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AND TOBAGO WHICH OPENED ON NOVEMBER 27, 1995

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SENATE

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave to Sen. Finbar Gangar to be absent from the sittings of the Senate during the period July 19 to August 3, 1997. I have also granted leave of absence from today's sitting to Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Mr. Vice-President: I have been advised that His Excellency the Acting President, has appointed Mr. Vincent Cabrera a temporary Senator with effect from July 19, 1997 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Sen. The Hon. Finbar Gangar.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sen. Vincent Cabrera took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, today is Private Members' Day, however, after we have completed our deliberations, we would like to seek leave of this Senate to deal with Motion No. 1, dealing with amendments coming from the House of Representatives.

Agreed to.

TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas there are many individual old and new institutions and initiatives in tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago; and

Whereas small island states such as Trinidad and Tobago need to develop the potential of their human resources to the highest level to compete in the current and future economic environment;

Be It Resolved that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago take the lead in reorganizing and integrating the tertiary education system so as to ensure efficiency and maintenance of high quality.

1.40 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, in some sense this is a repeat of a Motion which I moved in the Senate in September of 1995. It was stated a bit differently on that occasion because I was trying to promote, specifically, the idea of a technical university for Trinidad and Tobago. This is still my thrust but I decided on this occasion, to broaden the scope of the discussion somewhat by having a Motion.

I would just like to read the Motion that was passed unanimously in the Senate on September 26, 1995:

“RESOLVED that the Senate urge the Government to expedite the full implementation of the 1977 White Paper on NIHERST so that a Technical University of Trinidad and Tobago be created having functional relationships with the University of the West Indies and to achieve this objective the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago set up a working group.”

Of course, we know that the government has changed and that working group was not then established at that time.

Before going into the arguments that I shall use for the need to integrate our tertiary educational system and, indeed, as I will suggest, creating a technical university in Trinidad and Tobago, I would just like to say a word on the role of the university. I am not going to expand on this very greatly but I just want to read from the educational supplement of *The Independent Education* of Thursday, June 26, 1997. One would see that the same discussion is now taking place in the

United Kingdom. There is now a report which is to be published shortly—or may even be published now as we speak—by Sir Ron Dearing on higher education in the United Kingdom. I will just read from this article. It says:

“Sir Ron Dearing will publish his report on higher education this summer. Appointed by the previous government, but with the support of what has turned out to be a new government, Sir Ron commands respect across the policy-makers. There is broad agreement, too, that higher education presents complex issues—of funding and quality—that need to be addressed calmly, and outside the pressures associated with party politics.

Issues of funding and quality are important, and are of the moment. But unless we ask ourselves two questions, and find answers to them, a debate framed around such issues will fail entirely to secure a higher education adequate for the new century. The two questions are: what is higher education for? And what kind of education should we offer our students, that is going to live up to the purposes we have identified?”

It is clear that we in Trinidad and Tobago need to ask ourselves these questions as well and debate them before we could conclude what we need by way of modifications in the system of higher education. Indeed, one would have hoped that working group which was agreed to in 1995 would have done just that. The article goes on:

“Like Robbins in 1963, his predecessor is heading a major inquiry into higher education. Sir Ron, it is understood, has been giving attention certainly to the first to these questions, about the purposes of higher education...”

A number of people who have made submissions have also commented on this question. What are the wider purposes of higher education?

“...there was wide agreement that the purposes of higher education should not be framed entirely around narrow, vocational agendas. But what then? Are the wider purposes consonant with economic purposes? Shouldn't we admit that, in the modern world, higher education is just a matter of economic investment, a means of enhancing UK Inc...”

Or Trinidad and Tobago Inc.

“...and that's all?”

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This also, Mr. Vice-President, is not. Basically he is making a point that the current world, as we live in it, is a very complex one and, therefore, we need a maximum flexibility in our educational system in the way in which we train our students. These students have got to be operating in a rapidly changing environment in a rapidly changing world. It seems to me that we ourselves have to enter into that discussion on what we see the role of the university in Trinidad and Tobago should be. I am sure that Sir Ron's report would be very useful to us as a starting point for that debate.

Before going on to discuss tertiary education, I would just like to make a couple of points about the secondary educational system, because I think that it is difficult to discuss the tertiary educational system without some knowledge of what is going on in the secondary system. Indeed, at the 'A' level there is an overlap in functions. I would not spend a great deal of time on this but I would just like to make two points, one of which I have made repeatedly in this Senate. I think it is worth repeating again because the sort of student who comes from secondary school into university is going to determine what progress will be made at university.

The first point I want to make is with respect to computerization in the schools. Again, I mentioned this repeatedly before and I still think we are not addressing it as aggressively as we ought to. Here is an article from *The Herald* of Tuesday, June 24, 1997. I would not go into the details of the article but I just want to read the headline. It reads:

"There is one computer to every six secondary school children in Scotland."

So that, as the author says, the "IT" generation has finally arrived in Scotland.

I was quite interested to find a number of advertisements for employment using what was termed "IT". Quite frankly, it took me a little while to figure out what "IT" meant—of course, it is information technology. You cannot pick up a newspaper in the United Kingdom now without seeing a number of jobs advertised for a person in "IT". So clearly there is a shortage even there because they have only now got to the stage where they are addressing the problem effectively in their secondary school system.

I have, on more than one occasion in this Senate, referred to the situation in Barbados which has gone to the extent of adopting a policy of one computer to

every 10 kids in secondary school. Incidentally, the deputy principal of the college, Professor Mootoo, gave an address recently to the opening of a new section of CARIFLEX Limited. He made some points about the secondary school system in Trinidad and Tobago in relation to the tertiary system. He said:

“Figures for participation in tertiary education in ACS countries show Bahamas 13%...”

—going on to tertiary education.

“Barbados 21%...”

—before they made the changes in their secondary school.

“Mexico 16%, Trinidad and Tobago 7%.”

Yet we are this financial and technical capital of the Caribbean region.

Mr. Vice-President, I would not say anymore about the secondary school system except to say that when it comes to the ‘A’ level programme, there seems to be a resistance in Trinidad and Tobago to modifications in the ‘A’ level system. For many years now I have been suggesting that the Scottish educational system which has a one-year ‘A’ level and covers five or six subjects instead of the three or four as we do here, is much more suited to our needs. If one looks at the school population I am sure one would find that not more than, perhaps, 10 or 20 per cent of the children who go through ‘A’ level programmes go on to university.

That means that you are structuring an educational system which is really geared to the university entrance and is catering for just a small proportion of the population being educated at that level. Furthermore, if one goes on to university one would find that many of the programmes in the university start at ‘O’ level rather than at ‘A’ level. Many students will study one subject at ‘A’ level but do different subjects when they go to university. So it is not clear that this two-year programme for ‘A’ level education is best suited even for university entrance for which it is geared and, certainly, in my opinion, is not suited to the percentage of those who do not go on to university.

Of course, Mr. Vice-President, I have a hobby horse about the ‘A’ level system which deals with the scholarship exams, which is a whole discussion in itself. Again, it is not that some students do two years at ‘A’ level, some do three and four because they are setting out to win scholarships. It is really in my opinion, an abysmal system to put our bright young people through. Even in the United Kingdom this sacred power of the ‘A’ level is being addressed. Here is a headline

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in the *Guardian Education* supplement for June 24. You will see from these various quotations that I have been recently to the United Kingdom. The headline says:

“It’s Bac to the valleys”

In the United Kingdom they are discussing very actively whether the ‘A’ level exam should be replaced by a baccalaureate. They are calling it an international baccalaureate except that the Welsh have already taken that decision to go that way. There is a Welsh baccalaureate being proposed and implemented, because the Scottish ‘A’ level has a lot in common with the baccalaureate that they are now suggesting should be implemented in the whole of the UK. So, our ‘A’ level is finally about to be axed in favour of a baccalaureate style qualification, with the Dearing report on hold.

1.50 p.m.

This author examines what has set Labour ministers buzzing—the WelshBac. Basically, they are making the same argument that in order to have a sensible educational system which is efficient and not wasteful, one should look to broadening the horizons of students at that level instead of narrow specialization at ‘A’ levels with three or four subjects, which are really very steady over two years indepth, but they should have a more general education to allow both arts and sciences to be given to them at that level. So, there is some significance to what we do, certainly at the higher levels, in the secondary school system for the university.

Now, Mr. Vice-President, going on to the university system as a tertiary education system as we now have it, we have on the one hand the University of the West Indies which I think, as far as I am concerned, has been doing a reasonably good job. One can make comments and criticisms on various aspects of the way the university operates but, by and large, I think it has served our purpose reasonably well. Of course, we must always be looking to see how we can improve and change, and make more flexible the system of university education. One of the problems with the University of the West Indies is that it is the only institution of its kind in the Caribbean and, so, we have the situation where it turns out that the population and the country as a whole want it to be all things to all men, and that is an extremely difficult thing for it to be.

In many countries you have more than one university so you have different approaches to the training at tertiary level and this allows a degree of specialization within the whole system. But here we have the situation where the University of

the West Indies is the only official institution offering degrees in Trinidad and Tobago. The Jamaicans have recognized this and they have taken one step further in that they have upgraded, what would be referred to as a polytechnic, CAST (College of Arts, Science and Technology) to be the university in Montego.

Incidentally, Mr. Vice-President, in the United Kingdom two years ago all the institutions which were previously polytechnics were changed into universities. I say “changed” rather than “upgraded” because I do not think they fundamentally changed what they were doing but they viewed what they were doing somewhat differently and in the United Kingdom there are a 101 universities. I suppose when I was a student there, if there were 20 universities that was a lot, there were probably under 20. Mr. Vice-President, if you look at the population of the United Kingdom it is about forty million; 101 universities works out—

Hon. Senator: *(Inaudible)*

Sen. Prof. J. Spence: Sixty million? Sixty million. A hundred and one universities works out at about six hundred thousand persons each. Our population is 1.2 million so the ratio of two universities to 1.2 is quite in order. In the case of Singapore which has 2.4 million, I think there are three universities, and a similar situation in Costa Rica and in other countries. So it is not outside the norm for a population of 1.2 million people to have two universities. It is a good ratio if one were having a reasonable level of persons trained in tertiary education.

One of the problems is that we have a number of tertiary level institutions and we looked at this situation quite intensively in 1977 when there was a white paper on NIHERST. It really was on research, science and technology and university education. In that white paper we recognized that there were a number of institutions operating at tertiary level in Trinidad and Tobago which, because they were operating as separate isolated entities, were inefficient in the way in which the resources were used, and each of them was below critical mass—and that I still think is, because the situation has not changed in my opinion between 1977 and now. There is John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, there is San Fernando Technical Institute, there is Cipriani Labour College. A number of new ones have been added, most of them under the wing of NIHERST, they call it the language school, there is a College of Health Sciences and so forth, that is on. That is on the teaching side.

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In addition to that, what has happened in Trinidad and Tobago now is that a number of private institutions are developing for tertiary level training. This is another aspect of the situation that needs to be addressed very carefully, because as yet we have no system of insuring that the quality of these various institutions is such as we would like it to be, and many of them now want to offer degrees.

I think one which is knocking at the door very loudly is the Caribbean Union College in the Maracas Valley that does offer degrees from a university outside. There are a number of other institutions that offer, by way of correspondence or by way of licensing or franchising, and I think more of these degrees from abroad are being discussed and proposed. I might say that this way of doing it also involves—the Minister of Finance should take note—some drainage of foreign exchange because we have to pay for these franchises and for the various services that the universities provide.

On the research side as opposed to the teaching side, we also have a similar fragmentation of institutions in Trinidad and Tobago which was recognized in 1977, which still exists today. So that we have the Institute of Marine Affairs, the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute, we have the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources with a very substantial research arm, perhaps the most expensive of the lot, some \$20 to \$30 million dollars a year being spent on that sector. We have the Bureau of Standards and others. And, again, fragmentation and duplication of resources such as library, equipment and medical equipment and the like.

As I have stressed on a number of occasions, more important still is the leadership, the management of this research system. One thing we have not done successfully in Trinidad and Tobago, it is not difficult to demonstrate, is to manage our research institutes effectively. This really is not surprising because research management is not an easy task to perform. I have looked at institutions in the United Kingdom, mainly agricultural research institutions, and seen their fortunes rise and fall and wane with the level of leadership. It is quite well known and discussed among scientists what is happening to a particular institute because of the leadership that it has.

So, because it is not easy to find research managers, the smaller the population that you have, the fewer persons are available by way of suitable competence, not just training but native capability. So, if you have your research institutions split up into a number of small units, it means you have to find good

research managers for each of these and whereas one person can manage an institution of 500 persons, it may take the same skills to manage an institution of 50 persons. The problem arises, if you split them up, of trying to find these effective managers. So, you have on the teaching side and the research side.

Of course, the same thing is true of a teaching institution. Any look at universities here and abroad will show that they have succeeded to a greater or lesser degree in relation to the leadership they have within the institutions. Again, if you split your teaching institutions up into small units, you have the difficulty of trying to find effective leadership in them all. Then, when you have your academic systems, you have to maintain your quality in the various institutions. Again, it is more difficult to do so in a small institution because the number of persons that you have to monitor the system is much fewer. If you pool these into a larger pool and you are able then to develop internally the academic quality and monitor it as you have, for example, in the University of the West Indies, you have a fairly sizeable number even with one campus but here you have the advantage of being able to pool the resources among the three campuses when it comes to quality management.

Again, for that reason, both for quality and for utilization of leadership qualities, the amalgamation of these various institutions into a single one, I think, has a great deal to commend it. That does not mean that you have to have the institution on one single site. It well can be that in a single country, as indeed in the United Kingdom, the University of London has many campuses. To give one example, the University of Wales has a number of campuses.

2.00 p.m.

There is no reason the technical university of Trinidad and Tobago, if we agree to go in that direction, should not have more than one campus. San Fernando Technical Institute can still remain as a campus of that university, or John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, and the like.

On that score, I would suggest that it is important that we develop a campus in Tobago. Now, clearly, there is need for that sort of development to take place in Tobago. The obvious choice, in my opinion, for a campus there, would be for tourism or hotel catering. Indeed, this is what we have done with the University of the West Indies. The first campus to develop in the Bahamas is tourism management. That is a degree that is taught in the Bahamas. The same thing, I think, would apply to Tobago.

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Personally, if I had my choice, I would also move the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF)—I did not mention ECIAF when I was talking about the teaching institutions. Of course, that is another one, at tertiary level. I would put a campus of ECIAF in Tobago, even perhaps have the headquarters there and have a smaller campus in Trinidad.

Then you would start getting a critical mass if you had hotel catering, agriculture and perhaps the Institute of Marine Affairs should have a branch in Tobago. Why should the headquarters not be there? You would now have a critical mass of persons and you can start thinking about how you would structure that campus in Tobago.

I think there is a lot to be said for having an integrated system but having a dispersed set of campuses. When it comes to the academic systems, clearly, the persons from these various institutions would meet as regularly as it is necessary to run the system and there would be interchange between the staff of the various institutions, moving from one to the other, which, clearly, would be to the benefit of their development, as teachers or as researchers.

It seems to me that although we have talked about it for some 20 years now, we have not really made the move forward that we might have done, if we had been serious about our intent. The problem in Trinidad and Tobago is that we insist upon doing reports, preparing plans and then not implementing them. We had a task force on education three or four years ago. It would be interesting to find out how many of those recommendations have actually been implemented in the year since the report was first submitted. It is so, time and time again.

We started, I think, during the NAR government, thinking about amalgamating these tertiary level institutions into a community college. That never came about. In the PNM government, when the Minister of Planning and Development was responding to my motion at that time about tertiary education, he spoke about starting a community college. I understand that there is a decision taken by the Cabinet of this Government to have a community college which, it is said, will be based on the community college of the American type.

I am not in favour of amalgamating these institutions to a community college of the American type. I think that here we would have to decide that we are not going to short-change Trinidad and Tobago; that we are going to have a University of Trinidad and Tobago. In the United States, there are many universities which are no greater in quality than we would have if we amalgamated

our existing institutions, the ones that I have mentioned, because the persons who teach in these institutions, basically, I am sure, are quite competent teachers. What they need is the development, the atmosphere and the structure to fulfill their potential as teachers at tertiary level.

I was fortunate to have Metal Industries Company (MIC) allow me to meet with the principals of some of the institutions about a month ago, and certainly I found no resistance to the idea of a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago from those quarters. I think that it certainly is something that we should be looking towards.

What I really want to do is to try to stimulate some discussion on this subject and have some response. In my winding up on the last occasion on another motion, I had to express my disappointment as there was very little response. So, in fact, I had a very short winding up. This time I am trying to make the introduction as short as possible with the hope that there would be these very active responses and then I can, perhaps, expand somewhat more in the winding up.

I have tried to avoid giving my own view as to what the university should be; what role it should play in the society, and so forth, because I think this should come out of our discussion and, perhaps, I would hope to do that to a greater extent in my winding up. I just want to say this, that if we think of the world as it is today, and Trinidad and Tobago as it is today, and if we think we are going to move in the direction that we say we are going to move in, without addressing this issue of the percentage of persons who go into tertiary education—7 per cent as opposed to 51 per cent in developed countries, or as opposed to 21 per cent in Barbados—then let us have another “think” coming, because we would not do it. If we think we are going to do it without looking at our tertiary level institutions as they now stand, again, we are going to have another “think” coming, because these institutions have been as they are for the last 30 or 40 years and we have not made that progress. Clearly, we have to make a serious decision as to how we should go.

I fear that if we go the level of community college, we would still have the situation in Trinidad and Tobago where young people and their parents would want to see their students having university degrees. So what will happen is, we will go to this community college and treat it as a feeding system for the University of the West Indies and we would still leave all the pressures in the University of the West Indies that now exist.

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One of the problems at UWI is that it has to fulfill a regional mandate as well as a national mandate. It has to be an academic institution of excellence and at the same time it has to turn out people who are able to perform on the job in a practical way in a short space of time. We have faced this in the Faculty of Agriculture for many years. We got pressure from the Ministers of Agriculture to prepare students who tomorrow can go out and work as farmers or run agricultural systems. They say we are giving them too much basic science; that they cannot perform because they have been too academic. Yet we feel that we can go into a liberalized world and compete worldwide against countries in which most of their farmers now have university degrees and training to tertiary, or even, perhaps, post graduate level. We think we can do this and compete successfully.

That is not to down-grade the role of farmers and small farmers by any means; that is to say that we live in a world in which the technology is changing rapidly and becoming more complicated. So that if you are growing corn in Trinidad and Tobago, you are competing with a farmer in the United States who is doing square miles of corn in a tractor which he operates by computer; there is nobody sitting in the tractor; it runs from one end to the other, harvesting the corn. That is what you are competing against, price wise.

So if you say you are going to have an open market, as we said we are going to do—you know, I find this difficulty all the time; I have not been as enthusiastic, perhaps, as some of my governmental colleagues of three governments in liberalizing, but we have done it. Yet those persons who have taken us in this direction are not able to see the consequences of what they do with respect to various aspects of our life, an important one being human resource development. In fact, it really should be the other way around; you should delay your liberalization as much as possible.

I remember when I was a very small child in St. Vincent, we used to give a joke about one of the dentists there—the same profession as the hon. Minister—who had a large number of kids and he used to teach them to swim, apparently, by throwing them in at the end of the jetty, and most of them swam. Perhaps that is what we have done; we have jumped in the deep end. But let us at least, once we have jumped in, realize that we have to swim, otherwise we will go under and drown.

I honestly feel that we need seriously to look at our system of tertiary level institutions; those that are financed by the Government and those that are financed

by the private sector. One of the things that naturally arises when we say, go in this direction, is: Where is the money to come from. Clearly, that is a very important aspect. For example, I have said we should computerize all the schools to one in ten. I have calculated that would cost \$150 million.

2.10 p.m.

So, the Government may decide that over the next five years it is going to spend \$30 million per year—because we cannot do it any faster than that anyhow since we have to train the people. Is that too much for us to think of spending to get into the 21st Century?

Mr. Vice-President, the Government may then say, “All right, we have to set up this university”. Of course, if we think of setting it up in terms of building a super structure in which to house all these institutions, surely that would add an additional cost to what it would be trying to do. However, if it is thought to be done from the bottom up, the Government could then say, “We have these institutions, and we can effect savings if we are able to integrate them”, then that is a completely different order of the magnitude of financing resources it would have to spend.

Clearly, there is a financing implication, I have no doubt. Eventually I would say that the thing to do in Trinidad and Tobago, if we really want to move forward, is to have a campus for the university of Trinidad and Tobago, using what was to be the Caroni Racing Complex. What better use for that site on which we have spent so many millions of dollars without getting any value for it? Yes, surely, it would be good to have a new campus with many centralized things which could include administration and new developments taking place, and it is within easy access to south and so forth. That is what we should do.

Mr. Vice-President, of course it is going to cost a lot of money to develop a new campus in Tobago, but that is what we should be doing if we really want to move forward.

I look forward to having responses from Senators on this issue, Mr. Vice-President, and hope to, perhaps, go into greater detail on some of the issues and give my own view more fully than I have done in these introductory remarks.

Once more, I reiterate that we need to integrate our tertiary level institutions and to develop a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago which is complementary to the University of the West Indies, not competitive with it. This

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idea is supported by the present Vice-Chancellor, Sir Allistair McIntyre. Sir Allistair gave a talk on the Eric Williams Memorial Lecture Series some years ago, in which he suggested that, perhaps, exactly this could happen, and that at a national level the institutions should be integrated into one sensible institution. Also, that the University of the West Indies might eventually become a postgraduate school which would give the topping-up to these individual national universities. That is precisely what Sir Allistair recommended—in fact, I quoted from his lecture during my contribution in the last debate on this subject.

Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move.

Seconded by Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny.

Question proposed.

Sen. Cynthia Alfred: Mr. Vice-President, I stand to make my contribution on this Motion which is of great importance. Indeed, a motion of this nature gives an indication that there are persons in this community who are thinking about education in the widest sense and what can be done so that our education system can be resolved into one where everyone can benefit substantially. I commend and congratulate Prof. Spence on this Motion and ask that it be noted that we are pleased to support this Motion. Whatever reservations I have I would deal with later.

However, Mr. Vice-President, it must be borne in mind that some initiative was started some time ago; first in 1977 and later in 1993. In 1977 there was a White Paper on Education Policy which states, on page (vi), in part that:

“This Section also deals with the system of curriculum engineering and development that must be put in place at the different levels of the system...”

I repeat:

“...at the different levels of the system in order to ensure that academics, the expressive arts, technology studies and broad personal and social development concerns are all given appropriate and balanced attention in our learning system.”

I believe that is what Sen. Prof. Spence has in mind; that there should be a balance in our learning system when we speak about tertiary education. Tertiary education in the minds of most persons, I believe, means university education. I submit that tertiary education is more than that; it is further education and should involve technical/vocational as well.

For instance, Mr. Vice-President, when the PNM was in government, the technical/vocational aspect was advocated in its policy. We are pleased to note that some fruit has been borne out of this. Just recently there was the completion of the technical/vocational centre on the compound of the Signal Hill Comprehensive School. That is indicative of the thinking that was had by the previous government which has borne fruit to the extent that we now see this institution in place.

Of course, we have to be careful in our general thinking as to whether we are having education *per se* for the sake of education, or whether, in fact, we are linking it with training programmes. There seems to have been for some time, perhaps, in the minds of those who have put these things together, that there is education, on the one hand, and training programmes on the other. What we need is to have a linkage between education *per se* and training programmes so that when we put both together we would then have what I believe Sen. Prof. Spence has in mind and what all of us would like to see emerge.

Mr. Vice-President, in the same white paper on page (xi), it says:

“(iii) In order to increase participatory decision-making in the system, a phased process of decentralisation based on eight Divisions each with advisory divisional boards with a membership reflecting community interests should be pursued.”

This is very commendable, but I would take it a little further if, in fact, we are looking for linkages for coordinating the system. I suggest that whether it be eight boards or, perhaps, more, representatives should meet at particular times and discuss how the linkages are working in the various areas. In other words, if we have a board in Tobago, North, South and so forth, and each board pursues its own system of training without consultation or coordination with the other boards, then we would end up in the same situation we are in now; that is, with many institutes of learning, but each with its own particular programme, trying in its own way to preserve and protect its own turf. So, if we do have different boards in the various areas, there ought to be fairly regular meetings of representatives of these boards where they will discuss the overall programme so that the linkage will then be established.

2.20 p.m.

On page 69, of the same paper under 3.35.3 it says and I quote:

“In order to maximise the efforts made at the secondary level, further education should be organized in such a way that it facilitates personal and

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career development. We emphasize the need for more precise articulation between programmes in...and the further education sector as a whole and secondary and other tertiary level programmes.”

In other words, this is just re-emphasizing that the education system—first, one starts at the pre-school stage. We take our children right through to the higher level but there must be some sort of coordinating process where one monitors, from the time a child goes into pre-school, that progress. The system must be so structured that there is a proper follow-through of the educational systems that are in place and not have systems where each one is doing his or her own thing and there is no coordination.

On page 69, under 3.35.4, I quote:

“We also must re-emphasise the importance of a sound general education for the development of vocational/technological skills training in the further education sector. Ideally, that general education should be provided in the secondary school.”

Mr. Vice-President, I re-emphasize the importance of treating with the technical/vocational area as part of further education and not just having it regarded as something separate and distinct. If we continue to regard technical and vocational training as distinct from tertiary or further education, we would be making a grave mistake because, students who are trained in the technical/vocational area are, in fact, students who come from secondary schools and who then go on to another level. If we continue to regard training in the technical and vocational area as something separate and distinct, and not further education, we will not have what I believe Sen. Prof. Spence has in mind, a linkage, so there is a general picture of where we have started and where we are going.

On page 70, under 3.36.0, and very important, I quote:

“Some of the institutions delivering...”

—like the technical/vocational programmes—

“...the two Technical Institutes and the Trinidad & Tobago Hospitality Institute, also offer programmes at a Sub-Sector I level. Agricultural Technology to which CXC was the required admission standard, attests to a growing recognition of the need for greater flexibility in the definition of tertiary to encompass those national institutions that play a major role in the preparation of our middle level technical and managerial personnel.”

That just re-emphasizes the point that persons who are trained, whether it is in agriculture or whatever technical/vocational area, that the training for these persons must be regarded as training of a higher educational nature and not just technical/vocational training.

On page 79 under 3.45.8, I quote:

“There should be a major thrust in the preparation and training of teachers in the areas of Art and Craft, Physical Education, Drama, Dance, Music and Technology Studies if the expressive arts and creative and imaginative talents of our nation are to flourish.”

That particular section is one I endorse 100 per cent. Having been a practitioner in the field of the arts for most of my life, I believe it is important that this school for the arts should be established in such a way that it will be part of the curriculum, not just something separate, distinct and apart. What we have recognized is that there is an abundance of talent in Trinidad and Tobago in the arts and that abundance of talent perhaps, has not been researched or brought to the fore as it should. There are certain artistic expressions, for instance, the Tobago Heritage Festival, the National Drama Festival, Music Festival and so forth.

I believe the time has come where there should be established this institution for the arts—and if I may be so bold as to suggest taking into consideration the great amount of talent existing in Tobago in respect of the arts, particularly the dramatic arts and the oral expressions, that such an institution be centred in Tobago.

I spoke to some educators in Tobago and I would also like to express one or two concerns that we have. It was mooted at some time that there will be a community college established in Tobago, perhaps along the same lines as obtains in the United States. However, it will be instructive to know what is the present position. I inform this honourable Senate that in order to hold our own in Tobago—and as I say that, let me lay it on the table that in spite of what may be said at times, when one lives in Tobago, one is disadvantaged to a great extent simply by the fact that one has to leave Tobago, find accommodation in Trinidad and pay for that accommodation and so forth, whereas, if one lives in Trinidad it makes it so much easier. There is the UWIDITE programme in Tobago. We also have the NIHERST programme which was started recently. These programmes are designed to facilitate persons who would wish to participate so that they do not necessarily have to come to Trinidad to go to the University of the West Indies or attend NIHERST in Trinidad.

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[SEN. ALFRED]

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We would like to see established—and Sen. Prof. Spence mentioned this—a campus in Tobago of the same standing that perhaps one would have in Trinidad or in Jamaica.

2.30 p.m.

More than having the campus, we would like to see some linkage with perhaps an American university. I make this point because Dr. Murray, a former parliamentarian is pursuing some sort of linkage with the Morgan State University in American with what could be a campus in Tobago. It would not be an institution for a campus for the sake of having a campus, but we see where this could be linked to the overall tourism thrust. It would appear that some universities in America find that it is of greater advantage to have campuses overseas. More than that, persons from the developed countries find it cheaper because of the exchange rate, to attend a university in one of the Caribbean islands.

There has been discussion in various areas on the type of campus to be established in Tobago. Perhaps there could be a revision of what we had in mind originally. Certainly, it would be good for this Government to take a definite look at establishing some sort of campus in Tobago, so that on one hand, Tobagonians would not have the hardship of coming to Trinidad to enjoy courses which could be done in Tobago, and on the other hand, with the great accent on tourism in Tobago, the social and economic factors involved could be fully addressed.

Having said that, in winding up, I reiterate that I am not sure that we have reached the point in our thinking of whether we would consider separate universities in Trinidad and Tobago. We support the motion in principle. We feel that we have come to the stage of our existence where the entire educational system must be looked at and make the words, “tertiary education” mean not just education related to a university, but education that goes beyond the secondary schools.

I commend Sen. Prof. Spence for his thinking and perhaps with one or two adjustments, in general, we support the intention of the Motion.

Thank you.

Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny: Mr. Vice-President, this Motion of Sen. Prof. Spence is of critical importance to the future of the country. I think we want a full debate on it. We would like to hear more from the Government side. Obviously, we would hear from the Minister, but this subject matter is of such great

importance to this country, that we must ensure that we have a deep, thorough and continuous debate and not one which goes on over six months.

When I joined the University of the West Indies in November 1963, one of the questions asked was: What are the manpower needs of Trinidad and Tobago? I took early retirement from the University of the West Indies in 1990, and as I was leaving the question was still being debated. I dare say that in 2015, the question would continue to be debated.

Sen. Mohammed: The year, 2020.

Sen. Prof. J. Kenny: I trust that somebody caught what I was saying.

I will deal with a number of topics, but before I get on to one of the major concerns which may seem strange when we are dealing with tertiary education, one of the major concerns is not tertiary education, but primary education. I will come back to that because I think I have a solution for the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism and Sen. Prof. Spence.

Firstly, I will deal with tertiary institutions which come in all sizes, flavours and wide ranges of standards. Many of them are concerned with education in the broadest sense and in research. There are comparatively few tertiary institutions involved in research in its conventional sense for the size of the Caricom community. Some are technical/advisory like the forensic centre or the Institute of Marine Affairs. Many of our tertiary institutions are concerned with job training and there is a stigma attached to that. When people think of vocational training they tend to think about it for the non-achievers. Try to get a good plumber today and you will be looking for a graduate from John Donaldson Technical Institute.

Tertiary institutions also offer degrees, certificates and diplomas. The degree seems to sit above the rest of them. I will come back to degrees. Some of these institutions are concerned with technological training, but all seek to find some means of putting a seal of approval on the quality of what they offer. The formula used for this is extremely varied.

Let us examine a few trends in tertiary education. All top tertiary education institutions whether universities or institutes of technology have a history that they are born; they grow to a certain size, then bud offsprings. The University of the West Indies is the offspring of the University of London. Initially, it was a college. Most of the West African universities are an offspring of the University of London. Some have gone adrift. One of the universities I attended, the University of

Toronto at one time had an agricultural college called OAC attached to it at Guelph. That is now a full fledged university.

Similarly, there was a campus in Scarborough, East Toronto which became York College. It is now York University. When all institutions develop they bud off institutions. One of our tragedies is that the University of the West Indies does not seem to have spawned any offspring. It is remote from our other tertiary institutions in the country and it seems to sit in a sort of isolation. This is one of the negative comments I would make about it.

2.40 p.m.

One of the phenomena in Trinidad and Tobago which has become very prominent in the past decade or so, is the birth of tertiary institutions that are privately financed offering 'A' level courses, and in parallel with this now, diploma courses. Recently one would see university degrees being offered by reputable institutions such as that in St. Augustine—not the university. One can now do a degree in accounting and an MBA at Brunel University, which is one of the polytechnics of the University of London where one did external degrees and it is now a university in its own right.

One now sees the Heriot-Watt being advertised, this is an old university in Edinburgh, which offers degree courses in Trinidad, and Sen. Spence referred to the Caribbean Union College which is now offering a full degree—Andrews University degree—but they are aiming towards their own degrees. There is no doubt about it that we are on our way to having a range of tertiary institutions offering degrees right up to first degrees, and herein lies the problem and concern of Sen. Prof. Spence.

All institutions are now paying ones, whether one is attending the University of the West Indies, and there are students who complain about a fee of \$10,000 which, of course, is chicken feed compared to what one will pay if one enters a North American University. All individuals who go to these universities for diplomas, training courses or university degrees will be paying, or at least their parents would. Herein is one of the major concerns because there is such a proliferation of these institutions, that for the first time we are starting to wonder whether it is right, or if the people are getting value for their money. When one puts out \$10,000 or whatever, is that institution going to last until the next term, what protection does the individual have? There is no doubt there are many people out there who are desperate for training and personal advancement, and, in part,

the Motion asks the Government to watch this matter very carefully to see that its citizens are not disadvantaged in anyway.

Mr. Vice-President, some of us belong to that generation when education was really a degree in medicine, law, or perhaps dentistry, and doing degrees in other subjects where one got a scholarship and went off and did history. The degreed person was really a pinnacle, highly respected and so forth and the diploma was a bit beneath one's dignity. In the old days, teachers were trained at the Government Training College for teachers and they came out fully equipped to teach right up to Higher School Certificate, and then we started giving persons university degrees and sent them out to teach without any training whatsoever in teaching. Things have been corrected in the past few years, but I want to emphasize that there is this perception that persons with degrees are the pinnacle of intellectual achievement. I assure you that there are many persons with degrees who have come to the end of their usefulness as independent thinkers. I mention this because the degree means so much that persons go to great trouble to acquire them.

Can one imagine a reputable journal such as the *Economist* having on its back pages, in its classified advertisement. "Win a BA, MBA, PhD without attendance, use your life experience to get a PhD." I think that everyone here has had enough experience to have one of these degrees and these "universities" which are seen in the international magazines—indeed someone who actually failed his PhD at the UWI and is no longer with us—in fact, he got a degree from Pacific Western for his life experience. There is this pressure internationally which one sees in all the advertisements in international journals because persons feel when one has this piece of paper saying PhD, one has some competence.

There are a number of persons who had these degrees or certificates who ended up being advisors. In fact, not so long ago one eminent UNDP advisor who is paid large sums of money and who has one of these degrees from Walden University ended up that way. So the point I am making is that we must somehow get across to the community that a university degree is not the be all and end all. We should be thinking in terms of our manpower needs. Do we need to turn out many science graduates who take two years before they can find a job, they teach, but they do not really want to do so, and two years later they get a job baby-sitting, keeping discipline in the class and not imparting anything. We must somehow try to identify the real need in the society and see if the emphasis in tertiary training cannot be shifted into these areas.

It is inevitable that I speak of the University of the West Indies. Sen. Prof. Spence is rather kinder to the institution than I am likely to be. I have a great attachment to the institution, not a professional one now, because it has been made quite clear that times have changed and there is a new dispensation now.

Hon. Senator: No extensions.

Sen. Prof. J. Kenny: I did not ask for an extension, I took early retirement. I knew my time had arrived and I was no longer useful to the institution, I thought I would be of more use to the society.

When one thinks of tertiary education, be it the university, technical or otherwise, one really ought to ask some questions. When we talk about the University of the West Indies which is the regional institution, the first question one asks is: Why do we have a regional one as opposed to a national one?

2.50 p.m.

There are very powerful arguments for having a regional institution. First of all, the regional institution avoids duplication. In other words, one is more efficient because one does not duplicate.

Secondly, in a comparatively small society, we have a limited intellectual pool well suited to the sort of things that go on in research in universities and one has a regional institution so as to integrate the regional pool of minds.

Thirdly, the reason for having a regional institution is that we all come from the same history; we are all English-speaking and with a regional institution one could take the young post-adolescent minds and move them through the region.

This is what the University of the West Indies was like in the 1950s and 1960s. The numbers of persons who were leaders in society—I remember Lennox Ballah who was Director of the Institute of Marine Affairs saying that he and “PJ”, that is Patterson, were in the same class and they lived in the same hall. So in that period there were many people who had gone through university education and they were bound together by the university education.

The fact is, however, the University of the West Indies has duplicated every faculty, except agriculture and engineering. This means that the unit costs are greater; it means that we have a limited pool which has been spread over three countries. If one examines the statistics for the University of the West Indies as well, one will see that 90 per cent of the student body at St. Augustine Campus is Trinidadians and Tobagonians. There are a few Jamaicans doing agriculture and

engineering. If one goes to Jamaica, one would see exactly the same thing, 90 per cent Jamaicans. In other words, the ideal of this regional institution of the late 1940s and through the 1950s has disappeared into what is three educationally separate units. What links them is a bureaucracy.

At the university it is more difficult to move for academic reasons than it is to move for administrative reasons. Administrators fill the planes and go backward and forward, but if one has a skill in one campus to move from that campus to another one is almost impossible.

Our history in the university, is a university of London College, then to an independent university in 1962, and then the Colleges of Arts and Science of 1963 established, unfortunately, at the break-up of the Federation. That was a political decision, but once it was taken, we started down that slope. We cannot just have a College of Arts and Science; we want full fledged degrees and this made demands on the society from the taxes of the various countries.

What has evolved now is something which has been brought about by the regional governments. I cannot remember the exact date, but just a few years ago, in the early 1990s, there was a commission on governance of the university. This was forced on the university by the Ministers of Education and the Heads of Governments. The university was asked to review what it was doing because there were major complaints from within the university about the way in which it was run—the committee system—and the way in which a small clique of people would continue to influence events in the university. This led to the commission on governance. Many people were invited to submit views on the future of the university and I, among others, made a written submission. The commission on governance did its work and came up with a new proposal on how the university would be operated in the future. The present structure is three so-called independent campuses and the university centre.

Yesterday, I spoke to the University of the West Indies' bursar about the costs of the institution and he told me that the annual budget for the St. Augustine Campus is \$132 million per year. This is for a student body of over 6,000. I also asked him about the centre's budget. I asked him if that information was classified or restricted in any way and he said: "Well, in a sort of way, yes, because it is very complicated the way in which one determines what the central costs of the university are."

The centre which is in Barbados, costs \$45 million per year, when multiplied by three, comes to a total of \$140 million. Is my arithmetic correct?

Hon. Senator: Approximately.

Sen. Prof. J. Kenny: As I said, Mr. Vice-President, it costs Barbados \$45 million per year to run the centre of the university. I do not wish to suggest that Barbados \$45 million per year is devoted to a bureaucracy that is flying in aeroplanes backward and forward, pushing paper. Let me make it quite clear that the centre has regional responsibilities. For example, the Seismic Research Unit is part of the centre; the continuing studies at the university is also part of the centre because there are continuing studies in all the islands; education is part of the centre; management audit is part of the centre. I think the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) is also part of the centre; then, of course, there is the bureaucracy, including a pro vice-chancellor for research, which apparently is located in St. Augustine.

I mention these figures, Mr. Vice-President, to show that when we talk about the university we are really dealing with two different responsibilities. The matter to which Sen. Prof. Spence referred was the regional part of it; these common things in the region, and then what is purely a local campus matter. I think that this Government and other governments must start thinking in terms of where it is heading with the university.

I am glad to see that Sir Allistair thinks of the University of the West Indies as being a post-graduate institution. That has been my view all along. That is what I told the commission on governance, that one wants to have a very small university, entirely post-graduate and pay international salaries to get the best minds into the system. One of the problems that the university has encountered over the years is that it is no longer competitive. It will advertise for professors and the only ones it will get are the ones who happen to be here already, who have connections here. The salaries do not and cannot compete.

An ordinary professorship in an American University or in the state universities is about US \$60,000 per year. At a college one would get this type of salary. In a university in Britain, professorial appointments are now about £45,000 per year, and in the top universities it could be about £50,000 to £60,000 per year and so forth.

What has happened in the university over the years is that we have grown inwards. Originally, the salaries were competitive. When I was recruited, the salary

I had was not very great at the time but it was as good as anything in the British system.

3.00 p.m.

Now we are training our people, having them do higher degrees and we are recruiting our products into our system. This is unhealthy. Herein lies one of the problems, because if we continue this way we would never have the top minds to do the top quality research in the region. We would just have the pedestrian stuff. Many years ago, the late Sir Arthur Lewis made the statement that the University of the West Indies was not about creating highly paid jobs to mediocre West Indians, it was about being an international institution.

Mr. Vice-President, I hope the Minister of Finance would listen carefully to what I have to say because it is in response to what Sen. Spence mentioned. At the start of my contribution, I emphasized that I was not as concerned about tertiary institutions as I was with primary. Not so long ago, the hon. Minister of Planning and Development stated in public, that this Government was dealing with its arrears to the university. He gave the figure of \$300 million that was owing to the University of the West Indies and I find it very difficult to understand how there could be arrears of \$300 million and yet the university has been in continuous expansion during the past two decades. The student numbers, in my time, have quadrupled, but in the last decade the student numbers at the University of the West Indies in St. Augustine have almost doubled. That is when the arrears of \$300 million have been accumulated.

Mr. Vice-President, I suggest that the Minister of Finance freeze these arrears for the next 15 or 20 years and take that \$300 million and put it into primary education. The university is obviously able to manage. I do not want to speak about my colleagues here, but the last salary increase they got a whopping regional allowance. All of a sudden these Trinidadians become regional and they get a 30 per cent salary increase.

Clearly, the institution has been growing. If the institution has been growing and producing larger and larger numbers of graduates who cannot find jobs, then, perhaps, we could just have a moratorium where the university would forgive the Minister of Finance this debt and the Minister of Finance would now put in \$50 million a year into computerization of primary schools, and upgrading of plant and equipment for the next five or six years. So these are my comments. I would like to leave the university for the time being—obviously, I cannot return to it, but my views on it would continue to be strong and unchanged.

Let us look at some of these other tertiary institutions. Sen. Prof. Spence referred to research in agriculture which is about \$30 million a year; CARIRI is about \$10 million a year; and the Institute of Marine Affairs is about \$7 million a year and you could add the Sugarcane Feed Centre and a few other places. In the public sector, in the scientific civil service, we are probably talking in terms of \$50, \$60 or \$70 million dollars a year in research. When one is involved in research there are certain expectations of the institution. One expects to see not only the results of the research itself, but the application of this research to the welfare of the country.

Herein lies one of the problems that I encounter within my own discipline. There is an awful lot of fisheries research going on in the country, yet the fish stocks have apparently collapsed. For almost 50 years there has been aquaculture research in this country. There are four institutions doing aquaculture research, namely: the University of the West Indies, the Fisheries Division, the Institute of Marine Affairs and the Sugarcane Feed Centre and today there is still no commercial aquaculture and these are research institutions. Some of them have educational functions. My point here is that if we are spending this kind of money year after year and there are no results from it, is this not an argument for what Sen. Prof. Spence is saying, that is, to look at our tertiary institution, do a deep critical review and then do what is necessary; use the guillotine? This is what happens in tertiary institutions in Europe and North America. When the institution does not produce, you cut back on it and when it produces, you support it. This, I think, is the other aspect of the Motion on tertiary institutions. There is a need for deep and critical review of performance on a regular basis and with this continuing evaluation on what is happening, shifting emphasis in relation to the real needs of the country.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

The Minister of Education (Dr. The Hon. Adesh Nanan): Mr. Vice-President, I rise to speak on the Motion before this honourable Senate. This Motion is timely because it runs concurrent with this Government's vision and philosophy for education as we prepare for the 21st Century.

Let me congratulate Sen. Prof. Spence for allowing the Ministry of Education and the Government another opportunity to sensitize, not only this Senate, but by extension, the national community, of the reorganization of the entire education system from pre-primary to the tertiary level in terms of being relevant and futuristic.

In the 21st Century, the quality of a country's human resource would determine its ability to compete in international markets and assure the well-being of its citizens. Human resource development is the key to economic development and education and training are inextricably woven with human resource development. While primary schooling provides the foundation for later learning and tends to have the widest reach, other levels are needed to build on those foundations.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, in some countries the crucial bottleneck may be quality secondary education especially in mathematics and science, whilst in others the priority need is to concentrate on training, technical and vocational cadres. In the international community, higher education is synonymous with tertiary education. The terms higher education and tertiary education are used interchangeably. Higher or tertiary education is now deemed to start after successful completion of five years of secondary schooling instead of the traditional seven. Tertiary education then is post-secondary education.

Nevertheless, often for purposes of argument or clarity in discussion, the distinction is made between university level and non-university level tertiary institutions, or tertiary level institutions (TLIs), as they are familiarly known. In this regard, 'A' levels are considered post-secondary or tertiary education, although they may be offered in a secondary school setting. For 1996 at the Ministry of Education, there were 3,700 places in Lower Six. In September 1997, approximately 3,900 places would be provided for Lower Six students.

Non-university tertiary level institutions developed rapidly because they were more responsive to social demand than the universities. They were more vocationally, technically and technologically oriented than universities, served the needs of mature and part-time students and could concentrate on teaching rather than research. In response to demand, both from employers and from the individual students seeking personal or professional growth on new job opportunities, TLIs have grown rapidly in the last two decades. They began to offer professionally related degrees in areas not traditionally found in the universities. Programmes for specific employment areas, for example, in business studies management and computer science increased dramatically.

Mr. Vice-President, Trinidad and Tobago's rate of participation in the tertiary level education compares unfavourably with the following ACS countries, for

example; the Bahamas 13.7 per cent, Barbados 21 per cent, Colombia 13 per cent, Mexico 16 per cent, Panama 25.9 per cent and Venezuela 26.4 per cent. At the recently concluded Caricom Summit, the Heads of Government endorsed that by the year 2005, 15 per cent of the secondary school cohort would have access to tertiary education. This realism filters down and permeates all levels from pre-primary, primary and secondary through tertiary.

This year, 1997, the Ministry of Education, with the assistance of a World Bank loan, is focussing on early childhood programmes. Of the 150 existing early childhood care and education centres, there will be 50 of these existing centres—10 per year—for upgrading. Fifty new early childhood care and education centres will be built in the next five years, 10 per year. Coupled with this thrust into early childhood education is a strong foundation in terms of instructional materials; a new harmonized curriculum has been put in place, furniture and equipment are being provided to all early childhood care and education centres and teacher training is ongoing.

You may ask: Why is this expenditure being placed in this particular area, early childhood care and education? Neurological research has shown that with this particular age group, the preschoolers, there is plasticity of the child's brain at this age and there is less expenditure on remediation, so this particular emphasis will pay off in the long run. So this Government is capitalizing on this particular age group to focus and strengthen, from the base, the entire education system. Recently, a national council for early childhood care and education has been put in place. That will be responsible for the coordination of the entire early childhood care and education programme.

Mr. Vice-President, I now turn my attention to the primary school environment, of which we have heard so much from Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny in terms of focus on primary school education. Over the next five years, there will be greater access to primary education. There will be 15 new primary schools built, there will be 15 replacement primary schools and there will be renovations and additions to 16 existing primary schools. Also aligned with this particular construction programme of building primary schools, is curriculum reform. We have already witnessed, in the language arts area, a number of workshops were held to strengthen this particular delivery in language arts to the primary school population. Soon there will be focus on mathematics and a number of workshops are being planned.

Mr. Vice-President, I now turn to the area of testing and reform, and I speak of the concept of readiness. The Ministry of Education is placing heavy emphasis on this in terms of getting the primary school population ready to take the Common Entrance Examination when, having been tested, using the national testing system, they are deemed ready. The Ministry of Education is soon to go out for public consultation on this particular area of testing and reform and the concept of readiness.

Also important in this particular scenario is the concept of management of the primary schools. Starting in September 1997, there will be a bachelor of education programme for senior teachers, vice-principals and principals in our primary schools. This is an important and welcome component, that is management for these senior teachers, vice-principals and principals.

We have heard so much about information technology. Again, with the assistance of the World Bank, this Government will be able to introduce, over the next five years, 300 computers to act as teaching aids.

Also focussing on the primary school population in terms of making textbooks affordable and available, we have just recently seen history in the making in terms of the standardization of primary school textbooks. Soon we will see, coupled with the standardization of primary school textbooks, the purchase of language textbooks for needy primary school students. Besides being directed towards that particular textbook environment, the Ministry of Education is also focussing on the purchase of library books for primary schools.

3.20 p.m.

Sen. Mohammed: A point of clarification. The hon. Minister mentioned the standardization of textbooks, is he in a position to indicate to us what is the selection process or the criteria being used for textbooks that would eventually be selected?

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. Vice-President, the selection criteria has been explained in Parliament and published for the entire population, in terms of what books—

Sen. Mark: Make a copy and give her.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: I would make a copy available to the hon. Senator at her convenience.

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We have harmonized the entire education system in the primary schools and we are also looking at the primary school environment in terms of what has resulted from this important CARICOM Heads of Government Conference in Montego Bay. The Ministry of Education is now using the working document from that particular conference, especially on education and human resource development, as a blue print for how we are going to focus the education system as we move into the 21st Century.

I make reference to national implementation in terms of what is being recommended as an immediate action plan. I spoke of early childhood education and by the year 2000 it is hoped to achieve 75 per cent enrollment of the pre-primary age cohort—three to five years—and to work assiduously to lift the quality of programmes delivered in centres run by private and government assisted organizations.

By the year 2000 primary education would improve on the levels of achievement in the language arts about which Sen. Alfred enquired, especially reading and mathematics. In the Common Entrance Examination in the year 2000, at least 65 per cent of the students would score more than 50 per cent of the required marks in English and Mathematics. In addition, the immediate action plan would require added focus on secondary education.

At the conference the heads agreed to the following specific measures and I quote from this particular document:

- " (i) 15 per cent enrollment of the post-secondary age cohort in tertiary level education by the year 2005, with annual output targets to be set in relation to this objective;
- (ii) universal quality secondary education be targeted for the year 2005 with attendant annual targets set;
- (iii) the introduction of programmes for achieving appropriate levels of competence in Spanish and other languages among secondary and post-secondary graduates with the targets to be achieved set and programmes designed by 1998;
- (iv) the identification by June 1998 of desirable learning outcomes for the language units, especially reading, and mathematics at different grades of the primary school, and thereafter ensure that they are achieved through regular in-service teacher education workshops and careful monitoring of progress;"

In reference to the national implementation, by September in the year 2000, approximately 22,000 students should be admitted in the Form I classes of secondary schools. This measure will seek to establish a parity of esteem among more secondary schools and reduce regional inequities in the transition from primary to secondary schools.

Mr. Vice-President, increasing access to secondary education would be achieved by construction of four secondary schools in the next five years, in terms of the number of available secondary school places, focussing on the national implementation and recommended immediate action plan.

I now turn your attention to information technology and what has been achieved in the year 1997. Fifty-four secondary schools have been provided with computer labs. Teachers are undergoing computer training and this is with the whole thrust of computer literacy and to enhance the computer skills of teachers and in the future, students.

We have also seen in 1997, the beginning of permanent appointments for temporary teachers—a long outstanding area of concern. In Tobago in 1997, we are going to see the conversion of three and five-year schools into five and seven-year schools respectively. The Scarborough Junior Secondary, now a five-year school, would be called Scarborough Secondary, and the Signal Hill Senior Comprehensive School, Signal Hill Secondary, a seven-year school.

The Ministry of Education is also working assiduously to convert schools in Trinidad and Tobago to five-year schools from three-year schools and those discussions are ongoing. In terms of achieving universal quality secondary education, coming out from what the Heads of Government in CARICOM endorsed, preliminary discussions with Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) are taking place for a loan to assist delivery of secondary education. The main purpose is to de-shift the junior secondary schools.

Not forgetting, of course, the textbook situation in the secondary schools, soon a committee would start the process to standardize secondary school book lists, making textbooks more affordable and available at secondary schools. Presently, through the association of the Ministry of Education and Roytec there is a pilot programme incorporating 12 secondary schools and a network being built up in terms of the spread of information technology. The programme is called "Edulink Trinidad and Tobago". I am sure, building on the computer labs that we have placed in secondary schools, we are going to expand this particular programme of

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12 schools to incorporate as many secondary schools as possible. We invite all private sector corporations to make our secondary schools comparative—in terms of Internet access—with those in developing countries.

Curriculum reform is ongoing to steer the course for an individual to be multilingual, functionally numerate, literate and computer skilled. Our education system is being redesigned to produce creative and futuristic thinkers. This was endorsed by the Heads of Governments as the ideal Caribbean person. I would now read into the record a speech by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok-Tong, at the opening of the Seventh International Conference on Thinking on Monday, June 2, at the Suntec City Convention Centre Ballroom.

3.30 p.m.

“A nation's wealth in the 21st century will depend on the capacity of its people to learn. Their imagination, their ability to seek new technologies and ideas, and to apply them in everything they do will be the key source of economic growth. Their collective capacity to learn will determine the well-being of a nation.

We know three things about the future. First, it will be an intensely global future, with diminishing barriers to the flow of goods, services and information. Competition between cities, countries, sub-regions and regions will be intense. No country or region will have permanent advantages. There is no guarantee that it will always retain its competitive edge.

Second, knowledge and innovation will be absolutely critical. The recent victory of the computer Deep Blue over chess champion Gary Kasparov was not a triumph of machine over man but the triumph of human innovation, of organised human mastery of technology. Companies and nations which organise themselves to generate, share and apply new technologies and ideas more quickly than others will, like the early bird, catch the worm.

The third defining feature of the future is that it will be one of change, and increasingly rapid change. It would be change as a permanent state, not change as a transition to some known, final stage. Change will be unpredictable but it will affect everything we do at work, in society and at home.”

Sen. Alfred: Mr. Vice-President, before the Minister takes his seat, I would like to ask him a question, please. The Minister mentioned something about Spanish in secondary schools. I would just like that part clarified please, if the Minister could just repeat, perhaps if not immediately, when he is finished.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. Vice-President, for clarification, the conference agreed to the introduction of programmes for achieving appropriate levels of competence in Spanish and other languages among secondary and post-secondary graduates with the targets to be achieved set in programmes designed by 1998.

Sen. Alfred: I would just like to know if the Minister is aware that in November 1994, at the 8th Conference of Ministers of Culture and other persons involved in culture, representatives came from both the Spanish and English-speaking Caribbean. It was highly advanced that Spanish should be taught from primary school level, the reason being that the English-speaking Caribbean and our Spanish neighbours are so close and yet there is this barrier. One of the reasons it was felt that there should be closer integration between the English and Spanish-speaking people in order to achieve this was to have Spanish being taught from primary school level.

Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan: Mr. Vice-President, from 1998, Spanish would be introduced into the primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Vice-President, this Government in its short-term plans has launched operation, "Read me now" which is a project to take place over the August vacation. This project is to promote literacy nationally. Also in keeping with the concept of continuous or life-long learning, Cabinet has recently approved 43 additional adult education centres. This particular concept of adult education is going to change in terms of re-organizing that particular area to encompass continuous or life-long learning centres. Again, in terms of retraining, Phase II of the retraining programme for displaced workers was launched recently to target approximately 1,000 individuals.

Mr. Vice-President, in terms of the technical institutes, I would now like to make reference to the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute and the long-term plans for this particular institute and to show how it is being looked upon as being integrated into the tertiary level education environment. The long-term plans for the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute include a Building and Civil Engineering Technician programme which was introduced in September 1996, and continuing. Computer Technology would be a new course to facilitate repairs to computers. There is also, in terms of expansion, a new curriculum offering certification from craftsman diploma and technician degree to an associate degree and an expansion and upgrade of plant and equipment in terms of library facilities, workshops, laboratories and multipurpose facilities to provide space for conferences, seminars

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and other forum type activities. Accreditation to international standards is being addressed and equivalency to facilitate university entry.

Mr. Vice-President, if we look at the tertiary level environment and what we are faced with in terms of what exists presently, the University of the West Indies is based on a United Kingdom system where the entrance requirements are 'A' levels and it is a three-year degree programme, for example, Natural Science. In the US-based system, the entry requirements are CXC 'O' levels where one can spend two years doing an associate degree and at one's own pace and for the next two years can move on to a first degree. This is an avenue that has to be considered in terms of access to tertiary level institutions. *[Interruption]*

In the US-based system one can enter via the CXC 'O' levels, spend two years with an associate degree and can make a contribution in terms of the world of work. When one is ready, at one's own pace, can continue one's education and return to do two more years in order to get a degree. I just wanted to give the honourable Senate the scenario for that particular programme structure.

I turn my attention to the National Training Agency and how it is being positioned in terms of technical vocational education. The National Training Agency, 1997, is being considered by the Government. In terms of co-ordination, the agency will be responsible for organizing and managing all technical vocational programmes. NIHERST is being perceived as a separate agency responsible for community colleges of which technical institutes form a part.

3.40 p.m.

Sen. Prof. Spence gave us another scenario of the role of the technical institutes in a different environment in terms of a technical university and the two technical institutes playing a different role in terms of a major university and their peripherals as aligned to the particular campus. It is a suggestion worthy of consideration, Mr. Vice-President. So, I wanted to get that kind of clarification in terms of the position of NIHERST, the national training agency, and the technical institutes.

Mr. Vice-President, the availability of the computer and the internet provides unique opportunities for the region to catch up. Bill Gates, commenting on the role of information technology states, and I quote:

“There is an often expressed fear that technology will replace teachers. I can say emphatically and unequivocally it won't. The information highway

won't replace or devalue any of the human educational talent needed for the challenges ahead: committed teachers, creative administrators, involved parents and, of course, diligent students. However, technology will be pivoted in the future towards the role of teachers. The highway will bring together the best world of countless teachers and authors for everyone to share.

Teachers will be able to draw on this material and students will have the opportunity to explore its inter-activity. In time this access will help spread educational and personal opportunities even to students who aren't fortunate enough to enjoy the best school or the greatest family support.

It will encourage a child to make the most of his or her native talent."

Mr. Vice-President, at the juncture between primary and secondary education there is a gap. The Ministry of Education is enhancing the opportunities for students who have not been placed in a secondary school by building and/or upgrading post primary centres and the use of competent teachers here. A new technical vocational model is under consideration by this Government to incorporate, in a structured fashion, all levels of technical/vocational education; again for relevance.

In terms of technical/vocational training, Mr. Vice-President, there is expansion of the National Skills Development Programme being planned. It is proposed that two new centres will come on stream, one at Usine Ste. Madeleine utilizing Caroni (1975) Limited, and the other at Penal, to bridge the gap for skilled labour.

Mr. Vice-President, curriculum reform is also taking place at the Teachers' Training Colleges. Computer labs are to be added to our training colleges to encourage and enhance the education of our teachers to become computer literate. We have just seen at the San Fernando Technical Institute the recently launched building and construction programme, again, with a retraining requirement to meet the demands of the labour force.

Mr. Vice-President, Sen. Prof. Spence made reference to the secondary education system in terms of the 'A' level structure, whether it is necessary or it should be considered in terms of a one-year programme as compared to a two-year programme. It is an area that must be considered. He also made reference to the Welsh baccalaureate as another area to be considered, and he positioned Trinidad and Tobago as a financial and technical capital of the Caribbean. One of his suggestions was to utilize the Caroni Racing Complex for the campus for the technological university.

Mr. Vice-President, on the subject of arts and craft, the Ministry of Education fully supports the Institute of the West Indies, Creative Arts Centre which is in the process of expansion. In other words, at the University of the West Indies, creative arts will give the necessary support and would serve as the school for the arts which is sorely needed. Coupled with this particular thrust for the arts, the Ministry of Education is giving 10 scholarships in drama, and we are looking into the Bachelor of Arts music programme.

Mr. Vice-President, NIHERST is perceived as offering courses which will be certified by the training agency and for which standards will be provided by the National Training Agency. NIHERST will also function in a collaborative relationship while doing other work independently as a community college. The two institutes which are public sector owned, are perceived in the model as providing courses which come under the responsibility of the National Training Agency. Accreditation for higher level courses will be required by the accreditation agency NIHERST and CORD. Collaboration for accreditation will be necessary. Apart from this, NIHERST is perceived as a separate agency responsible for community colleges of which the technical institutes form a part. The National Training Agency, as I said before, is perceived to be responsible for organizing and managing all technical, vocational, educational and training programmes, not implementing or delivering.

Mr. Vice-President, this Government is laying the foundation in its quest for reorganization and integration of the entire education system to afford our citizens every opportunity, at the tertiary level, to develop their fullest potential and in turn our country's fullest potential. We will be preparing our citizens to be effective and efficient in the global environment.

3.50 p.m.

I would now conclude with the recommended National Implementation Action Plan in terms of open learning and distance education. Beginning January 1998 and continuing at an accelerated pace, greater use would be made of distance learning techniques to assist out-of-school youths and adults to be better prepared to make their contribution to society.

Lifelong education—83 adult education centres will be offering relevant programmes, especially in literacy, entrepreneurship and vocational skills. Every

effort would be made to ensure that they function efficiently and effectively. The media, particularly radio and television, have an important role to play in the enhancement of lifelong education.

In terms of the curriculum of the secondary school, English, Mathematics, a science subject, a social science subject, Computer Studies or Information Technology and Spanish, will become an integral part of compulsory core subjects for all secondary students.

Sports and performing arts will be visible learning activities in all secondary schools. Continuous in-service teacher education is a definite requirement for quality education. The teacher's legacy is to inspire and motivate his or her students, hence the absolute necessity to plan and organize for teacher-renewal programmes, especially at the secondary level.

Education and training are central to how nations will fare in the future. Strong nations and strong communities will distinguish themselves from the rest by how well their people learn and adapt to change. Learning will not end in the school or even in the university. Much of the knowledge learnt by the young would be obsolete some years after they complete their formal education. In some professions, like information technology, obsolescence occurs even faster. The task of education must therefore be to provide the young with the core knowledge and core skills and the habits of learning that enable them to learn continuously throughout their lives. We have to equip them for a future and that is why the education is being re-organized, re-directed and re-focussed, to enable our citizens to become creative and futuristic thinkers.

I thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, with the concurrence of both the Opposition Leader and the Independent Senators, we have agreed to suspend further deliberations on this Private Member's Motion and move immediately to Motion No. 1, under "Government Business".

Agreed to.

Community Service Orders Bill

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDERS BILL

House of Representatives Amendment

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs (Sen. Dr. The Hon. Daphne Phillips): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move,

That the House of Representatives amendment to the Community Service Orders Bill, 1997 listed in the appendix be now considered.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 3(3):

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

“Insert after the word ‘offence’ occurring in line 2 the words ‘or an attempt to commit an offence’.”

Sen. Dr. Phillips: Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that the Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, before moving to have the Senate adjourned to next week Tuesday, I would like to indicate that we have agreed to continue with Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion and seek to have it completed. This has to do, in deference to our good friend, Prof. Julian Kenny who had to suffer the agony of six months, I think, before his Motion was concluded. We want to expedite Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion, therefore we are going to allocate next Tuesday to that particular debate.

Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, July 29, 1997, at 1.30 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 3.59 p.m.