

*Gambling and Betting (Amdt.) Bill*

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

**SENATE**

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

The Senate met at 1.32 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**GAMBLING AND BETTING (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Gambling and Betting Act, Chap. 11:19, brought from the House of Representatives [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings.  
[*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**NATIONAL DANCE ASSOCIATION OF  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Daphne Phillips):** Mr. President, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the National Dance Association of Trinidad and Tobago.

I now ask that the Clerk be allowed to read the petition, and that the promoters be allowed to proceed.

*Petition read.*

*Question put and agreed to*, That the promoters be allowed to proceed.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Agricultural Development Bank of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 1995. [*The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung)*]
2. The Provisional Collection of Taxes (No. 2) Order, 1996. [*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]
3. The Provisional Collection of Taxes (No. 2) (Amdt.) Order, 1996. [*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]

4. The Supreme Court of Judicature (Amdt.) (No. 3) Rules, 1996. [*The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark)*]
5. Annual Report of the National Helicopter Services Limited for the year ended September 30, 1995. [*Hon. W. Mark*]
6. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 1995. (*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*)

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark):** Mr. President, with the exception of question No. 3, for which we seek a deferment of two weeks, the remaining questions on the Order Paper shall be answered.

#### **Highway Maintenance Programme (Loan Agreement)**

1. **Sen. Mahadeo Jagmohan** asked the Minister of Works and Transport:
 

Is there a loan agreement entered into between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and a foreign financial institution or lending agency with respect to a proposed comprehensive Highway Maintenance Programme?

If the answer is in the affirmative, could the Minister state:

  - (a) The date the said loan agreement was signed on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and by whom?
  - (b) Whether the recognized majority trade unions were consulted with regard to the proposed conditions of the said loan agreement entered into by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago prior to the signing of the agreement?
  - (c) Is there a conditionality in the said loan agreement to have certain operations privatized or to be contracted out to foreign or local contractors?
  - (d) If the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, would the Minister state whether there is a commencement date?
  - (e) Whether daily-paid as well as other workers would be retrenched in the process stated at (d) above?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Sadiq Baksh):** Mr. President, yes, there is a loan agreement entered into between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter-American Development Bank with respect to the National Highways Programme, which encompasses a comprehensive Highway Maintenance Programme.

The loan agreement was signed by the Hon. Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism, Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung on July 12, 1996 on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Yes, the majority of trade unions were consulted with regard to the proposed conditions of the said loan agreement entered into by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, prior to the signing of the agreement. The said trade unions have had representatives on the steering committee meetings for the maintenance of contract projects. In addition, their representatives have been nominated to the labour sub-committee of the Maintenance-by-Contract Steering Committee.

One of the conditionalities of the loan agreement is that the Government approves the plan of action agreed with the Inter-American Development Bank for the institutional changes in the Highways Administrative Unit of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

**1.40 p.m.**

One aspect of the plan of action is that routine maintenance of the entire 2,800 kilometres of the national road network including 1,000 bridges to be fully contracted out by the end of the programme (year 2001) incurring savings of approximately 50 per cent of current expenditure. No foreign contractors would be involved.

At present the commencement date is proposed for July 1, 1997. Since maintenance in the long-term will be carried out by contract and not done by forced account, most of the daily-rated workers who now carry out this function will be separated. It is proposed however, to equip and train the separated workers so that they will, in fact, become the first contractors to be employed. Our analysis has shown that all the permanent workers to be separated can be absorbed in the Micro Enterprises and the Roadmen Contracts to be used to carry out the maintenance works. It is proposed to have an initial period of training and to offer a 3-year guaranteed work on all contracts which would be offered to all separated workers.

Mr. President, in addition to that, the union on an on-going basis, is participating in discussions with the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Inter-American Development Bank with the view of looking at other alternative opportunities as far as the absorption of contract employees is concerned.

I thank you.

### **Police Service Vehicles/Crime Statistics**

**2. Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed** on behalf of Sen. D. Montano asked the Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister please inform the Senate of:

- A (a) The criteria used in the selection of vehicles and their accessories for use in the police service?
- (b) The number of vehicles purchased and ordered during 1996 for the police by type and model describing the options and accessories included?
- (c) The total sum expended and projected expenditure in the purchase of motor vehicles for the police service in 1996 and the price paid for these vehicles by type and model?
- B Could the Minister please inform the Senate of the number and type of violent crimes and other serious crimes committed during the first nine months of 1996 with comparative statistics for the same period in 1995?

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore):** Mr. President, this honourable Senate is advised that the criteria used in the selection of vehicles and their accessories for use in the police service are the needs of the police service. The Commissioner of Police determines the needs of the police service in terms of number and types of vehicles and accessories.

Specifications are developed, bearing in mind the use to which the vehicles are to be put and include the markings, siren, lights and telecommunications equipment. The Commissioner of Police then submits his requests to the Ministry of National Security which, in accordance with the provisions of section 20(1) of the Central Tenders Board Ordinance 1961, may approach the Central Tenders Board to acquire the required vehicles and accessories on its behalf. Alternatively,

in accordance with section 20(A)(1)(c) of the Central Tenders Board Ordinance, as amended by Act No. 3 of 1993, the Ministry of National Security may recommend to Cabinet that the National Insurance Property Development Company Limited (NIPDEC) be approached to invite offers for the supply of the required vehicles and accessories on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The number of vehicles purchased and ordered for the police during 1996, by type and model, and including options and accessories are:

<b>Purchased Type/Model</b>	<b>Nos.</b>	<b>Options &amp; Accessories</b>
Land Rover Defender	10	Diesel Engine, Manual Transmission, Sirens, Loud Hailers and Rotary Lights
Isuzu Trooper Wagon	7	Diesel Engine, Manual Transmission, Sirens, Loud Hailers, Amplifiers and Rotary Lights
Mazda 626 (2.5 litres)		'V6' Engine (Gasoline), Power Steering, Siren and Amplifier
Mazda 626 (2.0 litres)	13	4-Cylinder Engine (Gasoline), Power Steering, Siren, Loud Hailers and Amplifiers and Rotary Lights
<b>Ordered:</b>		
Jeep Cherokee	100	Revolving light bar, Electronic Siren, air horn, built-in radio rebroadcast wires, Driver controlled locking mechanism, Security mesh behind rear seat.

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[HON. S. BAKSH]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

The total sum expended in the purchase of vehicles for the police service in 1996 is, therefore, \$4,936,813.77, in terms of type, model and price:

**Purchased**

<b>Type/Model</b>	<b>Nos.</b>	<b>Price</b>
		\$
Land Rover Defender	10	1,893,750.00
Isuzu Trooper Wagon	7	1,051,543.88
Mazda 626 (2.5 litres)	2	294,555.29
Mazda 626 (2.0 litres)	<u>13</u>	<u>1,696,946.60</u>
	<u>32</u>	<u>4,936,813.77</u>

**Ordered**

Jeep Cherokee	100	—
---------------	-----	---

Payment for these jeeps will be made on delivery at an estimated cost of \$16,770,000.

With respect to the number and type of violent and other serious crimes committed during the first nine months of 1996 compared with the same period for 1995, I would like this honourable Senate to note that in presenting statistics, the police has no category listed as violent crime. What we are looking at here, is serious crimes.

<b>Crime</b>	<b>Jan.—Sep., 1996</b>		<b>Jan.—Sep., 1995</b>	
	<b>Committed</b>	<b>Detected</b>	<b>Committed</b>	<b>Detected</b>
Murder	76	40	94	58
Felonious wounding	305	128	376	163
Rapes, <i>etc.</i>	204	127	236	165
Sexual indecency	68	39	54	44
Breakings	4,854	500	4,718	521

*Oral Answers to Questions**Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

Robberies	2,973	424	2,921	458
Fraud, etc.	267	143	275	237
Larcenies (above \$2,000)	2,415	192	2,039	187
Narcotic offences	847	847	771	771
Larceny of dwelling house	216	33	240	31
Other serious crimes, e.g. suicide, corruption, manslaughter, attempted murder	537	352	540	351
TOTAL	12,762	2,825	12,264	2,988

**1.50 p.m.**

**Sen. Mohammed:** Mr. President, I have a supplemental question. Can the hon. Minister indicate to this honourable Senate who are the dealers for the Cherokee jeeps which were ordered by the Government?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** I cannot give all these particulars. As pointed out, NIPDEC was given the responsibility of sourcing these vehicles. I would appreciate if I can be given some time to find out the answer to this question.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Could the hon. Minister state whether in the decision-making process for selecting types of vehicles, any account is taken of the competence of the agents to give service both by way of keeping spare parts and the length of time such agencies may have been in business?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** The answer is yes. For both vehicles purchased and those which were leased, contracts were entered into with the supplier or the local agent to provide after-sales service and to ensure that, not only do they have the competence to maintain these vehicles, but also that there would be an adequate supply of spare parts.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Would the hon. Minister like to comment on the fact that it was reported that one such agency has been in the business for a short while?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** Answering that question would not determine the ability to source the spare parts. I prefer not to comment on that because I do not know what is the significance.

**Sen. Montano:** Could the Minister respond indicating the options and accessories included with the vehicles?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** That was stated in the body of the answer. Options and accessories deal with what the vehicle is meant to have on it and, under the various types of vehicles I indicated that under the Land Rover Defender, the 10 vehicles which were purchased came with diesel engines, manual transmissions, sirens, loud hailers and rotary lights.

I do not know if this satisfies the question raised by Sen. Montano.

**Sen. Montano:** Perhaps the Minister could tell me how many of the jeeps which were bought in 1996 are air-conditioned.

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** I do not know. I never asked. From experience I know that the Discovery jeeps are air-conditioned. Note that these are Defender jeeps. Most of them have canopy backs and are not normally air-conditioned. They are not designed for that purpose.

**Sen. Montano:** How many of the vehicles purchased in 1996 have power windows?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** Mr. President, if the hon. Senator requires a full description of the vehicles, I ask that I be allowed time to go back to the supplier to get that information.

**Sen. Montano:** I would be grateful.

**Sen. Mannede:** I was checking the number as the Minister went along. Can he confirm that in 1996, only 32 vehicles were added to the police service?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** As stated, it is as follows:

<u>Types of Vehicles</u>	<u>No.</u>
Land Rover Defender	10
Isuzu Trooper Wagon	7



*Oral Answers to Questions*

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

Mazda 626 (2.5 litres)	2
Mazda (2 litres)	13

**Sen. Daly:** Could the Minister indicate who is responsible for how these vehicles are allocated for use by the police service?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** The Commissioner would indicate his needs to the ministry. When the vehicles arrive he has the final decision in consultation with his executive. During the course of last year there were requests from various constituencies that vehicles be supplied. That information was passed on to the Commissioner.

**Government Officials  
(Overseas Trips)**

**3.** *The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed:*

Could the Minister of Public Administration and Information inform the Senate of:

- (a) The number of official overseas trips each Minister of Government, including the Prime Minister, has made since November 07, 1995?
- (b) The nature and duration of each Minister's visit abroad and the cost of each trip to the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago including airfares, hotel accommodation and allowances?
- (c) What real and tangible benefits have accrued to this country as a result of these overseas trips?

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark):** Mr. President, I would like to have this question deferred for two weeks.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Community Centre  
(Barataria)**

**4. Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed** asked the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs:

Could the Minister please state:

- (a) Whether construction work on the community centre at the corner of Ocean Avenue and Third Avenue, Barataria has been completed?
- (b) If construction work has been completed, could the Minister state when it will be officially opened?
- (c) Whether any new community centre is being constructed within a one-mile radius from the community centre on Third Avenue, Barataria?

**The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Daphne Phillips):** Mr. President, the community centre now called the regional complex at the corner of Ocean Avenue and Third Avenue, Barataria was completed on February 12, 1996.

The regional complex in Barataria was officially opened on Friday, December 13, 1996.

No new community centre is being constructed within a one-mile radius from the community centre on Third Avenue, Barataria.

**Sen. Mohammed:** Can the hon. Minister indicate the members of the board or who would be responsible for managing the affairs of this regional complex?

**Dr. The Hon. D. Phillips:** The affairs of all regional complexes—there are 12 in Trinidad and Tobago—are managed by a board which was selected from the community. I do not have the names of the people. A manager would be put in place.

**Sen. Mohammed:** I take it that to date, no manager was appointed. Were board members appointed?

**Mr. President:** The questions were answered strictly according to how they were posed. Further information should be obtained through additional questions.

**Sen. Mohammed:** Can I ask a question?

**Mr. President:** Relative to (a), (b) and (c) and not to the imposition of any new questions.

**Sen. Mohammed:** The hon. Minister indicated that the complex was opened on December 13, 1996 and work was completed on February 12. From February 12 to December 13, did any activities take place?

**Dr. The Hon. D. Phillips:** Some activities did take place, but the official opening was held on December 13, 1996.

**Medical Doctors  
(Negotiations)**

**5. Sen. Mahadeo Jagmohan** asked the Minister of Health:

Would the Minister kindly inform the Senate of:

- (a) The present status of negotiations between the Ministry of Health and the Public Services Association on behalf of medical doctors of the ministry, at the San Fernando and Port of Spain General Hospitals and other similar institutions in Trinidad and Tobago?
- (b) The number of meetings held with medical doctors or their representatives between the period December, 1995 and the present time with respect to the question of retroactive payments due to doctors?
- (c) The exact nature of other fringe benefits being sought by the Public Services Association for medical doctors attached to the various hospitals in Trinidad and Tobago?
- (d) How many doctors have resigned from the public service resulting from dissatisfaction over negotiations with Government with respect to their employment with the Ministry of Health between the period December, 1995 to the present time?

**2.00 p.m.**

**The Minister of Health (Dr. The Hon. Hamza Rafeeq):** Mr. President, there are no new negotiations at this time between the Ministry of Health and the Public Services Association on behalf of the medical doctors. The north-west and south-west regional health authorities were negotiating with the junior doctors who are employed by the regional health authorities for a contract beginning July 1, 1996. During the negotiations, 12 meetings were held and a contract was agreed to in November, 1996 for a period beginning July 1, 1996. The question of retroactive payments therefore, did not arise. In light of the fact that there are no ongoing negotiations, this question is not applicable.

*Oral Answers to Questions*  
[HON. H. RAFEEQ]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

There is no record in the Ministry of Health of any doctor having resigned from the public service resulting from dissatisfaction over any reported negotiations with Government with respect to his or her employment with the Ministry of Health during the period December, 1995 to the present.

Thank you.

**Sen. Jagmohan:** Mr. President, I have a supplemental question, but I respectfully wish to state that I am not satisfied with the Minister's answer. Part (c) of the question was not answered, something else was said. Could you permit the hon. Minister to take his time and go over part (c) of the question, which is the nature of the fringe benefits? The doctors were making noise all over the country that they were not getting shift allowance and other allowances, and the hon. Minister has stated because there are no ongoing negotiations, that this part of the question is irrelevant and does not apply, but I do not think so. Certain matters have been settled, as admitted by the learned doctor, therefore there must be an explanation. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. President:** Let us deal with the issue that is before us, please.

**Dr. The Hon. H. Rafeeq:** Mr. President, the question is, what is the exact nature of the fringe benefits that are being sought by the Public Services Association on behalf of the medical doctors. Nothing is being sought at this time.

### **Trawler Regulations (Renewal of)**

**6. Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources:

Could the Minister kindly state:

- (a) When will the Trawler Regulations which expired on December 7, 1996 be renewed?
- (b) What action is planned to prevent local and foreign trawlers from destroying the sea bed around Trinidad and Tobago in contravention of these regulations?

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj):** Mr. President, the Fisheries [Control of Demersal (Bottom) Trawling Activities] Regulations, 1994 which expired on December 5, 1996 were renewed on December 6, 1996.

On Monday, December 16, 1996, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources appointed a committee to review the status of the inshore/coastal fisheries on the North Coast as well as other coastal areas affected by trawling activities and to make recommendations for the optimal utilization of these resources taking into consideration the need for conflict resolution and management among resource users.

The committee, which is comprised of representatives from the following Government ministries, agencies, and non-governmental organizations has been mandated to submit its report by January 31, 1997. They are:

Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources

Tobago House of Assembly

Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard

Institute of Marine Affairs

University of the West Indies

National Organization of Fishing and Allied Co-operative Society Limited

North Coast Multipurpose Co-operative Society Limited

Trinidad and Tobago Commercial Trawler Owners Association

Trinidad and Tobago Game Fishing Association

San Fernando Fishermen Association

Council of Presidents of the Environment

The committee was given specific terms of reference including *inter alia*:

1. the review of the status of the inshore fisheries resources of the coastal areas of Trinidad, including a review of preliminary stock assessment reports of fish stocks as well as current statistical information on the relevant fisheries;
2. to review and recommend amendments to the existing Fisheries [Control of Demersal (Bottom) Trawling Activities] Regulations 1996 with a view to updating these regulations to provide for greater consistency with sustainable fisheries management practices;
3. to examine strategies for enhancement of the surveillance and enforcement capability for the North Coast.

The recommendations to emanate from the deliberation of this committee will address the issue of illegal fishing by local and foreign trawlers in contravention of the trawler regulations and strategies to strengthen the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard surveillance and enforcement capability.

A request has already been submitted to the Minister of National Security for the provision of Coast Guard officers at the Maracas Police post in order to strengthen surveillance activities along the North Coast. A similar request has also been made for the Gulf of Paria.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt:** Mr. President, I wonder if the hon. Senator could let us know if the report of this committee, which has to report on January 31, 1997, will be placed in the parliamentary library for the Members of Parliament to take a look at?

**Sen. V. Tota-Maharaj:** Mr. President, I see no problem with that request.

#### **Domestic Violence Reports (Policy Directives)**

7. **Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt** asked the Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister please state:

- (a) What policy directives have been issued to police officers, relative to the acceptance at stations of reports on threats and incidents of domestic violence?
- (b) What action is taken against police officers at the stations who refuse or neglect to take such reports?

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore):** Mr. President, police officers have been instructed to respond promptly to all reports of threats and incidents of domestic violence. Specific instructions have also been issued by the Commissioner of Police, that victims who are in fear for their safety should be attended to immediately by the station receiving the initial report.

Further, police officers have been admonished to refrain from dealing casually with family disputes and to investigate such disputes to determine if criminal charges should be laid or whether the informant should be referred to the Justice of the Peace for civil action. In addition, step by step procedural guidelines have been

issued to police officers at stations throughout the country to deal with reports on both threats and incidents of domestic violence.

**2.10 p.m.**

These guidelines are:

- (a) Reports of threats: Upon receipt of a report of a threat, serious or otherwise, the police must:
  - record the report in the station diary;
  - warn the person against whom the complaint is made;
  - record, in the station diary, the action taken with respect to the complainant;
- (b) Reports of violence: Upon receipt of a report of an incident of domestic violence, the police must:
  - record the report in the station diary;
  - dispatch the complainant to seek medical attention. If the complainant is female, she must be accompanied by a female police officer;
  - accompany a female complainant to a safe house, if necessary;
  - conduct further investigations on receipt of the medical report and take appropriate action;
  - advise the complainant of the procedure to obtain a protection order;
  - refer reports to the Community Police Section of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to monitor the complaint.

Police officers at stations who refuse or neglect to take such reports will be disciplined in accordance with the provisions of section 163(1) of the Police Service (Amdt.) Regulations, 1990 and section 104(1) of the Police Service Commissions Regulations, 1966.

This honourable Senate is asked to note that Cabinet has appointed a committee to review domestic violence and related legislation. To my knowledge, this committee has already begun its sittings, and only recently I have asked that a member of the police service, with responsibility for domestic violence, be appointed to that committee.

**Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt:** Mr. President, can the hon. Minister say, firstly, when were the procedural guidelines issued in relation to reports on domestic violence? Secondly, has any disciplinary action ever been taken against an officer in a station for neglecting or refusing to follow these procedures?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** Mr. President, we have to look at this in two time zones. Last year, when this domestic violence situation became prominent, the police were advised to receive training and adjust their behavioural patterns to deal more sympathetically with victims of domestic violence.

I cannot say if anyone has been charged before or since. What I can say is that certain training courses have been conducted, albeit limited, and there are approximately 100 police officers, men and women, who have received training. The intention is to expand this number so that, in time, virtually every police station would have officers who have been taught how to react in cases of domestic violence. These guidelines have only come about during the course of last year. Before the courses were run, the police officers themselves were in some doubt about how to behave.

**Sen. Daly:** Mr. President, I notice that in the case of threats, there is a specific duty on the police officers to warn the person issuing such threats. Is there a corresponding duty, when violence actually takes place, to visit the person who is alleged to have committed the acts of violence? I did not hear that.

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** Mr. President, I am not quite sure about the words "to visit". The point I made is, in the event of a threat, a record is made in the diary with respect to the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made is warned.

**Sen. Daly:** Is there a similar warning in the case of actual violence?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** In the case of actual violence, we are past the stage of warning. I suspect that an arrest will be made and a charge laid. I cannot speak with any authority on this.

**Sen. Daly:** Is the Minister aware that the routine question in police stations in this country when acts of domestic violence are reported is: Do you wish to prosecute? If the person says no, no further action is taken. Is that so?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** Mr. President, I cannot answer with any authority. I do not know if the nature of the crime is such that the complainant has



an option. This is something about which I would have to be advised. If the person has an option, the police would be guided accordingly. I would certainly make myself acquainted with the procedure.

**Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie:** Mr. President, is the Minister aware that there is the feeling that when the perpetrator is a police officer he is treated differently? If the Minister is aware, has he done anything about it?

**Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore:** Yes, I am quite sure that if the perpetrator is a member of the police service there would be some sympathy for the person. The very reason that a Police Complaints Authority has been established is to avoid the situation where people do not trust the police to properly investigate one of their own. There is mechanism that should someone be dissatisfied with the manner in which an investigation is going, particularly if the person is a member of the police service, the Complaints Authority is brought into the picture.

**Mr. President:** According to Standing Order 18(6), 45 minutes are allowed for answers to questions. I see the hon. Minister of Labour and Co-operatives is here and I wonder whether Senators will allow the questions to be answered.

Please give me an indication of whether or not you would allow question No. 8 to be answered.

*Assent indicated.*

### **Minimum Wages Order (Security Personnel)**

**8. Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt** asked the Minister of Labour and Co-operatives:

Could the hon. Minister please state when the Minimum Wages Order governing security personnel that was withdrawn during the last Parliament will be laid in this Parliament?

**The Minister of Labour and Co-operatives (Hon. Harry Partap):** Mr. President, this Government will not be re-laying the Minimum Wages Order, dated December 19, 1994, issued as Legal Notice No. 231 of 1994 and laid in Parliament on January 6, 1995. That Order was revoked by the previous government one week after being laid in the House, the excuse for that action being that the former government had laid the wrong Order.

This first Order dealt with wage rates, hours, overtime, vacation and maternity and provision of uniforms and equipment. The second Order was laid in Parliament

the day the first one was revoked, on January 13, 1995, and dealt only with the wage rate of certain grades of security guards. The other terms and conditions which were for the protection of the employees had been stripped from it. One can only guess at the motives of the former government in withdrawing the first Order and revoking it by a second and weaker Order.

**2.20 p.m.**

Mr. President, there are more non-unionized than unionized workers in Trinidad and Tobago. This Government is committed to safeguarding their interests while protecting the national interest. For this reason, we have taken a more holistic view of the question of minimum wages. Unlike the previous regime, therefore, we abhor a piecemeal approach to what is a national problem. We are seeking to establish minimum remuneration and other terms and conditions of service for all non-unionized workers and not for a few sectors. There are five sectors, presently, that have minimum wages.

This decision, Mr. President, and hon. Senators, was informed by a recommendation of the World Bank made to the last government. In fact, on December 13, 1996, Cabinet appointed a special committee with a six-month deadline. I quote:

“To review the recommendations of the World Bank for the establishment of a single economy-wide minimum wage, set equal to the market wage for unskilled labour.”

The committee has already begun its deliberations.

This committee is comprised of the members of the Minimum Wages Board and technical officers of key governmental agencies. Simultaneously, with this initiative of Cabinet, the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives and the office of the Chief Personnel Officer, are collaborating on a review and analysis of the results of a survey of the security industry for submission to the ministerial committee that monitors negotiations and levels of remuneration in the public sector. I give the assurance that any recommendations to this committee will receive prompt attention.

To summarize, Mr. President, comprehensive provisions regarding minimum wages for workers in Trinidad and Tobago, including those in the security industry, will be brought to Parliament, based on the findings and recommendations of the committee appointed to review the recommendations for

a single economy-wide minimum wage. This committee, as indicated earlier, has been requested to submit its report within six months of the date of its appointment.

Thank you, Sir.

**Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt:** Mr. President, could the hon. Minister be so kind as to inform this Senate on the following:

- (a) will domestic workers be included in the general category for minimum wages;
- (b) will that report be brought to this Senate?

My reckoning is that the report should be ready by June, 1997.

**Hon. H. Partap:** Mr. President, with respect to the first question, all workers in the country will be included. Secondly, the report will eventually come before the Parliament.

**Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt:** Mr. President, is the Minister aware that at the present time domestic workers are not included under the definition of “worker” in Trinidad and Tobago? From what the Minister is saying, I gather they will be included under this Minimum Wages Order. Could I have clarification on that, please?

**Hon. H. Partap:** Mr. President, domestic workers are not regarded as workers and we are looking at this matter. It is now before the legal counsel in the ministry and we would have to make a decision.

**Sen. Prof. Spence:** Mr. President, do I understand the Minister to have said, that Government has accepted this policy that there be one minimum wage for all workers? Is that what he said? This seems very strange.

**Hon. H. Partap:** Mr. President, we have set up a committee to make recommendations.

#### **SUGAR INDUSTRY SPECIAL FUNDS (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Sugar Industry Special Funds Act, Chap. 64:04 [*The Minister of Housing and Settlements*]; read the first time.

**SUGAR INDUSTRY LABOUR WELFARE COMMITTEE (INCORPORATION)  
(AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL**

Bill to amend the Sugar Industry Welfare Committee (Incorporation) Act, and to validate things done thereunder [*The Minister of Housing and Settlements*]; read the first time.

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION**

**Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny:** Mr. President, I beg to move the following Motion:

*Whereas* the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has adopted sustainable development as a national goal; and

*Whereas* sustainable development aims at meeting current and future needs of citizens while minimizing negative environmental impacts; and

*Whereas* there continues to be widespread practice of environmentally dangerous activities nationally, especially pollution of both built and natural environments, prejudicial to the health and welfare of present and future generations; and

*Whereas* the work of the Environmental Management Authority has had no demonstrable positive influence on the solution of major environmental pollution problems;

*Be It Resolved* that Government make a full statement to this Senate on its policy for prompt and effective management of the general pollution problem;

*Be It Further Resolved* that Government invoke section 5 of the Environmental Management Act of 1995 and direct the Authority, both generally and specifically, to concentrate its efforts in the area of environmental pollution.

Mr. President, before actually going into the substance of the Motion, I would like to note that it is a bit unfortunate that the Minister responsible for the environment is not here because I think we could, very easily, have heard the entire Motion at one sitting. It would be a novel experience for a Private Members' motion to be held and heard in its entirety in one day.

I would like to read for Members of this Senate a few extracts of a report. Later, I will give the origin of this report. I quote:

“From what has been said in Part II of this Report it will be apparent that a policy must be determined to deal with pollution problems, and that this policy

must envisage both existing pollution and the more important aspect of pollution to come.”

“The Caroni River and its tributaries present, at the present time, the most serious instance of industrial pollution. The majority of industrial undertakings at present are situated east of Port of Spain and a number of them use the Caroni River as a drain, without, in the majority of cases, treating their effluent in any way.”

“(D) Pollution of the Air

This aspect of pollution is definitely outside the Committee’s terms of reference. It is mentioned here only to ensure that it is not overlooked.”

The report gives a series of recommendations and I will only read three of them:

- “(5) Introduction of a Pollution Control Ordinance
- (6) Establishment of a Pollution Control Authority
- (9) Inauguration of long-term technical research and survey schemes relating to the control of land, river and sea pollution.”

**2.30 p.m.**

I have gone to some trouble to extract this information because this is not from yesterday. When these words were written Sen. Daly was, in fact, a school boy at St. Mary’s College, possibly still in short pants—I am not quite sure of his age. Sen. Spence was then Mr. Spence—not Sen. Prof. Spence—he was an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries at the time. I look across at the hon. Minister of Finance—I do not know his age—one can never tell; *[Laughter]* I suspect probably pre-school. I would like to point out one final thing, that Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed was actually not even born, because this is a report of a commission in 1958, set up by the Governor—not the Chief Minister, the Premier or the Prime Minister—and it concentrates on pollution problems. The late Siddique Mustapha, who was uncle to Sen. N. Mohammed was actually a member of this commission and is responsible, collectively, for writing these words which I report today.

Mr. President, this is an issue which is not really partisan. It is a long-standing issue which ought to be dealt with in the same way that Sen. Teelucksingh’s motion on Vagrancy must be dealt with; it is a national issue that is long-standing. Here we are, almost 40 years later, and I see invitations from the Environmental Management Authority calling for tenders to help draft a policy for the

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

environment. I would like to try to put some perspective on this because when one looks at the environment, generally, it must be very confusing for many people because the range of problems is so wide and the media seem to pick on certain things which may have some charisma or glamour, for example, the movement of radioactive plutonium across the Atlantic, a highly emotional issue which people get very worked up about. Turtles, Nariva Swamp, global warming and sea-level rise, all these things are problems of the environment.

My point is that one must really try to put things in perspective. Just in passing, from the point of view of a scientist, sea-level rise is not a big thing. In the last 11,000 to 12,000 years the sea level has risen by about 130 metres. This is a fact of geology and climate. People get very worked up about this and they forget the really pressing issues. I suggest that we really have to examine the categories of environmental problems and if we do this, then we might be able to put them into perspective, so that we can formulate policy very, very quickly to solution of some of those problems. I do not think there is much to be gained by a debate on sea-level rise or the ozone layer. These things are all very, very interesting but they deflect attention; they deflect focus away from what we really have to do with national policy.

I would like to emphasize and what I am saying here I would like to re-emphasize it, especially as we have a member of the Board of the Environmental Management Authority present, and we get along extremely well. This is not to get up here to beat this Government or the previous ones, but to try to see if, collectively, we can really come to grips with it and somehow get agreement at national level moving in a certain direction.

I have made quite an arbitrary and simple classification of environmental problems. I list them as four categories—1, 2, 3 and 4. Let me just state what I think is the problem of the first category. It is any environmental influence which directly affects the individual: his health, the health of children and of future children. That is something that has a direct effect on the air you breathe, the water you drink, the food you eat. These are the things that I feel should be our first concern in any environmental policy which we develop and I will speak on that later. Also, in this category, I would consider hazardous substances, such as things which are not normally around but if you come into contact with them, they can adversely affect you, possibly even kill you.

The second category relates to problems or phenomena that have direct effects on the built and natural environment, things like plastic litter. Plastic litter is not going to kill you, but these are things that are not nice to have around, either in the built environment or in the natural environment. There may be some problems within this category in the built environment, for example, noise pollution which affects people and their health, generally.

The third category is amenity loss. In our country we have unsightly highways but this does not necessarily mean that you are going to be hurt by it. So the third category would be the amenity and aesthetic values in society.

The fourth category would be the regional environmental problems; problems about the ozone layer and sea-level rise and all these other things. I will just deal with the first category because I think that we have to remember that governments accept that we have to look after the health and welfare of people. Let us look at some of these problems.

Mr. President, air pollution is a serious problem and the strange thing about it is that there are certain segments of the society which are adversely affected and it is usually the disadvantaged people who live in crowded conditions along the East/West Corridor. The problem each day gets worse and worse because we do not address it. I have spoken about motor vehicle emissions. I will not rework this one but it is not only motor vehicle emissions—these are the important ones—but there are all sorts of other particulates in the air depending on where one lives. If one lives in the Claxton Bay area, it is cement dust; if one lives in Couva, it is soot during crop time; but in the East/West Corridor, it is mainly motor vehicle emissions in the form of particulates, in the form of carbon monoxide, in the form of soot from high diesel sulphur. All of these things are in these emissions. These cause chronic problems such as respiratory distress to all of us. Most of us are strong and healthy but there will be a proportion of this society who would be adversely affected. People are going to develop asthma from the particulates. Some people will suffer from chronic bronchitis; others, emphysema and lung cancer.

I would just like to point out that this phenomenon is recognized worldwide and in a recent edition of the *Economist* it has been pointed out that in the United Kingdom, approximately 10,000 persons die per year from air pollution—now the population is 60 million and they have about 5,000 traffic deaths, but they have an additional 10,000 who die from pollution problems, mainly vehicle emissions and

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

so forth. This amounts to, if we pro-rate it to Trinidad, about 170 people, assuming that our air quality is the same as in England, which it is not. I hazard a guess that maybe 400 people per year would die in Trinidad and Tobago because of the quality of air and, again, it would be the unfortunates who live along the East/West Corridor.

**2.40 p.m.**

Mr. President, this is not the only air pollution problem. Noise pollution, smell pollution, can cause acute distress. If one happens to live or operate next to a building or a site where there is a carnival fete, one gets the low base beats going right through one's body. This thing goes until four or five o'clock in the morning and one is totally stressed out. If one is out there drinking grog and jumping up, this is one thing but, if one does not like that, if one wants a night's sleep, one is just stressed, and it may be stress repeatedly.

This happens even with religions. One sets up a tent in a vacant lot and people sing the praises of God. This is admirable. However, one may want a night's sleep. So, we have these problems. There is the problem of the stench along the East/West Corridor in Arima where, recently, there were people marching in public. These things stress out people, and when they are stressed, their behaviour becomes antisocial. Here is one problem that we must address. We cannot simply say, 40 years later, that we will invite tenders to determine policy.

The other type of category-I problem relates to water quality. I am not going to labour the business of the quality of water which we drink. I can, however, emphasize that WASA only uses part of the WHO standard. WASA treats its water with chlorine and one can be sure there are no germs in the water, but one cannot be sure of what else is there. The Water and Sewerage Authority is unable to monitor anything but a very limited range of pollutants. It cannot monitor solvents. It cannot monitor pesticides and pesticide residues. It has to send out heavy metals periodically to be determined. Therefore, the water one drinks will not kill one immediately, but a certain proportion of the population is going to be affected in time and, until such time as WASA is able to fully monitor its product, people will be at risk.

The third category-I problem is the food we eat. Again, when one cooks food all the germs are killed but, so much food—especially locally produced vegetables—is produced in a way and marketed in a way that brings into question, to me, and I suppose many others, the safety of that food. I will illustrate this by reference to actually seeing what is done with vegetable crops, to store and



protect them against being eaten by pests, including slugs and bugs of one kind or another. The farmers actually lay out the crop on a sheet of plastic and they dust the whole crop with sevin powder. That keeps the bugs away. Then they take it off to market. Now, sevin powder is not the worst of insecticides but I have seen it with sevin powder, I do not know what they do otherwise.

Mr. President, it is well known that in the agricultural areas the people who deal with agricultural chemicals; those who retail them and who actually use the pesticides, make up cocktails. If one wants to kill something one can buy Clordane in Trinidad—it is a chlorinated hydro-carbon, it is very strong—and mix it with some sevin powder and whatever else is available, and spray with it. This is a fact of life. Nobody actually monitors chemicals, except occasionally. Nobody does this routinely, as is done elsewhere. There is no money to do it. I mention these things because these are what we ought to be dealing with; not turtles, global warming and that sort of thing.

I turn now to one of the problems in category I which, quite frankly, I find alarming. I have already spoken in this Senate about the way in which we dump things like lead, solvents and containers of pesticides. On December 30, 1995, while driving up Abercromby Street, there was a bright yellow vehicle which had about six to eight large compressed gas cylinders chained to the superstructure. At the back it said: “Gas Chlorine. Keep 50 metres away.” This is right in front of Parliament on a meeting day. I cannot say for certain that the cylinders actually contained gas chlorine, they may have been empty. However, on January 10, 1997, there was a story on the international page of the *Express*: “Twenty killed in Pakistan. A Hundred hospitalized.” What happened? Someone was driving a truck with chlorine cylinders, it went off the road, the cylinders went “bang” and the gas cloud killed 20 people and hospitalized a couple hundreds.

Mr. President, this has happened in Trinidad and Tobago. It happened in Diego Martin some years ago. It happened on San Fernando Hill last year. It happened in a housing area in Trincity with sulphur dioxide. I wonder who put those instructions about keeping 50 metres away. Is it a requirement of the Ministry of Works and Transport? If it is, I find it incomprehensible that one would be expected to drive a vehicle in Trinidad and Tobago and keep 50 metres away. At 50 metres away one cannot see the print. One has to get close to it. *[Laughter]*

I am told that gas chlorine is transported in this way in Trinidad and Tobago. Chlorine is an important industrial reagent for one purpose or another, but the fact

that this is permitted. Is it the Ministry of Works and Transport, or is it the person who is actually transporting the chlorine? In other words we really have to review all the ways in which we handle these highly dangerous substances. The conclusion of what I am saying, Mr. President, is that the country must establish a policy. This is what gives me the difficulties.

I do not wish to hammer the Environmental Management Authority—it is only 18 months old and I think it is finding its way—but I am confused as to what it is actually doing. Over the past few months I have seen much press coverage, I have seen invitations for tender. I quote:

“Request for Proposals for the preparation of a technical background paper for standards for basic parameters in water effluents.”

This is at their expense. The Environmental Management Authority is not doing this by itself, it is asking for tenders. I continue to quote:

“Request for Proposals for the preparation of a communications plan. Request for proposals for the preparation of a national environmental policy, action and management plan.”

In parallel with this, I see that the Ministry of Planning and Development is inviting consultancy services for hazardous and oily waste management programme. I am not quite sure whether the Minister of Planning and Development and the Environmental Management Authority have their own programmes. I also see that the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is advertising for an environmental impact assessment of the Nariva Swamp.

### **2.50 p.m.**

Mr. President, I want to go through just a few of the things which I have noticed in the past to illustrate the problem I have in trying to determine exactly what the EMA is doing. I have been openly critical of the EMA's State of the Environment Report. I thought it was total nonsense and rubbish. But with all due respect, I have met with the EMA and we are collaborating and trying to turn out something of real substance.

Over the past few months there have been some views and snippets expressed in the newspapers which went as follows: “EMA accepts Kenny's criticisms”. That was in the *Trinidad Guardian* sometime ago. Another one is: “All dressed up and

nowhere to go”, is a book review on the State of the Environment Report. Then here are some of the things that worry me. There was a workshop on Adaptation to Climate Change. Why should we be spending time on a workshop for adaptation to climate change? Then there was an “EMA/scout workshop”—this is the boy scouts—down at the Capildeo Learning Centre. Then another one says: “EMA and TTBS unite to watch industrial pollution.” They are watching it! Then there is another one just this month: “ \$\$ shortage hits EMA, says CEO”. This is on January 15. On January 18, one reads: “EMA working on stench”. There is another workshop which says: “Sharing the Canadian experiences”. This is actually going on right now. This has appeared in both the *Trinidad Guardian* and the *Daily Express*. As interesting as the Canadian experiences may be, I feel we ought to be looking at what we are doing. Then finally, today, I noticed on the social page that the EMA was actually involved in a workshop on “gender and island sustainability”.

The connection puzzles me. I suggest that the authority does not really know where it is going. I am not sure whether it is a problem of the board, the executive and staff, or whether it is a general problem. I would like to suggest a certain course of action which I hope will be viewed as being highly constructive. First of all, I have read and re-read this EMA Act and with all due respect to the previous Parliament which passed this Act, I am still very concerned and worried about whether this can ever work except it has a political directive telling it to do (a), (b), (c) and (d).

When we were discussing the budget, Sen. Daphne Phillips told us that they had found a flaw in the National Heritage Trust Bill and it was because of this flaw that nothing was done about proclaiming it, and it is going to be corrected. Mr. President, I have read and re-read this Act and I think that it is deeply flawed. Now, I am not proposing changing it or amending it; I think that it is possible to work it if we somehow have political directives saying this is what we want done. The power is there under section 5.

The Act asks the Authority to do many things, but the strangest thing that it requests of it is to co-ordinate a whole series of ministries. This is what puzzles me. It puts a minister in the rather invidious position, in that if he wants to do his own thing, then who are these people to try to interfere with what he is doing.

I will just illustrate the point by reference to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. People forget that the problem of Nariva was born a few years ago in another administration. It went into the administration which followed

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

and there was a certain degree of mismanagement, in that the issue was decided in favour of that government and it was afraid to do what was necessary. I think people forget that it is in the life of this administration that all the squatters have been removed from the Nariva Swamp. They are all out of it now. Some of their structures are there. But it has been done by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources who is not here, but I extend my compliments to him. It has been done and it can be done. If one has a minister who really wants to get moving, how can one have some other nebulous, parastatal body co-ordinating what this minister is doing?

I think there is a very strong argument for making the main thrust of the EMA pollution control. There is a long history of attempts in the past, but within their Act they have the powers to do it. I suggest that they stay away from the workshops; stay away from international problems. These are things that can be handled at ministerial level; or set up a special technical advisory committee.

What power resides in the EMA? The EMA has often quoted section 70 of the Act which says, "Any person who through the release or handling of any pollutant or hazardous substance..." and so forth, can be fined an enormous sum of money. But this is like a red traffic light in Trinidad and Tobago; it is totally without any consequence. Until such time as the EMA brings the rules to Parliament saying: Under section 49, there is air pollution; and what are the pollution standards—between sections 49 and 60. This is what the authority ought to have been doing from day one; that is, establishing the standards: water quality, air quality, noise, hazardous substances. When they have that kind of clout, they can go to a court of law and say, "This is the standard which we have adopted; that man has been putting gas chlorine into the atmosphere; hit him for \$100,000".

Until such time as there are these rules, Sen. Daly will tell you, he will run rings around you when you go into the court, because although one has the power nothing was done to provide the courts with the standards which are needed and which are to be enforced.

Herein lies a bit of a problem for me, personally, because the authority is apparently still going into standards. Standards for environmental parameters can be had. One does not need to re-invent the wheel. It is a question of a policy decision. You can adopt UK, Canada, US or EU standards; you can go to any of these authorities; you can go to the United States and get the EPA standards for

effluents, air, noise. If one wants food standards, one can go to the Food and Drug Administration and get these put onto the law books. When this is done, one has some muscle. But there is no point in going through the debate and getting consultants. In fact, I have in my office, the Environmental Protection Agency standards which were given to us by the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States. One can go to a shelf and get a standard.

**3.00 p.m.**

Here we are 18 months later and what has been actually drafted? What draft legislation, or rules have been produced? The only thing that I have seen is sensitive species and sensitive areas and, Mr. President, I do not know what to do now because the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has been after me to advise them on the equivalent of sensitive species and areas for parks and protected areas. Now both institutions want my services, and I am caught between them because the people who are paying for the services tell me I cannot divulge my recommendations.

So that I am stuck. I would love to be able to tell the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources to put these on as species and those on as areas, but I cannot say this to the ministry, because I am professionally bound under the terms of the arrangement with the EMA and the United Nations Development Programme. This is very, very frustrating. After 40 years one feels one is getting there, but we are stuck in this thing of bureaucracies of one kind or another, and one does not know where one stands.

Now I do not want to prolong this, I have a few more things to say obviously, but I would like to think that it would be possible at Cabinet level to reflect on what we are saying here, and what others may say, both sides of the House, and perhaps come up with the general policy guideline. To me the primary one will be for us to concern ourselves with problems that directly affect the health of people. What are they? We can flesh them out. Let us look at water and water quality; at food and food quality; at the handling of hazardous substances. When I say handling, it is really not only transporting them, but what you do with them at the end when you no longer need them. I think that it is perfectly possible for the many technical people on the Cabinet to arrange the general policy guideline, a framework.

Actually, I think the time is overdue for a re-examination of the ministries of Government, and I would think that a "Ministry of Planning and the Environment"

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

might be a better way of approaching this. Then I would apportion out the responsibilities to the different ministries. Clearly, one ministry must co-ordinate. You cannot have a bureaucracy co-ordinating, it has to be a Minister. If, in the existing framework with an authority headed by a board and an executive, it goes off doing its own thing, what happens? You fire the board? Or if the executive and technical staff are not performing, you fire them? This does not solve the problem. You put in another lot until such time as you have the general policy directives.

Now I would like to sell my point of view, but the general consensus may produce something somewhat different. I would like to see certain key ministries involved. Clearly, if we accept my viewpoint, the EMA's pollution control function must be with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, because health is not only houses and roads, but also the work place. So, I would expect those two, the Ministries of Health and Labour, and the EMA, to be making the major thrust, establishing the standards, getting out there and starting to manage that aspect of it.

In other areas of the environment, for example, parks and protected areas, I have no idea why the EMA is involved in this. This is clearly something for the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, and—I am not sure what is the current name of the Ministry, is it still culture?—The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs, it has not changed yet. But our built heritage, our parks, and our lands, these are really for it. Now, below the level of "Minister of Planning and Environment", I would see a sort of Cabinet committee of the key ministries that are actually going to be interacting, and then I see everything down the line as directives from the Minister. I cannot envisage the EMA giving directives. I can envisage the authority acting within the law, once it has the standards and initiating prosecution.

I still see the need for a complete revision of the way in which we deal with it. It is not something that one pegs onto the end of a budget presentation, a little paragraph on the environment; it is not that at all. This thing has to be integrated, it has to be a first priority. If any government says it is concerned with the health and welfare of people, it has to be able to bring this thing right up to the forefront. It is health. Thereafter, the other things will fall into their natural place.

We have many obligations, in this country, to international authorities. I think the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources revealed for us that we are signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and there is responsibility on the CITES to make legislation. That was in

1984 and not a thing has come to this Parliament, the last one, or the one before. Now to me this is a question of the co-ordinating level below the "Ministry of Planning and the Environment". I see this clearly as foreign affairs, in consultation with the appropriate ministry, to keep needling them, you know we are CITES, we are RAMSAR, whatever have you, this is the way it will work. You cannot leave that to the individual ministry that is doing the full range of problems: food production or culture for that matter. So I suggest that there is need for a serious rethink of the importance of the environment, the need to give focus to health and general welfare. I see that this could only be done if we go into a serious rethink on general policy guidelines, which will then feed out.

Mr. President, to come back to the Environmental Management Authority, frankly, I am rather alarmed at one development. It has rather startled me that there is now a workshop on the environment, "Sharing the Canadian Experience." It is being held up at the Hilton. Little more than a year ago, there was also a similar thing with the State of Maine, something called METEP. I am, in fact, collaborating with the EMA and I have agreed to go there and moderate one of their sessions tomorrow. But when I look at the programme, essentially what is happening in the country, is that the honey pot is now open and—all these advertisements I have been reading—the people start fluttering in, and I question whether this is really in our interest. If the Environmental Management Authority has to rely on consultants, there is a very deep-seated problem. If I said, we will appoint Sen. Prof. Spence to a post in The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, the very first thing he does when he sits in his chair is write advertisements and invite consultants to come and tell him what to do. The same thing is done with the Professor of West Indian Literature. Can you imagine Sen. Prof. Ramchand being given a responsibility, and being told to put some advertisements in the newspapers inviting proposals?

### **3.10 p.m.**

Mr. President, one of the things they are requesting is for us to write a technical paper on water quality standards. I can get a graduate student to do that as an exercise. So there is a problem there. My expectations of the Environmental Management Authority were that a high-powered team would get in there and start moving the thing. I did not, frankly, expect this kind of consulting. There is this Canadian connection and most of the people speaking are actually, environmental consultants from private firms, and several of them have indicated

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

that they want to see me in the worst way—I am not quite sure what this is for. This, to me, is a very serious problem. After 40 years do we not have the internal talent in the ministry or in the country?

Mr. President, earlier this week there was a nice story on page 4 of the *Trinidad Guardian* dated Monday, January 20, 1997—this is relevant. There is a big problem now with pipes to be laid in the country by Sen. Daly's favourite public utility. Prof. Phelps who is an eminent specialist on water resources and waste water management—he is one of the world's authority and is the author of texts on this subject—is forced to write to an authority saying that what the consultants are telling them is totally false as there is nothing wrong with using PVC pipes, and he explained the whole thing.

This is one of the problems we have. To go back to what I was saying before, 40 years ago we knew where we ought to be headed yet, 40 years down the line we do not actually have pollution control legislation. Those rules under sections 49 to 60 would be the substance of the pollution control that was requested 40 years ago and there is a bureaucracy that is going into the social pages planting trees and so forth. These things are very nice but they lack focus.

So, at the risk of continuing to wear the patience of the Senate, I would state finally that there is an urgent need for the Government to get a few people together, who really have experience in this field, for a simple sit-down to examine this issue and assist the Government in determining its policy with regard to the environment. This can be done without reference to any consultant. When this is done the ministries would know what directives to make and as long as they say, "This is what we want", there will be pollution control.

Mr. President, I do not think that people understand the implications of having not acted last year or 20 years ago. As the problem continues, the cost of rehabilitation mounts, and when our economist friends start explaining the cost of rehabilitation it would make the public service debt look like nothing. Dr. Ivan Chang-Yeng has estimated the cost of decontaminating the Demerara site at approximately US \$1 million. That is only one site and apparently there are sites all over the country.

So, Mr. President, I end my contribution by asking the Government to consider what I have said, and what other Senators may say, and to start using its powers under section 5 to provide the direction necessary.

I beg to move.



[Secoded by Sen. Martin Daly.]

*Question proposed.*

**Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand:** Mr. President, my support for Sen. Prof. Kenny's motion comes in two parts. In the first part I offer a description of certain kinds of degradation of the environment engaged in by citizens of our own country as they perform their more or less normal everyday activities. In the second part I would take a look at the trauma inflicted upon our natural habitat by citizens and institutions in our country acting out of a seemingly well-intentioned creed that our tourism product is our environment. I repeat the creed: our tourism product is our environment.

Mr. President, if one says it again and again as one would say a mantra, one would realize what a terrible thing it is: our tourism product is our environment. What a degradation, that the place in which one lives, breathes, works and has one's being is now one's tourism product. What a sell-out. I am very sorry for the poor environment. This view has produced the sun, sea and sand tourism that has degraded the environment in many areas—I shall come to that.

This view, supplemented by bastardized versions of local culture presented for tourists, by prostitution, gambling and casinos, has led to the sun, sea and sand tourism that we all lament. Recently, we have seen a very dangerous shift from sun, sea and sand. Tourist hordes are now being directed to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective, they say, of "studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery with its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural manifestations, both past and present, found in these areas". The directive is to be found in the *Caribbean Hotel Association's Handbook* for 1993.

**3.20 p.m.**

You are moving from sun, sea and sand, to the neglected and undeveloped areas. So the cancer, Mr. President, is spreading in the name of the thing called eco-tourism. I want to argue later on that some of the things being done to the environment in the name of eco-tourism, may turn out to have greater negative consequences for the future of the environment than the visible dangers that we have already identified with respect to sun, sea and sand tourism.

In fact, Mr. President, I would like to suggest a new pronunciation of this thing. Do not call it eco-tourism, call it "echo" tourism, because it replicates all the evils of sun, sea, and sand tourism and because of the horrors it is going to

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

produce, the reverberations down the centuries out of our time and place; the echoes that it is leading to in the future; the horrors to be produced, horrors we cannot predict or imagine. So if you have your dictionary please cross out eco-tourism, and put in “echo” tourism. If one knows the enemy by his right name, one will be able to deal with him.

I am going to come back to the argument that eco-tourism is a business. It does not proceed out of love for the environment. It is a business. Its aim is large profits in the shortest possible time. This business may turn out to be lethal because it is more calculating than the carelessness and unthinking behaviour of ordinary people. Certainly the eco-tourism business is not the same as environmental management. Let me say again, it is a business with particular intentions which are quite different from the purposes of those of us who want to preserve our natural habitat as a place where we work, eat, breathe and so forth.

Sun, sea and sand tourism is like a man who kills the goose that lays the golden egg. Eco-tourism is like the man who has worked out that he must not kill the goose that lays the golden egg. When I was growing up my mother used to tell me do not kill the goose that lays the golden egg. I did not know what a cynical message that lady was teaching me. If I were a goose I would have preferred you to kill me than to keep me alive just to keep on laying golden eggs for you. I would find that a very degrading vocation; and not only that, a very insecure one. Because if you are the kind of “fella” keeping me alive to lay golden eggs, you would stew me as soon as I become an ex-layer, or move on as soon as you find a younger goose or chick who would lay more eggs. Because, Mr. President, in your heart of heart—if you have a heart—you are a mongoose.

That is the outline of what I want to say. I want to come back—

**Mr. Gangar:** What!

**Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand:** I come back to the first point, citizens degrading the environment. I always take the opportunity to bring to this honourable Senate the wisdom breathed by dead men to their kind, the wisdom of our spiritual ancestors, our elders, the messages of our artists and people like them. I want to read the first page of a novel *The Plains of Caroni* by the father of the West Indian short story, one of the great writers we have produced, the late Samuel Selvon. What we are looking at here begins as a statement about the Caroni River, but it is also about rivers and other aspects of the environment. I am using it because I want to give a graphic demonstration of the fact that “echo” tourism developers

should be aware of: the landscape has a memory. If you do wickedness to it, it would do you the back. I quote:

"The river must have been singing a different song when Sir Walter Raleigh and his men used it. They entered from the mouth in the Gulf of Paria, and were able to navigate and sail some distance inland on their way to attack the Spaniards at the old capital of St. Joseph. It might have sung some primitive Carib tune, or picked up some Spanish air from a soldier wandering along its banks.

If it sings at all today..."

And the passage doubts that this poor choked up river can sing. I continue:

"...it would have to be a calypso, or perhaps some Indian music it would learn from the farmers and cane workers who live along its banks. "

Then, Mr. President, the description takes us back to the source of this river:

"The streams in the Northern Range which make up its source are the same. They are beautiful and cool and crystal clear flowing from the hills to the valleys over rock and pebble, but once they get out of the valleys they become dustbins for Trinidadians who do not care anything about polluting or dirtying the clean waters. By the time the streams reach the Eastern Main Road, which runs across the breadth of the island from Port of Spain to the east coast, they have collected every imaginable kind of refuse, from dead bodies—bipeds and quadrupeds—to rusty, discarded cars and their parts, from dog shit to menstruation rags.

By the time they join the main stream on the plains of Caroni, the river is a muddy, sickly brown, sluggish and filthy, and so lazy to move (except in the rainy season) that it is a wonder it gets to the sea at all."

Poor thing! I continue:

"It meanders and turns and twists as if to avoid all movement and flow, backing into a bend here, almost stagnant in a pool there. Sometimes it turns back and heads for the hills, and sometimes it is still and lifeless like a long lake. But in the rainy season, when it cannot accommodate the swollen streams, it overflows its banks and destroys crops and livestock, and makes some passing roads impossible to cross.

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

Mr. President, if one interferes with the environment, it is going to get back at one, and that is the message of Samuel Selvon's novel; one should say, one of the messages of *The Plains of Caroni*.

I now want to leave the way in which ordinary citizens degrade their environment, and are sowing horrors that will spike us in the future. I want to look at some of the environmental problems that arise from tourism. I should explain. I have a great interest in people who wish to visit our country to enjoy the natural beauty of our island's, climate and our cultural and artistic expressions. I welcome those who wish to see how we relate to one another socially and fit into our environment. I feel a special responsibility to young people like these who come here to learn about us and our institutions. But I am concerned about the kind of tourist and tourism we seem to be officially soliciting, and about how the money brought into the country by tourism is distributed. Above all, I am worried that more thought is going into how we might open up the environment to the tourists, than on how we might protect the environment from the impact of tourism.

**3.30 p.m.**

We are spending so much time thinking about how to open it up to the tourist and so little time thinking about how we must protect it from the tourist. If one is going to open up, even while one is doing that, one has to be planning strategies to protect, and that, for me, is one of the most important points about Sen. Prof. Kenny's Motion. It is calling upon us as a Government, as a country and as a people to take care of the environment in these times, especially where we have our so-called tourist thrust.

Mr. President, let me make the point by drawing our attention to a particular example. The majority of Barbados's quarter of a million people live concentratedly on one-sixth of the island—narrow strips on the South and West coasts. These are the tourists strips and every year 400,000 stay-over guests arrive, in addition, to the 400,000 cruise-ship passengers who add their weight to this densely populated area. Think then, of the strain that this physical invasion puts on the land, the sea, the air, the water supply, the bathrooms, the toilets, the kitchens and the food supply. I will leave them there pressing down on the landscape and make a slight digression to take a side glance at an important aspect of this invasion which also has a bearing on the environment.

I am not going to spell out for you the strain that these numbers put upon the inhabitants of the islands, the mental strain, the stress, and I am not going into

detail to describe the anti-environmental behaviour this crowding and this visitation of the visible privileged can trigger off. I am just going to read something that suggests how important it is that we should take account of the psychology of the dispossessed when we think of taking care of the environment. There are people in this country who feel they do not have a stake in the environment, who feel other people own the place, it is not theirs so they will spit on it and do everything on it, and they will mash it up; they will throw rubbish on it because it is not theirs. They feel dispossessed.

One of the consequences of tourism is to let them see their dispossession. One of our writers from the tourist-ridden island of Antigua talks about that bitterness in the heart of the dispossessed native, which is a factor. She is not talking about the environment but I am saying it is a factor in the treatment of the environment. It is a passage where Jamaica Kincaid explains how the native feels when he sees tourists. It is taken from her book called *A Small Place* and I quote:

“That the native does not like the tourist is not hard to explain. For every native of every place is a potential tourist, and every tourist is a native of somewhere. Every native everywhere lives a life of overwhelming and crushing banality and boredom and desperation and depression, and every deed, good and bad that he performs is an attempt to forget this. Every native would like to find a way out, every native would like a rest, every native would like a tour. But some natives—most natives in the world—cannot go anywhere. They are too poor. They are too poor to go anywhere. They are too poor to escape the reality of their lives; and they are too poor to live properly in the place where they live, which is the very place you, the tourist, want to go. So when the natives see you, the tourist, they envy you, they envy your ability to leave your own banality and boredom, they envy your ability to turn their own banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself.”

Do you not see why these people have to mash up the place? They can have no interest in the environment if there is a mass of people looking at people coming for fun into the place that is hell for them. I have just been taking a side glance at the human side: tourism policies do have the result of alienating people from their environment and causing, not only the social problems that we associate with that, but a hostile attitude to the environment to which these citizens ought properly to belong. This human factor is not to be forgotten. I think it is a maxim, it ought to be a rule: the more one opens up one's environment to tourist and tourism, the

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

more one has to devise means of protecting one's environment from tourists and tourism.

*The pressure on the environment.* There is a book which I feel everybody who is interested in environment and tourism and the development of this society ought to own. And we should give everybody free markers so that they can mark out the important passages. It is a book called *Last Resorts*. The title refers to the desperation with which we are pursuing tourism as a last resort. It is also telling us that these resorts we are creating are the last resorts because after that, everything is done, finished, kaput, we are spoiling the place. The author is Polly Pattullo—I feel like if I am Sen. Dr. St. Cyr preaching—and on pages 104 and 105, Miss Pattullo gives us the general effects of tourism on the environment.

**Mr. President:** I know that the question of the environment is broad but you seem to be speaking more about tourism in this debate than on the environment. The Motion is quite specific, and while, I think there is a possibility of a nexus somewhere between what you are saying and the Motion before us, I would like you to please focus more on the substance of the Motion.

**Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand:** Thank you, Mr. President. There must be a weakness in my rhetoric that I am not showing the connection between tourism and the environment, but I am trying my best to show that tourism also is intimately bound up with the environment in the sense that tourism is, trying to sell the environment, to develop the environment, to market the environment and, therefore, it is very easy not to mention tourism if you are interested in the environment. I take your point, and I will do my best to comply.

I just want to read from the book *Last Resorts*:

“The catalogue of environmental destruction directly attributed to the growth of the tourist industry is long.”

Several kinds of environmental destruction are taking place.

“It includes the erosion of beaches, the breakdown of coral reefs, marine and coastal pollution from watersports, the dumping of waste and the non-treatment of sewage, sand-mining and the destruction of wetlands and salt ponds. In many cases, the impact is interrelated...”

**3.40 p.m.**

For example, somebody with a house. A man with a house or hotel will cut down coastal trees to improve the view from the bedrooms. When he cuts

down the trees, he is contributing to coastal erosion and sand loss. A jetty is built for a new dive shop, more sand is lost.

“...the newly shaped beach is washed on to the coral reef. The result is two-fold: the sandy beach has become smaller and the marine environment has been spoiled.”

Mr. President, our coastline is being destroyed. There are some very dramatic examples. In Antigua, the McKinnons Saltpond was filled in for a new hotel and condominiums to be built which resulted in extensive degradation of the environment. The wetlands which were preserving and protecting the rest of the coast were filled in for condominiums with the result that the rest of the coast began to suffer degradation.

Mr. President, in Barbuda, Antigua and Tobago, sand-mining has been having terrible consequences on the landscape. I quote from page 109 of the same book:

“In Tobago, the surge in sand-mining coincided with the expansion of tourism in the 1980s. Both the airport extension and the deep-water harbour at the island’s capital, Scarborough, were constructed with sand from local beaches. Local naturalist David Rooks points out, ‘The beaches are Tobago’s tourism mainstay, take them away and your tourist goes away.... Furthermore, the sand contains micro-organisms, so without the sand another part of the food chain has gone.’ Goldsborough beach, for example, has already shown the effect of mining: the sand is black, the beach has narrowed and it is littered with dead and rotting plants and trees.”

Mr. President, we have the destruction of coral reefs; we have the dumping of cruise-ships’ waste; we have the dumping of hotels’ waste. So that the conventional sun, sea and sand tourism which I promise not to talk too much about, has had a degrading effect on the environment. I was trying to suggest that a shift is taking place from that kind of tourism which is recognized as destructive, to what is called eco-tourism, which concentrates on the neglected areas of the environment. The story there is just as bad.

Many countries use the term to describe any part of their tourist product that focusses on natural attractions and they would say, “We have to develop this into a tourist attraction.” They would see something, it looks nice: “We have to develop this into a tourist attraction.” It is as though you see a stone on the beach: “I have to carry it home; I have to polish it; I have to mount it; I have to put it in my living

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

room.” There is a thing called “found beauty”, “found art” or “found cultural expression” and they are finding these and then framing them. That act, while not as bad as some of the other acts, is an unnatural act, Mr. President. If people want to come and see the beautiful stone on the beaches, come and look at the beautiful stone on the beaches! We do not have to go and put a wire guard around it and say, “Here is a stone from the beach.” Just leave it there; let it go about its business of being a stone on the beach and if you want, come and see it while it is doing its business, and then go away.

We have to be very careful about the notion of wanting to develop this into a tourist attraction. Like somebody will say, “Ah, Carnival, that is not a very convenient time of year—February. Why do we not shift Carnival to the summer?” Interfering with nature and the natural processes is very hostile to the natural and human environment. We have to be very careful about why we do these kinds of things. I have been describing a version of eco-tourism. In this version, environment other than sun, sea and sand becomes part of the thing that we want to market but we do it along with the conventional tourism.

As I have suggested, some of this is the result of a very shallow searching for something different or another. Some of it, to be fair, is based upon sustainable environmental projects such as, the 450-acre Grenada Levera-Bathway National Park; Asa Wright Nature Reserve; and Jamaica’s Blue Mountain/John Crow Mountain National Park, which is established to help stop deforestation. The article also stated:

“The 200,000-acre park has developed a range of recreational and educational activities for tourists and Jamaicans, which will provide employment for local people.”

So, there is this attempt to combine conventional tourism with an interest in the neglected and remote parts of the environment—and you sometimes have sustainable environmental projects associated with this—but we still have to make a distinction, a very important one, about the outlooks of the countries where this kind of thing is happening. In some countries you are tying eco-tourism to the other kind of tourism. But then you have those countries where it is claimed that eco-tourism is the only kind of tourism they are going to have, with eco-tourism defining the shape and strategy of tourism as a whole. I am thinking of countries like Belize, Dominica and Guyana which do not have the conventional white sand. Just stunning landscapes, flora and fauna, and marine environment; countries that



*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

have missed out on mass tourism, because of poor infrastructure, poor communication, lack of beaches and casinos. Their governments turned to the environment as a source of income and they say, “Well this is our entire strategy for economic development. We are going to develop this thing we call eco-tourism”—which I call “echo” tourism.

Mr. President, if you look at what is happening—

**Sen. John:** Mr. President, I think in keeping with the Motion that has been moved, the Senator has failed to keep within the parameters to which you have called his attention a while ago. If we look at the resolve of the Motion, definitely he is not keeping within that.

**3.50 p.m.**

**Mr. President:** Sen. Ramchand, please focus on the Motion. I realize that tourism is an important aspect of environmental degradation. I believe this is the point which you have been making all along. I think the path has been probably deepened. Perhaps you might now focus on other areas of the Motion.

**Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand:** Mr. President, thank you for your tolerance. I thought that Sen. John would have been enjoying what I am saying so much that he would not have cared whether it was relevant or irrelevant. I have been trying not to use the words “tourism” and “eco-tourism” too much and just talk about the environment. Mr. President, if I could use it five or six more times I would concentrate on the environment.

If we examine what is happening in Belize, Dominica and Guyana with this new attention to the environment, we would find that this new approach to the environment has resulted in certain developments which are harmful to the environment and the way in which people live. When it was decided to focus on the natural attraction of Belize there was a great rush to buy land with the result that 90 per cent of all coastal developments in Belize are owned by foreigners.

A second result is that powerful expatriate groups own and manage the environment through lodges and small hotels which they have set up. If a government has an environmental policy which it wants to implement, it would have to deal with a small group of expatriates who own the land. The film director Francis Ford Coppola owns one such lodge in Belize where you can have pizza and pasta, with sun dried tomatoes specially flown in and landed on the director’s own airstrip.

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

A great conflict has arisen in Belize between the people who live there and want to see the economy and the environment develop for the people of Belize and the businessmen who have invested in the environment of Belize. The case is true or the same in Guyana and Grenada. The environment is being threatened because control of the environment has now fallen into the hands of foreign investors who are interested, not in the environment, but in a business called eco-tourism.

I am trying to argue that what we need in this country, in support of Sen. Kenny's Motion, is a proper understanding and love for the environment. I want now to speak about the destruction of the environment and love for the environment in the words and voices of the region's two leading poets. The first one, Edward Braithwaite, laments what is happening with the environment as a result of certain kinds of developments, in the book called *Islands*. He states:

“...The green is gone now,  
  
trees cut down, grass cruelled under-  
foot, the lake converted to a park-  
ing lot. And yet these publicists  
  
with hitch of trousers, flick  
of switch, bawl out through red-  
eye'd microphones how they will build  
  
the island: hotels where there were pebbles,  
casinos where the casuarinas sang,  
and flowing fields of tourists for our daily bread.”

The other poet is the Nobel Prize winner, Derek Walcott, who talks about the time when as a young boy, he and his friend Dunstan St. Omer began to take lessons in painting. They decided that this environment where we have suffered and worked for so many years has never been truly loved or understood. They were going to try to love and understand it in their hearts. The quotation is from a poem called *Another Life*. The teacher was a short-sighted man named Harry Simmonds. They were disciples of that teacher:

“But drunkenly, or secretly, we swore,  
disciples of that astigmatic saint,  
that we would never leave the island

until we had put down, in paint, in words,  
 as palmists learn the network of a hand,  
 all of its sunken, leaf-choked ravines,  
 every neglected, self-pitying inlet  
 muttering in brackish dialect, the ropes of mangroves  
 from which old soldier crabs slipped  
 surrendering to slush,  
 each ochre track seeking some hilltop and  
 losing itself in an unfinished phrase...

For no one had yet written of this landscape  
 that it was possible, though there were sounds  
 given to its varieties of wood;

the *bois-cannot* responded to its echo,  
 when the axe spoke, weeds ran up to the knee  
 like bastard children, hiding in their names,

whole generations died, unchristened,  
 growths hidden in green darkness, forests  
 of history thickening with amnesia,  
 so that a man's branched, naked trunk,  
 its roots crusted with dirt,  
 swayed where it stopped...

Our poets and artists can teach us to care for the environment. I would add one thing to Sen. Kenny's list of the various ways in which we might deal with the threat to the environment: It is the whole issue of education. It is true we need the kind of institution which Sen. Prof. Kenny has suggested. We need the involvement of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, and Women's Affairs the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives but we also need the Ministry of Education. One needs to concentrate not simply on committees and bureaucracy and the ministry working from the top, but one needs to educate our people so that every citizen understands the connection between his life and the life of nature.

One needs to understand his environment, the natural heritage and the built heritage; to understand that environment as an archive of spiritual struggle and of our history; to understand that the proper attitude to the environment, is a proper

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. PROF. RAMCHAND]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

attitude to the past, the present and the future; to understand that a proper attitude and understanding of the environment is a proper understanding of one's self. To understand, know and love one's environment is to know one's self; to know who you are and where you want to go in the world.

Mr. President, we are in danger because of this lack of understanding and love of our environment, and not only of succumbing to the kinds of destructive influences from abroad about which I have talked. The enemy is encamped at home too. What rubbish it is to build a hotel in a remote forest area where the turtles breed, and say you are interested in the environment.

**Mr. President:** The speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. Prof. J. Spence*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand:** Thank you very much Senators. Mr. President, I would not take more than three minutes.

To understand the environment in the way I have suggested and to have an educational policy which seeks to bring about that understanding, is to begin to make a major contribution to our society, to make us understand ourselves, and to let the world see us as a happy people living in harmony with one another in our environment; a people and a place that the world will want to visit and love because we are true to ourselves.

Thank you.

**Sen. Penelope Beckles:** Mr. President, I just want to add a couple points on Sen. Prof. Kenny's Motion. Interestingly enough, there is an article in today's *Newsday* captioned, "Who's aware of the environment?". The Environmental Management Authority (EMA) had commissioned a survey sometime towards the end of last year and they asked questions of 1,000 Trinidadians in relation to their awareness of the environment and the persons who are responsible for it. Of this number 40 per cent could not name any organization involved in environment protection; 10 per cent thought first of the Ministry of Health; 7 per cent said it was the EMA; 5 per cent said Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste; 3 per cent named

Green Peace and the other 3 per cent named the local county council or city council.

Mr. President, the document also said that the persons who were interviewed identified the top three environmental problems as garbage waste disposal—65 per cent, protection of the atmosphere—49 per cent, and pollution of beaches—34 per cent. One of the conclusions was that many of the adults were not classified as anti-environment, and half of them were described as indifferent to the environment. It is quite clear—and I suppose most of us will read this at some point in time—that many of the Trinidadians are not aware of whether there is anyone who is responsible for looking after the environment at all. One of the things they actually discussed was what the persons who were interviewed defined the environment to mean, and that is also quite interesting.

The person who wrote the article stated that many of the programmes that are seen on television do not really deal with the local environment, but there are several programmes coming out of the National Geographic and the BBC Wildlife which deal with the environment from other areas. In looking at Sen. Prof. Kenny's Motion, one of the questions I asked myself was the extent to which we have been concerned in educating our population about the importance of the environment and the extent to which this issue affects the entire population of Trinidad and Tobago.

Those of us who come from the east, or even go in that direction particularly when one passes through the Beetham area—and I recall one Saturday morning coming into Port of Spain around 7.00 a.m. I would not say what I saw were clouds but the extent to which this very grey dust covered the city of Port of Spain on a very clear sunny morning is something about which we must be extremely concerned. Sometimes we get the impression that some of us who drive air-conditioned cars are not concerned about the air which we breathe, but somewhere down the road it is recognized that it is extremely important for us to deal with this as a matter of crisis. Almost every night one passes there, and for me personally, I cannot pass without having my car window totally wound up, and even then, having passed the Uriah Butler Highway, there is still that smell in one's vehicle. At some point in time, whether one lives extremely far from that area, or within the vicinity, it is something about which one has to be concerned. Even moreso, for the persons who occupy that area, it is one of the practices that I am sure Sen. Prof. Kenny referred to when he talked about the continuing practice of widespread environmentally dangerous activities nationally.

Mr. President, not too far from the Beetham, for those who use the bus route, a particular Minister took considerable amount of credit for clearing a particular ravine—for the want of a better word—which ran adjacent to the Priority Bus Route and today, that ravine is again exactly the way it was sometime ago. One of the concerns we must have in terms of the practice of these activities, is the extent to which some of the industries which occupy areas very close to rivers are concerned with what actually goes into those rivers. Some persons deliberately create other ravines running from their industries so that they run into some of the other ravines or rivers and this practice has been going on for ages unchecked and some of them consider themselves to be environmentally friendly.

Where I live in Arima—and interestingly enough, it came to the attention of the population of Trinidad and Tobago in a very strange fashion—hundreds of persons from the area surrounding a particular industry in Arima, face the stench of a combination of chicken entrails and the remains of shrimps. Sometimes I go so far as to think that it has to be dead animals because it is impossible to consider what could be happening inside that industry, for it causes a smell to go for almost five miles unchecked.

**4.10 p.m.**

The report from the EMA was that they had gone into that industry and indicated that it was quite unhealthy and something needed to be done immediately. Their response almost a year ago was that they hired a consultant to deal with it. This situation ended on Monday when the residents of the area actually blocked the highway to get the attention of the national community and the Ministry of Health. Of course, since that time the smell no longer exists. What will happen, I do not know.

Fortunately, Mr. President, there were 20 citizens, including a UNC councillor, who decided that they had had enough of the situation which was being totally ignored. It was really an unfortunate situation and we hope that we do not have similar occurrences in other areas because some industries really take a position that is totally indifferent to the community in which they are. Very often people from these same communities are employed there and obviously find it difficult to complain. However, after two to three years of complaining and nothing happening, this was a situation where, it seems, the Environmental Management Authority seemed to have no power, even though it said that it had sent a report to

the Ministry of Health indicating that this was almost a health hazard. I must say that several persons in the district got rashes that they could not account for until they recognized that it was due to what was taking place at the plant.

So, Mr. President, we all have to be extremely concerned about these practices. Of course, some of us do not admit that as citizens we contribute to much of the environmentally dangerous practices on our beaches and other places. We do not discipline ourselves into waiting for a bin in which to place our garbage. Most of us who have travelled to Europe or any other part of the world find it very easy to discipline ourselves not to drop garbage all over the place. In Trinidad and Tobago, it seems to be almost a matter of practice. Even with the Litter Act, we very rarely hear anyone being charged. That is because we think it is something almost normal. Even though we very often focus on tourism, how do we feel, knowing that as citizens we are responsible for the type of environment in which we now live? People go to the beaches and they have no problem leaving the place dirty, thinking that it is either the Government or the local authority that should clean up, when it is fairly simple for us to walk with our bags to collect the garbage to ensure that we have a fairly clean Trinidad and Tobago.

On more than one occasion I have heard Prof. Kenny, and certainly Sen. Daly, talk about travelling in the maxis. It is virtually impossible to understand that persons drive maxis and sometimes a person who is driving behind them cannot even pass because the smoke is so much. It is not even passing, but the fact that one is continuously inhaling this smoke that obviously is dangerous to one's health. I feel that we have reached the stage where dealing with this issue of pollution in our immediate cities and boroughs, and by extension, some of the other places, is something that is extremely critical.

We just cannot think of Port of Spain, San Fernando and our established cities or boroughs. What has been happening over the last couple years, too, is that some of the practices in the northern range and in the forests have also been quite a source of concern. The slash-and-burn cultivation that has developed over the years by some of the farmers and certainly the fact that some of them are not aware that there is a link between how one deals with a forest, the type of agriculture that one practises and what eventually happens when the rainy season comes, underscores the need for education. Some of us have to realize the extent to which we cause some of the problems that eventually occur, particularly as they relate to garbage collection. Some of us may have problems, and the easiest thing to do in terms of one's activities is to throw the garbage down a drain knowing full

*Environmental Pollution*  
[SEN. BECKLES]

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

well that there is no water running. Then the rainy season comes and these drains and rivers are clogged and, again, we have the good old story that the government of the day will be responsible for it.

Like the motion on vagrancy, Mr. President, this is not really a political issue but one that calls us, as Prof. Kenny stated, to take a collective position to ensure that we all do what we can to deal with it as an immediate problem. I therefore support this Motion.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark):** I beg to move that this Senate be now adjourned to Tuesday, January 28, 1997 at 1.30 p.m., at which time we will focus on the Gambling and Betting (Amdt.) Bill and the sugar industry amendment bills.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 4.18 p.m.*