside the fence which marks the Amoco compound at Galeota Point, is a public station which will serve the fleets of vehicles as well as members of the public."

What we have witnessed in the area of CNG, for the first time in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, is that just as there is a monopoly, NGC being the sole buyer

of natural gas from a group of monopolies led by Amoco and now Enron and British Gas joining that group, since NP came into being there has been one agency responsible for the retailing of gasoline in Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has now broken that.

I am saying that it is not accidental. It should not take anybody by surprise, and in spite of what the Minister would attempt to say, it is part of the Government's *Medium-Term Policy Framework* to deregulate the distribution of petroleum products in Trinidad and Tobago. It is stated in this document that the Government is committed to introducing a market responsive pricing mechanism. It is also committed to the formation of a transparent pricing regime for the sale of natural gas and also the use of natural gas in transportation and in households.

This recent development involving the commissioning of this gas station by Amoco, which, I understand, is the first—in Egypt they were supposed to open a gas station, the first of its kind, but the Government of this country apparently beat the Egyptians to it and allowed this company to open its gas station in Trinidad and Tobago.

I would like to find out, and the Minister should tell us, whether, there is a deliberate policy of the Government of this country to destroy National Petroleum. Is the Government opening up the market whereby other competitors can now open their own CNG stations in Trinidad and Tobago, or maybe, their own gasoline stations? Can we now expect to have Exxon, Mobil, Standard and the rest of them coming to Trinidad and Tobago? It is going to deregulate that system. Let us know what is happening.

The Government should let us know if it wants to destroy and bury National Petroleum as an agency in this country. We find the Government's policy to be quite contradictory. That is why it is so confused today. It continues to bungle and blunder because it does not have a consistent policy. It wants to give the Minister the power to fix the price but, at the same time it tells people it is freeing up the economy. If it is freeing up the economy, it should do like the British.

When Margaret Thatcher privatized water and electricity, she established regulatory mechanisms, agencies and commissions to fix prices and to look after consumer standards. How can this Government tell people it is freeing up the economy and liberalizing? Our party does not agree with that policy. We are saying, for Heaven's sake, if the Government is going along that path, line or course, it should be consistent. We would like the hon. Minister to let us know if

Petroleum (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. W. MARK]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

it is the Government's intention to really promote CNG as an environmentally friendly fuel in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, let us look at the *Draft Energy Policy for Trinidad and Tobago* which was published in November 1992 in the form of a Green Paper on the question of CNG. Page 27, section 2, of this document is headed:

"Environmental Matters"

It says:

"The scope for conservation of the environment has widened to include not only the physical aspects but also the use of cleaner burning fuels. The latter has gained significant prominence with the enactment of the U.S. Clean Air Act and other planned programmes in Europe.

A programme must consider the scope for using the available alternative fuels to gasoline that are more environmentally acceptable. However because of the size of operations in the country a multiple fueling system cannot be economical.

A programme will also be formalized for the phasing down of lead as an octane enhancer in local gasoline.

CNG as an alternative fuel is also being promoted."

In this document the Government is seeking to establish the fact that CNG is an environmentally friendly fuel and, therefore, it should be promoted in a positive way. We are saying that the Government is moving very slowly on this question. It is not moving with the kind of urgency that is necessary to bring our country into line with serious environmental standards.

There is a cost overrun on the upgrade of the Petrotrin Refinery. Initially it was approximately US \$200 million. We understand it is now close to US \$300 million.

3.00 p.m.

As we understand it, that is supposed to reduce the lead content of gasoline so that the Government can now export fuel to the Americas. We are concerned about the extent to which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is serious about pursuing a policy to convert this motor vehicle population which is over 200,000, to the whole CNG chain. We need to get them on that particular train.

When one looks at the PNM manifesto and the matter of natural gas, one realizes that the Government gave a commitment to introduce a price regime for the purchase of natural gas. It will enact legislation for natural gas. All these things were also identified in the Green Paper. At this time, we do not have a natural gas Act nor a proper pricing policy for natural gas. Some people who come in here are able to get away with murder, raid this country, while the people of this country are punished because we do not have a natural gas Act nor pricing policy in this vital area of natural gas.

As you know, Trinidad and Tobago is now a natural gas economy. Oil is going out of existence. We have not struck oil since 1971 or 1972 in any appreciable quantity. Therefore, we are now more or less saddled with an economy in which it is predicted that in the next 10 years we would be out of crude oil. Trinidad and Tobago would be reverting from being an exporter of crude to an importer of crude. In the context of CNG there is need for the Government to look very positively at developing a serious natural gas policy, since natural gas is going to constitute the bedrock of the future of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago.

Sen. Rooks: Mr. President may I just give Sen. Mark a little information. When I joined the oil companies in 1945, my friends all told me I was a fool because there was only 15 years' supply of oil left and it would be gone. Today it is still 15 years off.

Sen. W. Mark: We can all be wrong at times. [*Laughter*] In the long run we would all be dead. I am sure about that one. The fact of the matter is, that is what the technical people are predicting. They can also be wrong. Maybe the Minister can tell us what the position is with oil discoveries and developments in our country.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: Read tomorrow's newspapers.

Sen. W. Mark: I do not want to read tomorrow's newspapers. I want the Minister to tell us here now as the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: No.

Sen. W. Mark: What is the extent of crude oil reserves in Trinidad and Tobago?

The fact of the matter is that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has not implemented this Green Paper because there is nothing to be implemented. The Government has sold out Iscott to Ispatt; Methanol Company to the Japanese and the Germans, and all our vital energy and petrochemical industries. This Green

Petroleum (Amdt.) Bill
[SEN. W. MARK]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

Paper on energy deals with the implementation of a gas policy, a natural gas Act, the conversion by transportation vehicles to CNG and the fuelling of natural gas to our homes. These things are not possible any longer because the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has virtually privatized, sold out and given away the entire vital energy sector. I am not surprised that this Green Paper on energy is a waste of time.

We on this side have a little difficulty in understanding the attempt of the Government, on the one hand, to provide the Minister with the authority to fix the price of CNG, and on the other hand telling us that it is going to introduce a market responsive price mechanism for energy and petroleum products. How is the Government going to introduce that particular responsive price mechanism, when at the same time the bureaucracy is still taking charge of the destiny of gas users in the country? We find it contradictory.

Maybe the hon. Minister could provide us with some clarification on these matters; let us know what is in store for the population in terms of crude oil production in the next 20 years; what the Government is doing about pricing policy for natural gas and what incentives it is offering the population to convert their vehicles to CNG. Once we are able to get clarification on these matters, we would have no difficulty in supporting a matter like what is before us—we need to have some fundamental clarification.

Thank you.

Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt: Mr. President, when the Minister had finished his presentation, I felt a bit confused and when Sen. Wade Mark ended his contribution I was even more confused—at a higher level. I think, I would go back to my original confusion. Perhaps the Minister can assist me.

I understand the point that the Minister made about the introduction of compressed natural gas as being something which is desirable for the country because it is environmentally clean, and that in 1991 or 1992 there was a big drive by the Government, that was greatly encouraged, for people to invest money in converting their vehicles. At the time quite a number of people did. It started off with 57 and it has grown ever since. I think the policy was a good one and one to be admired.

I would like to know from the Minister, at some time in his response, how many government vehicles were converted. I presume that Members of this Senate and those of the other place have also contributed towards cleaning up the environment by converting their vehicles.

While I admire the philosophy behind this, I did a little research over the last couple weeks; I tried to find out from people generally in the population what, in fact, were their experiences. The experiences as related to me were somewhat different from those the hon. Minister has outlined. While I realize that he was optimistic about the programmes which come out of his ministry, I wonder if he could investigate a little further.

3.10 p.m.

For example, the Minister has said that at present there are 15 operative CNG stations, but my information is that the original one at Claxton Bay was, in fact, closed down and that, of the two or three other stations that were within driving distance of the people in that area, there is usually only one working at any one time. The experience of people is that they have to wait for hours to get gas, which means line-ups with the usual Trinidadian street theatre, which consists of people making extremely uncomplimentary remarks about the Government, NP and anyone connected with them. These are the people who have taken the time and gone to the expense of converting their vehicles, and done so in good faith.

I am wondering whether or not there is a control mechanism? While I understand that the Minister is saying that they are making haste slowly in trying to introduce this because it is so expensive to install an entire station, it does seem to be discouraging people from converting their vehicles. This is not on the grounds of expense. I understand that the cost is something which is attractive.

But, if as has been stated earlier by Sen. Rooks, a person can convert very much more cheaply to diesel, which as far as I am concerned is a terrible pollutant, people will probably end up polluting the atmosphere instead of trying to clean it up, simply as a result of a lack of management of this "make haste slowly" process. I am quite concerned about this because I think that much good faith has been wasted. I do hope that the Minister will resolve some of my confusion in his winding-up.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Barry Barnes): Mr. President, perhaps I should start with the concerns of Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt because I understand those. There is a partial response.

Let us reflect on our own experience when we are buying motor fuel, and we can begin to see what the difficulty is. The fact is we have a service station network that we have all become accustomed to. There are 210 gasoline stations.

We are driving, we look at our tanks and we have half a tank of gasoline and there is a station at which there are four cars at the pump. We drive past because we are pretty sure that a little way down the road we will see another station that has only one car at the pump. If there is that kind of availability, a person is prepared to go with a quarter tank or a half tank. When there are only 14 CNG stations scattered across Trinidad and Tobago and a person gets to one of those stations, he wants to fill up to the brim because he is not too sure when he will get more of the product.

The reality of the CNG equipment is that a person can get 95 per cent filled in 3 minutes precisely, but if that person insists on filling up 100 per cent, that last 5 per cent will take 10 or 20 minutes because he has come up close to the maximum pressure in the last 5 per cent. What is happening in this present stage of the project is that there is a bit of a clog. I have gone down myself and seen this in operation. It is a function of how many CNG stations there are. At a cost of \$1.1 million for each CNG station. *[Interruption]* we started with only 57 cars; you really have to ask whether we can afford to put in 210 CNG installations for what at the present time is a total market of 2,517 cars.

Sen. Mark in his discourse said one thing that was significant, and he is quite correct. In the United States of America when they began converting to unleaded gas, they gave a five-year phase down and then extended it a further five years. It took them 10 years. Now they are talking about going to CNG, they are talking about the year 2025, but in Trinidad and Tobago, we wish to see that conversion—because there are only 210 stations—in two years. That cannot happen.

One hears a lot of talk about converting everybody to CNG, freeing up the gasoline to go to the export market and making great revenue. The fact is that until the Petrotrin Refinery upgrading is complete, what Petrotrin has is leaded gasoline. If one can find three countries in the world outside Colombia that uses leaded gasoline to which we can export, tell me about it and, above all, tell Petrotrin about it. There is no place to go.

The United States has converted to unleaded; Europe has converted to unleaded; Canada has converted to unleaded, and our refinery remains behind with leaded gasoline. So, one of the considerations is to leave room in the domestic market for some time to accommodate the leaded gasoline. These are some of the realities. It is not an academic exercise, a doctoral thesis. There is the reality of Trinidad and Tobago and the reality of the energy market of Trinidad and Tobago, and one had better know what one is doing.

Sen. W. Mark: May I enquire, as the Minister is on the question of Petrotrin, whether he can bring the Parliament up-to-date on the upgrade and the cost overruns? Is he happy with the present state of affairs of the Petrotrin upgrade?

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: Mr President, Sen. Wade Mark from time to time persecutes me with formal questions to the Minister, and I would be happy to entertain another one. I have not had one for several weeks.

The programme for CNG was carefully designed. I heard Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt say, among other things, that in 1992 there was considerable governmental activity encouraging people to convert. There was a very careful, controlled statement on where the stations would be. There was a very careful setting of the price. Of the 57 cars that were converted as a pilot project, 22 were owned by technicians of the Ministry of Energy who kept appropriate records, so that the Ministry of Energy was full of the data on the cost of mileage and of the difficulties and so forth.

3.20 p.m.

National Petroleum Marketing Company built two stations—one at the Caroussel San Fernando, and the other on Beetham Highway—which were completed on August 31, 1991, but they could not be opened because nobody could sell CNG at that price. So NP waited for nine months, until we adjusted the price and then NP opened them. One of the reasons for this Bill is precisely that there is need to have a relationship between the prices of CNG and gasoline to provide the incentive for conversion.

The Minister, as he is required by the Act to set a price for gasoline, must also at this stage have the similar authority to set the comparative price of CNG, to monitor it and to encourage that section of the motor-car population to convert. It is the taxis, the van salesmen and the people on the roads in Galeota who have found the real incentive to convert.

As I said, as the number of converted vehicles comes closer to 5,000, there is then going to be the considerable pressure to increase the number of CNG outlets; and the cost is not getting any less than \$1 million per CNG outlet.

It is for this reason—and I respond to Sen. Wade Mark—that AMOCO did not have any interest in selling to the public. They wanted to convert for their own vehicles and under the regulations they are entitled to do so. If one looks at the South-East Coast one would realize that there is no availability of CNG nor any prospect of an availability there in the foreseeable future. We said to AMOCO,

rather than build your CNG installation within the fence, you should put it outside the fence and extend the availability of CNG to the public. Similarly, as we get our gas going into La Brea we can put a CNG station there.

What Sen. Wade Mark did not tell this Senate is that the Chairman and Managing Director of National Petroleum was there at the opening of the AMOCO stations. They provided some real technical assistance to AMOCO in the selection of the equipment. National Petroleum themselves recognized that there was no way they would spend \$1.1 million at Galeota. In fact, in AMOCO's case it was \$2.4 million, since they had to start from scratch, down at the end of Galeota. When it comes up in La Brea it would be the same. Petrotrin also applied for a Consumer own use CNG Licence and the Minister suggested that if they wanted, they, too, might wish to consider putting it outside the fence. They are still trying to make up their minds about that one.

Overall. I have a real difficulty with Sen. Wade Mark's contribution. If I confine myself to talking about the Bill we have before us, then there is nothing to respond to. I heard about *Draft Energy Policy* and many other matters—which I am quite prepared to talk about. I also heard prophecies of death and dire destruction of the oil industry of Trinidad and Tobago. I would, however, ask the Senator to pay close attention to the newspapers over the next few days, because he might learn something. *[Interruption]* No.

The medium-term document expresses the direction in which the energy sector of Trinidad and Tobago—and I choose my words very carefully—must move. It is being pushed because it is essentially—I cannot stress it too much—an international business that we are in. The domestic petroleum demand of Trinidad and Tobago, at best, 17,000 barrels per day, cannot support our oil industry. What is moving us and what we need for our viability and survival is to respond to the international market place.

What we have to do in many ways, is to ensure that we get the timing right. Yes, we would move to domestic deregulation of prices, but, at the present time, we still have a system that is based on subsidies and levies. We still have a system in which there is considerable disparity between the price of gasoline and the price of diesel—and for good, sound historical reasons.

If one looks at the value of the two products—gasoline and diesel—in any real market place, one would recognize that it cannot continue. The question is, how does one move from here to the point at which one has to go without creating considerable disruptions and inefficiencies? Therefore, we move very deliberately and, above all, knowing what we are about.

May I say in this honourable Senate that, whatever else we may wish to say, this country is being very properly served by the technical people of the Ministry of Energy. If all of us here saw them at work and saw what they were doing, we would all be very proud of them indeed. They are professionals—I will say something else which, perhaps I should not say—and they stay and work within that ministry whilst colleagues who are working elsewhere are much better paid.

They growl about it sometimes, but they do so in the way that the Trinidadian growls, and they go past that and continue working. I am very pleased with and proud of them, and it is not 'Minister,' it is 'Ministry'. The CNG programme was developed by those young men and women. The oil exploration programme is being monitored by those men and women and one does not hear a peep out of them. I know Sen. Wade Mark has a problem with secrecy. *[Interruption]* They are not given to secrecy; they are given to silence. *[Interruption]*

Sen. W. Mark: Mr. President, could the hon. Minister indicate to this Senate if he has any information on the present state of the Green Paper? Where are we on that question? I raised it, I do not know if he could help us.

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: Another 10 minutes? Very well, Sir. I am following instructions.

I will answer in two ways. The Green Paper was published and the Minister of Energy received comments from 48 different organizations. The Ministry of Energy did its proper job and collated the comments.

3.30 p.m.

The document went before the Standing Committee on Energy who have their own views, but I will just make a personal statement. I had the obligation, as Minister, to read the comments that we got from all 48 organizations. If there is any human being that can reconcile the divergence of views into one document, it is certainly not I.

Without calling any names, I spoke to one of the parties involved in respect of the submissions of another party and I said if we call a consultation—as you want us to do—and we have to resolve these matters, and I book the Chaguaramas Convention Centre, how long should I book it for? The response I got was "for 15 years, because after 15 years those people will be dead and I will still be here."

In the meantime, we have to decide whether we want to spend 15 years down at the Chaguaramas Convention Centre trying to hammer out a draft energy policy, while Colombia is offering exploration blocks and PDVSA is moving to

secure an integrated position, and people are trying to come in to start new exploration and development efforts. We have to decide whether we want to sit down and talk for the next how many years, or we could sit down and get the job done.

The *Draft Energy Policy* has been there. Various people have submitted comments. There is a broad understanding, but unless the parties are prepared to come together and recognize that, rightly or wrongly, this country will have to continue to depend on its oil and gas industry for several years—I have heard Sen. Capildeo—we had better get it right, and move quickly. That is what we are trying to do.

I have said before that we need separate natural gas legislation and so forth. I heard Sen. Wade Mark say that we now have three monopolies on gas, namely, Amoco, Enron and British Gas. I had a difficulty with that. I know a monopoly is one, but I am prepared to accept that three is a monopoly. The real monopoly is the National Gas Company with the sole authority to purchase and sell natural gas in Trinidad and Tobago.

Even today, with everything else that we have done, the major gas off-takers can be counted on the fingers of two hands. We are still developing and I am saying that the present degree of complexity can, in fact, be regulated by one semi-efficient traffic policeman. I can pick up the telephone and call all those people—with the telephone system working—in the course of one hour.

We do not necessarily, at this stage, need the level of complexity and so forth, while we are putting things together, but, certainly, as we come through the next exploration round, as we go to La Brea and we get an LNG plant and we have more players and so forth, and we have a greater degree of complexity and volume in the business, it will have to come. It is a question of timing.

Mr. President, I do not want to take up too much of the Senate's time but if there is anybody in this Senate or anywhere else who really in his heart would say that this Government has not moved to revitalize the oil and gas industry of Trinidad and Tobago and, moreover, achieved a significant level of success in the time that it has been here; if anybody can say that with a clear conscience, then—

Sen. Barrack: The only person who has achieved in the Parliament is—

Sen. The Hon. B. Barnes: Absolute nonsense!

I do not really want to take much more of the Senate's time. This is a simple amendment to the Bill. We are on a programme of introducing, encouraging and

developing the use of CNG as an alternative motor fuel. We have priced it in a way to decrease the cost of fuel to anybody that is really on a long haul. I do not want to call names but there are Members of the Senate who are using CNG. CNG is a new technology. When we went out we found out that the people that were most advanced were the Canadians because they had been involved in it for 20 years. The United States of America itself had picked it up fairly recently. That is why they say it will take up to 20, 25 years.

For example, take Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt's point. Those two stations that were built in 1991 and opened came out of Hamworthy of Britain. I should not have said that as it is a prejudicial statement. We ran into reliability problems with them. By the time Hamworthy came back in 1993 and I started to talk to them and said that we were having these problems, they said, "Yes, we know all about it. That was our first generation equipment." Two years later they had their second generation equipment and all those things had been built in. But we had already spent \$1 million on each CNG station and we could not rip it out and take the second generation equipment.

We do not really want to rush out there and buy everything; we want to do it gradually. We have 227 gas stations; they were not built in three years. The gas station chain developed over 30 years. We are not going to get 210 CNG stations built in three, four or five years. That is the only way to go. All that I am saying is, yes, there were teething problems; yes, we understand what they are; yes, we know how to relieve them; yes, we are seeking to encourage. The programme was 5,000 vehicles in five years. If you start from the end of 1993 when the stations were put in and there are 2,517 vehicles converted, in that sense we are ahead of the game.

When Petrotrin's refinery upgrading takes place and we can genuinely start to say that the gasoline produced locally will be shipped abroad and earn foreign exchange, that is really the time to start accelerating the programme, but at the present time, one has to balance desire with practicality. The Senate has made me work very hard to get the additional obligation of having to set the price of CNG, too.

Mr. President, I think it is in the interest of the country and the industry for the amendment to be accepted. Therefore, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Petroleum (Amdt.) Bill

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Senate in committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

Senate resumed.

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

3.40 p.m.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith): Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate now consider item 4 under "Private Business," the continuation of the debate on the motion relating to the joint select committee report on public holidays.

Assent indicated.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Joint Select Committee Report

Adoption

[Third Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [June 13, 1995]:

Be it Resolved that this Senate adopt the report of the joint select committee appointed by the Senate and the House of Representatives to consider the entire question of public holidays and to report by March 31, 1995. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]

Sen. Surendranath Capildeo: Mr. President, we are witness to history being made in this Senate in this debate—emotional history. I want to congratulate Sen. Barbara Gray-Burke and Sen. Mejias on their history making contribution. I do not think in the Commonwealth parliamentary tradition that there has ever been such an occasion and it seems to me that at the rate at which this Parliament is going, that we are in the process of breaking many parliamentary traditions.

This report raises certain fundamental questions with respect to our existence as a nation state. It goes beyond the politics of appeasement and I would like in that respect, Sir, to quote from a book entitled *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East*, edited by Esman and Rabinovich, printed by Cornell University.

Because of the time constraint, I shall paraphrase some of the quotations, but if I had my way, I would read this book into the record.

Sir, this nation has been, is, and will always be subject to a living tension, a continuing negotiation, if you will, between culturally different groups and the larger society. We face a two-part perpetual question and here I begin to paraphrase this book and it is this:

- (a) In a democratic nation state what is the extent of cultural differences that can be tolerated consistent with the integrity of the larger body politic; and
- (b) How in the face of technological, economic, social and political change does a nation state operating under the rule of law and specifically under a written constitution cope with cultural pluralism?

This raises a hornet's nest of even more questions. How can pluralism most usefully be conceptualized and analyzed as an inherently conflictual relationship, characterized by the competitive struggle for power, prestige and material resources in which order is maintained by coercive domination or as patterns of interdependence sustained in large measure by consensus; each group making a contribution to the maintenance of the system and deriving significant if not equal benefits?

Our Constitution provides a clue to the answers to the very first questions which I posed and I quote from the Constitution, Sir I want to read it into the record because this is the instrument upon which we are founded and by which we are guided:

"Whereas the people of Trinidad and Tobago—

- (a) have affirmed that the nation of Trinidad and Tobago is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions, the dignity of the human person and the equal and inalienable rights with which all members of the human family are endowed by their Creator;...
- (c) have asserted their belief in a democratic society in which all persons may, to the extent of their capacity, play some part in the institutions of the national life and thus develop and maintain due respect for lawfully constituted authority;

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. CAPILDEO]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

- (d) recognise that men and institutions remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect for moral and spiritual values and the rule of law;"

The opening paragraphs of the Constitution particularly (a), (c) and (d) recognize that there are differences within our society, and make provisions for all persons, to the extent of their capacity, to play some part in the institution of national life. In fact, the joint select committee report itself—the majority report—in paragraph 8 goes further. Paragraph 8(4) on page 4 of the majority report expands the Constitution. It says;

"8.4 Your Committee was also of the view that public holidays could assist the society by affording citizens opportunities to pause and reflect, celebrate, or recreate themselves. They are also opportunities to recognise and celebrate the diversity of the Trinidad and Tobago society while at the same time promoting unity in diversity."

So that not only the Constitution recognizes it, but also the committee which sat and as reflected in the majority report, that we are a diverse society. Thereafter, Sir, and it is with a feeling of regret, tinged with shame that I have to declare that the majority report becomes an exercise in political cowardice.

3.50 p.m.

The majority report is a classic of bogus compromise. It tarnishes the brilliance of our parliamentary democracy with the brush of political opportunism at its worst. This majority report does a great disservice to the practice of honourable politics in this country. This sort of report is one of the reasons politics and politicians are looked upon with scorn and with contempt by the general public. You see, we refuse to face facts and we do not have the political courage to state what is the reality. It is political opportunism at its worst.

Here was a unique opportunity to look at our Constitution—(a), (c) and (d), the very first opening paragraphs of the Constitution—and to put life into the Constitution—real life. It was an opportunity to continue that great and glorious task of building a nation in unity from the beautiful diversity that we present to the world. But this majority report is reflective of weak minds and cowardly intellect. It does not dare confront the reality that is Trinidad and Tobago.

It would appear that the authors of the majority report were terrified of what they perceived to be a threat to the fundamental Judeo-Christian beliefs and practices and the existing capitalistic values which pervade our society.

That is one of the reasons you have this peculiar mind-boggling, "Alice-in-Wonderland" decision not to use the word, "Indian" before "Arrival Day." They did not have the courage or the conviction or the moral authority to be able to stand up in 1995 and tell this cosmopolitan country, "We are going to recognize Indian Arrival Day," because they think they will lose votes.

That is what tarnishes our Constitution. That is what puts the Constitution to shame, because the Constitution recognizes it and the Constitution is the Bible, the Qur'an and the Gita of this country put together.

But it gets "curiouser." There was a decision in the majority report to confine Lord Shango and the Shouter Spiritual Baptists to the status of an undefined public festival. Both the refusal to use the word, "Indian" and the confining of Lord Shango and the Baptists to public festivals are linked. The ideas are linked and you begin to understand the psyche of the people who wrote this report—gutless, spinless, absolute political cowards.

Let me illustrate to you how insulting it is to the Shango community and the Baptist community to confine and to consign them under the heading "Public Festival." It is a total and complete insult to these people. Just as I am an Indian and a citizen of this country, and a Hindu, the Baptists and the Orishas are citizens of this country and are entitled to their recognition. Because when you look at the definition of the words, "public festival"—and here I want to quote the 1979 edition of Black's Law Dictionary, the meaning of the word "public." It says:

"Pertaining to a state, nation or whole community. Proceeding from, relating to or affecting the whole body of people or an entire community open to all. Notorious, common to all or many. General. Open to a common use. Belonging to the people at large. Relating to or affecting the whole people of a state, nation or community. Not limited or restricted to any particular class of the community."

That is the meaning of the word, "public." The word, "festival" does not appear in Black's Dictionary, so you go to the nearest thing, the Oxford Dictionary. The Oxford Dictionary 1993 describes "festival" as:

"Of or befitting a feast or feast day."

So that when you marry the two words, "public festival" it is a feast or feast day for the general public. The insult could not be worse.

Our law, the Public Holidays and Festivals Act, Chap. 19:05, brings the fraud straight to the front and brings the insults to unbearable proportions. When the

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. CAPILDEO]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

people who decided to tell the Orishas and the Baptists, "We are not going to give you a public holiday; we are going to give you a—let me read into the record what they said.

4.00 p.m.

At page 7 of the report it states:

"15.3 Your Committee did not agree that these occasions should be public holidays. However, in recognition of the fact that these days are of great importance..."

This is where the intellectual dishonesty displayed in this language is shocking.

"Your committee did not agree that these occasions should be public holidays. However, in recognition of the fact that these days are of great importance and significance to the Orisha and Spiritual Baptist (Shouter) Movements in Trinidad and Tobago, your Committee agreed that March 30 should be observed as a 'Public Festival'."

It goes on:

"15.4 Your Committee was divided on the question of whether a public holiday should be proclaimed in honour of Lord Shango.

15.5 Your Committee, by majority decision, agreed that the birthdate of Lord Shango should be observed in Trinidad and Tobago as a 'Public Festival'.

15.6 In addition, your Committee was of the view that in respect of these days, mutually satisfactory arrangements could be agreed to between employer and employee for the observance."

The rank dishonesty. The rank, sheer, intellectual dishonesty of people who say in one breath that they recognize the great importance and significance of the Orisha and Shango but in that recognition they are going to confine them to a public festival. They also say, "Well, in the meantime, they are going to have to negotiate with their employers for mutually satisfactory arrangements to enjoy these public festivals." Total fraud! Total and complete fraud because when they wrote this, they had access to Chap. 19:05, an Act which is 123 years old.

Section 5 of this Act, under the subheading "Public Festivals" states:

"(1) For the purposes of this section, the President may, by Order, declare any day to be a day of Public Festival in Trinidad and Tobago and may

specify areas in which and conditions subject to which such public festivals may be celebrated."

I have already read into the record the definitions of the words "public" and "festival". It goes on:

"(2) The President may make regulations for the conduct and management of public festivals or any particular public festival and for the proper behaviour of persons and the preservation of the peace at such festivals;"

The President becomes immediately aware that the possibility exists at a public festival that you are going to have behaviour that is probably not acceptable to the civil law. It goes on:

"and, without prejudice to the generality of this provision, regulations made under this subsection may permit persons to celebrate such festivals in the streets and other public places with parades, processions, music and fireworks, and may permit them to throw specified substances at other persons, to appear masked or otherwise disguised and generally to celebrate the festivals in any manner that may be prescribed."

Mr. President, you do not have to be a legal genius or a QC to work out that what is being referred to here is carnival, mas, bacchanal. It goes on:

Sen. Dr. Saith: Phagwa.

Sen. S. Capildeo: Phagwa, Sir, is not carnival by any stretch of the imagination.

"(3) Regulations under subsection (2) may prohibit any person from having with him in any public place during the celebration of a public festival any specified article which in the opinion of the President may be used for causing injury to the person.

(4) Regulations made under subsection (2) may provide a penalty...not exceeding a fine of one thousand dollars and imprisonment for six months."

The Shangos and Orishas are given a public festival and if they step out of line, they are subject to a \$1,000 fine and imprisonment of up to six months.

Mr. President, who is the genius that came up with this idea? He could not possibly belong to this country. It goes on:

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. CAPILDEO]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

- "(5) Any person who appears in public masked or otherwise disguised except during a public festival at which he is authorised to do so...is liable to a fine of one thousand dollars and to imprisonment for six months."

I say again to you, Sir, that anybody with the slightest knowledge of the existence of this Act and the slightest knowledge of the meaning of the words "public festival" would realize right away, without any doubt, that celebration of the birthday of Lord Shango, the Lord of the Orishas; and the Baptist Movement, was being confined to carnival Monday and Tuesday.

Hon. Senators: No.

Sen. S. Capildeo: No? *[Interruption]* By calling it a public festival. This is where the intellectual dishonesty betrays you. By calling it a public festival, you have confined it to that.

Sen. Robinson-Regis: Mr. President, the Senator is being dishonest with the Parliament. He is clearly operating under a misconception. The Act clearly states—

Sen. S. Capildeo: With due respect to the Minister, is she on a point of order?

Sen. Robinson-Regis: Yes, Mr. President.

Sen. S. Capildeo: Can she state her point of order?

Mr. President: Senator, please state your point of order.

Sen. Robinson-Regis: Mr. President, the Senator is misleading the House and should desist from doing so.

Sen. S. Capildeo: Mr. President, with all due respect to the hon. Minister, that is why this report is as it is. When the words "public festival" are used, they have a meaning. I have already stated, and I would not repeat, the meaning of the word "public"; I would not repeat the meaning of the word "festival;" I would refer the Minister to the 123-year old Act which spells out what a public festival means and exactly what the President can do when he declares a day a public festival, and what operates on a day that is declared a public festival.

When the Shango and Orisha are told they are getting a public festival, this Act comes into play. Then, they are subject to all the penalties and fines, and:

- "(8) If during a specified festival any person has with him in any public place any article which, in the opinion of a member of the Police

Service, is likely to be used for causing injury to the person, such member of the Police Service, if he considers it in the interest of the safety of the public to do so, may, notwithstanding that such article does not fall within the class of articles specifically prohibited by regulations made under subsection (2), seize and take away such article."

So, if they are walking with a lota or taria, and the lota could be used to "lick dong" a man, take it away.

Let me come to the point, Sir. This is why I said this is emotional history. Few people know, and few people would recognize, that the people who want to keep the races apart in this country, and to have Indians and Africans fighting with one another; and to have the Hindus and Christians or Hindus and Baptists fighting—

Hon. Senators: That is what you are doing.

Sen. S. Capildeo: No, listen to it. Take it now and understand it! The affinity between the Baptist and Orisha faiths and the Hindu faith is closer than most people in this country realize—most of them—and this is where the bogusness of this report came from. This is where the opportunity to forge a nation was lost. Of course, there are Baptists who visit a Mandir—you do not go to a Mandir—you do know who you are.

4.10 p.m.

There are Ramayans every Saturday—you should have seen Baptists having dinner last night. Come tonight you will see them again.

Let me come back to the point—the affinity between these religions. They worship Mother Earth and they worship the elements in an almost identical manner—the rituals and the instruments that they use. *[Interruption]*

Mr. President: Last week there was a little peace and quiet.

Sen. S. Capildeo: I said it would be emotional, Sir.

Mr. President: Could we continue to observe the Standing Orders which require peace and quiet, for the sake of the *Hansard* Reporters.

Senators make use of the recorded speeches very often, and peace will ensure that the speeches are recorded accurately. Please continue.

Sen. S. Capildeo: I am tempted to say, Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. I was on a very important point of historical significance, in that I wanted to blow apart the theory that there is a gap between Indians and Africans with respect to religion

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. CAPILDEO]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

and culture. That is something that was exploited by our former masters and continues to be exploited by our bogus masters. I want to say, as I have said before, that the worship of Mother Earth which we refer to as Dharti Martyr in Hinduism, and the elements, are almost identical with the Orisha and Baptist faiths. The rituals and the performance, and the instruments used in the rituals are remarkable in their identity. They are almost one and the same.

As Hindus, we use a lotah so do our brothers and sisters of the Baptist and Orisha faiths; we use a deyah, likewise they do; we use a taria—and for the uninitiated and people who do not know, it is a brass tray; they use it too. We blow a conch shell, they do the same thing; we ring bells, they do it too; we have oils, they use that too; they use corn, rice, peas, we do so too. *[Interruption]* This is an example of the PNM braying first.

Mr. President, all of us know what is a jhandi. We use jhandi, that is the bamboo pole with the flag;—red, yellow, green, different colours—likewise do our brothers and sisters in the Baptist and Orisha faiths. I am not saying that these are confined only to Hindus, Baptists, and Orishas. These are common threads that run through most religions.

We use fasting, mourning and spiritual cleansing; and we use the act of baptism, they likewise. So that there is a commonality of purpose amongst the peoples, and that commonality was denied this nation by this totally and completely fraudulent report which failed to recognize the reality of Trinidad and Tobago.

I do not think that we shall ever have such an opportunity again to demonstrate to this beleaguered nation, which is being buffeted by political actions over which it has no control, and a nation which is plunging into the depths of despair because it sees no future here—everywhere you go people are asking, what next? And there was a glorious opportunity in this report on public holidays for this committee to come up with a report to weld this nation into one; to make unity in diversity, to create a country which all mankind would look at, as a glorious nation, with all people living in peace and harmony, practising their different faiths together and not so privately but nationally recognized by the state.

Mr. President, the fear of change, the fear of bucking the establishment; the fear of bucking the status quo, the fear of telling the people who are funding the party; the fear of the people who are the real Government of this country; the fear of the invisible government, was such that this majority report could come down

Public Holidays (JSC Report)

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

to this nonsense of scorning and saying, we are going to give the recognition of a public festival to the Shangos and Spiritual Baptists. And the thing goes further. The complete lack of credibility by refusing to use the word, "Indian" would send Sen. Dr. Saith back to Shakespeare because I am sure they taught him and Sen. Ainsley Mark literature.

I could almost see Sen. Dr. Saith going up there and hear him telling this committee Look, I, Lenny Khrishendath Saith am an Indian. Do I not have hands and organs? Do I not have dimensions, senses, affections? Do I not eat the same food? Am I not hurt with the same weapons? Am I not subject to the same diseases and healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter, as a Christian is?

And if you prick me, Krishendath Lenny Saith, an Indian, do I not bleed? If you tickle me do I not laugh? If you poison me do I not die? "(Beware! many people have died in the PNM.) "If you wrong me do I not seek revenge?" Do you see the danger of communal politics rearing its head because of the lack of courage and the lack of guts by a committee to recommend to this Government to call the day Indian Arrival Day?

Indians comprise fifty per cent of the population of this country and the Government is saying to them that it is ashamed to use the word, "Indian" *[Interruption]* Then, you have bogus statistics and I have bogus statistics; we do not know which are correct. Somewhere between the two. The crucial sentence that Shakespeare wrote, "and if you wrong me, shall I not seek revenge." Do you see the problems the Government is beginning to encourage in this country? It is encouraging division and perpetuating this colonial policy of keeping the races apart when there is everything to bring the races together.

4.20 p.m.

The Government had a unique opportunity and ditched it, threw it away, merely for political expediency. Once it gets into power, it does everything to stay in power and forgets the population. It even elected its Speaker and wants to throw her out now because she has already served her purpose.

Mr. President: Senator withdraw any reference to any matter in another place.

Sen. S. Capildeo: I withdraw absolutely all the references to Occah Seapaul who happens to be an Indian.

Mr. President: You did not mention the name—

Sen. S. Capildeo: I want to close now. Sen. Dr. Saith forgot Sen. Rahael. There has been absolutely no mention of the Lebanese community in this report. [Laughter] I consider that an act of great discrimination. I cannot understand this. Sen. Rahael as a typical PNM, tail-between-the-leg, gutless and silent would take the insult to his community. Not a single day for them! Not even a festival for them!

In all seriousness, this report should be consigned to the dustbin and another committee should be set up that would have the courage of its convictions to recommend to this country that we look at where our holidays originated. The dishonesty is total. The Government must get legal advice on feasts, festivals and religious holidays.

I quote Wharton's Law Lexicon 14th edition on feasts. You will see where our laws with respect to holidays have come from, and why this lack of courage not to confront this Christian civilization head on and relate it to our existence where there are Hindu, Muslim, Orisha, Shango, Confucianism, Baptist, Baha'i and the whole works.

"Feasts, anniversary days of rejoicing, either on a civil or religious occasion; opposed to fasts. Our feasts are either (1) *immovable*, such as Christmas-day, the Circumcision, Epiphany, Candlemas-day, Lady-day, All Saints and All Souls,...St. Peter, St. Thomas etc.: these are always celebrated on the same day of the year; or (2) *movable*, such as Easter,...Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, etc..."

It goes on to 1551.

"...directs certain days therein mentioned (being all Sundays,...printed in black letter in the Calendar...'to be kept hollie days and none other;"

From the 1550s where we inherited our laws, they are rooted in religious holidays. All the holidays that flowed therefrom had a religious bias and basis. In this country, we are saying look at us, move away from that and let us get our holidays to suit our people for our convenience and Republic.

Political cowardice is the order of the day. Political confusion is the order of the day. Political stupidity seems to be rampant in the People's National Movement.

Thank you.

4.25 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

4.55 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand: Mr. President, I have a feeling that nothing said in this debate will affect the contents of the report and the recommendations therein, so much of what I say is for future reference.

I want to begin by congratulating Senators Mejias and Gray-Burke on the passion, faith and cogency of their contributions to this debate. I also want to support Sen. Daly's argument that in the preparation of the report of the joint select committee an opportunity was lost to rethink the whole question of public holidays and the relationship of public holidays to the past, present and future of our society—what Sen. Capildeo might call "the realities of Trinidad and Tobago."

For this reason, I do not intend to agree or disagree explicitly with the institution, withdrawal or consolidation of any public holidays. My position is that the report of the joint select committee should be referred, if possible, back to the committee for deeper consideration and with guidelines as to the implications of the phrase "the entire question of public holidays."

I was particularly interested in Sen. Gray-Burke's implied argument that the granting of a holiday to mark the repeal of the Shouters' Prohibition Ordinance would be the granting of a holiday to mark the restoration of fundamental human rights. I was interested in it for the reason that what I refer to as—the 'holiday mentality' exists in this country. Many people feel that our democratic rights, our democratic possibilities, our possibilities of self-expression, have been eroded in the century and a half since emancipation.

I would like, as a kind of diversion, to begin with an encounter which took place earlier in this century between two politicians who are part of our history. The episode I am about to describe has a bearing upon my underlying theme, which is, "The loss of so many of our freedoms in modern society." My surface theme is not unconnected to it as I shall show. My surface theme is 'Holidays and the Holiday Mentality.' I am suggesting that the so-called freedom that is exhibited in our holiday attitude is merely a front for a sense of the lack of freedom to do and to be what we would like to do and be.

Many years ago, during the Second World War, there was a shouting match in the City Council Chamber between the Mayor of Port of Spain, Captain Cipriani; and Mr. Albert Gomes. Cipriani used to be the champion of the barefoot man, but he had become a supporter of the British administration, and the mayor had been

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

instructed by the colonial authorities to ban all meetings and speech making by ordinary people in Woodford Square.

Mr. Gomes, being at the beginning of his career, was therefore a champion of the people. He filed a motion with the Town Clerk asking the council to declare itself in favour of freedom of speech and the right of people to assemble. At the council meeting, the mayor, who was chairman, the equivalent of the Speaker, and who really ought not to have been presiding over a motion concerning his own actions, pronounced Mr. Gomes' motion out of order.

This did not stop Mr. Gomes from speaking on the motion in what he described as his most stentorian tones, and he refused steadfastly to shut up and take his seat. But Cipriani lost his cool and talking some nonsense about the power vested in him for the maintenance of law and order, instructed the police to eject Mr. Gomes from the Chamber. This is how Mr. Gomes described the action.

"Eight policemen converged upon me, the officer in charge pleading with me to withdraw and so spare them the necessity of having to remove me by force."

"I ain't moving" was not invented so recently after all. *[Laughter]*

"But I still refused to budge. I could see that they intended to carry out their instructions, so I slipped on to the floor and stretched myself out flat on my back."

Mr. Gomes weighed more than 300 pounds at the time. Every time they carried him out, he came back in and resumed his speech until the disgusted Captain Cipriani let him do as he pleased. The council voted in favour of Mr. Gomes's motion on freedom of speech and the right to assemble.

I have a feeling that the kinds of things that were being fought for there have a great bearing on holidays. As I have already declared, my subject is "Holidays and the Holiday Mentality" and I believe that our concern with getting as many holidays as possible is an index of a profound malaise that has far-reaching implications. We desperately need to construct a society in which the concept of leisure and what one does with leisure replace the mood of holiday, a society in which we cultivate a different and more creative attitude to ourselves and to our own time—the time that we do not have to spend at the workplace.

5.05 p.m.

Last Tuesday, Mr. President, I listened to the speeches of two occasional Senators.

Mr. President: Sen. Prof. Ramchand, I cannot have you referring to anybody as "occasional Senators," they are permanent Senators under the Constitution.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Mr. President, I meant by the phrase to refer to Senators specially appointed to take part in particular debates. Is there a term for such.

Mr. President: Senator, just for the record. All the Senators, except a few who are here as temporary Senators, are permanently appointed Senators. There may be people who would know how long that permanent appointment would last, but we have to accept it in accordance with the Constitution.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Thank you, Mr. President, I stand corrected, I was not quite aware of these matters.

I listened to Senators Mejias and Gray-Burke. One of them made the case for the creation of a public holiday to honour Lord Shango, supreme deity of the Orisha religion. The other Senator wanted a public holiday to commemorate the repeal of the Shouters' Prohibition Ordinance; a law passed in 1917 by the colonial authorities and their Trinidadian supporters to make it illegal for the Shouters to practise their religion.

The speeches were part of our debate on a motion to adopt the report of a committee that had been instructed in December, 1994 to consider the entire question of public holidays and to report by March 31, 1995. Three months, Mr. President, to report on the entire question.

To consider the entire question of public holidays involves many things. It involves, firstly, the relationship between public holidays and the nature and purpose of our society. It requires a discussion of the relationship between work and leisure and the place of public holidays in a society where we have a clear sense of the relationship between work and leisure.

In my view, the task was an impossible one in the given time frame. If you read the report—as I am sure you did, Mr. President—you would see that the committee barely scratched the surface. One would see that it is quite possible for someone who disagrees with the report to argue that the committee was really only trying to deal with the political question of how to keep everybody happy,

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

now that every creed and race must appear to get an equal place, if one expected them to vote in one's favour.

As I listened to Archbishop Mejias of the Orisha faith it struck me that the holiday for Lord Shango would be a religious holiday like Christmas and I wondered if it would go the way of all flesh like Christmas. I do not mind honouring Lord Shango but I do not want another Christmas. I do not even want the one we already have in the commercial, crass and economically opportunistic form that we have it.

In pointing to the repeal of the Shouters' Prohibition Ordinance of 1917, Sen. Gray-Burke was advocating a holiday to commemorate a successful political struggle, a defeat of a piece of colonial legislation, which was part of a vicious web of legislation that sought to continue slavery, in spite of abolition, by biting into the social, religious, cultural, personal and political freedoms of ordinary people and denying them the right to self-expression.

It should be noted that the politician involved in the repeal of the legislation was none other than the Albert Gomes I referred to earlier. He had been writing in *The Beacon* about the iniquity of the Shouters' Prohibition Ordinance since 1931. If we got a public holiday for the repeal of the Shouters' Prohibition Ordinance, it would be what one would have to call a political holiday. It would have the virtue of showing the close connection between religion, politics, culture and almost everything else in societies like ours.

This political holiday, in addition, would symbolize the overthrowing of colonial oppression. If we could show that it was a struggle initiated and maintained by the people, it would be a wonderful example for our age of true democratic rule. Whatever Gomes was or became—everybody knows that he became the 'Big-belly' referred to by the calypsonian:

'If you ask the people what party they voting, they shouting out PNM. The young, the old and all the little children shouting for PNM. The Government that we had before make this a corrupted land. So Big Belly you must take your grind, for your bad administration.

Mythical times. Whatever Gomes later became, he was in this instance led by the popular wish and popular will. He was able to succeed because he had behind him the endurance of those who kept alive, not only their faith, but also the determination that it should re-emerge into the light. If one wants to understand this better—and I was very happy to hear Sen. Daly making reference to it—one should read Earl Lovelace's very fine novel *The Wine of Astonishment*.

The committee charged with the task of looking at the entire question of holidays recommended that the two days we are talking about, should become not public holidays but public festivals. When I read this, Mr. President—not being versed in the law and the Constitution—I felt like reaching for a big stone, but instead I reached for my pocket dictionary. I looked up 'festival' and then I looked up 'holiday' and I could not see anything to suggest why one should get time off from work for a public holiday but not for a public festival. Neither could I understand why, in order to get time off for a public festival like Carnival, one had to call it a public holiday. Was this a clean-up act similar to the changing of pagan festivals into Christian holidays?

Today, Sen. Capildeo has shown how the unfortunate designation "public festival" brings the concessions granted to the two groups under regulations devised for dealing with carnival. Incidentally, I want to corroborate Sen. Capildeo's point concerning affinities between African and Indian religions. I do so in general and with reference to my experience in the teaching of literature.

5.15 p.m.

When I first introduced the study of African literature in English at the University of the West Indies, the Hindu students related immediately and spontaneously to the African religion and culture imbedded in that literature. But the students of African origin, I am sorry to say, took longer to come to terms with this, but one could understand it. As everyone knows, it is a matter of cultural history and imperial colonial denigration that the African religions were made illegal and driven underground.

So that even when these religions emerged to capture certain Christian forms, the Africanity is not generally recognized and young people of African origin still had an attitude of, "This has nothing to do with us; we are Christians". It has taken a long time for the denigration of African religions in our society to be reversed.

After looking up those two words "holiday" and "festival" in my small dictionary, I stopped listening to the debate because I realized what I wanted to say today and I needed to think about that. I felt it was necessary to consider the entire question of public holidays, and I had to start at the beginning which in my case is usually the compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, the one you have to read with a magnifying glass.

The earliest entries in this dictionary give two main senses of "holiday."

- i. A consecrated day, a religious festival. Now usually written Holy-Day.
- ii. A day on which ordinary occupations (of an individual or community) are suspended; a day of exemption or cessation from work; a day of festivity, recreation or amusement.

This notion of holiday with the two senses sometimes appeared as two words 'holy day', 'hally day', "Halig Day", or combined as "hollyday", "hallyday", "hallidaw", "hallydai" and so forth. But the early use implied that all holidays had a sacred component and a secular component. At first, the religious or sacred component predominated, but by the 50's the dictionary registers that the secular or entertainment side was threatening to take over. So in the early entries, say in 1225, of the *Ancrene Rewle*, a book which tells monks and nuns how and when to pray, we read

"Ine werkedawes, heihte and twenti pater nosters; in helidawes, forti;"

On holidays one has to pray more than on ordinary working days.

"1300, Cursor Mundi "Jesus went him for to plai with childer on an halidai;"

Jesus played. I am sure that he was not playing mas.

In 1481 one could have seen panic stepping in; it says;

"Goo to chirche, faste and kepe your halydayes."

Because the guy who was putting in this entry felt that people were keeping their holidays but they were not going to church and fasting; so the secular was creeping in.

By 1577:

"Doo you not knowe that it is a holliday, a day to dance in, and make merry at the Ale house?"

And this from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar when common people are found idling on the streets and they are being upbraided,

"Hence: home you idle creatures, get you home: Is this a holiday?"

So by the middle of the 16th century the secular or entertainment side of holidays was taking over.

The first thing one has to notice if one is considering the entire question of public holidays is the separation that has taken place between the secular and the religious. So, we can look at our holidays. Christmas is one big commercial

occasion to many people, although there might still be an influential minority who are alive to its spiritual character.

In considering the question of holidays one might want to take into account what we really do about Christmas. But in this very Senate, after I stopped listening, I thought I heard a Senator wondering what New Year's Day was all about apart from an occasion for horse racing.

The calendar and the clock have fixed a day for us, but what we mark at New Year's Day comes straight out of nature—the reaping of the old and the planting of the new. This feature of agricultural societies teaches us to accept the fact of death and reminds us that what matters is not that we die, but that we fulfil our purpose. As the great Trinidadian writer Samuel Selvon has one of his characters saying in *A Brighter Sun*, "When the bodee vine finish bearing ain't it does dead?"

This agricultural attitude reminds us of the presence of the sacred in the work that we do; of the rhythms that bind us to the movements in the Universe, of the eternal cycle of death and rebirth, decay and renewal; The consolation that death is not final. It reminds us of the hope and the exciting, unpredictability of new life:

"Thou fool, that which thou sowest, is not quickened, except it die.

And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." (I Corinthians 15:36-37)

One religion fond of martyrdom may speak of all this in terms of crucifixion and resurrection; another may speak of reincarnation and drawing closer to the absolute: and those we think of as pantheists or worshippers of Nature take it as natural religion which they live out from day to day, but for which they have no theory. But all of them need to celebrate New Year's Day.

I have used the example of New Year's Day to suggest that we have lost sight of the origins and meanings of many of the holidays we celebrate. I wish that the committee could have had more time to think about these things. If we want to consider the entire question of public holidays, we need to remember all of this and that with the development of nation states there are all kinds of national and political causes clamouring for holidays.

With the imposition of imperialism and colonialism, holidays are being imposed by alien people on native people. With the struggle against colonialism, days need to be appointed as holidays to celebrate certain victories that have been won in the struggle.

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

With the birth of new nations, some of them made up of many ethnic groups, there are problems of pluralism and the need for negotiations between the ethnic groups and the 'larger' society with respect to holidays connected with religion and culture. In the modern period the kinds of things we get public holidays for have multiplied; and the reasons for which we get holidays can sometimes be quite spurious and political in the worst sense.

In societies like ours, therefore, to consider the entire question of public holidays is to ask what kind of society we have been, what kind of society we are, and what kind of society we want to be.

5.25 p.m.

All this points to my feeling that the committee needs to think again. As I have said, I do not want to go into the question at this time of what public holidays should be granted and what should not, though, I think you can get a sense of where I stand. Nor am I able to pour sufficient scorn on the game of numbers—should it be 12, 13, or 15, a game that took the place of what really ought to have been an attempt to work out how to defend productivity in the face of the increasing numbers of public holidays.

I have a feeling that the committee's use of 'festival' and 'holiday' was a groping towards that notion of how to defend productivity and still grant the holidays, but I think that the ad hoc decision to call some things holidays and some things public festivals does not really solve the issue. It conceals the problem.

I do not have time here to argue that you can commemorate an event, or person and give him a day in the annual calendar without declaring the day a public holiday when everybody has to put down his tools. But I want to return to the word 'holiday' and point to a very serious dislocation, which is the motive for my choice of holidays and "holiday mentality" as the focus of my speech.

Every time the word 'holiday' appears in the dictionary, it is accompanied by some reference to work. There is, or ought to be, a profound connection between holidays and work. The example was set from the start, ever since God spent six days creating the heavens and the earth and then decided quite deservedly to rest for a day and contemplate His handiwork. He deserved a rest after all that work! But what we have in the dictionary, and what we see in modern societies is a bitter divorce between work and holiday. I am afraid that, more and more, work is seen as the enemy of holiday, and holiday takes on an identity as escape from work. There is an increasingly frenzied and almost mindless enjoyment of

holidays, and this drug in turn, makes work seem more and more like enslavement or indenture.

We also have a very desperate situation with respect to work. Many people have no jobs; many refuse to do the kind of work that is available to them; many have jobs that they do not enjoy; many do work that is frankly unpleasant. Work has turned many people into tools, instruments and bureaucratic functionaries.

In Vidya Naipaul's novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, a story is related to Mr. Biswas by an oyster man, and in that story, the oyster man's son puts a tin on a fence and shoots it down. "Pa", he says, "look, I shoot work, I shoot ambition, the bitches dead, they dead".

I have seen the pride that a truck driver takes in off-loading sand or gravel exactly where you want it. I have seen the resolution with which a person who comes in to work tackles a cleaning task. I have seen the art with which certain vendors hang and arrange vegetables and fruit in their stalls. I feel there is a satisfaction in the discovery and practice of virtue in even such tasks, though this does not make such tasks any more attractive or desirable.

But we have an attitude to work and to money in our society which makes it almost impossible for people to take up that kind of creative attitude to do work that is unpleasant.. Such an attitude does not make the work more attractive or desirable, but it allows the person doing it to retain a sense of his personhood and worth, to retain his self-respect.

Not everybody can get paid for doing what they were going to do, anyway, and every year I stand here and say, "O, my God, what a fraud I am!" I would read books and talk about them for free and "Look, I'm being paid to do it." Not all of us can find fulfilment in our jobs. No matter what we do, there will be jobs that people carry out only because they bring in money, but those who do these kinds of jobs ought to be encouraged by shorter working hours and by more reasonable compensation to think of their real life as taking place in the leisure periods that the state and the employers become committed to making more and more available to them.

I know men and women who undertake to do a job of work in order to earn money to supply their basic needs. They fulfil their contracts with speed and without fuss and when you visit their homes you see them using the money you have paid them, to survive and make in their own time the wonderful things that give them a sense of fulfilment and purpose that they do not get from their jobs. I

Public Holidays (JSC Report)
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

Tuesday, July 11, 1995

am not sure that we are all intellectuals, but I am certain that we are all artists striving for self-expression.

I close with the advice of a father to his reluctant son in Ismith Khan's novel, *The Jumbie Bird*. The boy does not wish to go to school, nor does he feel that he would get a decent job, and in any case, he does not like the kind of job that he sees being prepared for him. The father says to him:

"I know that you don't like my trade, but that is why you must go to school. I know it will be hard for you, but you have a chance that plenty people don't have. A man have to find a work in this world, he have to do something that is great, I don't mean big, I mean something that only he could give to the world.

You wonder why they teaching you all kinds of things in the school, you wonder what use they have? They only giving you time to look till you find that one work that make for you, a work that it ain't have nobody else in the whole wide world could do for you. In that way, you could put something in the world that they didn't have before. That is the thing I find in my work and, although you don't like my trade, you must always remember that it have something in it for me and that is what I want you to find out because if a man can't find that something, then he life finish."

I have a feeling, Mr. President, that if we could rediscover and cultivate man's original relationship to work, if we could think of work as the honourable means of buying leisure, and if we could see both work and leisure as the occasions for finding that special thing that we have to give to the world, and that nobody else can give to the world—if we could orient ourselves in this creative way, we would not be so bothered with the supply of public holidays. And we would know exactly what to do with them when we got them.

Thank you.

Sen. Everard Dean: Mr. President, coming after that intellectual contribution, I feel somewhat inadequate to make my contribution; however, I would try by taking a line from our National Anthem, "Here every creed and race finds an equal place."

Sir, these words are part of the lyrical content of our National Anthem, but if we are to give meaning to these words, then we have to favourably consider the representation made by the Spiritual Baptist and the Shango Community. We have to do this so that they can celebrate in their own way the observance of the removal of prohibition and the birth date of Lord Shango.

5.35 p.m.

When I read the majority and minority reports and look at the absence of some signatures, particularly of the Independent Senator, who in her contribution indicated that she did not sign the report because she missed the 14th and 15th meetings and was unaware of the reason for the change in very strong positions held by some advocates on the committee, and that she was totally confused as to why this happened, it leaves me with no other impression but that the report of the select committee can be regarded as a partisan report.

We have been preaching all the good things about our diverse cultures, the so-called melting pot. We have been described by Archbishop Tutu of South Africa as a rainbow country, but I would like to see us stop paying lip service to the notion of diversity. We say that we are a melting pot; we say that we are a rainbow country and that we recognize different ethnic cultural and religious backgrounds to the extent that it is in our national anthem and our Constitution, but I think true diversity needs to be recognized, appreciated and nurtured. I do not think we are there yet. But this debate gives us an excellent opportunity to give that recognition.

What is wrong with giving a holiday to the Spiritual Baptist and the Orisha Movements when the report itself said in sections 8.3 and 8.4 that public holidays did not unduly affect productivity and that they were of the view that they afford the opportunity for citizens to pause, reflect, celebrate or recreate themselves?

We ended up with two reports: one signed by the Government Members only and the other by the Opposition Members only, which, to my mind, makes the work of the joint select committee look farcical and, to me, it is not worth the paper on which it is written.

A comedian once described a committee as a group of persons who individually can do nothing but as a group decide that nothing can be done. I do not necessarily agree with this definition but they are words worth remembering.

All that we say and do, according to Merle Hodge in her letter to the editor in the *Trinidad Guardian* of May 29, 1995, captioned: "Cry for Shouter holiday will not die."—I will read just the first paragraph:

"Why should African religion in Trinidad and Tobago, triumphing at last in its long, heroic struggle against depression and scorn, settle for a 'festival day' on the national calendar? Why should other religions have 'holy days' but we a 'festival day?'"

I thank you very much, Mr. President.

AJOURNMENT

The Minister of Planning and Development (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith): Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, July 18, 1995 at 1.30 p.m. at which time we propose to deal with the Bill to amend the Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties Act. If we have time after that we will continue with the debate on the joint select committee report.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.40 p.m.