

Leave of Absence

Wednesday, November 13, 1996

SENATE

Wednesday, November 13, 1996

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, leave of absence from today's sitting has been granted to the following: Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung, Sen. Dr. the Hon. Daphne Phillips, Sen. Philip Marshall, Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny, Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Mr. President: I have received the following pieces of correspondence from the office of His Excellency, the President:

"12th November, 1996

Madam,

I wish to inform you that, in exercise of the power vested in him by section 44 of the Constitution, His Excellency the President, has appointed Mr. Vincent Cabrera to be temporarily a Senator with effect from 12th November, 1996 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Senator Brian Kuei Tung.

Mr. Cabrera's Instrument of Appointment is forwarded herewith together with a copy for your records.

Yours sincerely,

Gloria Nurse (Miss)

Secretary to His Excellency
the President."

Addressed to: Miss Norma Cox, Clerk of the Senate.

"13th November, 1996

Madam,

I wish to inform you that, in exercise of the power vested in him by section 44 of the Constitution, His Excellency the President has appointed Mr. Dennis

Senators' Appointment
[MR. PRESIDENT]

Wednesday, November 13, 1996

Nancoo to be temporarily a Senator with effect from 13th November, 1996 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Senator Dr. Daphne Phillips.

Mr. Nancoo's Instrument of Appointment is forwarded herewith together with a copy for your records.

Yours sincerely,

Gloria Nurse (Miss)
Secretary to His Excellency
the President."

Addressed to: Miss Norma Cox, Clerk of the Senate.

"13th November, 1996

Madam,

I wish to inform you that, in exercise of the power vested in him by section 40(2) (c) and section 44 of the Constitution, His Excellency the President has appointed Mrs. Nirupa Oudit to be temporarily a Senator, with effect from 13th November, 1996 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Senator Philip A. F. Marshall.

Mrs. Oudit's Instrument of Appointment is forwarded herewith together with a copy for your records.

Yours sincerely,

Gloria Nurse (Miss)
Secretary to His Excellency
the President."

Addressed to: Miss Norma Cox, Clerk of the Senate.

MRS. DEBORAH MOORE-MIGGINS
(RESIGNATION)

Mr. President: I have received correspondence from the office of His Excellency the President as follows:

Deborah Moore-Miggins(Resignation)

Wednesday, November 13, 1996

"13th November, 1996

Madam,

I wish to inform you that the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in him by paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 43 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, has declared the seat of Senator Deborah Moore-Miggins to be vacant, with effect from 13th November, 1996.

Mrs. Moore-Miggins' Instrument is forwarded herewith together with a copy for your records.

Yours sincerely,

Gloria Nurse (Miss)
Secretary to His Excellency
the President"

Addressed to: Miss Norma Cox, Clerk of the Senate.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Mr. President: I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President:

"13th November, 1996

Madam,

I wish to inform you that, in exercise of the power vested in him by section 40 (2)(a) of the Constitution, His Excellency the President has appointed Mr. Hugh Donaldson, a Senator, with effect from 13th November, 1996.

Mr. Donaldson's Instrument of Appointment is forwarded herewith together with a copy for your records.

Yours sincerely,

Gloria Nurse (Miss)
Secretary to His Excellency
the President"

Addressed to: Miss Norma Cox, Clerk of the Senate

Oath of Allegiance

Wednesday, November 13, 1996

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The following Senators took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law:

Vincent Cabrera, Dennis Nancoo, Nirupa Oudit, Hugh Donaldson.

1.40 p.m.

**FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTATION AND
VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) (1996) BILL**

Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 1996; brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister of Finance*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings [*Hon. T. Sudama*].

Question put and agreed to.

PAPER LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Committee of the San Fernando Carnegie Free Library for the year ended December 31, 1995. [*Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark)*]

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, I beg to move that we proceed to "Bills Second Reading" instead of "Motions".

Agreed to.

**FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTATION AND
VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) (1996) BILL**

The Minister of Planning and Development and acting Minister of Finance (Hon. Trevor Sudama): Mr. President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 1996 be now read a second time.

Mr. President, the matter before us is a simple variation of the appropriation as well as a request for a supplementary appropriation in the sum of just over \$15

million, as I would outline later on. First of all, I want to deal with the variation in the 1996 Appropriation Bill.

Mr. President, as you are aware, provisions are made in the budget at the beginning of the year for sums of money which are to be expended and for proposals which are to be approved by the Parliament for sums of moneys which are to be expended during the course of the year.

The estimates of expenditure—and I want to emphasize that what is presented at the beginning of the year are merely estimates; the best calculation of what is likely to happen during the course of the year; the best estimates of revenues we are likely to collect and how those revenues are in fact going to be expended. Today we will be dealing primarily on the expenditure side and more specifically with respect to the capital element of the budget, the Public Sector Investment Programme.

What we are merely seeking to do is to reduce the provisions we have made under certain items listed in the notes which have been circulated to hon. Senators, indicating the Heads to which these transfers are to be made. The reason for this is that some of the assumptions which we made when compiling the budget at the beginning of the year did not prove to be as accurate as they could have been, but these are rather minor adjustments because here we are talking about the variation of \$63 million in a budget close to \$10 billion.

As we move along we have looked at the situation—at the pattern of expenditure—we have reviewed the programmes of the various ministries and we have decided that in the light of that review certain adjustments need to be made in order to make the best effective use of the provisions in the 1996 Appropriation Bill.

As you will recall, Mr. President, the gross total of the Public Sector Investment Programme was \$1,170,000,000 for 1996—I am merely dealing with the Public Sector Investment Programme, the capital aspect of the budget. These provisions were made to support economic and social infrastructure developments as part of the efforts to promote economic diversification, growth and facilitate private sector investment and so forth.

Of this overall amount, approximately \$778 million was to be spent on projects and programmes to be implemented directly by the central government and the remainder was allocated to investments in the state enterprises and primarily

Petrotrin's refinery upgrade programme and the upgrade of the refinery at Caroni (1975) Limited. So that with regard to the other aspect of this capital investment programme, that element to be executed by the state enterprises, there were really two major investments in the upgrade of the Petrotrin refinery and in the refurbishment and upgrade of the refinery at Caroni (1975) Limited.

Some of the major investments in 1996 undertaken by the central government agencies include—and some of these investments as I have said are to facilitate private sector growth in the economy—business expansion and industrial restructuring programmes; what is called BEIRL Loan Programme where we were lending money to the private sector for them to refurbish their plants and so forth to make them more competitive and efficient.

1.50 p.m.

Then there is the economic and fiscal infrastructure. There was the road rehabilitation of the Solomon Hochoy Highway and the Rural Access Roads and Bridges Programme where we found we had made a very serious under-allocation and which we are trying to correct through this variation measure we are promoting this afternoon.

There were two significant programmes in social infrastructure—the Basic Education Loan Programme and the Health Sector Reform Programme. The basic education is the one where we sought to look at the education system and a number of its elements as the pre-school programme. Part of that loan was to be directed to the building and upgrading of a number of pre-schools in Trinidad and Tobago. A portion of the loan was to be utilized in the construction of 15 primary schools in this country and the repair and extension of a number of other schools.

There were four secondary schools which were to be constructed under that programme in addition to which this Government will be providing training facilities for managerial staff in the education system and attempting to put in place a decentralized system which is in the making. Those were the basic objectives of this whole Basic Education Loan Programme for which a provision was made to get that programme going this year. That loan, of course, was signed earlier this year. There was another area of social infrastructure; the Health Sector Reform Programme where we are trying to make the delivery of health services in this country more efficient and effective, to build a number of hospitals, polyclinics and to decentralize the system of health care delivery.

As has been the normal practice for a number of years, a review of the PSIP was undertaken after the end of the second quarter. We undertook a review on the performance of projects for which the ministries of Government have direct responsibility for their execution. The purpose of the review was to assess these programmes to see what level of implementation was achieved and where moneys were being spent reasonably well. Those programmes were somewhat lagging behind and we sought to look at the reasons for the slight delays which were occurring in those programmes.

As a result of this, we sought to form a judgment on how we could reallocate the provisions which were made at the beginning of the year. Those projects which were going at a reasonably speedy rate of implementation and which had the potential to utilize more of the resources during the remainder of the year, we felt that we should reallocate funding in a way that would give them more resources with which to work, and those where we were having some difficulty in executing at the rate at which we had anticipated, we would cut back and curtail a bit on those and defer expenditure and implementation at the required rate to a subsequent fiscal year.

This is really the exercise in which we are engaged at this time. Some of the projects which were implemented at quite a satisfactory rate and which had completely utilized their allocations at the time of review were the Rural Access Roads Programme and also the line of credit to the private sector under the Business Expansion and Industrial Restructuring Programme, the construction component of the Settlement and Squatter Regularization Programme. One will see that in these Heads of Expenditure we were able to target some increases. There are some other programmes which, for very good reasons, could not have gotten off the ground in the manner in which we thought they would have done. We are addressing these problems and we are confident that the moneys which have been reallocated to them will be spent for the rest of the year. We will be intensifying our efforts to look at some of the minor impediments to be dealt with in the fiscal year of 1997.

Some of these include the Agricultural Sector Programme where we took a loan to restructure the agricultural sector in Trinidad and Tobago, the National Highways Programme where we are attempting to rehabilitate 600 kilometres of highways and to construct an additional 55 kilometres of highway. This is quite an elaborate programme which is going to be extended for a number of years and some of the conditions which would make this programme effective are such that

they must be given very serious thought as to how it is going to be implemented. That is one of the reasons for the minor delay being experienced.

There is a fourth basic education programme. We have put the Programme Implementation Unit in place and it is just a matter of getting work down on the ground.

I might explain with respect to the Health Sector Reform Programme, where we have spent quite an extended period of time in reviewing the proposal which was handed down from the previous government, that we felt it was necessary to make some significant adjustments to this proposal before we commit ourselves to signing a loan with respect to the reform exercise in the health sector.

Mr. President, I will elaborate a bit further on these programmes later on. As I said, in very many cases the reasons for the delays have been effectively addressed and those programmes which could not get off the ground very quickly in 1996 will be ready for implementation at full speed in 1997 and beyond. I must emphasize at this point that where there has been a reduction in the expenditures we are proposing in the variation measures, this merely means that we are deferring the execution of that programme to a later period. It does not mean that we are in any way eliminating the programme as seemed to be the impression gained yesterday when we debated this in the other place by persons who ought to know a little better. When one varies an appropriation, it does not necessarily mean that one has eliminated. What we have done is to look at the programme for extended execution and try to meet the expectation of the rate at which it can be implemented during the rest of this year.

2.00 p.m.

There is no point in having a provision on the books which cannot be utilized for one reason or another. If that element of the provision could be utilized by another programme and ministry, we feel that it makes sense to make those variations and transfers and have the programmes going.

During the course of this year we have been addressing some of the issues which have caused a retardation in the implementation effort. Some of these measures include the dedication of additional human resources in project management. This has been an area where not only Trinidad and Tobago but also many other developing countries have experienced difficulty in effective implementation which meets the expectation of the lending agencies, as well as one's own, and the citizens at large. It is not a problem which has only surfaced

during the course of the tenure of this Government, but one which has moreso affected previous administrations in this country, and one which affects so many other developing and under-developed countries in the world.

We need to expedite the preparation of contracts and improve the mechanism for project preparation, monitoring and execution. In this exercise a great deal needs to be done to access trained professionals to work in the system on the various programmes which are in train. One of the difficulties is the fact that due to the remuneration in the public sector, many of the professionals are in demand in the private sector and are able to command higher salaries and perquisites and they leave the public sector. Whereas we undertake the whole programme of training, we do not at all times get the full benefit of that training because they go for higher salary packages in the private sector. There is this constant problem of a turnover not only in the area of staff that is required for project preparation, monitoring, execution and management, but also in many other areas in the higher echelons of the public service. It is a serious problem. This is one aspect of that problem we face with respect to recruiting and retaining the required level of staff in the required numbers in the public service to deliver effectively. We are addressing that problem.

As a result of this review we have decided to increase the allocation to certain Heads. I will briefly give the Senate an idea of these Heads. From the documentation they have they would see the various Heads we have proposed to reduce in order to make this increase possible. For the \$63.5 million which we are recommending as a variation in appropriation, this does not constitute any addition to the appropriation that was approved at the beginning of the year. It is only \$15 million which is an increase in provision which is a supplementary provision.

This variation involves an increase in the allocation in the sum of \$9,470,000 to the Tobago House of Assembly. This increased allocation would be spent on a number of projects such as the Milford Road Esplanade which is in the process of construction. It is extremely desirable that this project be properly financed because chronic flooding on Milford Road poses a hazard to motorists, businessmen and pedestrians, particularly the school children. We are allocating an additional sum out of the \$9.4 million for the Tobago House of Assembly. We are allocating an additional sum of \$3 million to finance the installation of 318 piles and the construction of the remaining 400 metres of the sea wall. We want to spend an additional \$2.6 million on the Store Bay beach facility. This is all in keeping with our intent to promote tourism activities in Tobago.

Another critical area which we need to address in Tobago is the water supply. The leeward and rural water supply project in Tobago has been given an additional \$1.63 million to what was allocated at the beginning of the year. The project is for the purpose of design and construction of a water supply system for the North Coast, and improvement works to the existing Craigwell and Courland water supply systems. We hope that the communities such as Castara, Parlatuvier, Roxborough, Bloody Bay, L'Anse Fourmi, Mason Hall, Moriah and Runnemedé would benefit from the projects.

I do not have to emphasize the point that we are giving equal attention to Tobago as we are giving to Trinidad. It is an island which has suffered so much neglect under previous administrations and has not benefited as it should from the revenues. Tobago has been singled out for some special attention given the fact that we want to promote the infrastructure for tourism activities. We are mindful that we cannot focus only on economic infrastructure and that we have to pay equal attention to social infrastructure. Therefore, we have added to the provision we made at the beginning of the year to provide for the extension and improvement to the Signal Hill Comprehensive School.

The additional sum of \$2.24 million will be required to satisfy contractual obligations for the construction works which will be undertaken.

2.10 p.m.

Under the Ministry of Finance there are two small items. There is the design and construction of a container stripping station at Port of Spain to the tune of \$1.6 million. As you are aware, Mr. President, there is a container stripping station at Point Lisas and a long time ago it was decided that we would have one at Port of Spain to put in place the facility to increase revenues from customs duties. We are also constructing jetties at Hart's Cut Bay to the tune of \$1.5 million.

In the area of housing and settlements, which is an area which we had identified for some emphasis, given the fact that housing is so important in dealing with the whole question of relieving poverty and having the facilities for people to look forward to a better quality of life, an additional \$9 million is requested. Since June 1996 the programme had been restructured to increase acceleration in the rate of disbursement and to improve implementation. At the end of July, there were 312 houses under construction—Bon Air West, Harmony Hall, Couva North, Phase II and Malabar, Phase IV. By the end of 1996, 145 houses are expected to be completed. The additional sum of \$9 million is required to permit the Trinidad

and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company to continue disbursement of mortgages to beneficiaries. To date, there has been 369 beneficiaries under this programme and the additional provision is to facilitate them.

The greatest variation for increase in allocation has been in an area which we have given great prominence in our manifesto, and that is the improvement of the agricultural sector in this country, particularly geared toward a number of things—providing greater employment opportunities, higher levels of food security, minimizing of foreign exchange on clothes and the enhancement of rural communities. Here, one of the critical elements of infrastructure, is the access roads system. We have increased the provision by \$41.87 million.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, this is a programme which is financed primarily by the Inter-American Development Bank with supplementary financing from the revenues of Trinidad and Tobago. The object of this programme was the design and construction of 150 kilometres of agricultural access roads and 30 main road bridges. This programme was supposed to have been implemented over four years, in three phases. In addition to that, since we recognize the need for maintenance of these roadways so that maximum benefit is derived from that type of infrastructure, there is a rural road maintenance and management system which is part of this programme.

We also wanted to carry out a study of road rehabilitation and maintenance to identify new techniques and to see how much of our indigenous resources could be utilized in this effort. So Phase I of the project comprises six contracts, two road projects and three bridge projects in Trinidad, and one road and bridge project in Tobago. With the exception of the project in Tobago, which is being undertaken as part of Phase II, Phase I projects were completed at an estimated cost of \$48.6 million. A total of 19.4 kilometres of road and 10 bridges were completed under Phase I. Phase II, which commenced in October 1995, is currently in execution. This is the phase which was handed down to us and comprised 13 contracts totalling \$95.3 million. We had made some provision for execution of this phase earlier in the year but because of the rate of implementation it was necessary for us to add to this provision, which we are now doing.

Mr. President, the documents which have been circulated go on to identify those projects for which we had, in a sense, over-provided and for which we felt that some minor reduction would be in order for the rest of the year to give us time to put everything in place for a more satisfactory rate of implementation. These are

detailed in the document and I will not go into the details. However, I will answer any queries which may come up during the course of the debate.

Finally, Mr. President, we are asking for supplementary provision, additional moneys, for the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. There are some on-going projects for which we have to provide, that is the replacement of the mondo track at the National Stadium at a cost of \$4 million and the completion of the Woodbrook Youth Centre at a cost of an additional \$500,000. There are three new projects which we are recommending for funding. The first is the construction of an indoor sports hall in Tobago at a cost of \$4.5 million. We are in the process of constructing a number of indoor sports halls in various parts of the country. There was the St. Paul's Street Multi-purpose Complex which was completed a number of years ago. We have broken the ground for the construction of an indoor sports hall in Chaguanas. We are going to Tobago. We have targeted other parts of Trinidad and Tobago—Toco and elsewhere—to provide these facilities for the benefit of the young people. Then there is the further development of the Tacarigua Hockey Facility for which we are providing an additional \$4.2 million, and the refurbishing of the Jean Pierre Complex at a cost of \$1 million.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. President, we are proposing an additional sum of \$1,006,000 to the Ministry of Public Administration and Information and this money is to be utilized for the purpose of acquiring foreign technical assistance for the institutional strengthening of the public sector.

One would realize that in the process of laying the foundation for growth and development, and for meeting the challenges of the new era in which we have found ourselves—the era of market reform and globalization—where we have to become more competitive and efficient, there is need for a reformed state apparatus and that exercise was nominally attempted by the previous administration. There had been no effective benefit from whatever they did, it was just a set of ole talk by the then Minister of Public Administration and Information. He was the former Minister, a certain gentleman called Mr. Draper, who spent much of his time—and this gentleman is a management consultant to all sides. I remember when we were in the NAR he was a consultant and also a Member in 1987. Then suddenly, and without warning, he went into the bosom of the PNM and this is how he moves.

Mr. President, I say so because there is a critical need to make the public service of Trinidad and Tobago a more efficient mechanism to promote

development in this country, to facilitate the process of private sector growth and to be a more responsive institution in Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, this money that we are providing which was not provided for in the budget of 1996, is necessary in order to give partly the wherewithal to the Ministry of Public Administration and Information to carry on with this very critical task of effective reform of the public service of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, with these introductory remarks, I would indicate that what we are doing here is no departure from what has been done in the past. It is merely varying items of expenditure as a result of the review which we have undertaken, and it is a minimal variation when one considers that there was a budget of close to \$10 billion which the Parliament had approved in January of this year and we are making a variation of merely \$63 million out of that. So one can see the minuscule percentage of variation which is being attempted here. I am sure that after looking through these variations which we are proposing, the Senators will see it fit to support the Bill unanimously.

Thank you very much.

Mr. President, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Sen. Orville London: Mr. President, I do not know if you all are aware that the Minister of Planning and Development really has only two postures. It is kind of intriguing how he shifts from one to the other when faced with the same kind of information.

When one compares the Minister in the Lower House, years ago, faced with a similar bill, and one thinks of the critical manner, the general posture which he displayed, and it is compared with this afternoon where the voice is soft and soothing, he almost smiles at times, and the tone is measured and then there are the choice of adjectives. He uses adjectives like “simple”, where he used to say “sinister”; he says, “not accurate as it could have been” where he used to say, “incompetent”; he says “minor adjustments” where he used to say “gross inefficiency”; he says, “merely means deferring the programme, not eliminating”, where he used to charge “victimization”, “alienation” and other terms which do not seem to have the same appeal to him in 1996.

Mr. Sudama: Where you get that?

Sen. O. London: I read, Sir.

Mr. Sudama: Oh! You read.

Sen. O. London: Yes. I read *Hansard*. And the more that I read *Hansard*, the more I recognize the Minister's ability to shift from one posture to the other.

I wish to indicate by examining some of the details and to refer you, Mr. President, back to my contribution in the budget debate and suggest to the Minister and his colleague, the Minister of Finance, that maybe the problem was that they were just harden and if they had listened carefully instead of in those euphoric days when they used to tell us about government of national unity and everything was just honky dory and people were in bed together and happy. If they were listening—*[Interruption]*

Mr. President I know from reading *Hansard* that one of the postures which the Minister develops is one of attempting to bring the House into disrepute and I am hoping that he does not bring that posture to this elevated Senate.

As I was saying, I based my argument in the budget debate on the premise that we did, in fact, have a Government of three partners; the UNC, the NAR and some friends and I suggested at that time that even from a preliminary reading of the budget, one recognized that the UNC was well taken care of and so were their friends and since then, they have been doing even better and I suggested that the partner who was not being treated in an even-handed manner was Tobago. In effect, recent evidence indicates—*[Interruption]* I am a genuine Tobagonian, whose love for Tobago has nothing to do with politics. *[Desk thumping]* As I was saying, Mr. President, one has to recognize that one is dealing with a political party that over its entire existence has never thought it fit to do anything in Tobago, and when it did in fact send up a particular candidate, he got even less votes than the hon. Leader of Government Business, so one can understand what the UNC's position is in Tobago.

2.30 p.m.

I shall return to my original premise and that is that the Minister of Finance had indicated in the budget that Tobago's allocation would have been \$41 million. I want to read what I said at that time:

“I was shocked to note that under Tobago's development programme, the allocation was \$42 million...”

At that time I said that I wanted to do it slowly, and I want to do it slowly again.

“...\$1,811,000 less than what was actually received in 1995 under what they called a hateful PNM regime. The sum requested by the assembly was \$163.6 million and of that only a little over 25 per cent was actually allocated. Remember! Allocation is not receipt of funds...”

I go on to quote the Deputy Chairman of the Tobago House of Assembly, Mr. Benedict Armstrong who said:

“The cuts in Development Expenditure meant that a number of projects which the Assembly considered important to the vital tourism industry, cannot now be undertaken.”

I said:

“So the King George Theme Park and the redevelopment of the Store Bay beach facilities have to be put on hold.”

When the Minister of Planning and Development comes and crows about Store Bay beach facilities, what he is in fact doing is saying that finally they listened to the cry of genuine Tobagonians who are not in any way influencing their love for Tobago by cheap politics. I continue to quote:

“However, I was much less sympathetic to the Minister of Public Utilities who, in response to complaints by hoteliers in Tobago against the water shortage which is jeopardizing the viability of their properties stated very confidently, or as we in Tobago would say, “manish manish”, that he had a plan to resolve the problem expeditiously. Mr. President, is this Minister a magician? If not, can he explain to Tobagonians how he intends to alleviate the water shortage situation when the allocation to the Water and Sewerage sub-sector in Tobago decreased from \$15.74 million in 1995 to \$10.25 million in 1996?”

When the Minister talks about water and sewerage what he is, in fact, doing is giving us back what is rightly ours—what we got in 1995 and this Government refused to give us in 1996. Therefore, let us not crow too much about that either.

Mr. President, he goes on to talk about the esplanade. I want us to understand how these things operate—and I will give some examples of this—and to understand the very crude manner in which efforts are being made to dupe the people of this country and in particular the people of Tobago.

When one hears the Minister talk about the Milford Road Esplanade one gets the impression that this esplanade is a creature of the new Government. But in

effect, they should have recognized, because construction on the esplanade had been in progress—and this is an example of the way in which the whole thing was not planned—and anybody calculating would have recognized what the situation would have been.

The same thing happened with the Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School. Work on that school had been going on apace when I left and it continued going on apace. There is no great credit to be given to the Government for finishing a project which was already started. However, what I would like to advise the Minister of Education is that there is an even more serious problem because one of the concerns which Tobagonians have about the Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School is, at the end of the day when the construction is completed, whether the school would be able to deliver the curriculum in an effective manner.

I wish to advise that while I was principal of Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School I did a simple arithmetic and indicated that if one had a construction that was going to be finished at a particular time, then one has the responsibility to ensure that teachers are trained so that they would be ready to teach when the construction is completed. I wish to advise that the former permanent secretary who was treated so shabbily, immediately this new Minister got into office, recommended to the Tobago House of Assembly that he would agree for Tobagonians to come to Trinidad, accommodate them at the Chaguaramas Youth Camp and have them go to the John Donaldson Technical Institute.

Mr. President, one had a situation where a certain gentleman in the Tobago House of Assembly, out of sheer pique, frustrated that effort simply because it originated in Trinidad. One now has a situation where one has a \$10 million school and nobody—I defy anybody to tell me about anyone in Tobago and in Trinidad, including you, Mr. Minister, where the staff would be found when the school is completed.

The statement goes on to say that generally the Planning Division of the Tobago House of Assembly was not satisfied with the way in which the Development Funds were allocated. They said:

“Given the overall priorities of the Tobago House of Assembly for achieving its short to medium-term objectives for the island’s social economic development, an analysis of the 1996 development programme expenditure estimates for Tobago shows that the total amount allocated is inadequate to meet these needs.”

What is really happening is that we have a situation where, despite the protest of the Tobago House of Assembly; despite the efforts that were made in this Parliament to have the Government change its ways, we found nothing happening and then they come with this document at this particular time.

Do you know the thing that really shocks me, Mr. President? It is the way in which this Minister and this Government believe that people in this country are fools. I want to draw your attention to Schedule No. 80:

“Construction of Indoor sports hall Tobago. Revised provision for 1996, \$4.5 million.”

I want to give you some background to that, Mr. President. A few weeks ago, individuals in Tobago were informed by the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs that she was coming to Tobago to identify a site for the construction of an indoor sports hall. In fact, the Secretary of Sport in Tobago is still complaining that he was not consulted or invited to look for the site for this hall. We therefore have a situation where as of today's date, November 13, 1996, no definite decision has been made on the site for the construction of the indoor sports hall in Tobago and we have the Minister of Planning and Development telling us, in the middle of November, 1996 that he has allocated \$4.5 million for that hall for which no site has yet been identified, but he is saying that this is not an election gimmick.

Mr. President, how long do they think Tobagonians and the people of this country are going to accept that? We are not fools. When will they spend \$4.5 million on an indoor sports hall in Tobago when they have not identified the site? Throughout the list one sees that money could not be expended from the beginning of the year because they had problems with sites. What are they telling us? None of it is going to be spent. The only thing that is going to be spent is for political mileage. *[Interruption]* Of course not, I am for honesty. We all have to understand that what is not spent will be sent back and it will be reallocated next year. *[Interruption]* I have no problem with that, I want you to come to Tobago. I am defying you to come and to talk on a platform to the people in Tobago and tell them that you are sincere. *[Interruption]*

I want to draw your attention to the difference, to the way in which this matter is stated to show the level of duplicity. For example, when one compares the situation in the Tacarigua Hockey Complex, one sees that the money has already been expended. With respect to the mondo track, they have stated in the information that the firm has been contracted and they owe the firm that money.

However, we use a different system in the case of the indoor sports hall in Tobago. All I am saying is that people in this country have been told from day one about the transparency of this Government; about this Government's belief in consultation; that the people are going to be brought into the process. However, here one has a crude example of a government attempting to dupe people simply because there is an election coming up. I am suggesting that this is something that should be condemned very strongly.

I want to make a point about education. I have said throughout this year that I am worried about education because the Minister says little—I am getting the impression that he is also doing very little. He does not say much and he does not do much. When one looks at the Schedule on education, one sees, as against the increases in most of the others, decreases—not only decreases in that less moneys were spent, but decreases in the sense that no money was spent.

2.40 p.m.

I am not prepared to accept that you are taking a year to reassess and re-evaluate programmes and therefore you are not spending the money, I have a little problem with that. My feeling is, that even if you are evaluating, things must be going on. I want to draw your attention to what the Minister called a piddling percentage, it was \$65 million to \$10 billion. When there is a situation where it is close to \$10 million to \$125 million which is about 8 per cent, that is not piddling, and I am saying that somebody has to explain this very seriously.

I am suggesting that the people in this country are aware that the Ministry of Education is in crisis, and if the officers remain the same and their commitment remains the same and the only person must change is the Minister, then I am suggesting that when the Prime Minister, as he promised, is going to do his adjustments that very serious adjustments could be made in the Ministry of Education. The only suggestion I would like to make is that there is not a switch between education and information.

Mr. President, all of us are aware and I think this is the issue about this Opposition, and maybe, sometimes people accuse us of not being aggressive enough but it is not that we are less aggressive, it is that we are committed to good governance and as an Opposition committed to good governance we tend to be pragmatic; we tend to recognize that regardless of how you do the thing there is a need for some level of abrogation, but the point is that you must come clean and you must be able to explain in a manner which is clear and accurate how and why it was done. We get very upset when people try to fool us, we are not stupid.

Consequently, we have very grave concerns when we look at those details which we know are not accurate; those issues which we are not able to investigate because we do not have the information. We have a little problem with that. What the Government and the Minister is indicating to us is that he is not above fiddling with the figures, fiddling with the information to send a certain kind of signal. Therefore, even in areas that we were not able to investigate or evaluate with any great degree of rigidity, we are a little concerned. I am hoping that those of you who have more skills in accounting than I have, would look at these figures very, very carefully because the signal that has been sent to us by the hon. Minister is that he has not been totally transparent.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. President, I would like to make a few remarks on a particular point. Before doing so, I would just make a comment on the hon. Minister's proportion of change to total budget. I believe that it is not a significant amount, but it is not really \$10 billion because the hon. Prime Minister has pointed out that one-third of that is taken up in foreign debt and one-third is public service emoluments, so it is really a variation of the other one-third. I still do not think that it is a big issue.

I would just like to ask one question concerning Tobago considering the fact that we are about to consider a bill which will, in effect, give internal self-government to Tobago and the Tobago House of Assembly would have the jurisdiction over all the matters that are considered under these various heads. I was just wondering whether the Tobago House of Assembly was consulted in respect of the changes which were made—perhaps the hon. Minister might answer that in his summing up.

I wanted to zero-in on rural access roads and to make a comment which I had made to the previous government when this issue was being discussed some time in the past. I have a problem with a substantial expenditure on rural access roads before we have an agricultural development policy—I said that to the last government. I do not quite honestly see how you can decide where to develop your rural access roads; where to repair your roads; where to build new roads before you have decided what is your agricultural policy and therefore what areas in the country you are going to develop. Now, I waited for one year, with great expectations, for an agricultural policy and it has not yet been forthcoming.

During the last regime there were attempts to do an agricultural policy and it took about four years in gestation. Eventually a Green Paper was prepared but it never got to be a White Paper. It may have been just at the end of the last Parliament, so far that goes down the drain because we now have a new Government. I have read in the newspapers that there have been some statements about an agricultural policy made by the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, but there is nothing published. After that statement I made every effort to get some documents from the Ministry, unsuccessfully, so I assume that the newspaper report was not valid in suggesting that there was a policy document and certainly it is not a public document if there is.

The hon. Minister has stated that the Government's intention is to address food security and reduce the foreign exchange balance. We have been saying this for—certainly, the 10 years I have been in Parliament and perhaps it has to be before that. It is certainly not going to happen just by saying it. Unless we can come up with some reasonable policy that can be discussed, criticized, supported or what have you by the population as a whole, my concern here is that such a document, if it is ever produced, would be presented in the Parliament so it can be discussed here.

Over the last year I have refrained from making any comments on this issue deliberately, because I believe when a new government comes into power, it must have some time to get its thoughts together. Although I did suggest in the last budget that a Government that comes in whether it be PNM, UNC, NAR or what have you—any government that comes into power that has not, as a political party, decided on policies in energy and agriculture and the rest, to my mind, really is not doing the population the service it should. All political parties should have policies in the various sectors, so that when one comes into power it should be a matter of deciding how its policies can be implemented in accordance with the resources that were available to the government, which the party may not know about before coming into power, but certainly the policies should be there.

Nevertheless, it seems that our political parties do not, in fact, have policies but just come into government and start operating and then develop their policies, and we have seen it with every sector in this Government. The Minister of Trade and Industry says the Government is developing a policy; the closest we got to it was the Minister of Energy who clearly, earlier on, gave us a policy statement.

In the case of agriculture, as I said, I have been deliberately not making any comments, but I think one year has now gone by, so I am just forecasting some of

the comments that I am likely to be making in the budget debate, which is coming up shortly, in connection with the agricultural sector. I certainly think that to embark on a \$41 million rural access roads expenditure without having an agricultural policy which will then inform where and how to develop these rural access roads, is to repeat mistakes that have been made by the past government.

I thank you.

2.50 p.m.

The Minister of Education (Dr. The Hon. Adesh Nanan): Mr. President, I rise in support of the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill. I would first like to clarify the position that we are at in terms of implementation of the World Bank loan, the 1996 Basic Education Project. When we entered into government, Mr. President we were faced with this particular loan and there was need for revaluation and reassessment. What I can say this afternoon is that although that took place, the UNC/NAR Government should be congratulated by the Opposition because we are almost dead on target, Mr. President.

One of the problems we encountered with this particular loan was a requirement from the World Bank which was not fulfilled in the Education Programme Co-ordinating Unit. The Unit Administrator position was already filled when we came into office, but the Bank had laid down specific guidelines and a new Unit Administrator had to be positioned. The Unit Administrator who was placed by the former administration did not conform with the bank's guidelines. As a result, advertisements were sent out so that the requirements could be fulfilled in terms of qualifications for the Unit Administrator. That was a problem that we encountered in this loan process.

Mr. President, yesterday in the other place we heard that it was the Ministry's staff that was stalling in this particular loan. Today, we hear in the Senate that it is the Minister's fault. I would like to compliment my staff for the hard work in this particular unit, the Education Programme Co-ordinating Unit, which has been driving this loan for this past year to get to this point. Mr President, this loan is crucial to the Early Childhood Education components of the Ministry of Education's plan. Yes Senator, plan. Also for the primary schools plan for the 21st Century.

Mr. President, just yesterday I had the opportunity to go down to Morne Diablo for the dedication of the first Early Childhood Centre which was refurbished under this loan. In the coming weeks and months, to the end of the

year, nine more centres would be coming on stream, that is, refurbished Early Childhood Centres.

Mr. President, in any follow-up to loan implementation unforeseen problems occur. A problem that is being encountered right now in terms of—and I quote from the implementation manual for this particular loan—“Invitation for Tenders from Construction Firms” which are being evaluated. Presently, we have extended the deadline because of lack of information. So the firms are required to send in more information so there can be proper evaluation. The deadline for this particular aspect, “Invitation for Tenders from Construction Firms” was October 18, 1996; “Submission of Tenders by Construction Firms” is supposed to be November 29, 1996. So, Mr. President, we are dead on target, and we have just had a review from a representative from the World Bank and I am advised by the co-ordinator of the programme that they have given it an ‘A plus’ and it is going to be a model for the Caribbean. Many regions are sending representatives over to Trinidad and Tobago to look at the project and see how they can use it as a model.

Mr. President, again, I was fortunate to be in Tobago earlier this year and to view the Signal Hill Comprehensive School’s expansion. Sen. London said that for this particular project we should not take the credit, because the former administration had started that project. Mr. President, funding is essential, and this Government has seen it fit, because of the speed of construction and the speed at which the new wing is proceeding, to allocate money for that particular venture; and they should be congratulated in this particular effort.

The Senator made mention of a lack of technical/vocational teacher training programmes to fill the niche for technical/vocational teachers in Tobago when the wing is open. I would like to inform the Senator that the technical/vocational teacher training programme at the John Donaldson Technical Institute was suspended for one year and this Government has seen it fit to reintroduce it in September, 1996. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. President, this is a two-year programme and as the Senator pointed out, we have to look at the arrangements for housing, probably at the Chaguaramas Youth Camp, or elsewhere, because we recognize that there is a requirement in Tobago for technical/vocational teachers. I am quite happy that the Senator raised the matter here this afternoon because I want him to know that the technical/vocational teachers programme which the former administration stopped for one year has now been reintroduced in September, 1996.

Sen. London: We introduced that programme.

Sen. Mark: No, no, you stopped that programme.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: I am not misleading the House.

Sen. Beckles: He is talking about John Donaldson.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. President, the Senator made reference to my position as Minister of Education, and spoke about the staff remaining the same and the Ministry's achievement. The Minister has been silent for the year on education. I would like to enlighten that Senator this afternoon in terms of the achievements of the Ministry of Education.

Sen. Mark: Yes, enlighten my colleague from Tobago. He is still in darkness. This is Divali.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. President, earlier this year there was a repair programme conducted by the Ministry of Education. This administration has repaired 94 primary schools and 72 secondary schools, Mr. President, and I will tell you why that is so significant. Yesterday we heard in the other place that there was victimization by this Government. Let me give you some references in terms of the spread of the repair programmes this year.

3.00 p.m.

Salibia Government Primary School—listen and you will hear. Petit Valley R.C. School—and it is not one piece of galvanize, or two nails, or a change in a wash tub, or a new faucet. Let me give the scope of work for the Petit Valley R.C. School—roof, floor, walls, doors, windows, drains, electrical and painting.

Sen. Mark: New school.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: A total of \$250,000 was spent on that school.

Mr. President, I go on to the Toco R.C. School—roof, floor, walls, doors, windows, electrical and painting—\$593,000.

Valencia R.C. School—roof, floor, walls, door, windows, electrical and painting—\$274,000.

Mucurapo Boys' R.C. School—walls, doors, painting, termite treatment—\$105,000.

Belmont Boys' R.C. School—roof, floors, windows, electrical, paint, drains—
one wonders what that administration was doing in the last five years.

Sen. Mark: Sleeping.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: —\$187,000.

Point Cumana R.C. School—floor, ceiling, electrical, painting—all the schools I have called so far need painting—toilet improvement—\$70,000.

Success R.C. School—\$514,000.

I want to read it into the record, Mr. President, because they need to know.

Sen. Mark: They do not know. A government of the people, for the people and by the people.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: I go on to the secondary schools.

Belmont Boys' Secondary—roof, ceiling, guttering, repairs, paving of the yard—\$126,000.

Arima Senior Comprehensive School—roof repairs—\$204,000.

Morvant/Laventille Secondary School—repairs to the science laboratory—\$206,000.

Mucurapo Senior Comprehensive School—roof repairs \$75,000; repairs to toilets, \$25,000.

Malick Senior Comprehensive School—roof repairs, repairs to students' toilets—a total of \$290,000.

Neglect, poor administration but this government is going to uplift the infrastructure of all the schools with private sector involvement.

I go on—Mucurapo Junior Secondary—roof and ceiling repairs, \$71,000; arrest termite treatment, \$17,000; repairs to toilets, \$15,000; and replacement of windows, \$75,000—approximately \$170,000.

I go on, Mr. President, because they need to know. *[Laughter]*

Sen. Beckles: Be ridiculous. We have no problem with that.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Diego Martin Government Secondary School—roof repairs—\$175,000.

St. James Secondary—repairs to boundary walls—\$70,000.

All the principals are happy, Mr. President.

Diego Martin Junior Secondary School—repairs to fence wall—\$80,000.

South East Port of Spain Secondary—roof repairs, floor repairs, repairs to walls, partitions and windows—\$389,000.

Mr. Sudama: Do you think they would do those things in my constituency?
[Laughter]

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: You will see, Mr. President, that there was no nepotism by this administration. This Government is a government of national unity.

Point Fortin Junior Secondary School—roof repairs, repairs to drains—\$168,000.

Fyzabad Composite—roof and ceiling repairs—\$200,000.

Point Fortin Senior Secondary—roof repairs—\$352,000.

I could go on, Mr. President.

Hon. Senator: Go on. Tell them.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mayaro Composite—electrification of workshop—\$40,000.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Thank you, Mr. President. Can the Minister tell me how much has been spent on the Cedros Government School which was burnt down and which needs foundation, blocks, cement, sand, wood, galvanize, nails, paint and everything else?

Mr. Sudama: Cedros will be next year.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand, that particular situation does not need repairs; it is going to be rebuilding; so it is being introduced in the ministry's development plan for next year.

Mr. President, I am hearing asides about the Carenage school. Let me give some information about the particular school. We were giving information about the Carenage Government School in the other place.

Mr. Sudama: The PNM stopped it. Why give it to them?

Hon. Senator: Rowley stopped it for spite.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. President, the Ministry of Education has transferred funds from its rebuilding to the Ministry of Works and Transport.

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Presently, the Ministry of Works and Transport is evaluating tenders and a contract should be awarded shortly, but what I have to remind Sen. London and others about is that it will be this UNC/NAR administration that builds the Carenage Government Primary School, not the PNM. [*Desk thumping*]

I would like to crave your indulgence, Mr. President, and go on with the repairs for primary and secondary schools.

Cumana Anglican Primary School—repairs to electrical—\$41,000.

Saint Ursula's Anglican School—repairs to walls, ceiling, replacing floor, electrical—\$234,000.

Ascension Anglican School—repairs to drainage and upgrading of facilities—\$59,000.

3.10 p.m.

The Marac Baptist Primary School—repairs to floors, walls, ceilings, painting—\$80,000.

Gloster Lodge Moravian Primary School—building new toilet block; additional classrooms—\$444,000. One wonders if there were any schools at all. I am proud to have attended Naparima College.

The Maracas Presbyterian Primary School—completion of annex—\$338,000. What is important here—and I would like to commend the Director of the Facilities Management Unit of the Ministry of Education, because all these schools that I have called have been 100 per cent completed during that particular two-month period.

Of extreme significance is the Toco Composite School—construction of animal pens and repair of corrosion in steel structures—\$150,000

The Arima Government Secondary School—roof and ceiling repairs, replacement of doors and hand rails—a total of \$155,000

So this has demonstrated the achievement, in terms of repairs, of the Ministry of Education. Let me go on, because the Senator raised the issue in the debate and just today I had a meeting with the Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools and certain recommendations were made concerning a code of conduct for students, because we recognize that there is a problem of indiscipline in the schools which has been neglected by the former administration and which this UNC/NAR Government is going to address.

Let me just give you some of the recommendations made by the Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools.

Sen. London: Mr. President, a point of order. I am questioning the relevance of that statement to this particular debate under Standing Order 35(1).

Mr. President: The hon. Minister is replying to certain issues raised by a Senator during the contribution earlier on.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. President, if the hon. Senator did not want to debate he should not have come in the House.

I was making reference to the recommendations made by the Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools, and in particular the dress code. Some of the recommendations are, and I quote:

- "1) All students must wear the school uniform prescribed by the school while on the school premises, travelling to and from school and at authorized school functions. The uniforms should be clean and tidy at all times.
- 2) If a student is unable to wear the proper school uniform permission must be sought from the Principal/Vice Principal or person designated.
- 3) Hairstyles should be kept simple, neat and acceptable.
- 4) Girls are allowed to wear one pair of stoppers/studs in their ear lobes. Both boys and girls may wear a wrist watch.
- 5) Makeup and nail polish are not allowed.

I would like to go on to Attendance. I quote:

- "1) Students must be punctual for school and if late must explain their lateness to the Principal/Vice Principal or designated teacher.
- 2) Students who are absent from school must furnish the Form teacher with a written excuse signed by the Parent/Guardian on his/her return to school. Absence for a prolonged period due to illness must be supported by a medical certificate. Absence for two consecutive months or more during the school term would require an application for re-admission."

I would like to just touch briefly on behaviour because this is very important. I quote:

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- "1) Students must obey and respect their teachers and all other persons in authority.
- 2) Students must attend all classes prescribed by the Timetable for his/her class.
- 8) Students are expected to remain on the school compound during the school day. Permission to leave must be obtained from the Administration."

Certain problems were raised by the association in terms of students spending time in malls during school period. Another problem that seems to be surfacing is that students are taking matches to school. It is a problem that has to be nipped in the bud, because we recognize that bringing matches to school can be dangerous. It has been alleged that in some schools the children are setting fire to paper in the waste baskets and that can be a serious problem.

This particular problem of indiscipline must be dealt with in a holistic fashion. I am pleased to say here that the police community section is going to play a crucial role in discipline in our schools, not from the police aspect, but they are seeking to have some sort of introduction via the curriculum in terms of coming into the schools and giving the students an idea of crime prevention programmes. That is what it is all about. So we are looking, not only at disciplining students, but at the holistic aspect, in terms of guidance and supervision.

The Ministry of Education was recently accommodated by Roytec where a Memorandum of Agreement was signed with the Canadian Government for the Schoolnet programme. Just today I was speaking to the Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools and they were enthusiastic about this particular venture by this Government of the UNC/NAR. With the speed of technology many of our schools—not with the help of the previous administration in terms of computer requirements for secondary schools—have been able, because of the community input, to acquire computers for particular schools. They want to keep up with technology.

I just want to give a window into next year's plans. The library at the Learning Resource Centre, as I mentioned before, is going to be the hub and all the school libraries would be tapping into that particular library at the Learning Resource Centre in Couva. We are going to link the Schoolnet at that library setting so we can download the information from the Schoolnet and have it available for the teachers to come into that particular centre.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. President, Schoolnet is not like the Internet. In fact, it is censored and is just for the school system. The principals were very enthusiastic about getting their schools hooked up to Schoolnet, and I am sure that an arrangement can be made. I would be approaching TSTT soon with a view to their providing some kind of subsidy for all schools to be linked to Schoolnet. We have started a pilot project in Port of Spain, but soon we are going to expand to all schools in Trinidad and Tobago, be it primary or secondary schools. We are also going to put computers into our primary schools so teachers can have access to computers so they can have some kind of computer literacy experience. With the speed of technology we are looking at bringing—

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, I wonder if the hon. Minister can tell us what allocations are being made in this new variation of this year's budget to assist in the computerization of schools? Of course the Schoolnet is a complete waste of time if there is one computer in each school. The first thing is to computerize the schools then the pupils can access the net.

Since we are talking about the variation of appropriation and, of course, you ruled, Sir, that his remarks were relevant, I suggest that he should draw attention to the changes in allocation that are being made that would make the Schoolnet relevant and useful by the computerization of schools.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. President, in the education system we must have a 21st Century vision, whether it be early childhood, primary, secondary or tertiary education, adult education centres, nation skills development centres or YTEPP centres. I did not want to go into the 1997 budgetary plans or projections because I wanted that to be part of the budgetary statement.

Mr. President, I brought that into the debate, to show Sen. Orville London, who has left, how the Ministry of Education is focusing on what we are doing in terms of looking at education in the 21st Century. That is why I think it is relevant to this particular debate.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, it could be just a simple answer. There is no change in allocation with respect to computerization in this document.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. President, I think that I have elaborated and, I hope, transformed the Opposition. *[Interruption]* I am hearing an aside that I have misled the House.

Mr. Sudama: Do not take them on. Do not let them mislead you. *[Laughter]*

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. President, I would like to now turn my attention to the Teacher Training Programme. Earlier on I spoke about school management and how it relates to training.

A Bachelor of Education would be provided to primary school principals and senior teachers under the Teacher Training Programme. The component of that particular programme will be a school management component.

Mr. President, one of the reasons for the particular transfer is because we are looking for value for the dollar. We are in the process of negotiations in terms of getting the best programme. That is why the money from this particular area is being vired to another area, not because of the ministry's staff, but because of negotiations to get the best programme economically.

The Tranquillity Government School is being built in phases and there is a revised provision for this. That is because of the phasing of construction of that particular school. Mention was made in terms of putting off the construction of Cunupia and Mason Hall Government Secondary schools—the Minister of Planning and Development has put those particular projects for next year. If one looks at these two schools, and what I said before in terms of a time frame, the time frame for construction is April, 1997.

I have visited the Mason Hall Government Secondary School's site and had discussion with the Chairman of the Tobago House of Assembly on this particular school. I have assured him that construction of these schools will have to start next year because of the problems that we have faced with the hiring of the unit administrator—for which we again had to advertise—and the problems, right now, in terms of evaluation of tenders for construction firms.

Mr. President, we have heard about the particular aspect of education in terms of silence from the Minister of Education; no planning for the education system; lack of teacher training and the tardiness of work on the Tranquillity, Cunupia and Mason Hall Government Secondary schools. Schools will be constructed next year because we recognized that access to primary and secondary school places must be increased not only in Trinidad, but also in Tobago.

Mr. President, I thank you and hon. Senators for the opportunity to make a contribution on the education aspect and for the virement of funding from the Ministry of Education.

Sen. Nirupa Oudit: Mr. President, I have listened to hon. Minister Trevor Sudama present this Bill—which I thought would be a very routine sort of numbers-shifting bill—shifting some money from one part to another. Overall, we are not talking about much money. We are talking about .63 per cent, I think—if my figures are right—of the total Government budget.

3.30 p.m.

The public image which the Government has been presenting recently is that of a tightly run company, managed professionally and with accountability. If one is running a private company and one goes to one's shareholders—and make no mistake, the Government is the board of management running the private company, which is Trinidad and Tobago; and we the taxpayers are the shareholders. For that reason I believe we would be very concerned about how the money is being spent. With this in mind, if I am told at a shareholders' meeting that .63 per cent of the money is being shifted from X, Y and Z to W, P and Q, I will have no problem with that. But if I am told that within the range of projects, there are some projects on which they are actually incurring 200 per cent more cost than was originally planned; 70 per cent less than was originally planned; in the case of the Agricultural Sector Technical Assistance Programme, 66 per cent less than planned; the primary school area—0, but the Minister addressed that; in the case of shelter construction—175 per cent more than originally planned; the Rural Access Roads and Bridges Programme—300 per cent more than was originally planned, I do think, very respectfully, that as a taxpayer and shareholder I deserve a better explanation than “we will address that next year.”

It does not really give one any comfort as a taxpayer to hear a government saying—and if I am looking at agriculture and I believe Sen. Prof. Spence addressed this in his contribution—I am looking at roads to the extent that I am spending 300 per cent more—\$60 million on rural access roads but I am not explaining why I have managed to spend only one-third of the money on the Agricultural Technical Assistance Programme of my business. What are we trying to achieve at the end of the day? We are trying to achieve a well-run agricultural sector, a well-run Ministry of National Security, a well-run Ministry of Health. I will feel much more comfortable if in all these sub-areas in which there has been such a significant variation in spending allocation, that the Minister in his winding up would give a specific explanation for that being so, and more significantly what is going to be done about it.

If there is non-performance in a particular area, it might be an indication that something is not working particularly well in that ministry and the CEO, the Prime

Minister or the Cabinet of the country should be addressing on a per-minister basis why this money is not being spent and what is going to be done about it.

Respectfully, I submit that if something like this is being brought to the taxpayers, we should get more explanation than “we are going to address it next year”. Those are the comments that I have to make on this Bill, Mr. President.

The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Sadiq Baksh): Mr. President, I rise in support of the Finance (Supplementation Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill, and to address a point raised by the Sen. Oudit, in terms of the provision of proper accountability to shareholders and to give a proper explanation.

I would seek to do so in the Ministry of Works and Transport because one of the matters raised was a 300 per cent allocation in the Rural Access Roads Programme.

Mr. President, this signals the capacity within the Ministry of Works and Transport to implement. On coming into office, we would have made our projections based on the previous poor implementation record and historical data within the Ministry of Works and Transport. We could only project the implementation capacity of that sum, and the 300 per cent increase really speaks of results, performance and implementation. This is not singular to the Ministry of Works and Transport, but all the ministries in this new Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

We have had an excellent year within the Ministry of Works and Transport. We have performed much better than our projections. We have attained this in a number of areas, in terms of our drainage works, our highways maintenance programme, in terms of maintenance of public buildings, in terms of our Rural Access Roads Programmes in which there is an outstanding record and for which we are seeking to justify the increase of \$42 million, an increase of some 28 per cent of our original total expenditure for the year.

In north-east Trinidad, four roads with a total length of 6.64 kilometres are substantially completed under contract IB. Also in the north-east of Trinidad, three roads with a total length of 6.37 kilometres are 57 per cent completed. Under contract II, north-west, four roads in Trinidad with a total length of 11.6 kilometres are 78 per cent completed.

Mr. President, I could continue but I do not think that we need to show further examples of our implementation record within this particular ministry and since the

\$42 million increase is some 66 per cent of the total variation, Ministry of Works and Transport accounts for a sizeable amount of that variation. We have been the recipient of funding from other ministries which, due to other circumstances, were not able to implement their programmes, a very significant point in terms of only .67 per cent of a total allocation as a variation. I am sure that the shareholders will be extremely pleased with the board of directors in terms of the direction in which this Government has taken Trinidad and Tobago over the last year.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, I wonder if the hon. Minister would, perhaps, clarify a bit on the rural access roads. I have been making the point that I do not see how one could start a programme on rural access roads improvement until one has an agricultural policy to guide one. I wonder if the Minister could explain how he was able to do that.

Hon. S. Baksh: Mr. President, we do have an agricultural policy and I am sure the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources will make it available to the Senator. The Ministry of Works and Transport is the implementation ministry of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and whereas my Ministry would not be choosing the locations of roads, it would be implementing all the plans in various ministries.

The Ministry of Works and Transport does not choose the site of schools, but when the sites are chosen, the Ministry of Works and Transport has the responsibility to construct and we continue to do so in a prudent manner and with the efficiency that we have become accustomed to.

3.40 p.m.

During the fiscal year 1997 we want to continue the implementation record of 1996. In so doing we would request more funding under the Public Sector Investment Programme, and if allocated, we would continue with our national highways and drainage programmes; our modernization effort at the Licensing Division; the construction of the national library and a commitment for the redevelopment of Piarco International Airport and Crown Point Airport, with a construction start-up date no later than March 1, 1997.

No amount of funding could be enough to adjust the infrastructural deficiency which has developed in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to the deficiency in infrastructure, we have noted the decay of our infrastructure. Our commitment is that we would not continue to allow our infrastructure to deteriorate to the point where the public would suffer the great inconveniences which it has been made to

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suffer in the past. We know that we would be unable to do everything in the shortest possible time, but our commitment is to ensure that the infrastructural development in Trinidad and Tobago, as we move towards the 21st Century, would be a modern one which would make us proud.

Thank you.

Sen. Philip Hamel-Smith: Mr. President, the return of Sen. London to the Chamber signalled my interest in making my contribution. *[Laughter]* I rise in an attempt to bury for once the misinformation on Tobago which we have heard from Sen. London. For too long in this Chamber, we have heard Tobago being used as a battering ball by the Senator on the other side. We know he is a representative from that sister island, but it never ceases to amaze me how he treats so lightly with some important issues and the response which this Government of national unity has given to the needs of this sister island.

From this Bill before us, if we simply focus on Tobago for a while, we would see evidence of the Government's concern for the needs of this sister island. If we enlarge the slice which we are looking at, as I attempted to do, to examine where we have come from and where we are going with regard to Tobago, we would see that this Government has emphasized—if it is guilty of anything, over-emphasized—that Tobago is in dire need of attention.

We see four heads of increased expenditure totalling about \$9.5 million for 1996. I have taken the opportunity to look at these four heads of expenditure and try to analyze in what context these heads of expenditure have come about and why the need for an accelerated expenditure in 1996. When we look at the first head of expenditure which is being asked for an additional sum to be allocated to it, we see Milford Road Esplanade. If we cast our eyes on the explanatory note, we see, and we have heard from the hon. Minister, that this project involves the attempt to eradicate a long experienced flooding problem this part of Tobago has been experiencing.

My investigations have suggested to me this is not something new. It is as old as the hills. It is something with which people have come to live, but something of which they are not deserving. We look back at the records of 1994 which show that the project on Milford Road Esplanade was given a budget of zero. The records tell us that in 1994 the flooding problem was of zero importance to the government of the day.

Sen. London: Is the hon. Senator aware that the Esplanade is for aesthetic and economic reasons rather than for flooding as he has indicated?

Sen. P. Hamel-Smith: I do not know the primary or secondary reason for the project, but I know that one of the objectives for the project is to curtail a very serious problem being experienced in that area of Tobago.

Getting back to the 1994 figure, we see a zero budget for Milford Road Esplanade. We see in 1996 this Government budgeted \$3 million to eradicate this problem once and for all. As the Minister of Works and Transport just indicated to us, we are almost being penalized for our high implementation rate. With the best will in the world, at the start of the year the Government estimated a progress rate which would incur expenditure of approximately \$3 million. The report coming out of that project is that work has progressed faster than anticipated. We heard some specifics from the Minister about the number of piles which was driven and the number of running metres of sea wall which was constructed during the course of 1996. It is because of this swifter than expected progress on this project, that this Government is prepared to put its money where its mouth is, and decided to double the allocation to ensure that progress on this much needed structure on Milford Road was not curtailed for want of money, and allocated \$3 million in the current year, to ensure that work not only progresses, but also by the end of the year it would be a significantly completed project.

Milford Road Esplanade is intended to curtail a significant flooding problem which in 1994 was given zero attention, has been budgeted for, implemented and significantly completed in 1996. The Government has come to account to the country for the expenditure of an additional \$3 million to complete such a project. We can ask ourselves the question and answer it very quietly: Is this something for which the Government should be criticized or commended?

3.50 p.m.

The second project that we see in Tobago—and I will stay with Tobago—is the water supply project in leeward and rural Tobago. It is no secret that Tobago has been subjected to water problems for a very long period of time. Here we have a project labelled the Water Supply Project, Leeward and Rural Tobago, which existed in all its fury in 1994, but the then government had budgeted \$1.9 million to address the problem. In 1996, the Government of national unity, concerned about the water problem in Tobago, allocated \$8 million, four times what was allocated in 1994, and is now asking for an additional \$1.63 million to spend on

bringing this project to fruition. Again, the report indicates that the progress on this project was steady; that three of the five contracts were completed. Again, this is an implementation plan which is working better than expected and which necessitates an additional expenditure of \$1.63 million. The present Government comes to the people to indicate that it will be transferring this \$1.63 million to address the water needs of the Tobago rural community and we hear criticisms from the other side.

The other project which we have looked at is the Store Bay facility. This one, although of less significance, reflects the same story. The 1994 budget for the Store Bay facility was \$200,000. In 1995, the then government estimated an expenditure of \$2.4 million. They came that year and did the opposite to what we are doing—they revised their budget from a \$2.4 million expenditure to \$250,000. They did almost nothing at Store Bay. It was a disgrace.

This Government estimated an expenditure of \$400,000 in 1996, realizing that with little or no effort and with relatively small money Store Bay could be transformed. I myself was a beneficiary this year to this facility, uncompleted, but vastly improved. They have come here to tell this country that with a \$2.6 million increase in expenditure at Store Bay the additional facilities will be completed.

In summary, what we see here is a combination of things. One is that the hon. Sen. London has attempted to present a picture of this Government paying lip service to Tobago. His statement was that this money was allocated simply because there is an election coming up. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. President.

Rather than dilute the point I am trying to make, I will stay with Tobago. The records clearly show who is concerned and who is not. The records clearly show that the present Government is straining every nerve to deliver what the people of Tobago have been crying for, deserve and never got.

Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed: Mr. President, I sat here this afternoon and listened to the hon. Minister of Planning and Development present this Bill with a certain level of holiness. He made his presentation in a very low-keyed tone. He made it appear that the Government was seeking a very simple variation. His presentation merely reinforced in my mind, and I am sure in the minds of many others in this Chamber, that this really is a government of propaganda and public relations. His presentation merely highlighted the haplessness, helplessness and the bungling incompetence that we have seen during the past few months in Trinidad and Tobago.

With their very sophisticated public relations campaign in 1995, compounded by the help of certain well-known political investors, they have found themselves in government. I know for a fact that at no time when they were waging their campaign did they have any policies, principles or ideas. I am speaking from experience. They just had a brown paper document they called a manifesto. Read it, Mr. President, and you will see the same words used in the *[Inaudible]* manifesto of 1991. I cannot recall what political party existed then. It is just rhetoric. There are no concrete policies, programmes or ideas, so that when they found themselves in government, they had difficulty.

I remember very clearly the budget debate of January this year. When the budget was presented, we took great pains to point out to them that at some point later in the year they would have to review the budget. Today we are here experiencing that very same situation where they are seeking to vary certain allocations made.

I distinctly remember, when we were looking at the allocations made to the Ministry of Works and Transport, making the point with respect to the allocation for the Rural Access Roads and Bridges Programme. At that time, and in fact just before that “vaps” government found itself in power, Phase II of that project was already being implemented and contracts to the tune of \$95 million had been awarded. Yet they came in January 1996 and made an allocation of a mere \$19 million.

4.00 p.m

It is no wonder that they have to come now to seek a variation in that allocation to the tune of some \$41 million, and even that seems to be a shortfall in terms of what will be needed insofar as that particular programme is concerned.

Mr. President, we had warned them, that they would have to return but they laughed at us and here it is today they are back.

Hon. Senator: That is the normal procedure.

Sen. N. Mohammed: Mr. President, in the field of agriculture, I support and endorse the comments made by Sen. Prof. Spence and Sen. Oudit when she inquired about the Government’s agricultural policy. It is 12 months now, what is the Government’s policy on agriculture? It is just talk and more talk. I have always heard Mr. Panday talk about agriculture and what it will do for unemployment and I expected to experience an agricultural revolution in Trinidad and Tobago under

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this particular Government, but what are we getting? Ministers subjecting other people to all sorts of awkward situations and abuses, total chaos, confusion and bungling incompetence. This is what characterizes this Government.

Mr. President, I see in terms of the agricultural sector, an attempt is being made to reduce the allocation for the technical assistance programme. Is this programme not to assist small farmers and similarly, with the land use policy? Now where there is this problem with the farmers in the Nariva Swamp we have been hearing talk about some new housing settlements. It is now, more than ever, there is a need for a definite land use policy and here it is with this particular variation, they are seeking to reduce the allocation.

Today we heard the hon. Minister giving various reasons for the need for these variations. I have heard talks about delays and problems with technical staff leaving the public sector, but I wonder why technical persons would have to leave? Maybe they are having tremendous difficulties functioning with this Government that is so incompetent. *[Interruption]*

Mr. President, another area that has me very disturbed is the reduction in the allocation for the construction of a police station in the Barataria/El Socorro area. I have to express my deepest and most serious concerns about this reduction. I live in the San Juan/Barataria area, my navel string is buried in El Socorro and it is an area that is well-known for problems with crime. This is a Government that has spoken so much about crime and yet, in an area where the crime situation is so acute they are seeking to stop the construction of a police station where it is most needed and where there is a problem with drugs.

I operate under a permanent curfew. When I have to return to my home as a woman in the society, I have to go home in fear and I have to reach home at a certain time. They campaigned about fighting crime and dealing with it and here it is they are in the process of abandoning the projects for police posts and stations. It is a sad day for this country, Mr. President, a very sad day indeed. Instead, they have opted to pursue some questionable deal for the provision of some kind of Cherokee jeeps. I wonder from where they came?

Sen. Theodore: Indian jeeps.

Sen. N. Mohammed: The Indian jeeps? Yes. We really have to get to the bottom of this. The Government that has spoken so much of corruption and nepotism and what have you and here it is, we are seeing it on a daily basis.

Mr. President, I was a bit taken aback to hear the hon. Minister talk about equal treatment for Tobago. I had been out of the country for just one short week and the last date I was present in this Senate, I distinctly remember seeing my very dear colleague Sen. Deborah Moore-Miggins in this Chamber. Today, I got the shock of my life when I heard that she has resigned from the Senate. I wonder why, Mr. President? *[Interruption]* And there is talk about equal treatment for Tobago and this is how a Tobagonian is treated? I was not here, I have been out of touch with the news and I really have to wonder.

I am very happy to see that efforts have been made to make some more provisions for Tobago, but I cannot help but wonder at the timing of these increases in allocations.

Mr. President, I would end my contribution by saying—*[Interruption]* that they can fool some of the people some of the time but they cannot fool all of the people, all of the time.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Before you begin I want to ask the hon. Senators, to be less vociferous in their cross talks and their interruptions

Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh: Thank you very much, Mr. President, I now feel protected. Let me associate with those who in the last few days have complimented the Government on its first anniversary of being in office. We are entering the season for review, introspection and resolutions and you are correct as a Government in the assessment of your stewardship and I hope that your own admission that much more could have been done, will itself provide the impetus for more successful service in your second year and thereafter.

Nevertheless, as I say this, I must express very great concern about the lead article in one of today's daily newspapers about certain tax concessions and contracts and I personally feel that as we enter into this time of review, introspection and resolutions, that you would be very cautious because that kind of information will certainly be used to your disadvantage by those who question the practice of providing jobs for the boys. If that will not hurt the party, tell me what will?

Mr. President, I know that there will be explanations, they have been given already concerning all the information on page 1 of one of the popular dailies. Who will believe you will ask about the explanations given since platinum dazzles? I

must respectfully share with the Government counselling which advises that one has to be very cautious with the decision one is making, because the world is looking on, not only the Opposition.

Concerning the Bill before us today the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill, I will limit my brief intervention to two ministries, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Works and Transport. So far very little has been said in the debate about the Ministry of Health. In that Ministry there was a decrease in allocation of \$10.6 million according to the Bill before us and the money was not spent in that Ministry according to the explanation given in the Appendix to the Bill because of a delayed programme.

4.10 p.m.

The question we need to ask is: If this \$10.6 million could have been diverted to another ministry—as it was done—why was it not used within the Ministry of Health? In review and assessment of the year closing, if there was one ministry that provided headaches and problems, one ministry that was an embarrassment to the Government, it was the Ministry of Health. It was not only an embarrassment to Government, it also imposed untold hardships on the population, junior doctors, interns and house officers at the country's main hospitals in Port of Spain and San Fernando. The complaints were intolerable working conditions, lack of job security and overall unsatisfactory health facilities across the territory. But now they have removed \$10.6 million from the Ministry of Health, and funded it elsewhere.

The prolonged impasse at the hospitals created confusion, chaos and probably death. The Government ordered an investigation into all deaths during that period of industrial action. Mr. President, what is the value of that investigation? According to the investigation which is in progress, if persons died during the impasse, who is that going to help; who is going to be comforted; who is going to be jailed? I understand suffering still continues even now and the junior doctors are not happy with many things.

You will recall, Mr. President, that the *1996 Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* for the Ministry of Health, show an allocation of \$665.6 million—the ministry has been the source of much embarrassment to the Government and the cause of suffering to the population and who knows, probably death—what has happened to the \$665.6 million allocated to the Ministry of Health now that the year is closing?

Do you know what this represented for 1996, Mr. President? This represented \$73.2 million added to the allocation for 1995 to bring it to this amount of \$665.6 million. Government's intention, when it drafted the budget, which is on its way out, was good. The Government recognized that there was a problem in the Ministry of Health and it pumped in \$73.2 million and yet that ministry is a disaster area. There is no doubt about that, whatever the Government thinks.

Mr. President, something has to be wrong somewhere. Is the Government saying because there were some deaths and other kind of reports, that a committee was appointed to investigate? More has to be investigated; this is a lot of money. With so much money being spent in that ministry and its continuing problems, something has to be wrong with the administration. I am not talking about the Minister of Health, I am talking about everybody involved; the administration, managers and so forth.

The Regional Health Authorities system was adopted for health care management. The past administration adopted this system—which failed in England—and hastily planted it here in Trinidad and Tobago. The present Government said it was not going to change too much by way of policy and that it would continue with the RHAs, but I do not know how long it should continue. This Government pumped \$73.2 million into the ministry with the hope that the Regional Health Authorities would get off the ground. I think the people of Trinidad and Tobago are very disappointed and I wish they had a say. I believe that the time has come—if all this money is put into the hands of certain persons, departments, and managers—when we must evaluate the performance of these administrators. With respect to the Regional Health Authorities system, I believe the time has come when the Government must reassess the appropriateness, effectiveness and the relevance of the RHA system for health care management in Trinidad and Tobago, because that system is not working.

Mr. President, I want to quote from two out of six letters to “The Editor” in the *Trinidad Guardian* newspaper dated November 12, 1996.

“A major problem faced by the health system in Tobago is a shortage of modern functioning equipment, shortage of professional staff, lack of supplies from sheets and toilet paper, to money to pay telephone bills and maintain motor vehicles.”

People are aware that many things placed in the health system by government or donors are diverted to private use. Stiff penalties must be enforced to deter selfish and life-threatening actions within the Ministry of Health. I continue to quote:

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“Anyone removing gasoline or tyres from Health System vehicles must never again be put in a position to repeat the behaviour.”

Is this letter suggesting that there are people within the Ministry of Health who remove gasoline or tyres from health system vehicles? I continue:

“Taking sheets and toilet paper from the Hospital, inconveniences patients and burdens the System.”

This is the type of clean-up that is necessary. This is where part of our \$665.6 million will be going. There is another letter about the Regional Health Authorities which says:

“I am Regional Health Authority employee... It seems to me that once you are an RHA employee you are worse than a pensioner.”

Mr. President, these are two out of six letters that relate to the health care system in Trinidad and Tobago.

In the Bill before this honourable Senate, is the Government saying that the \$10.6 million was removed from the Ministry of Health because we are not aware that the Ministry needs the money so we could send it elsewhere? Or, is it saying that the money has been removed out of disgust and disappointment? Is the Government saying that \$665.6 million is enough and the Ministry of Health should be doing better, therefore why plough a precious \$10.6 where management is questionable? What is the real motive for removing the money?

The second area of concern is the Ministry of Works and Transport. An additional \$41.8 million has been diverted to this Ministry of Works and Transport—I am glad previous Senators made mention of the Rural Access Roads and Bridges Programme. It is not that I am suspicious but as a student of economics I have been looking at the term “Return On Investment (ROI)”—this is the newest discovery in my dabbling with economic. I will remember that. That is a very beautiful concept, one that we should explore as a government and as a people. This applies to what I said about the Ministry of Health; so much money, Mr. President. Am I, as a layman, interpreting this right?

Hon. Senator: Right on board.

Sen. Rev. D. Teelucksingh: Thank you, Professor.

What are the returns for this kind of investment? Mr. President, if a member of one’s family goes to the hospital he would have to carry his pillowcase and so

forth. I repeat, therefore, what are the returns on this kind of investment? Oh, I like that term.

4.20 p.m.

So the Government is telling us that it allocated \$90 million for the Access Roads and Bridges Programme and it wants \$41.8 million more. That is plenty money. Based on the return on investment concept, the Government has a question to ask: Is the Government getting value for that kind of expenditure? It is very important. It is going to haunt them all through their second year and the rest of their term, as they mentioned 2015. Is the Government getting value for its money—the sum of \$60.8 million for the rural Access Roads and Bridges Programme? I heard some figures quoted. Mr. President, we all drive vehicles—fortunately, thank God for that, at least we could afford something. I have been all over this country, would you please tell us how many bridges and, where are they located? Are they in the forest or in Nariva Swamp? Where have \$60.8 million gone? Why do you need \$41.8 million? We are not seeing the number of bridges; we are not seeing these roads, maybe, they are far in the agricultural development area. Farmers are complaining that the bridges are not there and they are not seeing the roads, but you come here for the approval of that kind of expenditure. Where are the returns for a heavy expenditure like that?

I know the Minister of Works and Transport spoke but I am going to tell you something: Mr. President, I think the motoring public and the travelling public, when this year is over, would be very disappointed about the maintenance of our secondary roads—I am not talking about the highways—the potholes are still there and look at the amount of money we are spending. Where is it going? Is it not true that in our evaluation we might find that—and you are going to tell me that we are clean, as far as the contracts are concerned and so forth?

There is a very important question about labour productivity that we have to look at in this country. Are we getting value for these things? We are spending so much on bridges and where are they? I do not know the cost of constructing that famous bridge, the 1996 bridge in Ste. Madeleine, but some of us wonder, in truth and in fact, if that money could not build three bridges. It is very important, do not tell me the cost of things—before the dollar was floated you could tell me that you built a bridge for so much money in this country and it took so long. From where did the materials come? What is the cost of labour? Who is overdoing it as far as tendering and costing is concerned? Are we saying that the Government has plenty money so we are going to increase and inflate our charges on the Treasury?

Mr. President, one of the Ministers spoke about results, performance and implementation and I am looking for results too and we are looking for that performance. This is the substance of what I am saying and I have only picked out two ministries from the document before us.

Mr. President, I close by saying the evaluation of this year's work certainly calls for a responsible and accountable management of the people's money. We are not seeing the results; do what you want and boast about the performance of this country and all the investments and so forth. So much money is being poured into this country and we are not seeing results. Where is the money going? It is a good question that we have to ask ourselves. I, most respectfully, advise the Government that they look at this question of labour productivity; the question of exorbitant tenders, almost ridiculous tenders, look at them again. As a nation, for the kind of money passing through the Treasury and passing through our hands, we need to be more responsible in our spending.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I believe it might be an appropriate time to take the tea break now.

4.25 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

4.55 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. Penelope Beckles: Mr. President, I rise to make a contribution on this Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) Bill, 1996. The area I really want to focus a bit on is our social issues. I think, while most of the other Senators have agreed that the figure being varied is not a significant amount, I do not think the issue is so much the amount, as it is the cause for delays and the areas from which the decreases have come. Particularly, Mr. President, when we see in 1996 for a considerable period there has been an increase in our oil revenues, the question then arises whether there has been any mechanism put in place by the Government to adequately benefit from those increases.

Mr. President, we see that there is likely to be an increased surplus of almost \$1 billion from oil revenue, and the issue is whether or not policies and plans were put in place by this Government to ensure that the country benefits, in a maximum sense, from such an increase in oil prices. We may go down in history as one of the few countries where, when there was an increase in oil prices and oil revenue, there was a devaluation of our dollar.

If we look at the reduction in allocations, for example, the modernization of the St. Michael's School for Boys, where there was a reduction of \$1.3 million, and the explanation is that it is expected that only the designs for these facilities will be completed in 1996. There is the establishment of a Probation Hostel with a reduction of \$1.2 million. The explanation for that variation is failure to secure a site. There is another reduction of variation in the establishment of a Halfway House, and it is indicated that it is expected that only preliminary design preparations may be possible in 1996.

Another area is the establishment of a Remand Home where the reduction is \$630,000. Again, the explanation is due to the unavailability of a suitable site. There would only be preliminary drawings for the refurbishment of the buildings being developed by the Ministry of Works and Transport on the basis of a brief prepared by the Ministry of Social Development.

Mr. President, we see in all these very critical areas that the obvious problem has been the unavailability of suitable sites. The question which arises—and some of my colleagues spoke about it—is: What is the policy position of the Ministry of Social Development on social services? Because clearly, the establishment of a Halfway House, or a Remand Home; the improvement of the St. Michael's School for Boys and a Probation Hostel are very important projects.

I am sure we would have liked to see these completed in 1996, bearing in mind the fact that this Government spoke of their concentration on the issues of poverty, vagrancy, social services, and the relationship between those and the reduction of crime; and the whole issue of drug abuse. Yet, here we see, Mr. President, in all these very important areas, that there seems to have been absolutely no planning.

Clearly, Mr. President, if in November 1996 they are saying that only the designs for these facilities I have mentioned will be completed in 1996, it is my submission that what has been lacking is planning. It is quite easy for some of the Ministers to compliment themselves and say that they have performed and that there is implementation; and to further say that that implementation and performance extends to all other ministries. But from what we are seeing here today, that statement is very far from the truth.

The Minister of Education spoke at length, indicating that he was going to illuminate us on this side with respect to the various projects that he was doing, and those projects, mainly, were for 1997. He was asked to identify the budgetary allocations for those computer and other projects for 1996, and he is yet to answer

that question. Therefore, when my colleague, Sen. London, indicated that he has been talking less and doing little, it was absolutely appropriate.

Mr. President, as I said, my contribution is mainly on this concern that they have come to the Senate and indicated that they have plans and policies relating to vagrancy. They have spoken about this Government's focus on the administration of justice and the fact that they have all these plans and programmes. As a matter of fact, the Attorney General indicated to the Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago that wherever he has to find money to ensure that the administration of justice moves forward, and that all the plans and policies are implemented, that money would be found in a very short space of time!

5.05 p.m.

When we look at the Arima Magistrates' Court which the Attorney General boasted would have been started this year and to a large extent, we would see some considerable improvement and construction work by the end of 1996; we see from this document here, as produced, that that is not true at all. Yes, one must agree that compliment must be given if it is we are also going to house a High Court of justice in Arima, but the impression that is created there is that that is a new suggestion when that is not so at all.

Mr. President, when I made the comment during the contribution of the Minister of Education that the population is being misled to a certain extent by some of what is said, that is entirely true. When one comes saying that this is a simple exercise, or a simple variation, or a simple adjustment, I think that one must be honest in one's contribution, because it is quite clear that notwithstanding the so-called Government of national unity giving the impression that this exercise is a simple one, had it had its policies and programmes in place in terms of these projects that are before this honourable Senate, I do not think that it would have the difficulty it now has in explaining to us why in most cases it has only reached design stages insofar as the social services are concerned and that most of the things have to be implemented in 1997.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Minister of Social Development (Hon. Manohar Ramsaran): Mr. President, after listening to Sen. Beckles, I would like to respond in the following way.

For the last year the Ministry of Social Development has been planning, because when we went into that ministry nothing had been done. I share nine of

the things I have done as Minister of Social Development. I have taken to Cabinet and had approved the following policies and projects:—

1. National committee and task force on social displacement;
2. National policy with respect to persons with disabilities;
3. Activities to improve the welfare of elderly;
4. Development of a national population policy;

Sen. London: Mr. President, on a point of order. Is it permissible to quote from statements made in the Lower House during the same session?

Mr. President: I am not aware that the hon. Minister indicated he was quoting from statements made in the Lower House.

Sen. London: He is quoting. He is reading verbatim.

Hon. M. Ramsaran: Totally different, Mr. President.

5. Establishment of a policy on national heroes;
6. National plan of action for the survival, protection and development of children;
7. Policy regarding blind people;

If I may mention, it is called the Rita Ortega Report.

8. National social development council; and
9. Poverty line report.

Mr. President, as the arm of the Government vested with responsibility for protection of the vulnerable and disadvantaged and promotion of a better quality of life for all citizens, the Ministry of Social Development has been playing a very critical role in carrying out the stated social policy objectives of the present administration. Policies which reflect a people-centred approach to development have been accorded high priority on the Government's agenda and, as a consequence, the work of the Ministry of Social Development has been placed in the spotlight. Concomitant with this was an increasing demand from various sources for information, financial and technical assistance.

What I am trying to say is that when I assumed responsibility as the Minister of Social Development, nothing was in place and all these projects that were in the

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PSIP were there before my tenure. Nothing was done to have them started. As a matter of fact, what we had in place was just talk. As the Senator said, rhetoric. I went in and revisited all these programmes. If I may just read what was the position.

The establishment of a halfway house for ex-residents of children's homes—the project involved the provision of temporary residential accommodation, development and recreational facilities for ex-residents of children's homes. A site was established at Centeno to establish a home for males and approval has been received for use of the site. This only happened this year and this project was there for three or four years. As I mentioned before, when I assumed responsibility as the Minister I did not want to throw things out. I examined what was going on and this was there with nothing done about it. It was just sitting there. I plan in 1997 to complete construction of that home at Centeno for males and to establish one for young women.

What I am informing this honourable Senate is that we now have a government which really cares about what is happening in this country. We cannot just sit here and listen to people on the other side saying that we did not have a plan. We have been in office for one year and I am sure if a comprehensive report on what is happening at the Ministry of Social Development is had, one would see what I am talking about.

The establishment of a formal foster care system—this project would provide temporary care in the home setting for children in need of such services and who are at risk of abuse and neglect. A foster care committee was established and a foster care unit set up. A policy document and placement procedures were completed.

Establishment of a probation hostel—the project involved the construction of a hostel to serve as a temporary home for probationers which will provide an environment conducive to rehabilitation. A site at Couva was approved to set up the hostel and a planning group has been prepared to enable preparation of drawings by the contractors when approval was obtained from Cabinet.

Mr. President, this was ongoing, as the Minister of Public Administration and Information would tell you, for quite a long time under the last administration. It was promised to the Ministry of Social Development then there was a change of plan; the building was vandalized; and we now have to re-examine the whole system. We did not want to move from Couva so we have now found a suitable

site and we are going ahead with that project. It is not fair to say we have not planned. These projects deal with children, with displaced youths, with women at risk, so we just cannot put them in any old place, we must have a proper environment for the recovery and rehabilitation of these people.

The Marion Acres farm project—this project started and was completed in May, 1996. It provides residences for homeless, destitute, young men with training in agricultural activities. The project was used as a model organization for training of teachers who provided remedial education, counselling and sporting activities to participants. More than 13 young men benefited from this programme and were afforded an opportunity to lead productive lives on completion. Mr. President, it is said that this project could serve as a model for other Caribbean countries.

The reconstruction of the St. Michael's Home for Boys—I would like to report to this Senate that Phase I was completed in March this year and we moved into Phase II. To date, Phase II of this project is expected to commence early 1997 and we will go into Phase III next year. The ministry is presently working on the commencement of Phase II which will include the construction of trade shops, a dining/multi-purpose hall and a basketball court.

5.15 p.m.

In the Ministry we were able to secure funding to the tune of US \$120,000 from the Korean Government to purchase kitchen equipment and other necessities for the school.

What I am trying to put into the record here is that in the Ministry of Social Development we are in the process of starting a ministry. It is really sad to have gone into that ministry and seen what was happening there. Apparently someone used to be there, but it was frustrating that everything had to be planned; everything had to be restarted.

Do you remember that the last administration said there were no street children? When I went into that ministry there was a survey sitting on the desk completed in 1992 speaking about street children. I was not in politics at the time and I used to hear the Minister of Social Development saying there were no street children.

A drop-in centre was established at Nelson Street, Port of Spain by the Credo Foundation with assistance from the Government. The centre caters for homeless children under the age of 15 and provides counselling, remedial education, primary

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medical care and one hot meal per day. We plan to purchase the building next year because at present it is on a rental basis.

There was also talk about vagrancy. I am sure that is quite popular with some of us here. When we went into the ministry and I asked for a vagrancy plan of what was done, all that happened was that there were one or two press conferences. There was nothing, no documentation. The plan that they spoke about was non-existent and we immediately had to go and formulate a plan for this vexing problem of vagrancy. We spoke about this at length previously in this Senate, but I would just like to report what has happened so far. The Task Force is at present working on immediate implementable actions to address the problem of vagrancy and homelessness. Early in 1997 we would like to refurbish the Riverside Plaza Assessment Centre; we would like to implement a voluntary removal from the streets; implement an effective assessment and evaluation programme at the Riverside Plaza Assessment Centre.

Mr. President: On the question of vagrancy, a certain decision was taken. As far as I am aware the committee has not yet reported and I believe you should not concentrate on making any pronouncement on vagrancy in the Senate.

Hon. M. Ramsaran: I am so guided. I would just like to say that the work is going on apace and we would report as soon as we complete the action in the other place.

Over the past year, as I mentioned before, we took action with respect to persons with disabilities and we have prepared a detailed statement on the cost of implementing the policy on persons with disabilities. We are having a National Co-ordinating Committee on Disability Affairs Unit. I am saying these things to let Senators know that we are in the process of planning and effecting remedial action in our ministry; and to enlighten Senators as to what is happening in the Ministry of Social Development.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, I am convinced that what the Minister is saying is extremely important and I would hope that he would perhaps present it to us as a statement, but I recall your attention to Standing Order 35(1). In fact, the only references to the Ministry of Social Development in this document before us is that there have been decreases under a number of heads. I do not know whether the Minister would like to explain to us the decreases, otherwise, I really cannot see the relevance.

Mr. President: The previous contributor made mention about lack of planning in reference to social development and the hon. Minister, in my view, is, in fact, indicating that they had planned and is enunciating some of the things arising out of the planning in the ministry.

Hon. M. Ramsaran: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I would not have touched this document had I not been accused of not planning. We cannot sit here and be told that we are not doing our work. This is a very serious allegation.

We also have activities to improve the welfare of the elderly. As you know, we have already passed legislation to improve the welfare of people with disabilities and lower the pension age, and so forth. We had, too, a Cabinet decision to formulate the National Social Development Council. We got it off the ground a couple weeks ago. We expect everyone in this Senate to take part in this Council. It has to do with poverty eradication. When we talk about poverty eradication and alleviation of poverty, it is not only a job for the Government, but for everyone of us to address.

We ask them to give us their fullest co-operation and to work with this Council to ensure that we do what we set out to do. I know we got some volunteers on the last occasion, but I would like that to be more concrete. We must fight this scourge of poverty as we move on. As you know, the Chairman of that Council is our Minister Extraordinaire.

I would not talk about our achievements because I was not accused of achieving. What was said was that we come here and talk about achievements.

So the moneys that were reduced, I mentioned in passing, but the point I am making is, we have not abandoned these projects; we have not left them by the wayside as was done in the past. What we realized was that everything had to start from scratch so we are at this position, and we have been asked to let the money be vired to another ministry and we have no problem with that. Most of the money that left my ministry would be doing some of the works that Sen. Hamel-Smith spoke about in Tobago. I feel proud that I could lend to the development of Tobago affairs.

The \$2.6 million that is going to the Store Bay facilities came directly from the Head of my ministry—Head 45, so that falls straight into what I am doing in my ministry. We are looking at the prevention of our problems rather than solving them. We feel that if we could prevent social development problems, that would be a plus in this country. So when we develop Store Bay facilities and do all these

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different developmental works in Trinidad and Tobago, that will achieve the goal of eradicating poverty. So I have no problem that the money has been removed temporarily from my ministry. I do know that when we start these projects late this year or early next year, that funds would be available and we would be on our way to solving most of the vexing problems in our country with the support of fellow Cabinet Members and colleagues on both sides, to ensure that we work together.

I always say at the end of my five-year term we should not have a Minister of Social Development because we should have eradicated all the social ills on the face of this beautiful country.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore): Mr. President, I would like to make a short intervention on this Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (1996) Bill, with reference to comments made by Sen. Oudit and remarks made by Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed.

It seems as though the general feeling is that transfer of funds is treated as decreases. In my ministry it is not a decrease but is as a result of savings. I am very happy by the manner in which the Minister of Planning and Development was able to allocate these funds to the Ministry of Works and Transport. I see where the \$8,500,000 is going towards the Rural Access Roads and Bridges Programme. I am sorry Sen. Teelucksingh is not here. He seemed to have had problems with bridges in certain parts of Trinidad and Tobago and I am sure these funds that the Ministry of National Security can well afford will take care of these deficiencies in the road works of Trinidad and Tobago.

5.25 p.m.

With respect to where the reduction in our funds came from, we are dealing with a fire station and a few police stations. The fire station, which is in San Fernando, is a new one to be constructed. This fire station has to be rebuilt because the present one is no longer useful. It has, in fact, taken us almost the entire year to find a site and people ask: why did it take a whole year to find a site?

Mr. President, I would like to tell them why it took a whole year to find a site. Originally, it was intended that the fire station would be rebuilt on the original site, but a group of people were doing a beautification programme of the promenade in San Fernando and they objected to this because the fire station would not fit into

the general layout that they had in mind. So, immediately, we had to look for a new site. We were shown a site on the wharf in San Fernando, which the fire service immediately turned down because it was too out of the way and would have required them going through too much traffic to get to high risk areas in San Fernando that would be served by the fire service.

We have found a site, Mr. President. This site has been identified on lands owned by the San Fernando City Council on Carib Street, and is to be cleared and construction, we hope, will start if not by the end of this year, then early next year.

So, what we have found is that the money that was allocated in the budget for constructing an entire fire station certainly would not be required at this time. So, we have taken a cut of \$1.5 million which I think would be put to good use.

The other area of concern is the construction of the Cunupia Police Station. Again, this is a rebuilding project. I visited the Cunupia Police Station some months ago and was appalled by the condition of the place; the building is virtually falling down around the policemen and women who are stationed there. We undertook to have them rehoused or at least have a new station constructed before the end of this year. As it stands the money that was provided was part of a Fincor project.

As part of our rationalization policy we approached the URP which is maintained by the Ministry of Works and Transport and this project can be completed for half the price. Work has already started, in fact, work began on October 28 and the project is expected to be completed in April of 1997.

So, Mr. President, we are not closing down police stations, or trying to deny the people of what is theirs. What we are saying is that there is proper and astute management by the staff of the ministry who are responsible for development projects and they are paying careful attention to what is going on. They visit these sites with members of the police service and the fire service and provide monthly reports on how the projects are going, so we know from month to month how much money we are spending, whether we are likely to overspend and there are certain modifications that are required by both the fire service and the police service that sometimes would change the design.

We are quite confident that transferring this money would in no way retard or inhibit the progress that our ministry is making in providing adequate accommodation for the fire service and the police service.

The establishment of police posts: Despite what Sen. Mohammed said about these high risk areas and, in particular, the area where she resides, we revised the entire issue of police posts. The last administration wanted 16 police posts. What seemed to be happening when we took office was that the police stations were, in effect, being allowed to fall down and new police posts were being built. I am afraid we have taken a slightly different approach. We would rather maintain what is possible and try to save some of these police stations. Some of the older ones—I am sorry Prof. Kenny is not here—are really works of art. They are beautiful areas but they have been neglected.

We have developed a maintenance programme and it is a pity that I have to say that of the 72 police stations we have looked at, 19 require minor repairs; 15 require major repairs and 37 require rebuilding. So, to say that we are trying to deny anybody police posts or police stations is really not true. The problem is what happens between now and then. We still have the problem of trying to keep some of these stations open and keep the police working while we go about building or refurbishing the stations.

Mr. President, I take the point made by Sen. London that when one builds or extends schools more teachers are needed, and by the same token, if we are busy building police posts, we need policemen and women. I am afraid that this matter was not seriously considered in the past, because the number of police who could be trained at the police barracks was approximately 120 per year. The wastage rate alone in the police service at that time exceeded 120 police officers in one year. So, we were forever catching up.

Since coming into office, in May of this year, I was able to get the URP to refurbish the entire police barracks which made it possible for the police to double their number of trainees. Right now there are 238 trainees approaching graduation in November of this year. At the commencement of the new year in January, we intend to start another training series for 240 more recruits, men and women.

Mr. President, one has to make sure that if we are putting up police posts there are people to man these police posts. In fact, I have been receiving complaints about a particular police post, I believe it is in Pasea, which has not been occupied since it was opened. We took office and this police post was commissioned and simply virtually abandoned. Now, there is no blame to be placed on anybody for this, it is simply a matter of facts that there were not enough people to go around. So, what we are concentrating on is training police officers.

We are also seeking to, maybe, decrease the number of police posts. What apparently happens with these police posts is that wherever there is trouble a police post was set up. We feel that is not going to stop the problem. This ministry is working with the other ministries of government, in particular, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Community Development and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs because we feel that if these other ministries do what they have set out to do, it will have a marked impact on the crime that we are suffering from in this country.

We have a new prison complex that would be ready for occupation in January, and again the Ministry has already taken a decision that building more prisons and, perhaps, building more police posts may not be the way to go. We are hoping to decrease the crimes, have less criminals on the road by starting with children to make sure that they get proper training and dealing with their parents. The schools play an important part. In the Ministry of National Security we would be very happy to see this and we are working alongside these ministries to try to decrease the crime rate.

We are working now with the Attorney General and looking at alternative forms of punishment other than incarceration. We are looking forward to using these same vehicles, Cherokee jeeps included, *[Laughter]* to heighten our patrols and get the police to respond more quickly because the complaint has been made that the police are not responding to the calls by the citizens because they do not have vehicles.

5.35 p.m.

The problem was immediately identified. We are not dealing only with hardware, management training is being conducted for the police. We believe that with another review of our resources, we will probably not complete five of the police posts. By increasing the patrols we will be able to cover the necessary territory to deal with the problems which may arise in crime ridden areas. One of those posts certainly is not the one in El Socorro.

As a matter of fact, the Barataria/El Socorro Police Station is one that was under the Maritime Loan Agreement. A decision was taken to move away from that agreement and funding was received under the Public Sector Investment Programme to build this station. In fact, we are going beyond the police post. We found that there were small police posts and large police posts. Small police posts were almost like guard rooms, with three or four policemen, so we have taken a

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decision that all police posts will either be large police posts or like the one in Valencia which was opened earlier this year, virtually a small police station. That way there will be ample resources and response personnel to deal with the problems of the public particularly in those communities.

The designs for this Barataria/El Socorro Police Station have been completed, tenders have been evaluated and we are in the process of awarding tenders. I am pleased to say that the new estimates will be submitted in the new year and we are asking not for \$2.340 million, we will be asking for \$4 million.

Sen. Mohammed: Would the hon. Minister indicate to the Senate where this new police station will be located, if a site has already been located?

Sen. Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore: Mr. President, a site has not been located. We know that a station is needed. I have volunteered to go with the Commissioner of Police to be taken around the various sites. We have also looked at a demographic layout of the country, we have looked at the areas of high unemployment where crime is more rampant. We need to strategically place those police posts. I am not at all suggesting this was not done in the first instance, but I think we need to look at them again in light of more recent developments. There is a San Juan Police Station and a San Juan Police Post which is located along the Eastern Main Road. We need to put this police station in a place where it would not impinge on the territory of the post. In fact, the Commissioner and I are scheduled to start paying field visits and this will be one of them.

Mr. President, we are looking at an increased cost from \$2.340 million to \$4,751,291. The other area we are looking at is the Ste. Madeleine Police Station which is one that is being rebuilt. This police station was allowed to become run down and I believe that the failure to maintain these stations was really being "penny wise and pound foolish." It is costing us far more money now to refurbish and replace these police stations. This programme is being undertaken by NIPDEC. Construction works commenced on September 1, 1996 because of delays of finalizing a suitable site.

The problem with the site for Ste. Madeleine is that police officers themselves had objections to the positioning of the station relative to their area of responsibility. This matter has been overcome and the present site is located opposite the Usine Ste. Madeleine Sugar Factory and next to the Ste. Madeleine Health Centre.

We expect completion to be in May of 1997. These are the main areas that we are concerned with in the Ministry and my main point is that there were savings due to astute management and the attention which the project development staff paid to the work at hand. That basically is the reason and I am very happy. I believe left alone without the intervention of the Minister of Planning and Development the money may have stayed there or I would have been tempted to spend it all out before the end of the year, which is always a temptation hard to resist.

Mr. President, I am very pleased to make this small contribution and to explain to our shareholders, as Sen. Oudit described the population, because the protective services in effect are here to serve the people of this country. We are not trying to score points. We took over a certain situation at a certain time and we are very pleased to be in a position to continue providing the security required by our citizens.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Dr. Eric St. Cyr: Mr. President, I join the other Senators who offered congratulations to the Government on successfully completing their first year in office. I would like to go a little further and wish them every success in the future. This debate has taken a rather interesting turn with many Senators giving a state-of-the-Ministry report, as it were, and such information as was provided is more than welcome. I would like to make a few brief remarks on the Bill before us.

The Ministry of Finance is to be congratulated on getting the numbers so close. It is pretty unusual in an exercise like this to come out that close to target and the arithmetic and the management must have been very carefully done and well executed. We must compliment the Government for this. The percentages have been alluded to so I would not trouble with those.

I am interested to see that the focus has been on the development programme. The recurrent budget is very important but if we are going to turn the country around, and develop the country, the real thing we want to focus our expertise on is the development programme, the infrastructure, both the hard and soft and I am very happy to see that this has been the focus in this Bill before us. Within that I am very happy to see how much emphasis has been given to the agricultural sector. While it is good to work from a plan so one knows where one is going,

certainly, except we open up the rural areas, the long term development prospects would not be very favourable.

5.45 p.m.

I have only compliments to see the lion's share of the variation go to opening up rural access roads and bridges, as some of the infrastructure which must be put in to get agriculture expanded and further developed.

I compliment the Government on providing the detailed explanation for the variations. I was somewhat disturbed when Sen. London said that at least in one case, there could have been a different explanation or that the explanation given was not the full story. I think that tremendous respect was shown to the House, in that for every variation there was an attempt to say why it came down or why it went up.

Mr. Sudama: First time.

Sen. Dr. E. St. Cyr: This is certainly something to be encouraged and strengthened.

To me the big point in the debate is the comment of the Minister of Planning and Development on the project preparation capability and implementation. To the extent that some of those resources given to the Minister of Public Administration and Information would be used to strengthen our capability in that direction, even though I have a little reservation about where we go to source the expertise, I think that wherever we could find them, we should make the investment there.

Let me make a brief comment about the macro economic management. Probably in the last budget we opened up a little too much. We saw the consequence of that in the exchange rate. Let me say again, that is the key price in the country. Looking into the future—I know it was just 0.5 per cent slippage by the time it stabilized—and taking the exchange rate as the indicator of the general success in economic management, I reinforce Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh's point that unless we get labour productivity up, the exchange rate would slip.

I was somewhat struck by the contribution of the hon. Minister of National Security. The number of persons engaged in security work, police work and the like is unproductive labour. I think we would start to see the turnaround in overall productivity when we stem the increase in that type of employment and increase employment in the productive areas. That would be tied in very closely with the crime situation both of which represent a break-down in social relations.

In terms of the development in policy in the long run, I urge that these general issues be taken into account. It is not that I am in a generous mood today, but I really think that the outturn I have seen here calls for compliments and I offer my compliments to the Government on this Bill.

Thank you.

Sen. Martin Daly: Mr. President, I associate myself with the remarks of Sen. St. Cyr relating to the summaries which we have been given for the variations in the heads of expenditure. This is something which began in my short lifetime in Parliament, largely at the promptings of Sen. Spence and Sen. Mansoor as he then was. I think that compliments are due not only to this Government for improving the practice because this is more detailed than we used to have, but it is also important to understand that behind the front office of the ministers, there is a public service that has recognized the need to provide us with this kind of information. I would not like the occasion to pass without attributing some of the Government's success in increasing the level of accountability to the receptiveness of the public service in providing summaries. I doubt very much that any individual minister would have the time—and if they are as poorly numerate as I am—and capability of summarizing these quite complicated figures in this simple and understandable fashion.

I think it is important to make that point, particularly as I noticed for the first time, that one Minister in particular has finally seen the wisdom of commenting on a situation in the country without ascribing blame. There is some sensitivity on the part of certain Members of the Government. On this occasion I would not call any names but the reference I am making would be perfectly obvious.

I am also very heartened by the fact that while I may share some of Sen. Spence's concern about Standing Order 35 (1), I think it is very important that the Ministers have some latitude to give us some update on what is happening in their ministries. To borrow another point from Sen. Spence and Sen. Mansoor as he then was, it is very important that we focus not only on the variations, but also have some sense as shareholders—to borrow Sen. Oudit's phrase—to see that we get value for our money. Implicit in what one minister is saying, if we have adopted a different approach to posts as opposed to stations, and we are looking at maintenance as opposed to rebuilding, that is the kind of springboard which would give us some idea of whether we are getting value for our money.

I am very glad to hear the Minister of National Security say that he wants to maintain some of the police stations not only as a money saving device, but also because they are part of our culture and some of them are fine old buildings. Indeed, if the requisite work had been done on the Sangre Grande Police Station, we would have avoided—I do not want to use any ambiguous words on this occasion—a rather quite horrible blue projection in the middle of Sangre Grande. I would not describe it any further than that. That is a building which clearly could have been saved and would have added to the lustre and heritage of the country. With regard to extensions being done, it would have been in keeping with our heritage.

5.55 p.m.

Anyone who knew the town of Sangre Grande maybe 30 years ago can only weep about the fact that it is now worse than an amalgamation of very old concrete and very inappropriate glass. This is one part of Trinidad which has been totally destroyed, when one considers that it was the cocoa and coffee centre of Trinidad and a kind of agricultural capital, where the cocoa and coffee trade was done. There were buildings of a certain type, but now the place is really very unsightly. I am pleased to hear that it will be part of this Government's programme to look at the value of these buildings from a heritage point of view. That is another encouraging sign in this debate.

So, Mr. President, there is much to be pleased about in relation to this exercise, which is part of the whole budget debate. This cannot be seen in isolation of the budget debate: it is really an exercise in accountability.

Of course, I very much regret that we still have a *vaille-que-vaille* Parliament schedule. I cannot, for the life of me, understand why this important debate is taking place on an unscheduled sitting day. I will complain about this again because there are reasons for it. One only has to look around to understand that even the most responsible Senators are extremely inconvenienced and the debate is made poorer by the fact that we do not seem to have a regular Senate day any more. We have a Senate day, which is arranged *vaille-que-vaille*, when we come here on whatever was the last *vaille-que-vaille* day we arranged. So we come on a Monday and we fix a Wednesday. This is affecting the way we conduct the nation's business. Look around, Mr. President, and you will see the effect it is having on the way we conduct the nation's business.

It is very important that the Government is pleased about the fact that we recognize the increasing levels of accountability and is prepared to account to us

without always this question of blame. The country wants to know that things will get better. They are not really interested in why we are so bad outside of election. This whole exercise, with its improved levels of accountability, is somewhat diluted. It is somewhat spoilt by the fact that it is not being done on a scheduled Senate day and on a scheduled Senate basis and that Senators are inconvenienced and Senators are forced, either not to be here for the start of the debate, or to leave before it is concluded.

I know that it upsets people, but this does not bother me. I do not care who is upset when I say my piece. We must have a rational schedule for the conduct of parliamentary business, and this whole session, which is drawing to a close, has been marred by not having a rational schedule for the conduct of business. If the Senate normally meets on a Tuesday, we must meet on a Tuesday except for very good reason. If the House normally meets on a Friday, then there is no reason to dislocate the business by moving the sittings of the House to a Tuesday. There are two other days of the week—Mondays and Wednesdays—if the House needs another day, even if Cabinet meets on a Thursday.

This is very important because we are conducting a very important exercise today, on this very unscheduled and *ad hoc* basis, which inconveniences Senators even if they are given proper notice. Sometimes we are not given proper notice.

I think it is very important as the Government accepts the compliments offered in relation to these levels of accountability, that it understands that the Parliament has a role and proper arrangements must be made so that Senators can take full part in anything that we debate, particularly something as important as this.

Now, Mr. President, there are one or two specific items that trouble me. There is no point hearing that the Government is new. The point is that it has had one year in office and I have absolutely no sympathy because my position is well known. If one goes up for elected office in this country, one must have policies in place before one offers oneself for election. I am very unsympathetic from a philosophical point of view to any government that tells me it is new, because they should hone their alternative policies in opposition and be ready to hit the ground running. My position on that is well known.

Sen. Teelucksingh has dealt with the question of the Ministry of Health and we have had some explanation from the Minister of Works and Transport about the implementation and improvements in his Ministry. I would like to focus on the Ministry of Social Development. My reason for doing so is that for the first time I

have heard a coherent explanation from a Minister of Government in this session of Parliament, on how he might go about reducing something that is bad instead of simply dealing with it after the event. We have had a coherent explanation of how the Minister of National Security sees the link between crime and the other ministries, and that is very refreshing. Last week when I tried to show how we would reduce the incidence of people being injured and not being able to claim on insurance companies, the official position of Government speakers was that it was irrelevant. Clearly they have changed their minds and the evidence that they have changed their minds is two fold. First of all, the Minister of National Security spoke about prevention rather than cure, so I welcome those of us who think that prevention is relevant. Secondly, I actually saw implementation of some of the practical things I complained about on the roads this weekend and I have spoken to the Minister privately about it in purely congratulatory terms.

When I look at the Ministry of Social Development which apparently will be taken seriously for a change, I really am concerned about the fact that in each of these cases—the St. Michael’s School for Boys, the Halfway House and so forth—the explanations that have been given, while I do not doubt them, are very unfortunate. Take for example the Halfway House. We have had much discussion about domestic violence and the relevant Minister has made two statements in the House already. I do not think much of statements, as is well known. Indeed one statement was made shortly after a number of us had complained about it, and we were again told we were irrelevant, and presto, the following week a statement was made.

I do not think much about statements, Mr. President. What concerns me is that when I look at the Halfway House, which is at page 13 of the explanations for the variations of the projects and programmes:

“The implementation of this project has been delayed because of the failure to secure a site. Facilities identified at Aripo and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) were assessed as being more suitable for the establishment of a Remand Home ... The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is presently seeking a new site. The MSD has completed planning brief, guidelines for entry of inmates into the facility ... and is considering ... It is expected that only preliminary design preparations may be possible in 1996.”

Now, Mr. President, I find that quite lamentable. I do not know—and I am sorry my colleague Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt is not here—the technical or site

requirements for a halfway house. A halfway house is simply providing safe and modest locations for persons who are refugees either from domestic violence or other things. To me all this business about the approval of the site is just mumbo jumbo and jargon. To me it is a very simple thing: get a location which is safe and modestly comfortable. This, as I say is not really a satisfactory explanation.

When I look at a practical problem like this and the way it cannot be solved because of all this problem of implementation of site and preliminary designs: this is not a five-star hotel we are considering here, Mr. President; this is a modest requirement for temporary accommodation. Halfway means what it says. It is to provide temporary accommodation for persons, so I am a bit concerned about this business of preliminary design and the securing of a site.

6.05 p.m.

I think that is way too high-falutin for this practical problem and therefore, I would have been much more comforted if the Minister had expanded on some of these things in his contribution instead of gazing starry-eyed into the future and talking about policies that have not yet materialized.

Likewise, Mr. President, there is the same type of explanation with regard to a Remand Home and I dare say that probably much more is involved in the design of a Remand Home than in a Halfway House. This is the problem, the longer we put off dealing with these practical problems—because they are too long on the drawing board—we will have the negative effects on society that have at long last been recognized by this Government, by the Minister of National Security today.

In summary, I hope that this very laudable trend towards accountability and explanations of the variations will continue, and that the trend towards certain ministries that are the subject of the variations, and those who come and give us an update will continue because that, too, is a healthy thing but at the same time, I think it is very important that some of us do not get carried away by our own rhetoric and perhaps say things that are somewhat extravagant in praise of ourselves.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Trevor Sudama): Mr. Vice-President, I would not wish to detain this Senate [*Laughter*] for very long, but I do want, in the interest of providing some information, and indeed being

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accountable, as we have promised to be and which has been expressed by this voluminous document which we have provided. It is the first time this Chamber has seen such lengthy explanations on variations and this was a deliberate effort on the part of the Ministries of Finance and Planning and Development to not only talk about accountability, but to express it in the kind of information we make available to the Senate. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, I thank the Senators who have contributed and want to make some comments on a few points which have arisen as a result of their contributions.

I start with Sen. London who indicated to us that he offered advice to this Government very early in the year. I am open to any sort of advice, Mr. Vice-President, but I am a bit wary when it comes from the goodly Senator, because I understand he was advising his political leader. [*Laughter*] I am a little sceptical and I am sure you can understand my scepticism when the advice comes from that source.

I also want to make a comment because I think I have been accused unfairly of being rather dubious and devious in presenting these figures and this Bill to the Senate. May I inform the Senate that it ought not to treat capital budget in a political way. If one has the objective of orderly development of the country, then that should be expressed in this key element of finance called the capital budget and that is basically what we are discussing here this evening.

I want to place on the record and I would be brief with the statistics which I am going to provide, because I have some more statistics for the hustings, but they will come later on this year; they will not be provided at this point in time. I want to advise this Senate what has been happening with the capital provision for the Tobago House of Assembly.

In 1992, a provision of \$62,500,000 was made and the actual expenditure turned out to be \$62,281,000, and my suspicion is that the new Government which came into office at the end of 1991 met this level of provision made and, of course, went along with it, so in 1992 there was this quite substantial provision for capital expenditure in Tobago.

In 1993 however, that was drastically reduced to \$38,600,000 of which only \$24 million was spent. So when the expenditure is reduced from \$62 million to \$24 million what one is actually doing is leaving many projects in abeyance and that is not the way to proceed. Capital expenditure is important because it provides

the infrastructure for development and growth, and it replenishes the capital structure on which one relies to go forward to building proper foundation for growth and development. To have a reduction for Tobago from \$62 million to \$24 million is not fair and I am not ascribing motives for this but one may come to one's own conclusions.

In 1994, the provision was \$26,492,000 and the actual expenditure was \$21,586,000 but in 1995 it suddenly shot up to \$45,580,000 of which expenditure amounted to \$43,439,000. Mr. Vice-President, I do not know if it is accidental that 1995 happened to be an election year, but we in the UNC/NAR Government have decided that we are not going to play politics with the capital budget because it is so important for developmental purposes and we have provided initially for \$42 million in the 1996 appropriation. It has now been increased by \$9,470,000 but, over and above that, we have also allocated \$4.5 million for the construction of an indoor sports hall in Tobago. So that for 1996, the overall provision for Tobago is \$55,970,000. Is that being dubious, is that victimizing Tobago? What then is the charge they are going to lay against the UNC/NAR Government? I really want to find out from the Senator if he is against the construction of an indoor sports hall in Tobago. If the hon. Senator is against it, then surely I would have to report such important information to the electorate in Tobago *[Laughter]*

6.15 p.m.

The other point made by Sen. Prof. Spence is whether the Tobago House of Assembly members were consulted. In drawing up the appropriation of this budget on the capital side, the PSIP for 1996, we consulted with the Tobago House of Assembly. I am in charge of that element of the budget and I did not only consult with the Tobago House of Assembly, I also consulted with the parliamentary representatives for Tobago. The representatives' views are also important because they represent the people in another forum. As a result of my consultation it is up to me to make the final judgment on the basis of the priorities which have been expressed and this is what I have done to come up with an allocation.

I hope that the Senator understands and takes in good faith the fact that we are not playing politics in Tobago; in fact, there is no need to. The PNM has only one representative in the Tobago House of Assembly, why should we want to play politics? *[Laughter] [Interruption]* I can see that there is great anticipation for this Tobago House of Assembly election.

Sen. Prof. Spence also made the point that one must have a settled agricultural policy before one can have an expenditure, in terms of provision of the infrastructure whether it is rural access roads and so forth. All I can say is, in the broad outline we have defined an agricultural policy which now has to be refined, but in the meantime—one cannot allow the horse to starve while the grass is growing—we have to identify areas where this expenditure will bring benefits.

As you know, Mr. Vice-President, this Rural Access Roads Programme is being implemented through a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank. We have identified areas where agricultural activities are actually taking place, and where the returns from implementation of this kind of infrastructure would be quite reasonable. In fact, we would not have been able to access loans had we not identified those access roads which would bear a satisfactory level of return in terms of their construction.

The question of an agricultural policy is not as simple a matter as it was a few years ago—in those days it probably was not that simple either—but it becomes more difficult when one is dealing in a situation of globalization; where all the multilateral institutions are saying that one must reduce one's subsidies, one has to open up one's country and the domestic markets have to be accessible to all and sundry. We have an obligation to position this economy as part of the global system; to take advantage of it; to minimize the risks; maximize the benefits from it and to look at the interest of our citizens who would be affected.

It is not merely a simple thing to locate it in that kind of context because what we have to do in the long-term is to make our agriculture more efficient. There is no escape from that. We need a far more efficient agricultural system than we have been conducting in the past; one that uses highly trained farmers where there is the level of technology that would make us efficient; one that is provided with the right infrastructure, marketing and other information.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that this Senate continue to sit until the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTATION AND VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) (1996) BILL

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. Vice-President, some deep thought has to be given on this issue, and as I said, there are two basic objectives that we have to satisfy in

order to promote the agricultural development which we so badly need in this country. What we are doing and what we intend to continue to do is to become far more efficient at this time.

Secondly, where we cannot fully compete in a globalized environment, where there is free market access and so forth, we have to devise a transition into activities where we can be profitable in utilizing our resources and establish niche markets overseas and, of course, serve our domestic markets at the same. It is a question of becoming more efficient and getting out from the unproductive activities—those in which we cannot compete—and setting the framework and the groundwork for farmers to get into new activities which would be more profitable and beneficial, both from a domestic and export point of view.

The reason that we had some delay in signing the Agricultural Sector Reform Programme Loan was simply because we had to review that critical element of the trade and price policy which was incorporated in the proposals which were agreed to by the previous administration. We said that we had to review that and in the review we had to put in mitigation measures whereby, if one went into a programme of restructuring, then one had to look at the fall-out of it and the consequences for the farmers concerned. That took a while, but it was done. Mr. Vice-President, one does not just go and negotiate with the multilateral institutions overnight and come up with a signed document. It takes a while to present one's argument and to answer the counter-arguments that would be forwarded.

We have done that and we are now going to implement the agricultural reform programme we have in place at a much faster rate. In fact, it is an element of the agricultural policy that we are going to pursue.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. Vice-President, I appreciate all that the hon. Minister said and I agree with it. I wonder when we could be privy to the policy that the Minister indicated has gone some way to its formulation. If I may seem a bit immodest, I would like to offer the contributions that I have made over the past 10 years in the Senate, as they address many of the issues which were raised.

6.25 p.m.

Hon. T. Sudama: Thank you, Senator. I am sure that we would not finalize our deliberations without an input from your goodself in that exercise.

Sen. Teelucksingh spoke about the newspaper report which appeared in the headlines today about tax concessions having been granted to a businessman who

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is associated with the Government. I want to make one point, that these concessions are available according to the policy and the rules that are established to facilitate tourism development in Trinidad and Tobago and they are available there. If you could satisfy the regulations and the rules and all the criteria laid down, they are available and then the Government makes a decision on it.

Now, if it is that this gentleman has, in fact, satisfied the criteria and has proceeded according to the rules, does it mean that his association with the ruling party and with the Government precludes him from accessing concessions which are available to everybody else? So that what the goodly Senator has to—*[Interruption]*

Sen. Daly: I wonder if the hon. Minister would give way. Would the Minister tell us, for example, what is the Government's policy, if someone who is admittedly a close associate with the Government and his business is the subject of some decision that is being made by Cabinet, does the Minister with whom he reportedly has a close association, as would happen in the private sector, does he leave the room while a decision is taken? What is the Government's policy?

Hon. T. Sudama: The Government's policy is that we should have a clear and transparent procedure in handling these matters. If an application comes in, it should be dealt with in the same way that you deal with other applications, and if there is an established close association, then it has to be proved that that close association has, in some way, influenced that decision. So that without prejudging the situation, the onus of proof that there was some degree of irregularity involved, really rests with those who are making the accusation. This is all I have to say in relation to what the Senator said this afternoon and I say no more on that, except to say where the onus rests with respect to any sort of notion of irregularity which may have been perceived in the transaction.

As I said, I want to be very brief this afternoon and I want to talk about the Ministry of Health and the comments made by Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh. First of all, I have to say two things: the variation we are really discussing is one of the capital programme of the Ministry of Health in which we had budgeted for \$45 million originally and we have reduced that provision to \$32 million or thereabouts. I think I should explain to this Senate what transpired with respect to that loan arrangement. That, again, was something which was passed on to us from the previous regime and it was an attempt to substantially reform the health sector and have efficient delivery of health services in Trinidad and Tobago.

When we saw the proposals we said that there was need to review this because it was not quite in accord with our own views. Then we went into a period of a review exercise. After having reviewed it; for example, the proposal called for the closure of the Caura Hospital and we felt from a policy point of view, that we would not go along with the closure of the Caura Hospital. We had to renegotiate that. The proposals identified certain numbers of polyclinics for construction in certain areas and we said that we wanted to add to that and put a polyclinic/mini-hospital in the western part of the peninsula to serve that area. That, too, had to be negotiated.

We had a little difficulty with the way the Regional Health Authorities were supposed to operate, so that when we went to renegotiate we found out that, given the size of the loan, it was difficult to accommodate it and to expend it and to implement that programme within a five-year period. We are talking about a total of US \$192 million—\$134 million of loan and \$58 million of our counterpart funding—which is close to \$1,200 million of our money. Now, to have spent that within a period of five years would have caused enormous pressures and would have placed great strain on the absorptive capacity of the Ministry of Health. So we negotiated to extend that period by two years, to have the implementation programme completed over seven years instead of five years. This is why in those negotiations when we thought at the beginning of the year we would spend \$45 million as an initial drawdown, we realized that was too ambitious; the renegotiations took longer than we anticipated and therefore we would reduce that level of expenditure and that is what is expressed here.

The other point he made about whether we are getting value for money with the provision of \$66.5 million which includes recurrent expenditure, which is a sizeable proportion of the budget, critically, has to do with the whole issue of wages and productivity and most of that money is allocated for paying wages. The question has been asked and will continue to be asked: After having expended most of that money in the payment of wages, are we getting the delivery of services for that kind of expenditure? This is not an easy issue of productivity, nor is it an easy issue to handle the size of the public service involved in the health sector.

In fact, that is one of the basic bones of contention of the junior doctors—basically, they want more money and other benefits which are going to cost more money, but we are already spending a sizeable amount of the

allocation on wages and salaries. That is the challenge we are facing; how we can deliver increasing levels of health care services at a lower cost.

This is going to challenge our thinking, our minds, as to how we are going to do that. It is not only a challenge for the Government; it is a challenge for the country; it is a challenge for the public sector unions; it is a challenge for the employees who work there in order to come up with a credible solution to this problem of productivity. If we were able to reduce expenditures, wages and salaries without reducing the level of services we provide, then there would be more money available for the capital programme and there will be greater developmental expenditure. I think that would improve the level of services in the health sector.

So we appreciate, we understand and we recognize that point. In fact, the decentralization of the health services through the Regional Health Authorities is an attempt to deal with that particular problem of effective management and increasing productivity. One of the tenets of management is that you must allow people to manage and give them the financial and human resources to be able to manage and then make them accountable; give them autonomy and authority to manage within a framework and then you make them accountable.

6.35 p.m.

So that the Health Ministry becomes, not a ministry to deliver health services, but to plan and formulate policy, to monitor, and let the delivery be handled by the Regional Health Authorities who are closer to the scene of the action. That programme has a lot of teething problems in the process of being implemented and I am convinced that if it is satisfactorily implemented, we are certainly going to have more efficient delivery and a higher level of health services available to the whole population of Trinidad and Tobago.

I must thank Prof. St. Cyr for his compliments on the presentation of this variation and the fact that we have attempted, within the past 11 or 12 months, to keep our promise to the people to, first of all, stick to the macro economic objectives we have set, and to discipline our financial expenditures.

I would also like to make two points, without trying to hammer the PNM or criticize the PNM. If you allow your capital budget to diminish, you are at the same time permitting the deterioration of your infrastructure. When you look at what has happened over the years and what the actual capital expenditure of the central Government has been, which is the bulk of the Public Sector Investment

Programme, you will see what has been happening and why we are in the state we are today with respect to our infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago.

Even in the very difficult days of 1987, when we were getting into the structural adjustment exercise, the then NAR government—and of course we are now a coalition—spent \$1.319 billion as capital expenditure out of an expenditure total of \$6.386 billion. In other words, it spent 20 per cent of the total as capital expenditure. In 1988, it went down to \$725 million, or 12 per cent, and in 1989 it went down further. The year 1990 was a particularly difficult year, as we all know, but in 1991, it went up to \$809 million which was 12 per cent, again, of the total expenditure of the Government—12 per cent being capital expenditure out of the total. But come 1992, that amount was reduced to \$511 million; 1993, reduced further to \$487 million.

In the meantime, our total expenditures were rising, but the capital element was contracting. In 1994, it was reduced to \$506 million and in 1995, again—I am not sure whether the connection is the fact that it was an election year—it rose to \$714 million, actual expenditure. We have in 1996 maintained and improved on that and allocated \$810 million as direct central Government capital expenditure. *[Desk thumping]* So you see, if you are deliberately eliminating and minimizing your capital budget, which is to be spent on infrastructure for development, then you would find yourselves in a position where we are today, where we inherited a water supply situation, a road network situation, the health services, the education plan and others, all in a state of disintegration and dilapidation. That is where you find yourself.

Therefore, Mr. Vice-President, we now have to renew our efforts to put capital expenditure back in its rightful place in the financial firmament, so to speak. That is something to which I am committed, as Minister of Planning and Development, and I am sure I can persuade my Government to make a reasonable commitment in that regard.

The other point I want to make is that, yes, there have been some slippages in the rate of implementation, but let us look at it on a comparative basis. For the period January—June, 1995 when the previous Government was then three and a half years in office, the implementation rate on the central Government element of the Public Sector Investment Programme, which is the bulk of the expenditure, was 29 per cent. This is a government which had already done its review, had already stabilized itself, and was on the go in terms of implementation, but in the first half of 1995 they could only achieve a 29 per cent rate of implementation.

For the same period, this Government was able to achieve a 35 per cent rate of implementation. [*Desk thumping*] The situation has dramatically improved in the third quarter. Thirty-five per cent, given the fact that we had so many delays. We had to get ourselves settled in office; we had to review a number of the programmes which were inherited, and there were new programmes we wanted to put in place. I just thought, Mr. Vice-President, that I would place that matter on the record.

As I said, I have a lot more statistics here and when the appropriate opportunity comes, whether it is inside or outside this Chamber, that will be made available to the public.

On the question of the delay in the social development programme, which was alluded to by Sen. Daly, in many cases the question of unavailability of sites was cited as one of the reasons. Although that might seem to be a very simple matter, the Government just cannot go and commandeer sites throughout Trinidad and Tobago. There is a procedure of acquisition which one has to go through. We are not going to do like the previous administration which took Caroni's lands without even the knowledge of Caroni (1975) Limited. They just went and took the lands and built NHA projects, and did all sorts of things on Caroni's lands without Town and Country Planning approval.

This is a Government with a different style. Even if there is going to be some measure of delay, we want to go through the procedures. Of course we have to streamline the procedures, but we do not want to violate the existing rules, regulations and procedures that exist. This is one of the reasons that some of the delays have been experienced, however, was mentioned. We have been able to sort out, in a number of cases, these minor impediments, Mr. Vice-President, and we are today placed in a situation that for the rest of the year and, indeed, for 1997 we are going to see a faster rate of delivery and implementation in all the respective sectors of the economy under the various ministries and, particularly, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development and those areas serving the needs of the social infrastructure of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Vice-President, I did not think I would have been this long in winding-up this debate, but I am sure that whatever I have said has served as an illumination [*Laughter*] to Members on the other side, and that it is in keeping with our own promise and commitment to be accountable and transparent in all our dealings, whether in this Chamber, or with the wider public. So, Mr. Vice-President, I have pleasure in moving that the Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the

sum, the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 1996, be now read a second time.

Thank you.

6.45 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

The Minister of Planning and Development and Acting Minister of Finance (Hon. Trevor Sudama): Mr. Vice-President, in accordance with Standing Order 63, I beg to move that the Bill not be committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Question put and agreed to.

Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, before moving the adjournment, may I inform fellow Senators that the Senate will meet on Monday and Tuesday of next week. We are supposed to prorogue on Wednesday, November 20, 1996 and resume some time the following week, when we will continue our debate on two important matters, two bills before us with respect to Tobago. I give advance notice that we will have some inconvenience until that debate is completed, both before the prorogation and after. I serve notice that we will be here sometimes on a Monday and a Tuesday, sometimes on a Thursday and a Friday, depending on the circumstances.

Mr. Vice-President, I now beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Monday, November 18, 1996 at 10.00 a.m. sharp.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.50 p.m.