

**SENATE***Tuesday, May 28, 1996*

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. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand, Sen. Vernon Gilbert, Sen. Martin Daly and Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed from today's sitting of the Senate.

**SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT**

**Mr. President:** I have been advised that His Excellency the President has appointed Mrs. Nirupa Oudit a temporary Senator with effect from May 28, 1996 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Sen. Nirupa Oudit took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**SUNDAY EXPRESS****(MISLEADING REPORT)**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I wish to bring to your attention an article in the *Sunday Express* of May 19, 1996 under the column "Shoo Shoo", the caption "Speaking frankly".

I shall read this for your information so that if it has escaped any of the Senators, you will be now aware of the article. It says:

"The official reason for the Senate's not meeting last Tuesday, we heard, was that they had met for an extraordinarily long session on the Tuesday previous.

*Misleading Report*  
[MR. PRESIDENT]

*Tuesday, May 28, 1996*

It seems that these wise members take more than a week to recuperate from a long meeting.

But that is not the most interesting happening there.

One senior member of the Senate has been away from the job for more than a month, albeit for serious surgery, but it seems that no one has missed him.

Poor fellow, he must have made significant contributions in the past, but people have such short memories.

It would be nice if this week (assuming no other long meeting between now and then) someone should move a motion that he should get well soon, or something, so we could put his name in the papers and remind people that he is supposed to be there.”

The records will reveal, hon. Senators, that no Member of this Senate has been absent from the job for more than a month from May 19, 1996, and also no Member of this Senate has been given leave of absence for serious surgery for any period at all, whether it be May 19, 1996 or whenever.

The President of the Senate was absent from the meetings on May 7, 1996 and May 14, 1996, being out of the country on parliamentary business. In fact, I attended my office on Monday, May 6, 1996 and met with a delegation from the People’s Republic of China and later that day, received His Excellency, the Ambassador to France. I left on Monday, May 6, 1996 on parliamentary business of the country and was absent for two consecutive meetings.

To state as a fact, therefore, that a “senior member of the Senate has been away from the job for more than a month, albeit for serious surgery,...” is a totally misleading statement and abjectly false. To further suggest that “It would be nice if this week... someone would move a motion that he should get well soon,... so we could put his name in the papers and remind people that he is supposed to be there.” reeks of derision.

The whole article, in my view, tends to bring this Senate into odium. On this occasion, however, I would merely request that the Editor of the newspaper ensures that when articles of this nature are contemplated, they verify their facts

first so that in the event that an article of a similar nature is published, the repercussions they might suffer will be justified.

#### PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts and financial statements of the Rehabilitation of Access Roads and Reconstruction of Bridges Programme for the year ended December 31, 1995 as required by Loan Contract 700/0C-TT between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter-American Development Bank. [*The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark)*]
2. Annual Report of the Tobago House of Assembly for the year ended December 31, 1994. [*Hon. W. Mark*]
3. Conventions and Recommendations to the Competent Authority in accordance with Article 19 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization. [*Hon. W. Mark*]

**1.40 p.m.**

#### ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

#### **PRIDE Airport Project (Withdrawal of Partner)**

*The following question stood on the Order Paper:*

4. A. Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport inform the Senate whether Hughes Aircraft Corporation which is the preferred partner for the PRIDE Airport Project has withdrawn from the consortium?  
If the answer is in the affirmative, could the Minister state what the Government intends to do in response to the withdrawal?
- B. Could the Minister also state in what time-frame can the people of Trinidad and Tobago look forward to improved airport facilities at Piarco Airport? [*Sen. M. Daly*]

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, Sen. Daly is unavoidably absent and he has asked that the reply to this question be postponed.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**PRODUCTION SHARING CONTRACT**  
**(ENERGY SECTOR)**

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Finbar Gangar):** Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to make a statement to this honourable Senate on one of the initiatives pursued by this Government with regard to the continued development of the energy sector.

The matter to which I refer relates to the granting of a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) to a consortium comprising BHP Petroleum (Trinidad) Inc. and Talisman (Trinidad) Holdings Ltd. for Block 2(ab) which is situated off the North East Coast of Trinidad. This Block, Mr. President, was offered in Phase 2 of the 1995 Competitive Bidding Order.

Mr. President, as a background to this development, Cabinet on March 7, 1996 agreed that the Consortium comprising BHP Petroleum (Trinidad) and Talisman Energy Inc. be invited to enter into negotiations with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries with a view to reaching agreement on the terms of a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) to be awarded for the exploration and development of Block 2(ab).

I am now pleased to report that negotiations, which adhered to the guidelines in the Petroleum Regulations Competitive Bidding Order, 1995 and utilized the Model Production Sharing Contract, were successfully completed with the Consortium on April 26, 1996.

I wish to further inform this honourable Senate that the Consortium is committed to a minimum exploration work programme and Phase 1 of that programme will include:

- (i) the acquisition and processing to industry standards of at least 20,000 CMP line kilometres of 3D seismic resulting in full fold coverage of approximately 499 square kilometres;
- (ii) the evaluation, integration and mapping of all seismic data related to contract area; and
- (iii) the drilling of at least one exploratory well, to a depth of at least 2,000 metres.

Mr. President, the negotiating team has been able to secure, in addition to production bonuses and minimum payment with respect to rents, the following financial obligations under the Production Sharing Contract:—

- (a) an administrative charge of US \$200,000 during the first year of this contract increasing annually at a rate of six per cent for the unexpired term of the contract;
- (b) a training contribution of US \$100,000 for the training of nationals in appropriate fields of study associated with the petroleum industry for the first year of the contract and increasing annually at a rate of six per cent for the unexpired term of the contract. In the event of a commercial discovery the amount shall increase to US \$150,000 in the year following the one in which the commercial discovery was made and shall increase thereafter at a rate of six per cent per annum for the remaining term of the contract; and
- (c) a research and development contribution of US \$100,000 for the financing of petroleum-related research and development activity for the first year of the contract and increasing annually at a rate of six per cent for the unexpired term of the contract. In the event of a commercial discovery, the amount shall increase to US \$150,000 in the year following the one in which the commercial discovery was made and shall increase thereafter at a rate of six per cent for the remaining term of the contract.

Mr. President, other salient features of the Production Sharing Contract relate to the inclusion of cost recovery and Minister's share of profit from crude oil and natural gas.

The signing of this Production Sharing Contract between BHP Petroleum (Trinidad) Inc. and Talisman (Trinidad) Holdings Limited and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, June 4, 1996. This signing will represent the second contract to be signed within a two-month period. Hon. Senators will recall that the first contract was signed on April 22, 1996 between the Consortium of BHP Petroleum (Trinidad) Inc., and ELF Petroleum Trinidad B.V. and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, it was a promise of this Government to deal expeditiously and in a transparent manner with energy sector development. The imminent signing of this new contract and this statement show that we do not make promises lightly, and mark, in a significant way, the energetic and transparent manner in which national affairs in general and those of the energy sector, in particular, are being approached by this Government. Mr. President, the shroud of secrecy which has

engulfed the development of this sector for far too long is now being rapidly removed by this Government.

Mr. President, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**1.50 p.m.**

**GOLDEN GROVE PRISON  
(PHASED OCCUPATION)**

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Brigadier Joseph Theodore):** Mr. President, I should like to make a statement on the situation existing at the Prisons at Golden Grove and, of course, the prison service throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

The Maximum Security Prison at Golden Grove has been built to accommodate 2,100 inmates including 300 remanded prisoners. The present prison population is approximately 4,251—double the number for which the existing prisons were built to accommodate.

Prison Officers are being phased into the new facility and, at present, there are 15 officers, headed by a senior Superintendent, who are on site working with the contractors, Keystone Property Developers. They have been at the new prison on a full-time basis for the last six months and will form part of a larger core group of officers who will be assigned to the prison in time for the September opening.

By June 15, several more prison officers will join the present team at the new Golden Grove Maximum Security Prison. Together, they will form the core group of the new prison's staff and will be responsible for training all new members.

As part of the staffing arrangements, Cabinet has also approved the recruitment of 480 officers, some of whom will be assigned to the new prison. Training of some 200 recruits will begin in June, 1996.

Prior to the intake of inmates, the core group of prison officers will be engaged in a familiarization exercise. They will be acquiring information on several technical aspects of the new prison, including the communication system, emergency response unit and operation of the electronic gates.

A number of dry runs will also be conducted as prison officers get ready for the intake of the first batch of inmates.

Occupation will begin on the ground floor and this will continue on a monthly basis until full occupation of the entire prison has been achieved. Each month, additional officers will also be integrated into the system.

By the end of the targeted period for full occupancy, all support facilities are expected to be in operation including the school, trade shops, hospital and laundry. An extensive rehabilitation programme will also be conducted at the new Maximum Security Prison.

Also taking place will be the relocation of the Commissioner of Prisons office and the administration of the prisons to a new prisons administration block at Golden Grove. We trust that more space will then become available at the Port of Spain prison for Justices of the Peace, attorneys at law and probation officers to use when visiting the facility.

Mr. President, it is expected that full occupation of the new prison would also assist in bringing the prison population at the other stations within more manageable limits.

Despite the overcrowding over the years and the adverse conditions under which prison officers have functioned, the institution has been well administered by these dedicated officers.

The island prison at Carrera and the Port of Spain prison will continue to operate for some time and I anticipate that until such time when the country has an alternative form of punishment other than incarceration, the size of the prison population will continue to be high. However, Cabinet recently approved the establishment of a Remand Court in, or adjacent to, the prisons for the purpose of remanding prisoners. Clerks of the Peace and Justices of the Peace would be authorized to take remands in the Remand Court.

Cabinet also approved a recommendation for the Attorney General to prepare the appropriate legislation.

Once the new prison is fully operational, the Minimum Security Prison at Golden Grove would be converted into a full-scale rehabilitation facility for which it was originally designed.

Mr. President, on the question of contractual arrangements for the transport of prisoners to and from the court, may I announce that the tendering procedure for the award of the contract has been completed and the contract will be awarded shortly.

*Golden Grove Prison*  
[SEN. THE HON. BRIG. J. THEODORE]

*Tuesday, May 28, 1996*

This contract will involve the provision of 29 vehicles for the transport of prisoners over a four-year period. In the initial stage, which will last six months, inmates will be taken from the Port of Spain prison and the St. Ann's Hospital to the courts in Port of Spain.

The other phases involve transport from Port of Spain and Golden Grove to courts in Port of Spain and finally transport to all locations where prisoners are held to courts throughout the country.

Mr. President, I note that work began on the new Maximum Security Prison in April 1992 but there were a number of delays and although the original completion date had been set for October 1994, work stopped in September 1994 and began in May, 1995. Every effort is now being made to have the facility ready for handing over on September 01, 1996.

I take this opportunity to indicate that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago wishes to record its profound appreciation to the officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service for performing an excellent job in extremely difficult and trying circumstances.

Thank you.

#### **LEGAL PROFESSION (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Legal Profession Act, 1986 [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage of the Bill be taken on Friday, May 31, 1996 at 1.30 p.m. [*Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **COUNTING UNREMUNERATED WORK BILL**

[SECOND DAY]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question* [Tuesday, April 23, 1996].

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

*Question again proposed.*

**The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Daphne Phillips):** Mr. President, I thank Sen. Mahabir-Wyattt for introducing such an important Bill, and also commend all the persons



who contributed to this Bill in the past, including some Members who no longer sit in this honourable Senate. The records of those contributions which are recorded in the *Hansard* are available and these I have read and they have influenced my own contribution. Firstly, I would like to look at the types of work which are unremunerated and I shall start with the definition identified by Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt as recorded in the *Hansard*. She said:

“I am referring to domestic work which is necessary for the sustenance of life and health, to the care of the elderly, to the care of the handicapped, to child-bearing, child-rearing, the socialization of children, the teaching, the feeding, the transporting, all that essential, emotional and psychological work which goes into developing people so that they become productive members of society, rather than unproductive and anti-social.

All of this work has traditionally been women’s work.”

I shall start with that definition although I will not end with it. I want to focus on the value of unremunerated work and to point out some examples of the outcome of the systematic and long-term undervaluing of this kind of work.

**2.00 p.m.**

The two examples I want to point out are largely due, in my view, to undervaluing this work. One of these examples is the relatively new phenomenon in Trinidad and Tobago of street children. A 1994 study which was carried out by the division of Family Services of the Ministry of Social Development found that there were 300 such children who lived on the streets of Port of Spain and there were children in all the other major cities in Trinidad and Tobago. There was an estimated number between 6,000 to 8,000 such children in the country, and this is approximately 1.7 per cent of the population under age 18, which amounts to around 450,000.

When you compare this to countries in South America, such as Brazil, in 1990, approximately 25 million children lived on the streets of Brazil out of a population of approximately 150 million; also in Mexico, around 30 million such children live on the streets. In Trinidad and Tobago the survey showed that these children live on the streets; they sell; they beg; they are unaccompanied by adults; they fend for themselves; they range in age between 5 to 18; they are continually in search of food; they have various stories to tell of abuse, of abandonment and of poverty. Some work on the streets for the family. The boys hang out, but most of the girls and some of the boys are quickly snared into sexual exploitation and abuse while on the streets. They face the most vile forms of existence and they

learn to defend themselves very early. To say the least, they are not properly socialized into human beings. That is one example.

The other example which I think is largely due to our undervaluing work in the household is the problem of juvenile crime and violence. These are the wrongdoers; these are the young criminals. Some are highly violent and they engage in the most heinous crimes without apparently having a conscience, without remorse or concern. Others fall into circumstances in which they are vulnerable but they commit illegal and immoral acts. There is also increasing violence in schools and some of this violence is gender violence. These behaviours threaten the safety and security of our homes and of our community, in fact, of our national environment, and the comfort of the entire society.

In these two instances, the vast majority of these children and youths do not have a safe home environment. Part of this is due to the complex and deprived nature of the socio-economic environment in which they live and in which they are powerless victims, because we, as a society, have not put high value on work in households, in that we have not rewarded it. This, I think, is the major cause of the suffering of children and youths. Children and youths have become the latest tragedies of our system of valuation, that is, of attributing value to some kinds of work and not attributing value to other kinds, especially the work carried out in households.

The important point to note is that the same activities which are carried out in households and are not valued, are highly valued in the market domain. These same activities carried out as a business are highly valued and highly remunerated. You may reflect a little while on the cost of quality child care, or the cost of care for the elderly, for the handicapped, or health care or psychological care. All of these are extremely expensive if they are obtained within the market domain and they are also very profitable to the owners of organizations which deliver this care. Once the care is carried out in the market domain it is highly valued; in the domestic domain, it is not valued.

There is a claim that the reason the work of the household is not valued or is not given any kind of reward is because it is intangible; it involves much caring and intangibles, such as love and affection, which cannot be measured and given a value, especially a monetary value. This is why it is claimed that caring activities in the home cannot be valued and cannot be rewarded. However in the market domain, intangibles are counted.

For example, I want to refer to the experience of going to the bank to negotiate a loan. One has to pay a number of fees. I understand there is a negotiation fee or a discount fee; there are insurance fees; there are bill of sale fees; there are re-finance fees if one is re-financing a loan. On withdrawals from the bank, even at the ABM machines, there is a cost for every withdrawal. These costs for intangibles are counted and are valued. Other intangibles such as services charges are measured or counted all the time.

Therefore, the issue of not counting caring work in the home is not because it is intangible, but because it takes place outside of the market domain. I shall refer to these domains in a little while. I want to note here that there are two trends which are emerging in the world economy. One is that, what we used to understand as social services are now again being placed in the market domain where they are highly costed, to some extent, highly technological and highly valued. The kinds of services I am talking about are services which we used to regard, some years ago as social services—health care, education, utilities, postal services and so forth.

The second trend I note is the transfer to the domestic domain of those activities or parts thereof, which are deemed unprofitable. For example, long-term care, care for the elderly and chronic disease care are increasingly being transferred today to the domestic domain. Here, in the domestic domain, they are not valued, they are uncounted and unwaged.

### **2.10 p.m.**

There is a new thinking behind health care, for example. The trends to early ambulation, decrease in hospital stay, reduction in bed space and so forth are observed on a world scale. This is a world trend, and these services are now transferred to the domestic domain especially, long-term care—which is sometimes referred to as community care—and are unwaged and uncounted. The burden of costs is borne by the domestic unit—this is cost in terms of time, re-organization of the lives of the household, psychological cost and the high levels of stress experienced by household members, especially the female members and, of course, the direct financial costs.

Mr. President, there is a continuous interplay between the domestic and market domains where activities are transferred from one to the other and are counted and costed in the market domain but not in the household or domestic domain. In the domestic domain costs are absorbed by the household and are uncounted and unvalued.

Another area of activity which falls into this dichotomy between the household and market domains is agriculture where there is a continuous interplay between the domestic domain and the market domain for the counting and valuing of work in this area. There is notorious use of unpaid household or family labour in agriculture in the domestic domain, but when agriculture is commercialized each activity is carefully evaluated, classified and costed so as to ensure handsome monetary returns to the owners. Domestic and household agricultural workers are, therefore, another category of persons whose work is unwaged, unvalued and unremunerated.

A third category of persons whose work or labour is unremunerated, are retrenched workers whose skills, or potential skills, have been overtaken by technological developments. Those skills are also unvalued, unwaged and unremunerated. This includes many male, as well as female workers, and also potential future workers—persons who will never, or perhaps, temporarily or briefly, face the formal work environment.

A fourth category of unwaged work is what we call "unemployed" persons. In this category are 45 per cent of persons between the ages of 15 and 25 years who are out of the school system, available for and willing to work but cannot find work. They are categorized as unemployed.

Of these, approximately 55 per cent are women who by the time they are out of this age group—that is by the time they are 25 years and over—tend to traditionally have responsibility for the home and children and are reclassified, recategorized or categorize themselves as housewives and are no longer counted as being in the labour force.

In addition, there are those within the school system at present who are potentially unemployable, that is, given the current arrangements related to our technology use, skill requirements and market conditions, as well as profit margins, there are all these people who are considered unemployed and whose work, whatever they do, is uncounted, unvalued and unremunerated. Some of these young people do put value to their work. I say this very guardedly since they call some of the work they do "putting down a wuk", but this "wuk" is detrimental to the social system in which we all live.

Mr. President, there are various categories of persons whose work or labour is unremunerated. In summary, they are, firstly, domestic or household workers. Secondly, domestic agricultural producers. Thirdly, retrenched workers. Fourthly, those categorized as unemployed—those who are outside of the formal

market system; those understood to be "informal workers" or belonging to the informal sector such as street vendors, inter-island traders, petty traders, and those who do husking. Finally, there are the voluntary and community workers whose labour is not remunerated. Most of these people are women, but, of course, many men and young people are found within these categories.

Therefore, we must broaden our definition of unremunerated work. We must broaden our definition to the extent that instead of seeing unremunerated work as household work or women's work, we must take into account the various types of unwaged, uncounted and undervalued work. Women, perhaps, still predominate in these categories, but men are also becoming increasingly present and young people are numerous.

The work of all these people is not counted in the national accounts known as the GDP. It seems as though we need to protect the GDP, so the work of all the people who are not in the market domain is not counted. Women in the home have been the first victims of our system of counting and undervaluing non-market labour, but they are certainly not the last. All these categories of work have also been affected but children and youth are the latest and most tragic victims.

Indeed, the work of women in the home is now being threatened by the very real need of many women to operate within the market domain. And, indeed, most of them who try are unsuccessful in finding secure or permanent employment in the market domain.

Indeed, women in the home now have to accommodate the additional burdens of cuts in access to social services and benefits, and increased unemployment of a husband or partner. They also face increased responsibility for the elderly and sick and an increase in poverty. It seems that there is a feminization and juvenilization of poverty.

I think that the fall out results in an epidemic proportion of street children and domestic violence, the deepening and widening of poverty, vagrancy, school violence and community decline. All this is because there is no value placed on domestic work and community work.

**2.20 p.m.**

We are counting this and not counting that. We are counting work when it is located in one domain and not counting it in another. We categorize people and we put them in and out of categories. We are told that if we count all this non-

market work in the GDP, especially the work of households, we would inflate the GDP and give false impressions as to our wealth.

Mr. President, I believe the problem is that we assume that there is only one way to count; that there is only one criterion in counting. The value that is given to work seems to depend on where it falls in the scheme of things related to the market economy and whether, and to what extent, wages and salaries are applied. I think we need to revisit our definitions of work and labour and differentiate them from our definitions of employment and unemployment. We need to reconsider what we should value and what, and how, we should remunerate.

I want to go back to the domestic environment a bit. If we really value the work of households, that is, work related to the caring and nurturing of individuals, work related to giving children love and attention, work related to the production of caring human beings, work related to the survival of the household as an entity, work that is crucial to our culminative survival and peace of mind, then we must find ways to show and appreciate that value. We must count and account for the necessity of this work in our society.

We see right before us that those children and young people who do not grow in caring environments turn out to be monsters without a conscience, without caring, and turn out to be a massive social problem.

Mr. President, this is no longer a gender thing. It is not a woman thing, a thing of little significance. This is a fundamental matter which threatens our very survival. Indeed, this woman thing has become a national thing and, I dare say, an international one as well.

According to the *Human Development Report, 1995*—and this report is a United Nations Development Programme Report. It says:

“Human development, if not engendered, is endangered.”

This is the simple but far-reaching message of this whole report.

I think there are a number of steps which must be addressed in our current environment. Our current environment is one of a market system in which value is placed on activity if it is in the market domain. In the past there have been calls for ‘wages for housework’ and this call has given rise to a high degree of hysteria. Wages for housework could not happen. I am not now advocating wages for housework. There have been other kinds of answers or suggestions given. For example, some have talked about the need for "satellite accounts". That appears to me to be a separate parallel account to the GDP which will not, therefore,

influence the GDP but will identify the value of the work that is done in households.

Some have also called for household surveys so we will know what is being done and the cost of what is being done. The usefulness of those approaches to valuing the work of women, the work that is now undervalued in all areas, does not seem to suggest some kind of solution to the problem.

The *Human Development Report, 1995*, page 83, identifies some of the things that are done in other countries. For example, some countries use what is called a "Gender Empowerment Measure" and this measure concentrates on participation of women and men in the economic, political and professional areas of life. They look, therefore, at three areas: firstly, power over economic resources based on earned income; secondly, access to professional opportunities and participation; and thirdly, access to political opportunities and participation in political decision-making. In those three areas they look at the extent to which various sectors of the population are empowered.

Mr. President, in our context these measures will not show very well in our various sectors of the population. There is another index used which is the evidence of time use, that is, how much time is used in unpaid work. Studies have been collected for 14 industrial countries and nine developing countries. They looked at the amount of time men and women spend in unpaid, unrecognized or undervalued work.

What I suggest for Trinidad and Tobago—and this Government supported the Bill while in Opposition and we do support the Bill now—are modifications to the earlier conceptualization of what could possibly be done. The *Human Development Report, 1995* says on page 87, and I quote:

“The revolution towards gender equality must be propelled by a concrete strategy for accelerated progress.”

Whatever we do, the strategy we undertake must accelerate progress and I want to suggest some strategies in this regard. These are strategies for consideration by the national community and for further debate.

Firstly, I suggest that we evaluate the minimum monetary requirement for the safe upbringing of a child and put a minimum monetary value on what it costs to bring up a child safely and well protected with adequate parenting.

**2.30 p.m.**

This of course must be adjusted in relation to the cost of living. I think we should look at ensuring a minimum wage index in keeping with this value so that

we have a baseline for understanding the value of the work in households. We should encourage and ensure that domestic workers—persons who work in households—are well trained and well compensated. The compensation will be related to the value which the economists use to put a monetary value on that work. Trained domestic labour is a high priority. Domestic workers should not be taken up and put in a household. There is a large market for well-trained domestic labour, especially when we realize that, in the first place, many persons are not properly brought up because of poor parenting.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Mr. President, I wonder if I can just clarify a point. Is the Minister speaking about paid work and not unremunerated work?

**Hon. Dr. D. Phillips:** I am talking about paid work in households. I am saying that domestic workers should be trained. There should be the setting up of agencies of some type to give certification and registration to these workers.

We should look at encouraging the full participation and education of women because in all countries educated women have fewer children than non-educated ones and they fare better than non-educated ones. We should also encourage family responsibility through the free availability of information services and technology in that area. More generally, I think we should encourage community activities in counselling programmes, home-work centres, youth drop-in centres, libraries for youths, sports and cultural activities, health care and education. Facilitators must be paid at least a minimum wage. Because of the need for money in our society, voluntary work and community work are on the decline. I am proposing that we enhance community programmes of all types, and all kinds of caring, training, cultural, health and education programmes and pay the facilitators. In a while, we will speak about where we will get the money.

I think we should entertain the concept of 'community parenting' for those children and young people who are without care. There are some countries, for example, in Canada, I know there is a safe house on every street where children in trouble can go if they need care, food, or if they are frightened. We should look at those concepts of community caring and expand community facilities for the care of people who cannot care for themselves. We should institute a programme of training and re-training for caregivers. Of course, caregivers need to be paid some kind of wage.

We should encourage a programme of youth training and service. We need to expand the programme of community relief centres which now exists for persons who are in dire need and where hot meals and training could be available.



Recipients could be encouraged to share their skills and give back some service to the community. These relief centres could also offer primary health care, legal and other services to the poor.

In these and other ways if there is no formal employment of parents, children, youth and the elderly can still be cared for in the community and by extension, the family could be saved. If there is employment of parents, children could also be cared for by the community when parents are out to work. I think we need to look at some of these strategies and suggestions which are under consideration by this Government. How can such a programme be implemented?

We will need help in the implementation of such a massive programme. I suggest that we could carry out a programme of community care where we could utilize the services of all these non-market people who are thrown off the productive formal market economy, in the community in these and other ways. We can therefore save our children, youth and communities. Such a programme will need to be paid for by the local and international private sectors and the public sector, as well as by international grant funding. I think there needs to be a partnership between the Government, private sector and international sector for financing of such a programme.

In these ways the GDP would easily reflect the figures which can be counted and there would be no hysteria associated with the call for 'wages for housework'. It is one of the ways in which I think we can deal with this problem of unremunerated work and undervaluing certain kinds of work, while at the same time reducing social crisis and chaos. I think this is a way in which we could use workers at the community level to help remove a problem which is threatening our very survival.

Thank you.

**Sen. Orville London:** Mr. President, it is not only because I am suffering from the effects of the flu that my intervention would be very brief. We on this side do not think that this is a particularly contentious Bill. It has been eloquently supported on both sides of the Senate. In addition to this, we do not think that we should respond to some of the important issues raised, and which we think are peripheral to the Bill under discussion. Sometimes, we spend too much time on these peripheral matters that the core discussion suffers as a result. I would like to confine my contribution to the Bill under discussion.

**2.40 p.m.**

Although I accept that it is a bill which will impact significantly on women, I agree that it is not exclusively a woman's bill. In fact, as a recently retired person with a working wife and two young children, I have a personal stake in this Bill. I agree with the concept of including the calculation of unwaged work in national accounts. I agree that women throughout this country, and in fact throughout the developing world, have not been treated fairly in relation to their contribution to society, and anything that can be done to improve their lot we should support wholeheartedly.

I would like, however, to make a few observations. I agree that there is too much negativism in relation to the contribution of women, and I think we should also look on the positive side. However, I get the impression, when I observe certain young men throughout this country, that there is a subtle change—it is not coming quickly enough—in their attitude to responsibility in the home. When one goes to football and cricket matches, one sees young men with nine and 18-month old children. Some of them say that it is because of the introduction of the disposable diaper. That might be part of it, but I think there is more to it than that. Instead of focusing only on the negative aspects, like why men batter their wives or why they neglect their wives and children, maybe we should also spend some time looking at the positive aspects and examining why certain young men from identical social circumstances have different levels of responsibility. I think sometimes we spend too much time looking at the negative aspects, when we might gain more from looking at the positive aspects and see why people behave in a positive way.

I want also to share some concern about the actual implementation of this particular exercise. Sometimes, when one is convinced that something is intrinsically good, one tends to draw the conclusion that the rest of the world agrees. This is oftentimes not the case and sometimes one has to market a good thing as effectively and as aggressively as one would market something that is not so good. I suggest, therefore, that when we leave this place, we should have in our minds the methods by which we can convince the sceptics that this is something worthwhile.

I wonder, Mr. President, whether—in order to motivate the data collectors, the individuals whom we interview, or even the persons who will fund this exercise—it might not be beneficial for us to examine the possibility of increasing the scope of the data collection. I am advocating a more frequent and all-

encompassing household survey which will highlight other problems facing women in particular, especially those in the lower income households: how children are affected, how it is linked with educational attainment, crime, drug addiction and so forth. In other words, instead of just collecting information, we can tell people that we are collecting information to deal with a number of problems, and the level of motivation might be higher. There might possibly be more funding and a better response from the recipients. Information like this could assist the Government.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Mr. President, may I draw Sen. London's attention to the fact that the Bill has two parts and that one part deals with household surveys.

**Sen. O. London:** All right. Mr. President, I agree with the need for us to have the household surveys. This would help the Government and the NGOs in determining areas and groups on which they can concentrate money and other resources.

There are individuals in various parts of the country who are not necessarily involved in taking care of their own children. The scope of this exercise could be increased to include individuals who do not necessarily focus only on their own children. Senators might have seen highlighted in the press recently a Mrs. Phillips. May I to state that although Mrs. Phillips was the person who was highlighted, that contribution was the contribution of Mr. and Mrs. Phillips. These individuals, over the last 20 years, have been concentrating on taking care of disadvantaged children in their house at Mount Pele. Throughout the years, hundreds of people have passed through their doors. If there was a way in which we could assess the monetary value of these individuals' contribution to the community, we might find a situation where they might find it easier to source funds from NGOs and from Government agencies.

The scope of this exercise should not just be confined to households in the strictest sense of the word, but should also include individuals performing these kinds of social functions. It should also include community groups, and so forth which carry out similar functions for the society.

On a personal note, I feel that much emphasis is being placed on unremunerated work done by the people in the lower income level, but I think that all of us recognize that people in other income levels make contributions which should be part of this entire process. We are dealing with self-esteem. We

are dealing with people's feelings that they are making a contribution and that the contributions are accepted. I therefore agree with the Minister that we should not confine our definition simply to a particular social class doing a particular type of job.

We supported the Bill when it was first brought to the Senate in 1995. We recognize that it has to happen. We are happy that Trinidad and Tobago is one of the developing countries in the forefront of this particular exercise, but we also recognize that this is only a part of the particular problem. If when we leave here we are not able to convince the masses that this is critical, especially in a situation where we are dealing with sourcing limited resources from Government, NGOs and so forth, we might find ourselves with a bill which is made into law but which is not effective because it is low on the priority level.

This is only stage one. Stage one is that we have convinced ourselves of the importance of the Bill, but I think it is even more important that we develop strategies which will ensure that we convince the masses that they should spend limited resources on this particular activity. Secondly, when we go out there, we should link it in such a way that we ensure that we deal with certain social issues which impact on this particular situation.

With those few words, may I state that we on this side have no difficulty in supporting the Bill.

**2.50 p.m.**

**Sen. Prof. John Spence:** Mr. President, I was one of those who spoke on this Bill when it was first introduced in the last Parliament. I confess that my initial reaction was one of a certain amount of scepticism for two reasons. One was, I could not see the immediate value of merely documenting the unremunerated work. Indeed, I remember commenting at the time that if the men in Trinidad and Tobago needed statistics in the annual account to appreciate the work that women do, then we were really in a very sad state.

However, there are two modifications which were made to the original presentation which have allowed me to give my support and also to second the proposal that this Bill be passed into law. One anxiety that I had was that if we just added to the GDP—and very few other countries in the world did that—then we would have the difficulty which the hon. Minister has alluded to; that our GDP would look bigger and that seemed, to me, very unfortunate, given the present international scenario with respect to countries being graduated to a higher level

and not being eligible for funds if they have too high a GDP. However, that has been taken care of by the fact that this will now be a separate account and not added to the GDP. We therefore do not have that difficulty but we are able, nevertheless, to document how much unremunerated work there is in the country.

I am still not wholly convinced that that in itself would help us to deal with the issue; that is the adverse effect which both Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt and the hon. Minister alluded to when we have a large number of unemployed and a large level of poverty in the country.

To my mind, the more important aspect is the one to which Sen. London alluded. It is a suggestion that I, myself, proposed in the last Parliament. I was very pleased when Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt accepted that proposal namely; that we should also carry out a household survey at least once in every three years. In many countries this is how one is able to get at the poverty level and the disadvantage that many people in the community have to live under.

Recently there was quoted, quite extensively, in our local press, a World Bank study which said that there was a certain level of poverty in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. President, why do we have to go to the World Bank study to inform ourselves about the situation with respect to poverty in our country? Are the World Bank figures correct? I think they give a poverty level of about 25 per cent in those figures, but the hon. Minister of Housing and Settlements, in this Parliament last week, said that he believed that about 40 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, which is correct. Surely we need to conduct the study ourselves, periodically, because things change with time. We want to see whether the growth in GDP has affected that level. This would inform us as to whether our economic policies are, in fact, doing what we want them to do. What is the good if there is a growth in GDP if it means that the rich are getting richer and we have as many poor people as before?

Mr. President, I think that the Bill as now framed is one that will move us forward, by recognizing the work that many people do, which is unrewarded. If this is the way we have to recognize that, then fine, I support that. It seems to me that we should be recognizing that anyhow, and let us use this way of bringing to the wider attention, the fact that there are many people who do much valuable work, not only within the household but in the community outside of the household, which may not be rewarded in monetary terms.

I think that equally, and perhaps more importantly, is the fact that we would now, by law, have to document what is happening in the country with respect to the well-being of the whole society. We would have to look at the well-being of

the very poor and also look at the well-being of the middle income groups, which themselves have lost considerably over the last few years. It will also indicate to us whether our economic policies are, in fact, benefiting the majority of people in the country or merely benefiting the few who are already rich.

It seems to me that the Bill, as now framed, would do much for our progress in the country, and in that regard I support it fully.

Thank you, Sir.

**Sen. Deborah Moore-Miggins:** Mr. President, I rise to support wholeheartedly this Bill which Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt has so ably piloted in this Senate. In doing so, I commend her for taking up the cause of an idea whose time has surely come in this country of ours. I also join her in paying tribute to Clothil Walcott and all the other women who have agitated, written, been ridiculed and scorned for the positions they have taken on this issue of making visible, the contribution made by women to our societies. I also thank her for the material she has provided to enable me to prepare this afternoon's contribution.

Mr. President, I wish to look at this Bill, briefly, in terms of the definition framework, the methodological framework and the benefits which are likely to flow from what Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt has proposed this afternoon. The Senator is asking us to support a measure that seeks to quantify the unremunerated contribution of women to agriculture, food production, reproduction and household activities.

Mr. President, I have a document entitled *Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Pilot Survey on Time Use of the Unwaged Household Worker for the Caricom Secretariat by Caribbean Researchers (CARR)* in September, 1994. In that document the term "reproduction" is defined. The definition has gone a long way to open my eyes to the scope of what Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt proposed today. Reproduction means:

"...all the physical, mental and emotional efforts to keep families, communities and the whole of societies, going—from giving birth to children to training and encouraging them and others when they are low; from making a home in a new country or a refugee camp to caring for sick friends; from planning and shopping and making ends meet, to protecting the environment and sources of energy...to surviving pollution and war."

As I hear about emotional support and efforts, I remember the vision I have every day of being in a courtroom and seeing that courtroom populated with the

women of this country. These courtrooms are not populated with the women as offenders, but as persons providing emotional, financial, psychological support, particularly to young males who find themselves on the wrong side of the law. This is fast becoming a very engaging and time-consuming pastime of many of the women in our society.

As far as household work is concerned we treat that as the work women do for their families within the home. These are a long list of tasks which are seen as indispensable and without which other activities which are included in the national product cannot be carried out.

### 3.00 p.m.

These tasks are—we should note—counted and valued in the national accounting if they are performed by a hired person. The rationale is that if they are performed by a hired person, it is a monetary transaction; and that leads me to another document which I wish to read into the record. It is a *Summary of Proceedings done at the International Conference on the Measurement and Valuation of Unpaid Work*, which was held in Canada in April 1993. In it, the hon. Mary Collins, Minister responsible for the Status of Women provided me with a very enlightening treatise of the fact, that even more advanced countries than ours are grappling with this issue of recognizing the contribution made by women at a level of the GDP. She said that a woman once told her that there were three kinds of work—part-time, full-time, and all-time work. She defined a woman's work as all-time work. She went on to say:

“Women grow half the food, but receive one-tenth the wages and own a mere one per cent of the world's property.”

She further said:

“It was the UNSNA...”

And that was the Satellite Accounts about which the hon. Minister spoke—

“...that established the production boundary, dividing productive activities which have a market value, and those which are not financially rewarded and are therefore excluded from the definition of economic activity.

Housework falls into the latter category,... As a result, there is no accurate record of economic activity for the unpaid hours women spend on child care, elder care, food preparation, household work, bookkeeping or volunteer work. If there wasn't a woman available to perform these services

for free, they would be recorded as economically productive activities. To put it another way, try finding someone other than a family member to clean your house for free. Perhaps this is the origin of the expression 'on the house'."

Mr. President, this is what is facing us at this time and we have heard the Minister speak in relation to domestic workers who, although they work and are remunerated, the question arises as to whether their remuneration bears any relationship to the value of the work that they perform. Therefore, there is the question of unremunerated and under-remunerated work, which is the matter we have to always bear in mind.

On the question of methodology, I echo the sentiments of former Sen. Carol Merritt who was very concerned about biases which can continue to seep into surveys which are done for the purpose of valuing women's work. She felt that there were existing biases in some of these surveys and she urged that we need to pay special attention to that fact. She says there are male biases which can creep in, there are western biases which do not relate to a setting of Trinidad and Tobago, and cultural biases. She felt that even the age and sex of the interviewer and the terminology used can skew the information which is collected and she urged that perhaps one ought to look carefully at the approach we were taking in relation to gathering this information.

One of the methods which seem to be preferred, is the time-use survey and that is the one on which this document prepared for the Caricom Secretariat was focusing. That one sought to make a finding as to the time expended on doing particular aspects of household labour and it followed the course of making entries into diaries over time as to the various activities that were carried out, and then drawing the conclusions based on that on-going process. That is what former Sen. Carol Merritt was urging. Also, any other method that may be used whereby one could look for the biases that can be revealed in this type of collection of information.

What I really want to turn to, are the benefits of what Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt so eloquently urged on us today. As the hon. Minister Collins said in Canada: "The power of statistics does not lie in the numbers, but rather in the use of those numbers." I think this is what Sen. Prof. Spence was getting at when he made the point that simply quantifying may not be where he would want to go and I can assure him that this Government is particularly concerned with where we take information of the quantification or the value once it has been collated.



Sen. Merritt herself provided the answer and I wish to commend it to hon. Senators. She suggested that the statistics can be used to inform governmental policy, action planning particularly as it affected these very women who are the victims of unwaged labour. Sen. Merritt's viewpoint found tremendous support in the very document from which I quoted and which was the coalition of the proceedings at the conference in Canada and this is what I want to focus our minds on, because what came out of it was that there are several areas where one can see immense benefits being derived from this computation of the contribution of women in the National Accounting System. Please forgive me if I focus particularly on the legal system because I dare say, there is a very intimate relationship between the economic system and the legal system of a country and once adjustments are being made to the economic system, I suggest respectfully that the legal system ought to adapt and reflect the new measures which have been introduced. I pose to hon. Senators this afternoon the scope of the problem and perhaps the effectiveness of what Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt is proposing in addressing the scope of the problem.

Let me put to you an instance where a household worker or a woman which we call a "stay-at-home woman" is hit by a motor car and is laid up for six to eight months and cannot do any of her usual household chores.

**3.10 p.m.**

Mr. President, when that matter, as any other matter, comes to the court of law, one would find that she would be awarded sums to compensate her for actual moneys expended in her medical care. She would be awarded a sum to compensate her for her pain and suffering but when it comes to the issue of her loss of income, that category would read nil. This is one of the injustices of the system that we, as attorneys, and we, as women, have had to face over the past years.

The legal system has developed in such a manner that the work of this type of woman is not given any value. So that if it were Sen. Beckles who was hit by that vehicle, whereas her loss of income may have been reading in the hundred thousands per month and per year, one would find that a woman who is regarded as a "stay-at-home" worker, hers would read nil. Is it that that woman has been doing any less than Sen. Beckles prior to her unfortunate accident? No. It is just that the system has developed whereby recognition is paid to the one who takes home, as the hon. Minister said, the tangible cash as opposed to the one who

expends the same amount of physical effort but does not have that tangible element to show.

I am suggesting that this is one of the first areas where the effect of Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt's Bill would be felt; in the legal system, which will now be forced to recognize and to put a value on that unfortunate woman's work in the household.

Mr. President, certainly the same applies if the woman had died.

Canada, to some extent, has gone ahead of us and the courts have already found in a case quoted as *Forbell and Dean* that that ought to be the case. The courts said that in such a case that woman's labour must be assessed based on what it would have cost to hire a replacement in the market domain for that woman who was hit in the accident.

A similar injustice prevails in relation to the division of property when a marriage breaks down. Again, the legal system has kept abreast with the injustices of the economic system in that if the woman who is a partner to that marriage were an attorney at law, a doctor, a teacher, a nurse and had worked throughout the period of her marriage, whether or not her name was inserted as an owner on that deed, the court would have allocated to her an automatic half share or interest in the property which has now to be divided on the breakdown of the marriage.

If it were a woman who had not gone out of the home, that half share gets whittled down to a one-third share. We have for years questioned the basis of this difference. Again, it is not that that "stay-at-home" woman has in her physical output contributed any less to the acquisition of the home. What she would have done was stayed at home and done the things which, if she had not done, would have had to be paid for at a market value.

However, the judicial system has not seen it fit to accept that kind of rationale. Instead, the injustice is perpetuated whereby that person is awarded a one-third share and she has to fight through all the able and eloquent lawyers that there are in order to get even that.

I am suggesting that the Bill before this Senate would bring a fresh awareness to the minds of the Judiciary so that perhaps there can be a redress of this long outstanding imbalance.

A similar situation prevails in family businesses. How often have we not seen an injustice where the legal owner of a family business, being a man, dies and he hands over to some third party, the interest in the business without even recourse

to his wife of 40/50 years who would have worked alongside him and worked her flesh to the bones in order to assist him in building that business.

The way he speaks, he does as though he is the one—"my business; it is mine"—and he alienates it as he wishes without recourse at all to that silent partner whose name may not have appeared on any of the documents but who, in terms of what she would have contributed to the business, would have done no less than he who claims to be the owner of it.

All of these are ways that we seek to avert what is now being termed the feminization of poverty in that we are now addressing specifically how women and their contributions can be recognized and valued at the level of the national accounting system.

Perhaps this Government may want to go a step further and not wait on the legal system to follow at the discretion of the judicial officer but perhaps to consider legislation that will follow what Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt has proposed and make clear, specific and unambiguous the position that the contribution of the woman in the circumstances that I have outlined must be taken into account and valued at the rate of what the value would have been if she were being paid for that contribution.

Mr. President, moving off the legal system, I make bold to say that this Government may wish not only to be guided in terms of what legislative changes would be made insofar as the judicial system is concerned but in other areas. One of them I draw your attention to, Sir, is recorded on page 16 of the report, done for the Caribbean Secretariat to which I drew your attention.

In one aspect of that report reference was made to some of the factors that the survey would take into consideration, and I was somewhat surprised to see what the survey wanted to find out were households that carried washing machines, videos, motor cars, clothes dryers, blenders, vacuum cleaners and so forth.

The reason for that is one which would interest a government such as ours which, as I said, would like its policies to be informed by the information that may be collected.

It is recorded that the lot of these women who work in the household is considerably eased and alleviated by the fact that they have these appliances and machinery which can assist them in doubling up on the time they use to do their household work.

That is very important to a government that has to understand that the extent to which running water is brought into a home alleviates the lot of the worker in that home and it is a very important consideration for a woman who is a worker in a household who has to be fetching water within a mile or a mile and a half, a woman who has to walk to the bus station to pick up her children, a woman who has to cook and depends on a reliable supply of electricity, a woman who has to go to the court and sit there waiting a whole day for the magistrate to get to her case, or to sit.

The information which is gathered, our government is saying, would provide some guidance in formulating the policies which should go to address the conditions of women who work in households.

**3.20 p.m.**

It does not stop there. We talk about the transportation system. If she does not have a car she has to depend on the bus to go to the health centre or to take the aged that she is caring for to the health centre. Our Government would like to know that if she has to work in the home and do these things that she can, at least, be provided with a reliable system of transportation to manage her time wisely.

Our Government would also want to know that she has time for herself to, perhaps, qualify in some better way to uplift herself, to train herself to do a business in the home; to pursue adult education courses. So that the ease with which she is able to produce the labour in the household is the extent to which she can develop, motivate and empower herself to reach greater heights; and this is what this Government intends to extract from the information to be collated under this measure before the Senate.

I go further on the issue of domestic violence, Mr. President. The experts have said that this problem has its genesis in the power imbalance between the sexes. Now, with the valuing of the work that a "stay-at-home" woman does, perhaps, would go a long way to addressing that imbalance which can be a very fundamental cause of the high incidence of domestic violence in this country.

So, again, we are seeking to extract from Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt some guidepost as to where a government that is responsible and is planning the future of this country—the men and women of this country—ought to go in putting down programmes and policies to address this.

Needless to say, the information collated would go a long way to promote the self-esteem of women. It would go a long way, perhaps, to eliminate some of the

exploitation of the females that goes on in any household. The boys do not want to wash wares because they think it is a female pastime. They do not want to cook or make up beds. With the valuing of this type of work, we on this side, hope that that type of mind-set in the male of the species may be eliminated or, at least, reduced.

Mr. President, that is basically what I would like to put on the table as we consider this measure and, perhaps, it is fitting that I assure Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt that she would not have to go through this process a third time. By this I mean, Sir, that she would not see us supporting this measure and then calling a general election in the next few days and have it lapse, and then have to go through it again. We can give her that assurance, and she ought to rest comfortably that this Bill would see itself to finality and to a stage where it can be fully implemented and perhaps serve to alleviate, as I said, the suffering of the women who are mainly affected by the injustices which I mentioned earlier.

I thank you very much, Sir.

**Sen. Nirupa Oudit:** Mr. President, I want to make just a few very brief comments on this Bill which, obviously, is one that is wholeheartedly endorsed by all present here today.

Firstly, I thank Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt for bringing such an important human development Bill to this Senate. It is very significant and from the debate that has already taken place, I am concerned that the real significance of this Bill has not yet been realized. Perhaps that might be a good thing.

What Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt has done in bringing this Bill to the Senate is, she has taken a global initiative that has been pioneered by the United Nations and tailored this to reflect the local situation relating to unremunerated work for people in general but, particularly, women in agriculture, family businesses, social support and care giving roles. These areas of unremunerated work are of particular significance and importance to Trinidad and Tobago.

The element that I wish to comment further on, or to add my voice to, is the question of whether we are adding value by assigning value to unremunerated work; and I wonder if as a country or a government we realize what a powerful tool this can be. In businesses and industry it is a very well-known and well-accepted principle that you can only manage what you can measure; and if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it. The fact is, when you think about how

developing countries plan, you wonder why developing countries, in spite of all the money that is allocated to them, continue to remain in a cycle of development.

One has to wonder whether it is not a question of additional resource allocation, but more effective use of current resources provided. In other words, if as a country we have a budget of \$1 billion to be allocated and if the Prime Minister is sitting with his Cabinet, I would imagine that the Ministers of Social Development; Health, and Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources would find it of great value to know exactly how much it costs within the country of Trinidad and Tobago to grow food, provide health care services, and provide services to the physically handicapped.

What it does from a business point of view is that it gives us a solid information base to be able to assign money and budgets. That, to me, is the real significance of this Bill, the ability to measure work that is actually going on and on that basis, manage it. Again it ties back, not to the question of additional resources, but to the question of effective and efficient utilization of the resources that we have. That is the comment that I wish to make on the Bill and, again, commend Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt for bringing this very historic and significant Bill before this Senate.

Thank you.

**Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie:** Mr. President, I would like to begin by supporting all the speakers who have contributed to this debate before and by congratulating Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt for bringing this Bill.

I want to look at some key areas of the Bill. Where does one look for these people who are performing unremunerated work? The tendency many times is to look just in the homes, but I would add that there are many voluntary organizations out there: Girl Guides; Boy Scouts; Brigades; Lions and Rotary Clubs; PTAs; NGOs and Church Groups; and we need to look at the types of contributions that these people make to the welfare and development of society without being paid.

**3.30 p.m.**

I would not say that we do not have accounting of unpaid work; I would say that we have a convenient valuing and accounting of that, because whenever we want to talk about the reasons for juvenile delinquency, and so forth, you often hear it said that it is because very many women have left the homes where they used to work and are working outside of the home. It is saying, therefore, that the value of contribution they were making was a very great one, because here they

have left that home and have gone outside to work and the devastation to society, you could not put a cost on it; it is so expensive. Therefore, I am saying that we count it conveniently, and what I think we are saying now is that it must be counted all the time. We look at the breakdown of family and all of that.

Mr. President, so drilled have women become to the fact that people think that what they do is not valuable, that when they go to complete forms which ask for their occupation, some of them do not even worry to put "housewife"; they state "unemployed", as if they do nothing at all. I am saying that at times our own concept of what we do is one that says to the world that we, ourselves, do not count the value of what we do. So I would like us to look at that.

When it comes to the recording of it, I join with Sen. Moore-Miggins. There is a differentiation between the conditions of women in their homes. We see it in teaching. If you are a teacher of normal children, your ratio is 25 children to a teacher; if you are a teacher of handicapped children, your ratio is between five or eight to one. It means that there is something that says that depending on the conditions under which you are working, the value of what you do is obviously different. So if I have to scrub all day on a scrubbing board and you only have to put your clothes in a washing machine and press a button, obviously, I am labouring harder. I would like to see that some sort of recognition is paid to the types of conditions under which we work.

When you come to me with your survey form and you ask me, "how many children do you care for?", would it make a difference if I say, "I care for three normal children and one handicapped child", or if I say, "I care for four children"? I would like to know that there is a differentiation.

We are also dealing with a cultural thing. I will tell you what I mean by that. In years gone by there was no free secondary education and parents had to pay for the education of their children, and if a father had the choice of paying for a son or a daughter, he automatically paid to send the son. Regardless of whether that son had more intellectual ability, or capacity, or intelligence than the girl, the boy was chosen. One of the reasons that was given many times, especially by the ordinary father, was this: "When I educate this girl, she is only going to be a housewife; a mother of children. All she is going to do with that education is look after children." In other words, that father was saying, "when I educate my son, he may become a lawyer, therefore, his value is much higher than the daughter whom I educate and she is only going to stay at home and take care of her children."

You see, it diminishes that value of rearing children and keeping a home going and so forth. I would like to join with Sen. London who said it is a cultural thing where we have to impress upon people that whatever you do to contribute to the development of people to make our society better and to help, is something that we have to put a very high cost on and at times it makes us feel that it is something that we cannot quantify in dollars and cents. So I would like us to think of those things when we are quantifying and when we are recording.

I agree with the household survey once every three years, because situations change. Today I may be just, what people would call, an ordinary housewife, but in the next two years my situation may change. So we need to ensure that there is maintenance, monitoring and continuity, that we do not just start and stop there.

I join again with Sen. Moore-Miggins, what do we do with the statistics? Are we going to make the people who—and I am saying that it is not a matter of jobs. Everybody works! It probably is that everybody does not have a paying job, but everybody works. So if we try to put a value on what people do, I think even people who tend to feel that they do nothing—they do something but they tend to feel that they do nothing—when they become aware of the fact that even though they are just rearing goats or chickens or planting their own lettuce at home and only supplying the home, they are contributing in a way that can be counted, hence they are of value. Obviously, it would make them feel that if they are contributing to the development, their esteem is lifted.

Much has been said and I would not like to repeat what the other Senators have already said. We agree with the Bill; we congratulate our fellow Senator for bringing it and may I thank her for the opportunity to express what I had to say.

Thank you very much.

**Sen. Nathaniel Moore:** Mr. President, may I say from the start that I stand to support the Bill as everybody else has decided to do. I, for one, believe that the Bill is a very good one and the intention is very good as well. What makes the Bill good, to my mind, is that it has a good intention behind it. Nevertheless, we are not living in a world of perfection and anything that is good can be improved upon. Not that I intend to say in what way we can improve it, but I am just making that observation. So much has been eloquently said already, that there are just one or two areas I want to speak on, because I do not think it is necessary to repeat what other Senators have said. If even I intended to say some of these things, which I did, I will not spend time to say them anymore.



The point I want to emphasize is the use made of the statistics. It is said very often that so much can be done with statistics, even to tell lies sometimes. Two Senators, Sen. Moore-Miggins and Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie, have emphasized that proper use can be made of the statistics when they are had. I liked particularly an observation made by the new Senator, Sen. Oudit, when she mentioned the idea of, what I call, productivity. It is not so much the amount of money you spend or the amount of resources you devote to any particular cause, but how the resources are used. She observed that that might make the difference between a developed country and a developing country.

**3.40 p.m.**

I know there will be great difficulty in quantifying certain kinds of unremunerated labour, and I am wondering how we would do it. If there are certain limitations with the statistics we collect in terms of GDP, GNP and so forth then when we use them for comparison it sometimes becomes almost impossible. How does one value the services of a bigger brother—I would not say a mother or a father in a family, but a bigger brother—who goes with his younger brother to school and protects him all day until he is back home? The younger brother feels safe when he is playing or is threatened because when he looks up and sees his bigger brother there he knows that he would be protected. Perhaps, the alternative would be to hire a security officer and place him at the school to look after this chap. I do not know how one would value the work that this bigger brother has done.

How does one value the work of a mother who has to bear a child in her body for several months? She then nurtures this child who, perhaps, is awake the entire night crying with gripes and so forth, and tends to the child at all the times seeing that he/she is fed regularly until that child can fend for himself/herself. How do we actually value that?

Without going into details, and giving more examples, I am saying that perhaps, as with many other issues, if one has to put a monetary value to this, it would have to be arbitrary in any sense. There are people being paid by the month and sometimes one asks: How does one break down the earnings for the month in terms of what one does each day? Perhaps, it is not as easy as the fellow who is being paid for piece-work whereby he would be paid for plastering so many square feet of wall; road paved or something of the sort. It is a different thing, and I think one would have to impute some value to it nevertheless.

In coming back to the point about this idea of value, I, too, think that one of the reasons we suffer so much in our country—and we can still call ourselves, perhaps, developing as we are forever developing and not reaching standards of development that we can be satisfied with; I do not know if anybody would agree with that—is because of what we put in for what we earn. I would give a practical example.

Very often workers who were employed outdoors in the area where I live used to be going back home when I was going to school. I would meet them with their cutlasses and tools wrapped up going back home and that was between 7.30 to 7.45 a.m. I very often wondered what work these people did, and how much work they put in for the pay they expected to get. Some people may argue that they went to work very early, but I know that where I lived there were workers who left home at 6.45 or 6.30 a.m. I know that some of them worked no more than one and a half or two hours, yet they were given a day's pay.

I asked myself: Are we getting value for the money spent from these workers? Is that a satisfactory level of productivity which would permit us to develop as a country and reach a satisfactory level of development? This is why I was heartened by the Minister of Works and Transport when, not too long ago, he stated more than once that he is going to insist upon productivity in his Ministry. He is going to see to it that he gets value for his money. If that is done then one can say that the work one is getting can reflect the true value of the money we put into it.

I also want to think about the regard that one has for public property in our country. I know we talk about unremunerated labour, but I am saying that the regard we have for labour, or employment, must be taken into consideration also. Very often we see people defacing or damaging public property. I see it at schools and I am pained to know that children sometimes do not value things—desks, doors and partitions—that must be used for their own convenience and health. Doors would be slammed, desks would be stood upon and pushed aside, people would just throw garbage about the streets and carry out all acts of vandalism against public property.

I am saying this to emphasize that, generally, as a part of our general regard for things, we regard women and domestic work very lightly. That is the point I am trying to make. I do not see why we have to put a monetary value to a woman's or man's work in the home in order for people to appreciate that the work has value. That is why we have problems. I am not against assigning some

kind of arbitrary value, as I said before. My problem is that we are saying, perhaps, it would value the work better and there would be a high appreciation for what is done in the home if one puts a monetary value to it. That is perhaps true, but I am asking: Does that kind of reasoning come from a stable and objective mind?

I am holding that people should be able to appreciate the value of things quite apart from their monetary value. I would be happy when my children grow up, have passed through school and qualified for a job. But even while they are going to school I would be happy to know that they are mannerly, healthy, courteous and that they would make a contribution to society. I would feel very happy. To me that is the reward for unremunerated work done in the home because parents know what their responsibility to their children ought to be and they just do it. When their children grow up and succeed then they feel rewarded for the effort they have put in training them.

On the other hand, one should think of parents—as some of those described by my colleague from Tobago, Sen. Moore-Miggins—in court, going there to see about concerns of their children who got into trouble. The parents who have to face problems from their children, I am sure, would feel very unhappy about that. In a way one may say that it may be a reward for work not done. So it would seem to me that somehow there is a price on the work we do. If we do it well, we may get just reward.

### **3.50 p.m.**

This is the difference between the real payment for work done and the monetary payments because one gets so much satisfaction and indescribable value for work well done. I am not saying that sometimes one does not get paid in bad money for good work. It happens, but very often in the matter of unremunerated work in the home in terms of the family upbringing, more often than not, one gets the value for the work one puts in or puts out in one's family.

Mr. President, I noticed that this Bill deals mainly with women although we speak about unremunerated work in and around the home, and this is why I agree with Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie that sometimes the women are responsible for the reward they get for the work they put in because they may be ashamed of themselves. I believe that no woman should be ashamed of being a housewife. I know very well what Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie spoke about. At least, in my religion and upbringing, and I think for many of us, if not all of us, we have learnt that at least a good name is rather to be chosen than silver or gold and to train a child in

the way he should grow that when he is old he will not depart. If as a parent in the home you have done that then you have nothing to be ashamed of. You have done your part and as a society, perhaps, where we fail is in not giving due recognition to parents who have brought up real good children and have done a great job in their homes and in their communities. We have not recognized them enough. I doubt whether paying them a sum would do it.

I believe that some of the highest paid jobs today are not what we would approve of. For example—and I do not know much about it—those persons who deal in drugs I understand they get a great deal of money very quickly. That is why so many young people are lured into lower levels to join in order to get some quick money; that is quick money but that is no respectable job. That is no work that people would actually commend for anybody who wants to live decently. It is not the amount of money that you hold down for the job that should make the job worthwhile or attractive.

I want to put this dimension on it because it is a call for people who are doing unremunerated work in the home not to despair when they are not paid, not to feel somewhat belittled or inferior about the work they are doing because in my view—and in the view of many well-meaning and thinking people—they are engaged in the highest work and deserve the highest level of commendation and that is how we must see it.

I agree that in putting a monetary value to the work many people would put more value on the work itself. I agree with this because it is the kind of psychology in our country. That is the way people look at things; more money, more prestige. I support the idea of putting a value however difficult it might be. I know our statisticians would work out something and put some kind of value and somehow we can keep revising the system from time to time. With the commitment of the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs—which we heard in this Senate some time ago—the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Housing and Settlements, the Minister of Social Development, we would come together to ensure that when these monetary values have been placed on the work—and any sphere where actually money is allocated for areas at least to help somewhat—the programme they build together would serve and help to make the optimum use of these resources. That would actually result, not only in happier women in the society, but also the total society being happier with more healthy children, not only physically, but also morally and mentally to face the

problems which are in the world; face the many temptations which they have to overcome which many of us as parents in earlier times did not have to face.

So we would see higher levels of productivity in and outside of the home, and we can say at the end that Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt's Bill would have served its part in awakening our sensibilities to the importance of the work done at home and around the home, and perhaps we would be able to measure it against the official GDP, how great a job might be done by people who are not getting paid for it. As I said, we believe this will help people understand better the value of this work.

Mr. President, my hope and my prayer is that we would find a way of appreciating and valuing the work in the home other than in a monetary way so that we would have the better society we are dreaming of and, somehow, we may feel happy that we, as a Government and as a people, would have done our best to make our country a better place for all of us.

I thank you, Mr. President.

**Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh:** Mr. President, I wish to associate with all the other hon. Senators in complimenting Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt, who, through the Bill she has piloted, reminds all of us of persons, both men and women, who make a significant contribution to the maintenance of the social and economic order through their work, although for such work there is no monetary reward.

Mr. President, I register my support for the Bill that is before this honourable Senate. The day is not far off when we must consider the social implications of the increasing number of men who are unemployed in this country. Many of them work in their homes, or in the wider communities in activities for which there is no remuneration. But for the purposes of this Bill, as I noticed in all the contributions so far, I too would like to join with other Senators in considering particularly the unremunerated work of women.

Why should we count the unremunerated work of women, the housewives, the girls in the home, the unemployed meaning the non-salaried? They have been employed nevertheless in home responsibilities—valuable work, caring for the elderly and engaged in social work.

The Bill calls for the CSO and other public bodies to produce and maintain statistics, to quantify and record the monetary value of such work. The question is, to what end? What is the good and value of that exercise? It is a question that I have been asking myself.

**4.00 p.m.**

What can be the possible focus and inspiration of such a Bill? Someone works and that work is not counted and appreciated. I dare to think that the exercise is a very courageous one. I do not believe that the summons from such a Bill is merely an arid computation, dry calculation and estimation in figures of the value of certain work. I want to go beyond that. I am only seeing figures before me. I see some people going around collecting statistics. I want to say more than that.

I think this Bill has more than an economic face. I detect an implicit moral perspective which demands closer attention. This is my concern. There are those within the nation's labour force who do not receive a cheque or salary slip and whose work is often taken for granted. Such labour is often sacrificial and considered by some to be menial, whether it be of household responsibilities or to the infirmed. In several instances, maybe, that work often passes without appreciation.

This is my contribution to the understanding of this Bill. What is sad is that no work is taken for granted, but people are undervalued and taken for granted. It is not about looking for, and collecting statistics. What about the people behind what is called statistics? In the case of women, if the Bill seeks to quantify their unremunerated work, it is because through our cultural and sociological conditioning we have failed to appreciate the role and function of women, the place and contribution of women within the social system. By extension, and this is most important, we have robbed the woman of the dignity associated with that work which she has been doing and continues to do.

I think that the explosive power behind this Bill is not merely statistics. There is a moral question of human value and worth. This is why I like this Bill. Is it not true that in many societies today, women have been denied the status, equity and right which belong to them since creation of being partners with men, co-workers, and the help mate concept, to the extent of being with men, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh? This is the key in the establishment of an acceptable gender sensitive society.

I submit that the Central Statistical Office may employ and equip the most knowledgeable staff who can indeed place an accurate monetary value on the unremunerated work of women. Let us say they can do it. I believe that Trinidad and Tobago would be no better off if we do not build and maintain more acceptable attitudes in the man/woman, boy/girl relationship based on mutual respect, appreciation and the recognition that both have been called to the sacred task of preserving the created order.

I believe that we are a very long way off in bridging the traditional gender gaps which are artificial and harmful to human development. I hope that this debate will challenge the home, the religious organizations in Trinidad and Tobago and the school. Everyone in society should begin to teach the young of the need for a healthier gender sensitive environment.

I join with Sen. The Hon. Dr. Phillips who in her contribution made reference to the gender violence in schools. That is a very wise observation which this society has been looking at for the longest while. At teenaged level, violence against girls has been taking frightening proportions. It is a vicious circle. It is as though it began in the home, it is now taken in the classroom and then goes back in the home in later years when these young people get married. It is one of the negative forces. The Minister is quite correct that it is one of the forces we must address. If not in the schools, gender violence is taken in the streets. I do not know how we are going to deal with it but I feel very ashamed that somehow we are failing. This spill over of gender violence from the classroom to the streets, the molestation, harassment and abuse of girls are issues with which we have to deal.

I do not know if the maxi-taxis are still on strike. I hope they resolve their problems. Could you imagine because of the strike what would happen to the young girls who are working? They would be afraid to walk down Frederick Street because of the teenaged boys in this country who would touch and abuse them. They are not protected. We have to do something about that. I think we have to go back home and look at the husband/wife, father/mother relationship and home and family living. It is most important.

Collecting statistics is good. It has its value but we are losing the appreciation of the human person in this boy/girl and man/woman relationship. We must get that otherwise the collection of statistics might just be merely a good exercise. I do not know what it is going to prove. If we do not improve our own relationships with one another at that level, given the traditional misconceptions of the place of women within the social order, I believe that at the earliest age boys need to be taught to respect girls. We must do that. Together they are to fashion a new society where each person's humanity is counted. We have to pray and hope for the day when it would no longer be necessary even to attempt to place a monetary value on such works as love, kindness, compassion and self-giving. That is the ideal. We have to work towards it. Why not start now?

Once again, I congratulate Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt and all the other women of this country for taking the lead in sensitizing our society to the need for us to develop healthier attitudes in the relationship between the sexes.

Thank you.

**Sen. Carol Cuffy-Dowlat:** Mr. President, as I rise to support the Bill entitled: "An Act to require the Central Statistical Office and other public bodies to produce and maintain statistics relative to the counting of unremunerated work and to provide a mechanism for quantifying and recording the monetary value of such work", I must first take the opportunity to congratulate Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt for having the foresight to have brought such a Bill before this honourable Senate.

**4.10 p.m.**

I must also take the opportunity to thank and pay public recognition to Mrs. Clothil Walcott and the National Union of Domestic Employees for the unremunerated work they have been doing over the last three decades.

Mr. President, I fully endorse the sentiments expressed by all my colleagues here today. The counting of unremunerated work is indeed important in this society. I would re-emphasize the need to compute this unwaged work. If the work traditionally done is quantified in the economy so that there is an economic price tag or value on it, then this could be translated into the legislative arena and possibly factored into policy decisions on how to invest taxpayers' dollars.

I am saying this in support of what my colleague, Sen. Moore-Miggins, has said, that if we begin to count unremunerated work, then the legal fraternity would have to take cognizance of the contributions made in the household by women and children. It also would probably mean that the Social Welfare and Pensions Divisions would have then to examine contributions given to old age pensioners against those given to persons who receive pensions from former employers. It is important because these statistics may guide us in deciding where, how and what social welfare programmes must be effected.

Counting unwaged work would also strengthen the demand in pay equity and it will increase the status and dignity of household work, be it domestic, agriculture or otherwise. It would give everyone the benefit of being able to see in



black and white what his productive value is to society. It addresses our self-esteem. Work defines our life, our position in the community and our status as citizens. If our work has no value, it is the same as saying that we have no value. This in itself is sufficient reason why this Bill is necessary.

There are those who would say that counting unremunerated work would amount primarily to an accounting change and would have no real tax implications. There are those who would argue against it on the basis that collecting comprehensive, meaningful data would be difficult and unrealistic. Mr. President, I can only answer them by saying that self-esteem and self-worth does not carry a price tag. If at the end of the day the only achievement is that people's value of unwaged work will be appreciated in real terms, then this exercise is well worth the effort, initiative and drive of its proponents.

I thank you.

**Sen. Dr. Eric St. Cyr:** Mr. President, I wish to make just a few very brief comments. The first is that there is a sort of paradox that we have been coming to that whereas we recognize that unremunerated work puts a low esteem on those who perform it, because the society is biased in the direction of money, the solution, we seem to be adducing, is that we put a money value on unremunerated work. I think that was the central point of my colleague, Sen. Moore.

The debate really shows us that this is a very complex moral, social and philosophical problem with which we are grappling. I think that when the Bill is passed, as we all would support it, one of the first things we have to do is to start with a technical working party that would attempt to put parameters and structures to what we will do and how best we would do it, and include the very important issue that data is either for or against some perspective or hypothesis. Data is not free, so we have to be aware of that.

I want to make comments on two issues. One is some of the assumptions that have come through. In the social sciences, two of the critical institutions are the household and the firm and we are long past a subsistence system where we make and produce everything we consume ourselves. We now live in a world of production and exchange and the fundamental assumption of the social sciences is that production takes place in a realm called the firm and consumption, which is the using up of what we produce, takes place in the household.

The first thing that worries me about the need to pin down exactly what we are doing is that lying behind the Bill is a moving away of the thinking of the

consuming unit as the household where an assumed structure would be a husband, a wife and children, and perhaps a mother-in-law. We are moving in the direction of individualizing the whole thing, that the man produces and he lays claim to what he produces; the woman produces and lays claims to what she produces, rather than a joint collective household effort.

I would not attempt at this time to trace the implications of this because I think they are quite fundamental. One of the values is that of sharing. I am somewhat bothered by the notion that we are introducing in the home a competitive concept to measure each person's contribution.

I want to make some very brief technical comments that, hopefully, when that working party gets going, would initiate this discussion. Mention was made by Sen. Moore-Miggins of the concept of the production boundary. Separating the sphere of production from the sphere of consumption is this notional boundary line which we could illustrate this way. When I shave myself in the morning, which is a task that the ladies are spared, or even when I tie my tie, which is another task the ladies are spared—which is perhaps why we could let them make the coffee while we are doing those things—I am both producing a service and using it at the same time. So production and consumption are taking place in the same instant.

**4.20 p.m.**

The production boundary in the marketplace, where the vast bulk of what we produce is exchanged, enables us by matching up supply and demand forces, to put a money value on what is produced. The issue here is that there is no market for unremunerated work, so that Sen. Moore-Miggins' point that we would have to put some arbitrary notional value, I shudder to think of some of the services one may want to put a money value on, and go to the market and get an imputed price there. *[Laughter]* Even if we were to find similar services we would still have the technical problem that one cannot impute a value to a large untraded stock of goods or services on the basis of small marginal amounts which are traded.

I know the purpose behind this Bill and I think it is good. I know that it has taken the capitalist gross domestic product and extended it, more fully, to the full range of goods and services produced in society. We must also remember that the Eastern bloc countries have a concept of material product which is only goods, not services; in other words they use a smaller sub-set of the total bundle of

things we use than the capitalist countries which use the gross domestic product which comprises goods and services. In this measure we are extending to the full set, goods, services and other intangibles like love, care and so forth. I see Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt nodding in disapproval. Mr. President, by raising some of these issues I am saying that a very well-intentioned move for the society would require a tremendous amount of intellectual effort to clarify and pin this matter down, if we are to make it both meaningful and policy-useful.

As I said, Mr. President, I would support this because I think it improves what we have, but these remarks are intended to warn that we just cannot go and do a very simple elementary exercise without ending up with a morass of numbers that would not make sense to anyone at all.

I thank you, Sir.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I think it might be appropriate that we break for tea at this juncture, just before Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt replies because we have to go into committee stage thereafter. The Senate will resume at 4.55 p.m.

**4.25 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**4.55 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Sen. Penelope Beckles:** Mr. President, the Bill before this Senate seeks to require the Central Statistical Office and other public bodies to include a calculation of unremunerated work in the production of statistics that relate to the gross domestic product and other accounts including the calculation of the gross national product.

Let me first of all congratulate my colleagues, both the Government and Independent Senators, who contributed to this debate. We were fortunate to have very informative and excellent contributions of a high level on what I consider to be a very technical, somewhat complex and interesting area. What is interesting about this area, is the fact that if we look at it very closely, it includes women, men and children and obviously the focus on women by most of the speakers would have arisen because of the fact that women, to a large extent, are the ones who are mainly unemployed, under-employed, or in some cases, almost unemployable.

I think it is very important, particularly when one listens to the concerns of Sen. Dr. St. Cyr as it relates to, what I call, collective responsibility on value sharing that we underscore the importance of men and children in this debate.

Mr. President, I share that concern, and, to some extent, it is a valid one if only because so often the debate continues about the role and function of the women insofar as fashioning the household, particularly now where so many of our women are getting involved in careers. Therefore, the traditional role of the woman, that is to say, housewife and mother and what we might consider the matrifocal household is being moved away and, therefore, the concern is being raised in several quarters as to the focus and role of women as it relates to the whole issue of the family.

He spoke about the competition as it relates to men and women and the whole issue of value between the men and women as we see the work in relation to this unremunerated work. The concern maybe that a woman in a household now would say even though she is not being paid, if one were to check the fact that she is getting up in the morning at 4.00 a.m.—the same time as a person who goes to work—she prepares breakfast and lunch, and when one returns home at 8.00 p.m she is still working and when one goes to bed at night, she is still working and therefore, if one were to calculate her work, she is probably earning three times one's salary. Therefore, the concern that he raised is very valid.

I would like to think that it would be incumbent for those who have taken the decision to accept this Bill, and this serious concern that was raised by Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt, to recognize the need for educating the population to ensure that her intention insofar as piloting this Bill is realized. If the Bill becomes law and we did not recognize some of the far-reaching consequences, not just in terms of the gross domestic product, but in terms of the relationship between men and women and the family, then I do not think that we would have actually crystallized and put in place the mechanisms to ensure that this Bill actually comes into effect, the way we intended. I am sure that the fears and concerns of the Senators could be dealt with adequately if we recognize that sometimes disparity and insecurity exist in some of the relationships, and that concern could be adequately dealt with if we were to take cognizance of the importance of educating the men, women and the children in the household. So often, as parents and adults, we do not pay concern to the fact that the children themselves in the household do not think that there is any sort of calculation for their unremunerated work, and whether or not it is a fact that they should see that as important. The point is that when we hear the concerns even in terms of men and women, we also need to recognize the concerns *vis-à-vis* the children and the parents.

Very often children remain at home to go and work in the garden and they do not go to school and are not really paid a salary, and that situation is just as important as the mother who is a housewife and at home working and her income is not being calculated. When we look at those issues very closely, we look at the other spin-off issues that are equally relevant, that is to say, sometimes, it has almost become acceptable that a parent could decide that the education of a child is not necessary and the fact that the child could stay at home and assist that family in earning an income is what we have to look at.

**5.05 p.m.**

Mr. President, what makes it become more and more complex is that sometimes it is a situation of survival where the parents actually are doing that because they feel that if that child did not stay and assist in that agricultural production, then the family would not be able to survive properly.

I am saying that in terms of ensuring that the intention behind this legislation, ultimately, is properly passed on and it materializes to the extent that we feel comfortable that all members of the society benefit from it, we need to ensure that the educational process is continued from time to time. So that if we accept that every three years this statistical data is to be collected, then it would continue to inform, as my colleagues Sen. Cuffy-Dowlat and the Minister indicated, the whole issue of the economic and social policy and influence the decision by the Government.

I was extremely heartened and I must congratulate my colleague, Sen. Moore-Miggins, for what I consider a very excellent contribution, particularly as it relates to focusing on the importance of the consequences of this particular statistical data and information not being transported and not being transferred to persons in the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Insofar as the whole development of jurisprudence, if this information is not passed on to those persons—the arm that really interprets the legislation to the benefit of those who are disadvantaged—then we may not have that coming into fruition.

If we were to be honest about some of the comments that we hear sometimes from the men and, at times, the women, in some of the areas that she specifically spoke about—in issues such as property settlement where two persons have lived together, the male client may come to you and you would ask him, “Do you have anything in mind to give to your wife now that you all are separated?” and he says, “Well, she has never worked, you know; she has never done anything; she has never contributed to the home; all she did was have children and when I

married her she was not anything and she just worked at home and looked after the children; I was always responsible for paying the mortgage and buying the car.”

His initial view is she is not entitled to anything by virtue of never having worked. That is where the whole issue of the competition, the concern, lies and there is need to educate both men and women in those particular areas.

So that one would spend a considerable length of time not just informing them of what the law is, but also trying to convince them that living with a person for 20/25 years and providing that person with meals and assisting him or her with his or her clothing and making sure that that person has had a happy marriage for 20 years, ought to be considered, what one calls, work to the extent that in deciding how the property ought to be settled, they should even in their own good conscience not come to the conclusion that their wife or spouse should not be entitled to anything.

This Bill, in itself, once it is properly put across to the population—men, women and children—we would be amazed at the extent to which we can, in a very serious way, benefit from what has come out in this exercise. From time to time, all the critical players need to get together. Very often our men folk feel that when we discuss these issues it is a question of the women only being concerned about taking from the men if and when the time arises that they have to distribute the money.

We must accept that fortunate or unfortunate, money has been the method used to purchase items and survive. Therefore, the fact that you either do not have access to it or you do not have it at all could be extremely destructive and could lead to all the several things that the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women’s Affairs just spoke about which we must, as a society, become extremely concerned about.

We have reached the stage where some of our young children, seven or eight years old, are committing very serious crimes. If we were to link some of the issues that were raised during this debate with what is happening now in our society, we would recognize how important it is for us to sit down and understand exactly what the intention of this Bill is in order that we really move forward.

Mr. President, the challenge really as it relates to this Bill is to develop new techniques which are designed to capture unremunerated work as well as the potentially economic contributions that are very often made by domestic persons.

All of us when we were growing up, some of our mothers or grandmothers would have been able to sew or design outfits for us from the time we were babies up until we are adults. In some cases, some of us still prefer our mother, grandmother, or even our father, to do so because they are the only persons who might be able to sew a particular outfit or tailor a particular suit in the way that we would like. When we look at that development from baby to adulthood and the various activities that would have been done over the years, then we would recognize the importance of this Bill.

We are looking at things like sewing and ironing, domestic things at home. Even those of us who may have grown up in rural areas may have been very fortunate for either our mother or father to have a kitchen garden and to feel comfortable enough that almost everything that we ate would have been grown right in our backyards. Once we are able to honestly look at ourselves and our own development and our own unique way in which we grew up, we would realize that in some way this situation here applies to every one of us.

It was almost two decades ago when in Mexico City they actually first started to recognize the importance of looking at this whole issue of the calculation of unremunerated work in the production of statistics as it related to gross domestic product. When this is made law, we would be the only country in the Caribbean that would have piloted such a Bill through our Senate and House of Representatives. Therefore, Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt must really be congratulated for having Trinidad and Tobago put on the map as it relates to this particular Bill. I am sure that our arguments both in the Senate and the House would be used in some of the other Caribbean territories, certainly, when they themselves see it fit to pilot this particular Bill, or similar Bills, through their respective Parliaments.

**5.15 p.m.**

Mr. President, the critical issue here is not just about being able to collect statistics and have surveys and statistical information. But if we are to really inform ourselves in terms of some of our social policies and particularly in terms of the Ministry as they relate to women's affairs, I think that the information we collect could be used to inform so many of the other different things we do as they relate to men, women and children. I think that, once we recognize that this is important, we will be moving in the right direction.

I think of the women who, so often, literally work two shifts—the women who are career-oriented. They leave home and work their normal 8.00 a.m.—

4.00 p.m. shift. Having returned home, they continue from 4.00 p.m. until whatever time they complete their housewifely duties. Recognition of this type of work can bring a very positive effect into one's family life, but sometimes we do not want to associate the whole issue of money and remuneration with work that is not calculated. Perhaps we should ask ourselves: why so often we do not either wish to recognize each other, or are upset at persons asking for recognition?

I think when we ask ourselves those questions and answer them we inform ourselves that the society as a whole needs to take another look at how we recognize each other and how we must come to the conclusion that very often we conveniently decide that we do not want to recognize each other. Therefore we say, "okay, fine, you are a housewife and everything that you want I can provide for you, therefore why do you want to know what is the value of your work?" Sometimes, if we really listen to what the other is saying and understand that the issue of recognition can change a society, or one's family life, then we can use this Bill and what has been debated here to move Trinidad and Tobago and the whole issue of family life forward. Then we may begin to recognize that we do not have to fear some of the concerns raised by some of my colleagues as they relate to competition and so forth, because the recognition of the value of that work becomes almost automatic.

Mr. President, I want to end by congratulating Clothil Walcott, as some of my other colleagues did. There are so many NGOs and so many other women who have really worked tirelessly in different ways in bringing this particular issue alive. There are so many different NGOs which are managed by people like Hazel Brown, or Rhoda Reddock. I could mention the Rape Crisis Centre. So many other groups who in different ways would have assisted in putting this issue in the forefront. But, of course, the person of the moment is really Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt. We must never forget, as we are discussing the word 'recognition', that we recognize all the almost unremunerated work that she would have done in order to prepare this Bill that is before this honourable Senate.

Maybe, Mr. President, it would be very fitting of me, since we are dealing with this particular Bill, to congratulate my colleague on the other side, Sen. Cuffy-Dowlath for her elevation to the position of Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Settlements [*Desk thumping*] and I think that in itself is also an indication of recognition of unremunerated work she has been doing over the years in the field of housing.



Mr. President, I, too, support this Bill and I look forward to it becoming law and also to Trinidad and Tobago continuing to be on the map because of the presentation of this Bill by Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt.

Thank you.

**Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt:** Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking everybody who has taken part in this debate today. I would, particularly, like to thank everybody who has taken so much time and effort and put so much thought into their contributions, because I think that the level of debate today was higher than it sometimes is; and it is one of which I am very proud and would make sure it gets reflected and sent to various other countries in the world, where people are going to be following in our footsteps and debating this very issue, both in the Caribbean and abroad. I am really very proud to be able to do this on the basis of such a high level of contributions.

Mr. President, I would like to start off by commenting on the Minister's very interesting and thoughtful contribution, particularly, the eight-point programme which she identified and which I thought was extremely useful and will be, I am sure, a guide to many other people. It went right through the whole range of the different kinds of definitions of unremunerated work, and it is going to be of great assistance, I am sure, in developing the sort of policy that can arise out of this kind of statistical gathering.

She started off with evaluating the minimum monetary value of what it costs to bring up a child safely and carefully. I would like to make one point, Mr. President, and that is that, nowhere in this Bill has there been any attempt to try to put a monetary value on love or caring. I think I made the point, when I was presenting the Bill, that one cannot put a monetary value on love, caring, thoughtfulness or tenderness. If one does work with love and caring, it is far better done, as we all know, whether it is a debate in the Senate; or making a chair; or painting a picture; or writing a calypso; or scrubbing a floor; or making a meal. It comes out much better. But we are not trying in any way in this Bill to put a monetary value on the caring part of it. That is something which is non-tangible in a very real way. We were trying to get recognition for the other areas; and the Minister's eight-point plan, I thought, was a very good guide. It is an eight-step programme of community care.

Sen. London spoke about a change in the attitude of young men towards parenting; and built that very nicely, I thought, into the debate on this Bill. He expanded the concept of parenting to go beyond just those—not just caring for

those children who are your own, but expanding the concept of "household". I think that the household surveys which we have included in the Bill will cover various kinds of households and take care of the concerns that he has.

Sen. Prof. Spence, who has very kindly seconded this Bill, did make a very good plea, once again, for the household surveys, and asked why we have to go to the World Bank to get a survey that tells us that 25 per cent of our households are operating below the poverty line when we should be doing this ourselves. I think that is an extremely important point, and I agree with him that the outcome of this sort of work will be to inform national policy on social and economic development in various areas.

I am sorry that Sen. Moore-Miggins is not here. I thought that her contribution was extremely valid and I echo Sen. Beckles' congratulations to her on it. There is a point that she made that I learnt much from listening to this debate. I thought that I had learned as I have been working on this Bill for two and a half, or three and a half, or four and a half years, or whatever time it was. But by listening to people's different points of view, I realize that there were some things which I did not emphasize enough and some things that I underestimated. One of those is the point that she made that the undervaluing of paid domestic workers in a society will lead to undervaluing of unremunerated work generally.

This is something that we have recognized all the way through in dealing with this concept, but perhaps we did not spend enough time on it, and I was really glad that she brought it up, particularly in the context of work done in the court. The whole question of the loss to a family—although it is not paid, well, it is income—if a housewife is knocked down by a car and cannot do the work she normally does for a period of six to eight months, it is very real cash income that is lost, because somebody has to be paid to do the work she was doing, but this is not being recognized in the courts.

**5.25 p.m.**

Sen. Oudit also brought up a point which I had not taken into account in my two presentations, and that was the whole question of adding value by assigning value. I think that is extremely fundamental. It is also fundamental to something that Sen. Dr. St. Cyr said later, and it is definitely something which I think we are going to have to take into consideration as we proceed down the line on this and I thank her for it.

Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie brought in the voluntary workers as well and I thought she made an excellent point when she said that we count parenting when it is

convenient. In other words, we count parenting as having a measurable value from a negative point of view, that is when it is done wrongly. If a child turns out to be a criminal through demonstrably bad parenting, then the mother is loaded with guilt because of the damage to the community and the society which had been produced by her lack of parenting, but if she stays home and does it, it is ignored. I like also the point that she made that there were distinctions where there were differences, and I would like to point out that we do have a general social condemnation on them because it matters to the society.

A few weeks ago there was a woman who was charged in the courts for abandoning her baby in a field. I was just wondering when was the last time you had heard of any father being charged for abandoning his children. We have been talking as though the lack of parenting and the value on it was something just for mothers, and we do not seem to take it into account when it comes to fathers.

Sen. Moore spoke again about the use being made of statistics and he did take a very traditional view of the whole concept and brought up a rather interesting idea of measuring unremunerated work by piece-work rather than by time-use, which is something else I would like to take a look at. I think I mentioned about 85 different ways which have been developed for actually doing the statistical work in counting the unremunerated work. That point is an interesting one. He asked a very fair question: "Does the wish to count the value of this work come from a stable or objective mind?" I marked it down as he spoke. I cannot say—I do not think anybody can vouch for their own sanity or objectivity, and he has the freedom to ask, of course, whether this concept comes from a mind which is objective or sane. Like he does, I wish there was a better way in which the recognition that this kind of work deserves could be achieved. I think I did say in my original presentation that I thought that we lived in a rather twisted society where this kind of thing had to be done because we are so money-minded that we do value things according to their monetary value. I hope, as he does, that the day will come when it will not be necessary.

Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh, again brought up, I thought, a very good argument and that is the moral question which is involved in this whole concept of human value and the value of human work. Also, I think it was a related question, of the gender violence which goes on in schools, violence against girls in the classroom, in the street, in the home, which is much higher, as we all know, than violence against their brothers. There is a definite relation there. It goes back to what Sen. Moore-Miggins said, and I am sorry that it exists but it does exist.

Sen. Cuffy-Dowlat said something that made me very happy which I hope does come to pass in the long term, and that is that this work will lead to a reconception and a recalculation of things like pension rights and the whole concept of "pensionable" and who is pensionable, and also welfare payments, and that kind of thing. If it does lead to that, I think what we have done here today would have been well justified.

I have a bit of a problem with Sen. Dr. St. Cyr. I agree with him that the underlying concept of this Bill is extremely complex in a moral, social, economic and philosophic way, and I am very much aware of that. I have been right from the beginning and I really do hope that I have not been trying to, in any way, minimize that fact. One of the things which we were hoping might come out of this would be that we could start to look at households as a unit, on a basis of human values and not just economic values, not individualizing in the sense in which he sees it.

I attended many long learned academic discussions amongst economists and statisticians in Beijing who were arguing exactly this question and I realized that there are different schools of academic thought in economics and statistics that approach it in different ways, some via market value and others taking another point of view. I am really hoping that this will not turn out to be something which people see as a competitor-concept which is only one way of looking at measurements. It is a capitalistic way of looking at measurements and therefore maybe it is something which we are familiar with, but there are other ways of looking at this which can be in a more co-operative way.

There is one point that I think has to be made over and over again and Sen. Beckles, in her inimitable style approached it very nicely and thoughtfully. She was balanced and thoughtful, as she always is, and spoke about fashioning a household as being only the job of women when it really is not so; it is the job of people. I would like to point out that this Bill while it does deal with the work of women, it deals also with the work of people. It is not gender specific; it talks about both men and women. While I can understand the fears that exist, both from an economic competitive point of view and fears in the society that if you start measuring the value of what women do around the home that men may feel threatened, I think we have to understand that if in this society—because of changes in the society—there is a fear that men have of being marginalized, the way to deal with that is not by keeping down women; it is not by trying not to value what women do—that is not going to make the value of what men do better; it is not a one-up-one-down thing; it is not a seesaw thing—it is that as we

begin to value what everybody does, then everybody increases in value. I think that this is the whole point. It is trying to do your economic policy-making decisions on humanistic bases rather than monetary bases, which is the whole intention behind the Bill.

I thank Sen. Beckles again for what she said perhaps much better than I am saying it because I am too close to it, and that is that the intention behind this Bill, in a very deep conceptual way, is not merely just to take statistics and throw them on to a piece of paper but the intention is that it should have a positive effect on family, on community and on society, and this is philosophically what it is all about, the underpinnings of it. It perhaps needs a paradigm shift in how one looks at statistics and how they can be used. But this is really what the intention is and I thank everybody for their assistance and for what I have learnt today and for their support in this measure.

Thank you very much.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

**5.35 p.m.**

*Bill committed to a committee of the whole Senate.*

*Senate in committee.*

*Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 2.*

*Question proposed, That clause 2 stand part of the Bill.*

**Sen. Dr. St. Cyr:** Mr. Chairman, that phrase "at least once every three years"—a household survey is a very massive undertaking. I think currently CSO would be hard-pressed to do one in five years, so I do not know if it is too strong.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Mr. Chairman, I think in the United Kingdom it is done annually, and I really think it is important that we provide the resources to understand what the state of our society is.

**Mr. Chairman:** Any further suggestions? Was it five years you said, Sen. Dr. St. Cyr?

**Sen. Dr. St. Cyr:** No, Sir, I was wrong. My comment would be that maybe that the CSO is doing a number of things that they should stop doing and do this thing more thoroughly more often. So, I withdraw the comment, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you withdrawing the amendment?

**Sen. Dr. St. Cyr:** Yes, Sir.

*Amendment withdrawn.*

*Question put and agree to.*

*Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Preamble 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.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark):** Mr. President, before moving the adjournment of the Senate I would like to indicate to Senators that we have to meet on Friday. It is not something that we usually would do in terms of seeking to disrupt our normal Tuesday sittings, but the House of Representatives would be meeting next Tuesday, therefore, we would not be sitting on that day. We have this important Bill to address; it is a short Bill and we hope Senators would study the content of the Bill in time for the sitting on Friday, May 31, 1996.

I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Friday, May 31, 1996 at 1.30 p.m.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.42 p.m.*