

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, July 29, 1997***SENATE***Tuesday, July 29, 1997*

The Senate met at 1.37 p.m.

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

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave to Sen. Hugh Donaldson to be absent from sittings of the Senate during the period July 17—July 31, 1997. I have also granted leave to Sen. Philip Marshall to be absent from today's sitting of the Senate.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I have been advised that His Excellency the Acting President has appointed Mrs. Nirupa Oudit as a temporary Senator with effect from July 29, 1997 and continuing during the absence of Sen. Philip Marshall from Trinidad and Tobago.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

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

**SUKYO MAHIKARI ASSOCIATION
(TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO) (INC'N.) BILL**

Bill for the incorporation of the Sukyo Mahikari Association (Trinidad and Tobago) and matters incidental thereto, brought from the House of Representatives [*Sen. N. Baksh*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.
[*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]

Question put and agreed to.

SARASWATI MANDIRAM (INC'N.) BILL

Bill for the incorporation of the Saraswati Mandiram and for matters incidental thereto, brought from the House of Representatives [*Sen. N. Baksh*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.
[*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]

Question put and agreed to.

PAPERS LAID

1. Audited report of the Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited for the year ended December 31, 1996. [*The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. B. Kuei Tung)*]
2. Annual report of the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) for the period 1994 to 1995. [*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]
3. Report of the Auditor General on the public accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 1996 and on other selected audit activities. [*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]
4. Financial statement as at September 30, 1996—Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (Petrotrin). [*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]
5. Financial statement as at December 31, 1996—Trinidad Nitrogen Company Limited. [*Hon. B. Kuei Tung*]

SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Premier Vesting Bill
Presentation**

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Settlements (Sen. Carol Cuffy-Dowlat): Mr. Vice-President, I have the honour to present the following report:

Report of the Special Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Private Bill to vest the undertaking in Trinidad and Tobago of Premier Oil plc formerly known as Premier Consolidated Oilfields PLC, a company incorporated in Scotland, in Premier Oilfields of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, a company incorporated in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mount Beulah Evangelical Baptist Church (Inc'n.) Bill
Presentation**

The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj): Mr. Vice-President, I have the honour to present the following report:

Report of the Special Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Private Bill for the Incorporation of the Mount Beulah Evangelical Baptist Church and matters incidental thereto.

1.45 p.m.**ROTARY CLUB OF PORT OF SPAIN WEST (INC'N.) BILL****Presentation****Sen. Selwyn John:** Mr. Vice-President, I beg to present the following report:

Report of the Special Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Private Bill for the incorporation of the Rotary Club of Port of Spain West and for matters incidental thereto.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Penelope Beckles:

**Dr. Morgan Job
(Swearing in)**

- 14.** Could the Minister of Public Administration and Information state:
- (a) Whether his Ministry launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the swearing in of Dr. Morgan Job as Minister of Tobago Affairs to which the media were not invited?
 - (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Minister state:-
 - (i) Whether the investigation is completed and what were the findings of that investigation?
 - (ii) If the investigation has not yet been completed, could the Minister state when it is expected to be completed, and whether this honourable House would be made aware of the findings?

**National Library Complex
(Construction of)**

- 15.** Could the Minister of Works and Transport state:
- (a) When construction work is expected to begin on the National Library Complex?
 - (b) The expected date of completion?
 - (c) The estimated cost of the project?

**Family Court
(Construction of)**

- 16.** Could the hon. Attorney General state:
- (a) When construction work is expected to begin on the Family Court?
 - (b) The expected date of completion?
 - (c) The estimated cost of the project?

The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. B. Kuei Tung): Mr. Vice-President, I beg your leave to have these questions deferred for two weeks.

Questions, by leave, deferred.

CARIBBEAN UNION COLLEGE (INC'N.) BILL

Question put and agreed to, That a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Caribbean Union College and for matters incidental thereto, be now read the first time.

Bill accordingly read the first time.

PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE WEST INDIES (AMDT.) BILL

Question put and agreed to, That a Bill to amend the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies (Inc'n) Act, No. 26 of 1965 and for matters incidental thereto, be now read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.
[Hon. B. Kuei Tung]

Question put and agreed to.

**PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES
(CARIBBEAN EXPORT DEVELOPMENT) ORDER**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move,

Whereas it is provided by section 9 of the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic Consular and International Organisations) Act, Chap. 17:01 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") that the President may by Order declare that any international or regional organisation or agency named or described in such order shall to such extent as specified in the Order, be accorded the privileges and immunities set out in Part I of the Fifth Schedule therein:

And whereas it is also provided by section 9 of the Act that every Order made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament:

And whereas the President has on the 16th day of June, 1997 made the Privileges and Immunities (Caribbean Export Development Agency) Order, 1997:

And whereas it is expedient that the Order now be affirmed:

Be it resolved that the Privileges and Immunities (Caribbean Export Development Agency) Order, 1997 be approved.

Mr. Vice-President, the purpose of this legislation is to accord legal personality to the Caribbean Export Development Agency and to confer certain privileges, facilities, immunities and exemptions on the organization and those who are working with it—the officials who are associated with it.

The Caribbean Export Development Agency came about as a result of the need of Caribbean countries to develop more focus and to sharpen the edges, as it were, of the export thrust. You will recall that under the Lomé IV Trade Sector Programme, the role of the Caribbean Export Development Project, which is the predecessor to the CEDA and as well to the Eastern Caribbean States Export Development Agency, the roles of these two sub-regional agencies have been recognized and it was decided by the CARIFORUM countries that the time had come to pool the resources that were available to have a single organization moving in the direction of furthering the export thrust of Caribbean countries and, as a result, CEDA was formed.

CARIFORUM is made up of the countries of Caricom, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The CARIFORUM countries really form the Caribbean component of what is known as the African, Caribbean and Pacific grouping, which has a relationship with the European Union under the Lomé Convention.

The CARIFORUM countries recognize the need for CEDA, and CEDA came about on January 1, 1996. It is an autonomous regional organization based in Barbados with a regional office in the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Vice-President, the purpose of the organization, as I said before, can be seen in its origin to further the trade of the Caricom countries, the intra-regional trade as well as the extra-regional trade.

The objectives of the organization are, in fact, set out in Article 2 of the agreement and include the establishment and implementation of comprehensive

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export development strategies and programmes of an intra-regional and extra-regional level; the continuation and expansion of the trade policies that will contribute to the ultimate goal of a single Caribbean market; the establishment, the adaptation and the strengthening of national and sub-regional entities dealing with export development and trade promotion; and the establishment of a trade information database and network—a very important aspect because, as you would realize, the whole question about the generation of information is absolutely important if we are to penetrate the markets.

Mr. Vice-President, you will realize as well, that in today's globalized environment, the question of trade is very important. In fact, international trade is the life blood of economies that seek to participate in the globalized environment. It is inevitable that we must participate in the globalized environment.

In addition to what I have said, one of the functions of CEDA—let me make the point, CEDA would be seeking to place its emphasis on hemispheric trade within our own hemisphere but, in addition to that, it would also be seeking to further the trade between the CARIFORUM countries, the Caribbean countries and Europe under the Lomé Convention. The trade sector aspect of the new Lomé Convention would, in fact, be furthered by the Caribbean Export Development Agency.

Mr. Vice-President, the funding for this organization comes in part from the Lomé Convention. Other regional and international organizations also contribute to the funding—the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank as well.

During its short term of office so far, CEDA has proved its worth in its one and a half years of operation. The organization has been rising to the challenges of globalization and, in fact, is seeking to develop linkages between the Caribbean countries and the other trading blocs in the hemisphere—MERCOSUR, the Central American Integration Process and the Andean Community which are all building blocks as we proceed towards the free trade of the Americas. CEDA is developing and helping to develop those linkages which are very critical, not only in terms of furthering the trade, in my view, but also those linkages are absolutely important as we move towards negotiation of the free trade agreement of the Americas.

1.55 p.m.

It is those kinds of linkages which will ensure, in my view, that when we do eventually achieve the FTAA it will not be an imposition but, in fact, it will be a negotiated settlement.

Mr. Vice-President, one of the other things that the CEDA is doing is seeking to help the Caribbean countries overcome this big bugbear of transportation in the hemisphere. As you will realize, the transportation infrastructure, for example, between the English-speaking Caribbean countries and the Latin American countries is almost non-existent. Everybody complains, for example, of the need to have to travel to Miami in order to get from one place to another. In the Caribbean, maritime transportation infrastructure is not there and we are saying that without that kind of infrastructure we will never reap the fullest rewards of economic integration between ourselves and the other countries in the hemisphere. That is one of the areas at which it is looking at the regional level.

In terms of the national level, this organization has already been of particular importance to Trinidad and Tobago in its development and export thrusts. Through the competitiveness fund CEDA has already provided assistance to a number of Trinidad and Tobago companies to enhance their competitiveness. The 1996 Annual Report of the Caribbean Export Development Agency states that the organization undertook a sample survey of Trinidad and Tobago export companies to determine their export potential and their need for export services. It was noted, very satisfactorily to us, that the Trinidad and Tobago companies were well placed to export through their well-equipped factories and skilful management and CEDA has also developed a useful working relationship with TIDCO and the TTMA here in Trinidad and Tobago.

An important aspect of CEDA, Mr. Vice-President, is the development of a database for the provision of information. It is doing this through one of its arms, the Caribbean Trade Information System (CARITIS), which is geared to provide a wide range of information services as companies seek to penetrate markets and to take advantage of trade agreements that are emerging.

May I say, Mr. Vice-President, with respect to trade agreements it will be remembered, just for the record, that the negotiations between Caricom and the Central American integration process, between Caricom and the Andean Community, between Caricom and the Dominican Republic, those processes have already started. Trinidad and Tobago has been represented and is part of those very, very important trade agreements that we seek to create markets for our products and, of course, CEDA is going to be playing an important role in this entire process.

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I have no doubt, Mr. Vice-President, that Members of this honourable Senate will agree that CEDA is already playing an important part and that it will continue to play an important part and, in fact, this Privileges and Immunities Order really is intended to facilitate the work of this organization, to create the kind of environment which will help it to function properly and effectively, and in the final analysis this order will further the development of trade and, consequently, the all-round development of the countries which are members of CEDA.

I do not intend to go into all its provisions because I feel fairly certain that Members of the Senate are acquainted with this Privileges and Immunities Order. It is a matter which has come to them before on a number of occasions. May I just point out that, with respect to this particular order, there are one or two unique features, one being that consultants who are hired by the Caribbean Export Development Agency, when they travel from country to country, will be afforded the privileges and immunities that come under this order. It should also be noted that the agency's executive director has a responsibility, under this order, to provide the names of all relevant persons and data of all those people who work and are associated with the organization and who are entitled to enjoy the privileges, immunities and exemptions contained in the agreement.

One other unique feature, Mr. Vice-President, has to do with the '*laissez passer*', a travel document which the CEDA will issue to its members to facilitate easy travel in the region, to prevent hassle during travel. This does not mean that the members of this organization will be totally exempt from the regulations and the procedures of customs. In fact, where there are reasonable grounds for presuming that illegal articles are being brought in, these members will be subject to the law and to the relevant search and procedures.

Mr. Vice-President, let it be remembered that this order is not for the personal aggrandisement, personal privilege, or personal immunity of any individual working with the organization. It is intended, as I said before, to further the cause of economic integration among the countries of the Caribbean which, in the final analysis, will position us to take advantage of the opportunities that are certainly going to arise as a result of the hemispheric economic integration processes that are taking place at present.

Mr. Vice-President, I commend this order to Members of this honourable House and I beg to move.

2.05 p.m.

Question proposed.

Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed: Mr. Vice-President, it is, indeed, very refreshing to see the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs present in our Chamber today. I thought since the recently held OAS summit he may have gone underground. I am always taken with the very high level of enthusiasm with which this Minister speaks and I have no doubt that when he went to the OAS in Peru recently, he had an even higher level of enthusiasm so that today we do not have an ambassador to Venezuela.

Notwithstanding that, I rise to support this Motion brought by the hon. Minister. Not too long ago, as we all would remember, the hon. Minister was part of the PNM administration which had a very clear and definite position with regard to our trade relations, our hemispheric relations and, generally, our international relations. Not too long ago, the same hon. Minister used to speak about Trinidad and Tobago being the gateway to the Americas.

Under the former administration there were many initiatives being taken insofar as establishing Trinidad and Tobago as the gateway to the Americas is concerned. Our commitment to the regional trading blocs, our commitment to be part of the whole free trade of the Americas movement, the MERCOSUR, the Andean Group, the hon. Minister is very mindful of our position in that regard.

Certainly, when it comes to Caribbean regional integration, the PNM's position is clear. It is regrettable that in the last few months under this present administration our leading role in Caricom is now being relegated for reasons about which we all know. Just recently there was the US/Caricom summit and we know of all the discussions that were taking place with respect to the Shiprider Agreement. The fact is, we went ahead on our own accord, signed an agreement and did not conform with our obligations under the Caricom treaty.

Our position in the PNM insofar as observing our responsibilities under Caricom, is that we are very committed. I heard the hon. Minister speak about the establishment of the Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) and it arising out of the whole Caricom discussions and the goal to establish Caricom as a single market and economy. We were part of that process; we continue to be committed to that process and, indeed, we wait to get a clear position with respect to this Government and Caricom, because as far as we see it, there has been bungling incompetence at nearly all levels of the game.

With these few words, Mr. Vice-President, I thank you and once again, as I indicated, we support the Motion brought by the hon. Minister.

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. Vice-President, I have no difficulty with the Motion, but I wonder if I could just ask the hon. Minister to explain to us exactly what he meant by saying that consultants to the institution would also be granted these privileges. Does that mean, for example, that a Trinidadian who does the consultancy for this institution would not pay taxes? Just what does he mean by saying that the consultants would also be covered by these privileges?

I might also say, I feel that I would be remiss in not making some of the comments that Sen. Wade Mark always made when he was on this side, and that is the question as to the expansion of these privileges to more and more institutions. But that is by the way.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj): Mr. Vice-President, first of all, let me thank hon. Senators for the support of this Order. I had no doubt that the Order would, in fact, be supported.

With respect to the consultants, the Order clearly states that nationals who are associated with the organization and who are working with the organization will not be granted these privileges and immunities. That is part of the privileges and immunities law and that has always been applicable. So that in the international organizations which are operating in Trinidad and Tobago, whilst foreign personnel would be granted these privileges and immunities from taxes, those from Trinidad and Tobago, working with the organization, are ordinary citizens paying their taxes and duties, and so forth.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Does that mean that non-national consultants would not pay taxes if they were consultants to this organization? For example, if you are a consultant to a United Nations organization I assume that you pay taxes if you are resident in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. R. Maraj: In addition to the established staff of the agency, provision is made for similar protection to be extended to consultants employed on a mission on behalf of the organization. Clause 4 of Schedule 1 of the Order establishes that.

With respect to the comments made by my distinguished friend, Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed, may I assure her that this Minister would never go underground. There is no need to go underground. He is transparent, above board and willing to stand under the hemispheric spotlight which he has caused to be erected on the maritime relations between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

With respect to the Senator's comment that Trinidad and Tobago is now being replaced as a leader in Caricom, in fact, that is not true at all. She referred to the recent summit of the Americas. I did not come here to sing my own praises and to beat my own drum, but the records would show, for example, that it is a Trinidad and Tobago initiative that first brought about the idea of that summit between the United States and the Caribbean. In fact, that was a suggestion which I made at the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Jamaica. In the whole preparation to the summit of the Americas, Trinidad and Tobago played a very leading role. In fact, I was the chairman of the preparatory committee that produced that historic document: *Partnership for Peace and Prosperity*. We continue to play a very important role in Caricom affairs.

2.15 p.m.

If the Senator looks at all our commitments, she would see that Trinidad and Tobago is a country that fulfills all its commitments to Caricom and we are playing our role. So with respect to leadership, I am to let the Senator know that we have not given up being one of the leading countries in Caricom.

Sen. Mohammed: Mr. Vice-President, on a point of clarification. I would just like to know if the hon. Minister played an equally leading role at the time when the Shiprider Agreement was being signed?

Hon. R. Maraj: Mr. Vice-President, we would talk about these matters another time, but the question of shiprider and so forth is not under consideration today; we are talking about playing a leading role in Caricom. I assure hon. Senators that Trinidad and Tobago, without being boorish and arrogant, will continue to play that role in Caricom because it is committed to Caricom and considers it to be absolutely important in an economic, diplomatic and politic sphere. I just wanted to make that particular point.

Mr. Vice-President, there really is no need to comment on any other matter which the Senator raised. I do not know if those can be considered matters since she spoke about CEDA, for example, being part of Caricom's attempt to establish a single market in the economy. That is not really very accurate since it is the wider Caribbean: Caricom plus the Dominican Republic and Haiti; it is Cariforum not Caricom.

Mr. Vice-President, I thank hon. Members of the Senate for their support and I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

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Resolved,

That the Privileges and Immunities (Caribbean Export Development Agency) Order, 1997 be approved.

LAW REFORM (PENSIONS) BILL

House of Representatives Amendment

The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move,

That the House of Representatives amendment to the Law Reform (Pensions) Bill listed in the appendix be now considered.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 4(2):

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

Insert immediately after the word “broken” occurring in line 1 the words, “(including a termination of service)”.

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

This amendment comes after this particular Bill had already been passed by this Senate, and it is merely a minor one to ensure that the wording is appropriate.

I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

PREMIER VESTING BILL

Adoption

Sen. Carol Cuffy-Dowlat: Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Be it resolved, That the Senate adopt the Report of the Special Select Committee of the Senate appointed to consider and report on a Private Bill to vest the undertaking in Trinidad and Tobago of Premier Oil plc formerly known as Premier Consolidated Oilfields PLC, a company incorporated in Scotland, in Premier Oilfields of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, a company incorporated in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Vice-President, the committee was appointed by the Senate on Tuesday, April 8, 1997 with the following terms of reference:

“To consider and report on a private bill entitled ‘An Act to vest the undertaking in Trinidad and Tobago of Premier Oil plc formerly known as Premier Consolidated Oilfields PLC, a company incorporated in Scotland, in Premier Oilfields of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, a company incorporated in Trinidad and Tobago’”.

The committee comprised:

Mrs. Carol Cuffy-Dowlat	-	Chairman
Mr. Andrew Gabriel	-	Member
Mrs. Nafeesa Mohammed	-	Member
Prof. Julian Kenny	-	Member

The committee was satisfied that in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 75(3)(b)(i) and (ii) of the Senate, sufficient notice was given to the public of the intended introduction in the Senate of the private bill referred to above. Notices appeared in the *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette* and the *Trinidad Guardian* newspaper on February 27, March 06 and 13, 1997. No objections to the Bill were received.

The committee held two meetings. The first was on Tuesday, May 13, 1997 and at that meeting, oral evidence was taken from the following persons representing the promoters:

Mr. Ameer Edoe	Chairman, Premier Oil plc/Director of Premier Oilfields.
Mr. Khamkeran Ablack	General Manager, Premier Oil plc/Director of Premier Oilfields
Mr. Krishna Narinesingh	Attorney-at-Law

At the conclusion of the meeting the promoters were requested to submit additional documents.

The committee held its second meeting on Tuesday, July 01, 1997 and at that meeting the committee examined the undermentioned documents:

- (i) An extract of the minutes of the Board of Directors of the parent company in London with the resolution agreeing to phase out its remaining branch operations;

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- (ii) Two agreements between the Oilfield Workers Trade Union and Premier Oilfields plc of Trinidad and Tobago Limited;
- (iii) Legal Opinions from the Solicitor General's Department; and
- (iv) Similar types of legislation.

The committee examined the Preamble and clauses of the Bill and found that there were provisions for the protection of the rights of persons and property associated with the obligations of Premier Oil plc. The committee was also satisfied that there were provisions for the collection of taxes by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and that the rights and continued employment of permanent employees were guaranteed.

Your committee, therefore, recommends that the Bill be accepted by the Senate. To this end, I beg to move.

Seconded by Sen. N. Mohammed.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Report adopted.

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

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

2.25 p.m.

MOUNT BEULAH EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCH (INC'N.) BILL

Adoption

The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move,

That the Senate adopt the Report of the Special Select Committee of the Senate appointed to consider and report on a Private Bill for the Incorporation of the Mount Beulah Evangelical Baptist Church and for matters incidental thereto.

The Special Select Committee was appointed by the Senate on Tuesday, May 13, 1997 and given the following mandate:

To consider and report on a Private Bill entitled, An Act for the Incorporation of the Mount Beulah Evangelical Baptist Church and for matters incidental thereto.

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The following persons were appointed to serve on the committee: Mrs. Vimala Tota-Maharaj, Chairperson; Mr. Nizam Baksh, Mr. Danny Montano and Prof. John Spence, Members.

The Committee was satisfied that in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 75(3)(b)(i) and (ii) of the Senate, sufficient notice was given to the public of the intended introduction in the Senate of the private Bill referred to above. These notices appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago *Gazette* and the *Trinidad Guardian* newspaper on April 10, 17 and 24, 1997. No objections to the Bill were received

The committee held a meeting on Tuesday, July 15, 1997 and at that meeting, oral evidence was taken from the following persons representing the promoters: Mr. Roddie Taylor, Senior Pastor; Miss Bernice Ryce, Secretary; and Miss Anesta Reeves, Attorney-at-Law.

During its deliberations the committee examined the organization's constitution, minutes of its meetings, register of members and audited financial statements. The committee made a careful examination of the preamble and clauses of the Bill, and having regard to all the evidence, the committee is satisfied that the facts and allegations presented in the Bill are true and correct.

The committee wishes to report that it has completed its deliberations and has found sufficient proof in support for the incorporation of this organization by an Act of Parliament. The committee, therefore, recommends that the Bill be accepted by the Senate.

Seconded by Sen. Prof. J. Spence.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed.

Report adopted.

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

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

ROTARY CLUB OF PORT OF SPAIN WEST (INC'N.) BILL

Adoption

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

Be it resolved, That the Senate adopt the Report of the Special Select Committee of the Senate appointed to consider and report on a Private Bill

Rotary Club of Port of Spain West (Inc'n) Bill
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for the incorporation of the Rotary Club of Port of Spain West and for matters incidental thereto.

Mr. Vice-President, the committee was appointed by the Senate on Tuesday, May 20, 1997 with the following terms of reference: To consider and report on a private Bill entitled, "An Act for the Incorporation of the Rotary Club of Port of Spain West and for matters incidental thereto".

The committee comprised Mr. Philip Hamel-Smith, Chairman; Mr. Selwyn John, Miss Penelope Beckles, and Prof. John Spence, Members.

The committee was satisfied that in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 75(3)(b)(i) and (ii) of the Senate, sufficient notice was given to the public of the intended introduction in the Senate of the private Bill referred to above. These notices appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago *Gazette* and the *Trinidad Guardian* newspaper on April 24, 1997; May 1 and 8, 1997. No objections to the Bill were received.

The committee held one meeting on Monday, July 14, 1997 and at that meeting oral evidence was taken from the following persons representing the promoters: Mr. Bhan J. Ramcoomarsingh, President; Mr. Gerald Popplewell, Director; Mr. Rupert Cheekes, Charter Member.

During its deliberation the committee examined the organization's constitution, minutes of its meetings, register of members and audited financial statements. The committee made a careful examination of the preamble and clauses of the Bill, and having regard to all the evidence, the committee is satisfied that the facts and allegations presented in the Bill are true and correct.

The committee wishes to report that it has completed its deliberations and has found sufficient proof in support for the incorporation of this organization by an Act of Parliament. The committee therefore recommends that the Bill be accepted by the Senate.

Seconded by Sen. Prof. J. Spence.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Report adopted.

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

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

2.35 p.m.

TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [July 22, 1997]

Whereas there are many individual old and new institutions and initiatives in Tertiary Education System 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 system so as to ensure efficiency and maintenance of high quality.

Question again proposed.

Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand: Mr. Vice-President, it is a pleasure to speak on Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion, but it is also a pain since some of the things I have to say have been said in the society for the last 30 years.

Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion on Tertiary Education System has a bearing on the educational system as a whole: the structure of the system; how we flow from primary to secondary to Tertiary Education System and how each unit within the system develops its own coherence, meaning and purpose while belonging to the larger system.

Mr. Vice-President, we also have to think about the content of the whole educational system: the question of curriculum, syllabus, testing and so forth. We also have to think about the purpose, or purposes, of education which is an area that is becoming more and more embattled. There used to be a time when we believed that education had to do with getting an education and being trained to do a job in the world—something that would help you to make a living. This was an automatic, instinctive and natural purpose that people had for education, and it is still very much a relevant approach.

There is also a school of thought that has come about as a result of the globalization of economic, social and educational systems, the effect of which, ultimately, is to impoverish and reduce education and prevent it from having to do with self-development and self-fulfilment; to deprive it of its balance; to stop it

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from being an education for living in a particular environment and to make it, instead, a process by which the individual can fit in as a nut or bolt, a cog or a piece of iron, or any object into the whole global economy.

Mr. Vice-President, international competitiveness has grown even in education. If one goes to America, England or Europe, one would see that they are now preparing league tables of universities which one can use to compare universities across the globe to decide where one should send a child to become processed to fit in and become competitive internationally.

Mr. Vice-President, while I do not object to being internationally competitive, I think this new development, which is part of the spread of economism in the world, is a threat to education which we have to bear in mind even as we try to adapt to it. I am saying that Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion invites us to reflect on all these issues.

Of course, finally, in reflecting on the educational system as a whole, we have to ask philosophical questions: What is education? How does education help us to live the good life? What is the good life? What do men live for?

Mr. Vice-President, I will not have time to go into all these matters, and since I am not a very boring speaker, I am sure you would not waive the Standing Orders and give me unlimited time, so I cannot go into all of it. However, I am going to try to reflect on the primary system, the secondary system, the nature of the university, the nature and means of Tertiary Education System and very correctly, the possibility of creating a tertiary system of education that would include the University of the West Indies and a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago.

During the course of my contribution I want to present arguments about the ideal nature of a university, the needs for other kinds of tertiary institutions and the arguments for an autonomous college of the University of the West Indies—which I feel our present campus should become—an autonomous college of the University of the West Indies developing programmes that arise out of the needs, research and capacities of people in this country and maintaining the highest standards that would be guaranteed by our continuing to be a college of this highly respected institution, the University of the West Indies.

At the start, Mr. Vice-President, I must say that an autonomous college of the University of the West Indies is not a threat to the University of the West Indies, nor is it a threat to regional integration. I think the people who are against an

autonomous college of the university—the bureaucrats—very often offer this kind of blackmail as an argument against an autonomous college.

Mr. Vice-President, I begin with what I think is a very crucial movement, that is, a re-examination of the passage from primary to secondary education to the University of the West Indies to show that our problem with respect to Tertiary Education System is not a simple one, but one about the mass of the population who get very little secondary education and no kind of Tertiary Education System at all.

2.45 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, the masses of our country are not part of the secondary education system, or they only get a bit of it. They are not part of the tertiary system either. The examination I am proposing will help us to understand the extent of the problem with which we have to deal. The levels and gradations of educational provision that we have to comprehend may even help us to analyze a little more clearly the confusions in our thinking and in our various separate courses of actions over the years; confusions that have arisen because we have not looked closely enough at all the things that are needed in our situation.

I begin with some statistics. *[Interruption]* I really do not know the difference between the First Unit Scheme and Second Unit Scheme, but I feel the figures I am about to quote are quite telling. Every year, it is well known that at least 24,000 children attain primary school age. Every year, at least 30,000 sit Common Entrance. Now, look at the fall-out rate. Of the 30,000 who sit Common Entrance, 21,000 get into the secondary school system. There are then 9,000 by the wayside. They will either repeat Common Entrance or go into post primary centres. Mr. Vice-President, those 9,000, for all practical purposes, will no longer get a satisfactory education.

There are then 21,000 children who go into secondary schools of which, 14,000 go into three-year schools. This is now 14,000 and 9,000, a total of 23,000 children. Of those who write CXC, only 5,500 get five CXC passes at grades 1 or 2. Of this 5,500, only 3,000 go into 'A' levels. Only 1,000 of them get two 'A' levels plus General Paper (GP). About 340 get three 'A' levels plus GP. A further 120 of them get three 'A' levels including GP.

I think there are about 20,000 people per year who fall out of the secondary school system and do not get into the tertiary system. Mr. Vice-President, 1,500 people are taken into the university every year, so the old entry requirement of

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three 'A' levels and GP has gone. Even two 'A' levels and GP is no more. There are many faculties, like agriculture, which are taking people with 'O' levels. There are campuses that have a preliminary year. There are faculties that have people with one or two 'A' levels of the lowest quality, and we have to develop remedial courses.

Almost everybody who comes into the Faculty of Arts, Education and Humanity has to do the use of English, or some course which they feel they already know. They cannot write, think or talk. We are doing a lot of remedial and preliminary work in the university at great expense. Some faculties have people who do not really want to be there at all. They want to go into social sciences, law or medicine. They cannot get in, but they are too ashamed to go anywhere else so they come to the university. They come by us in the Faculty of Arts, Education and Humanity.

It is hard to teach them. One tells them, "This week we are doing *Things Fall Apart*", and they say, "Sir, we did that in 'A' level." I then tell them that this is a good reason for doing it here. That we should try to do it. I do not want to knock the students. It is not their fault. That is the system. They want to go to university, even though it may be a faculty they do not really want to be in. They just want to be there, in the university.

I want to focus now on those who drop out of the secondary system and do not get into the university—at least 20,000 children. The Vice-Chancellor of our university has said that we have to increase the intake by 50 per cent. How are we going to do that? This will be very nice for him; his empire will be greater. It is good. Where are we getting them? The secondary school system is not producing them, and we have already lowered the standards of entry. If one wants to come 'frankomen' and say, "Let us have a preliminary year at the university, everybody is doing a four-year degree, and in the first year we will do what we should do in the secondary school," that is okay by me. But say that is what one is doing so that when people begin a university degree, they are prepared and qualified, and have a general kind of education that allows them to know what a university degree is.

Instead of increasing the intake by 50 per cent, I would cut it by 50 per cent and send some of the people who are there into other tertiary institutions; not necessarily back to high school, but other tertiary institutions where they will find something that they really want to do, something which they are motivated to do, through which they can express and discover, and make themselves persons in the

world, adjusted and happy with who they are and what they are doing. That is what we have to do.

There is nothing wrong with getting a technical education. Not everybody could sit and read Wilson Harris; not everybody understands the second law of thermodynamics; not everybody can go into the construction of software programmes, and not everybody wants to. Our notion that one goes into primary, secondary, and then into university—to create that system with those three traffic lights, just waiting for green from primary, secondary and then into university. This notion is really one of obstacles and a system of extra lessons. Now they know that is one narrow road they have to go on, and they know that only 1,500 of them will get into the university. So they cannot start too soon.

We must start reading the Common Entrance syllabus to pregnant women. I am sure we will be teaching the babies in the womb Mathematics and Physics.

2.55 p.m.

Lessons is one of the things that is killing the educational system. When I was small we used to call it extra lessons, because that meant the teachers and the schools were teaching us something and giving us an education. So what one was doing after that was extra lessons. Now they have a black market education, a second economy. People are not bothering with the school hours. School is to 'lime'. Teachers' attitude is that they are 'liming', then they are going to the real lessons, not extra lessons. That is part of the evil in the system that we have to deal with. Those 20,000 people who fall by the wayside, the ones who could least afford it, they are the ones who are paying for the extra lessons.

The Draft White Paper on Education presented by the National Task Force on Education is very concerned with these people who do not belong to the secondary system and do not get into the tertiary system. They look at them in a section of the report called "Further Education". I myself would prefer to think about Further Complementary and Alternative Education. For convenience, when I want to refer to that from now on I am going to speak about the CAF sector. The CAF sector can be divided into two large sections—those who have some secondary qualifications, and those who do not. Those who have one or two 'A' levels or one or two years of secondary school or maybe two 'O' levels, and then those who do not have anything at all. One will find that this latter section consists of some groups I can describe like this: young people without basic skills in literacy and numeracy and

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no marketable skills at all, of whom there are at least 10,000. Then, there are young people who are thrown into technical and vocational programmes by various agencies; craft level, youth camps, Servol, John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, Polytechnic, some at NIHERST, some at Continuing Education. Then there are those attending a whole mass of private institutions that are just stealing their money—typing, hair dressing, secretarial, commercial schools, computer, a whole racket has grown up, parasiting on those 20,000 people because the system does not seem to recognize their existence or has made no attempt to come to terms with their presence.

We have, of course, people with some reasonable secondary education who are in, what we might call, a higher education sector that is non-university, at John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, San Fernando Technical Institute, Continuing Education, some NIHERST courses, and I am sure Prof. Spence can name others.

So these two elements constitute the target group that I feel we have to deal with even though we are talking about tertiary education. Therefore, the term "tertiary" may not be satisfactory. We have a choice of either broadening the term "tertiary" to include all these people who need complementary alternative and further. Either broaden the term and include them, or keep tertiary for those with adequate secondary base and invent the category I am talking about, the CAF for the others. Then we have to decide to spend money to deal with the courses, programmes and institutions that are now providing complementary alternative and further.

Mr. Vice-President, I know that to deal with that, many very specific measures are required. One has to insist that something will provide them with literacy and numeracy, that they get a sound general education, that they get vocational and technological skills training. One has to inspect the private institutions that are supplying them and decide whether to license them or not, and monitor them for quality. We cannot leave apprenticeship training in the hands of industry or business. Where there is apprenticeship training it has to be done in collaboration with educationists. A firm cannot just say, we are training a boy to do so and so. You cannot just train him like a dog to do so and so. He needs education, he is not a robot.

Mr. Vice-President, this problem exists in Barbados, too. The White Paper on Education that came out from Barbados tries to deal with it, but I think very unsatisfactorily because they did not analyze that group enough. Yet, there are

some things in the Barbados White Paper that I feel we should take note of. Page 102, and I quote:

"Proposed Actions

The Ministry's response to the problems mentioned above will therefore be to:

- (1) provide for articulation of programmes and courses, both horizontally and vertically, to allow for student mobility at all ages and stages,..."

When one is dealing with the 20,000 and trying to rationalize the system, one has to create a system that will make them move from one institution to another sideways, to move upwards or to find a point where they can link up once more with the formal system or even get into university. It is the kind of engineering job that some people like. I like to think about how one can do it because I know it can be done, and I know it is necessary that it be done, the articulation of programmes and courses, both horizontally and vertically. The White Paper continues:

- "(iii) develop a coherent and integrated educational sector, up to university level,...
- (iv) facilitate the provision of on-going Adult and Continuing Education programmes..."

So it is the same kind of thing that they are trying to deal with and they are making legislation to try to deal with it.

On page 103 they propose an advisory committee for tertiary education whose functions would include the rationalization of the delivery of tertiary education and the coordination and articulation of programmes among post-secondary institutions. Secondly, they have created, or are about to create a Barbados Board of Accreditation and Certification.

I think we need to look at those 20,000 and try to rationalize, make sense of, and give purpose and direction to the things that are being provided for the vast majority of our young population. My suggestion that we deal with this is really an interim or an emergency measure, because what we have here is a consequence of the failure of the primary and secondary school systems. If the primary and secondary school provisions were satisfactory, we would not have 20,000 people falling out at the sides. Not only do we have to deal in an emergency way with

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these 20,000 who are being added to every year, we have to get into a revision of the secondary and primary systems.

Mr. Vice-President, what is wrong with secondary education? I do not really know where to start, but I am going to start with something I wrote in 1992 about a very patriotic man, a bookseller who was a gentleman, not a "saltfish" fellow, not a man who would ever sue the Minister of Education for depriving him of profits, a man called Clifford Sealy. The article on Clifford Sealy was entitled, "A man with a sound colonial education". I am proud to say I had a sound colonial education myself. My sound colonial education consisted of a thing called a Higher School Certificate and one could not get one's Higher School Certificate if one did not pass three 'A' levels plus General Paper in one sitting. When one got into 'HC' one had to do a two-year curriculum. One did not write exams in the first year unless one was a scholarship boy and was being trained like a horse to win the scholarship, but the majority had a two-year period of real education which came to an end with the writing of these exams and if one passed the three courses plus General Paper, one would get a Higher School Certificate.

3.05 p.m.

When we got that, we used to write beside our name "Inter-BA". I still have some books in which is written, "Kenneth Ramchand "Inter-BA", "Ph.D", because "Inter-BA" was the start. When you got that Higher School Certificate, you got metriculation, entry to a British university, automatic entry. Then they stopped that. They changed the system. You were not getting a Higher School Certificate (HSC) again. We went over to the GCE 'A' levels and you could take them one by one. Thus people came in there just to get grades.

It was not a system of education anymore, you were just going to get your two or three 'A' levels. We had fellas who got an 'A' in geography and so forth. But they got an 'F' in General Paper (GP) and could not get an HSC and cried because of that. Some people wrote the exam twice and still failed GP. General Paper meant that you could think and write on a wide range of topics.

We first dismantled the 'HSC' and went to GCE 'A'—if you preferred you could take them over a ten-year period—and GP does not matter, it is now 'AO', meaning it is really 'O'. A person could fail GP, get three 'A' levels and still get a scholarship. I feel if a person passed three 'A' levels and failed GP, he or she should be left home to cry.

Mr. Vice- President, not only has the GP been reduced, they changed the nature of it as well. We did not know how to prepare for GP, so we just kept on reading and hoped that we would catch them and that our minds would develop. Now, people in the school ask me, "Professor, would you come and talk to us about democracy and the environment because I feel that GP is coming with that." I have never heard that in my life! GP should not mean that. It is not something where you research and prepare for exam questions. It was intended to make you read and think widely and give you the ability to think on your feet in the exam room. You go in and see a topic that you never thought about before. But you are a GP boy, so you write your essay.

Mr. Vice-President, that is how it started. The break up of the HSC, the introduction of the GCE and the reduction of GP. Every year the first year students come to me and we know that they did not pass GP. They could not pass the type of GP we had to take.

This destruction of the secondary system got compounded by the way in which the CXC was introduced. Everybody wants us to set our own exams, but there is an exam, a syllabus and a curriculum. As usual in this country, everything had to be done "now for now", so the CXC came in as an examining body which says, "Here is the CXC exam." No plan for secondary education saying, "Here is an overall plan for a system of secondary education which comes to a climax with the writing of this exam." But they say, "Look the exam." Thus, your whole educational goal is to write that exam. If you have five years, "lime" for the first three years, play it cool; in the fourth year, extra lessons and you start warming up; and in the fifth year the jamming goes and you write the exam.

Mr. Vice-President, think of those fellas in the three-year schools, they have no CXC to write. "So what yuh going to do? Sharpen knife, break bottle, break biche, stay home, track teacher, anything so." You introduced an examination without a curriculum for an overall plan for the education of young people and you put the emphasis, therefore, on passing the examination and not education. You started dismantling from 'A' levels and now you are dismantling down here. The education that you get is determined by the requirements of the CXC exams. I have never read of anything like that anywhere in the world. Up to now there are some secondary schools that have not worked out a plan of education for the five years leading up to the exams.

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When I talk to the CXC people and ask, "How come you all set an exam and not a curriculum? They say, "We are an examining body." They want to give us 'A' levels now. I do not want to join with some of those reactionary people who say that we cannot set our 'A' levels, but CXC cannot set my 'A' level exam. If I had a child sitting 'A' levels and they set the exam, I would ship him away to England or America to take his 'A' levels. "I eh taking any 'A' level from those fellas" because they have proven their incompetence at the lower level. Now they are trying to make up for it by setting a kind of 'A' level syllabus which is going to try to cover all the things that people should have done in the first five years.

That CXC exam which serves nationalists' and other commercial purposes, has not served education. I am very angry with it because I want to tell a story which, incidentally, explains—they are not going to love me for this either—why for all the years that I have been teaching in this country, the CXC body has never once required my services. I find that is a disgrace for them, not for me.

I attended a meeting that was being chaired by a man I would call "Mr. B". Everybody would know it is Mr. Borelli, but I would not say that, I would say "Mr. B". He had gathered all the English teachers to explain the new CXC English syllabus. He talked for about half an hour. At question time I asked if I could ask a question. I was not invited to the meeting so I had to get permission. I asked him if this syllabus counted as two subjects or as one and a half. He asked, "Why do you want to know that?" I said that I did not see anything about literature in it. He said, "No, we are only having a language syllabus." So I said, "What about literature?" "They will get enough literature in the language syllabus." I asked the teachers, "Do you know that literature has just been abolished from the secondary schools?" "No." I told a lady who had some clout and when the time came for Trinidad to sign the CXC document, Trinidad said, "We not signing unless we see something about a literature syllabus." So we got English B. I am saying it now because we want it in the records. If there is an English B syllabus, it is because of me and not because of the CXC. They were going to abolish literature.

3.15 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, I think that the workings of the CXC has been quite damaging to the secondary education system. I do not have anything against them personally. When someone does me something, I just take notes and when I write my autobiography, I will fix them. I do not get ulcers about them but I am very

concerned about our educational system. Our secondary education system was destroyed by the dismantling of the Higher School Certificate, the establishment of the General Certificate Examination; the denaturing of the General Paper and the introduction of the Caribbean Examination Council system with an exam and not a curriculum. That is the argument purely and abstractly.

Mr. Vice-President, the secondary school system is collapsing because of exam consciousness; the competition for university places; the extra lessons phenomenon; because secondary education is no longer an education for life or for going out into the world. It has nothing to do with that anymore. At all levels in the educational system, there should be general education—education for living in your world at every level. That is an important component which has been pulled out of the secondary system.

Mr. Vice-President, you will understand very easily that we pulled education out of the primary system as well because what the CXC examinations do to the secondary system, the Common Entrance does to the primary. My little grandchild had to take a test to see whether she would be taken into a pre-primary school. The Government has made her owe so many million dollars already because she has borrowed so much money. The child has borrowed millions, not spending a penny as yet. She is just two years old and is given an oral examination to see if she could get into a school. I might consider retiring in order to coach her myself. Tell her, “Come and live by grandpa, girl. Bring my books for me.”

Mr. Vice-President, for years I have been moaning and groaning about the primary school system, beginning as far back as 1988. I have been asking, please, revise the primary system; change the nature of primary education; let the primary schools be a place where children paint, draw, listen to music, relax and get the atmosphere of a home. Abolish exams and books, play them music, talk to them, tell them stories, let them paint and draw, make them happy and loved and relate to one another. They could be educated much better in that way than in the present “cow pen” system. Recently a Common Entrance student had some past papers and he asked, “What is this” If I had to write that exam, I would fail. The only way one could pass that—you as well, Mr. Vice-President—is to take lessons and be coached. That is what is wrong with that system.

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Mr. Vice-President, I realize I am running out of time and I do not see any move being made to change the Standing Orders. I want to read two passages from some articles which I have been writing since 1988 on this matter. The first one talks about the primary education project which the Government has in the PSIP for 1997. According to that document there is going to be a focus on early childhood care and education. According to the draft estimates, \$74 million will be spent on primary education, the bulk of it on the refurbishment and construction of schools and on the purchase of furniture and other supplies. This would leave the project with approximately \$679 million dollars to spend.

Mr. Vice-President, somewhere in the PSIP there is a recognition of another set of problems and we see that there are some other initiatives that this money has to be used for. These schemes are to be implemented, not by the Ministry of Education, but by a number of different organizations including National Training Agency, the Entrepreneurial Development Programme, the Domestic Support Programme, the Civilian Conservation Corps Programme, National Skills Development Programme for Heavy Industry and Advanced Technology, a new tourism training institute and elements in the private sector. The PSIP in relation to the primary education project, realizes that it has to go into some other areas but there are no new thoughts on primary education in that discussion. Schools and teachers are provided but that is it. Government is not abolishing the Common Entrance exam; it is not about to change anything; it is just giving facilities to continue with the nonsense that has been done before. One does not just spend money on primary education, one has to rethink the system.

In a column of the *Trinidad Guardian* called "Beginning with the Young" on January 15, 1997, I tried to explain the value of the Early Childhood Care and Education component. With your permission, Mr. Vice-President, I would like to read a couple of paragraphs. It reads:

"Although many changes are taking place in our notion of home and in our attitude to family, no one is about to propose that we should give up on these institutions. We can't just turn to the primary schools and ask them to supply childcare and love in addition to what they already attempt to provide in the name of education."

The world is changing, not only in poor homes but even in rich homes the atmosphere of the home is being—

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-President. Thank you Senators. I am going to try to speed up. We have to change the whole concept of primary education and begin with early childhood care and education, amalgamating the two and have that continuous system run even beyond the time called Common Entrance exam time. That system must be allowed to flow easily into guaranteed places in secondary schools. That is the task that is required.

Mr. Vice-President, details about that are in the article I quoted from earlier so I would not go into them. The proposals there ask that we think of the meaning of early childhood care and education and its necessity in our changing society; that we think about the abolition of the present system of primary education; remove the Common Entrance exam; remove the extra lessons; remove all those books and deal with free expression and development; guarantee all children places in secondary schools; take the pressure off and let them become persons. In that way space is saved in prison, in hospitals and there would be less crime. We would not need so many police, jails and hospitals. All kinds of things can happen if people are encouraged to be the people they want to be, but we have the primary and secondary education systems which work against them.

3.25 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, the burden of what I have been saying so far is that we have a mass of people who are not served by the formal secondary system or by the University of the West Indies and we have to develop systems to deal with them. We have to construct the primary and secondary systems in order to make sure that the number of people in that fall-out section that I call complementary alternative can further be reduced over the years so that this category would become minimal.

We now have to think of primary and secondary education as providing not just entry to university, but leading to forms of tertiary education including the kind of things done by a slimmed-down University of the West Indies, by a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago.

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Mr. Vice-President, I am not just concerned with children at the primary and secondary levels, I am concerned about the university. I am an old-fashioned person who loves the university. The only reason I am working at this university is because I like the idea of it: not the bureaucrats who run it, not the people who push me around and tell me what to teach. I do not care for them but I care for the idea of the university.

The university is a place that, above all, teaches us to think. The university is a place that encourages scholarship. The university is a place that makes us free and independent people. The university is a place that teaches us to know who we are and where we are going. It helps us understand our society, our culture and our destiny.

I would spend five minutes reading two or three passages from another piece called : “Critical thinking and the university”:

“When he introduced the University Students (Guarantee Fund) Bill in the Senate, the Minister of Finance argued that pre-primary and primary education are crucial elements in the educational chain. No one can disagree.

How else to establish a proper educational foundation and make up for the gross inequalities in our society than by creating a primary school environment capable of providing the nurture and inner sustainment so many homes in this country cannot provide?

The question is whether the State recognizes that there are certain amenities—roads, water, electricity, health and education—that have to be delivered efficiently, but not necessarily in terms of profit and loss.

If you are a Communist just because you believe the State must aim at providing equal and affordable access to basic amenities for all its citizens, then I want to sign up as a Communist right away.

Look me, Fidel, look me Aristide. Bye bye, George Weekes, bye bye, Michael Manley”

(Bye bye, Wade Mark.)

“We have in place a system of education or miseducation which perpetuates the colonial mentality and colonially-imposed methods of diagnosing and solving our problems. To this structural disorientation we have

to add the effects of the electronic media and the junk magazines from abroad in cultivating mindlessness.

We must notice also the continuation in modern times of a brutal value system based, as in the days of the plantation, upon money and power.”

In this context, do not talk about whether you should spend more on primary, secondary or tertiary. You have to spend on all and you have to start at the beginning. The university has suffered from penny-pinching: it has suffered from its own bureaucrats.

The air-conditioning system at the University of the West Indies library, a gift from foreigners, broke down. The information was that the necessary part was not made or sold locally. There is nobody at the Engineering Faculty of the University of the West Indies who could service or repair the system or devise substitute parts. Week after week of sweating, people waited for someone from Puerto Rico to descend and deal with the problem. We are the UWI! We are the Faculty of Engineering! First of all we get a free one. The air-conditioning system breaks down and we cannot fix it? Something has to be wrong with an institution which calls itself the Faculty of Engineering of the University of the West Indies and it cannot fix an air-conditioning system. There are a lot of other things which it cannot do.

“This kind of problem-solving seems to me to be an important part of the function of universities in countries like ours. It is something related to but quite distinct from the university’s role in training people for the professions, business and other occupations. that require specialized knowledge, a distinction that is lost sight of in current discussions about what kind of specialist or technical training the university can provide.

If one had to put it starkly, one would say that the function of education is to create a thinking society; to produce individuals alive in their time and to their time; and to encourage the activities of intellectuals who help to fulfil the first two requirements.”

Mr. Vice-President, there are a lot of other things I want to say about the nature of the university and I think I have found a way to say them because I have just about run out of time. I want to close by suggesting, that having tackled the primary, the secondary and the CAF, we should tackle the whole question of the

nature of the university, and work towards an autonomous college of the University of the West Indies; we should re-organize all those places and courses—non-secondary and non-university, re-organize all our tertiary institutions that provide higher education but are not university.

Mr. Vice-President, I close by saying I have an amendment about a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago which suggests ways in which we might re-organize the tertiary system. The proposal for a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago must be seen as something that has to go along with a free autonomous campus able to look at the needs of this particular country while maintaining academic standards. The argument for a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago is also an argument for an autonomous college of the University of the West Indies.

I thank you.

3.35 p.m.

Sen. Nafeessa Mohammed: Mr. Vice-President, I sat here and as I listened to the Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand speak, I was taken with trepidation when I heard him espouse on the very many problems that he sees with our respective educational institutions in the country.

Let me first of all say that, with respect to the Motion brought by Sen. Prof. John Spence, we on this side are indeed very happy that he has brought this particular Motion because it brings to the fore the issue of our tertiary education system and the need for us to find ways and means to improve on this particular level in our education system.

We recognize that there are problems in our education system and certainly, Mr. Vice-President, I have in my possession, as indeed I am sure many other Senators would have, a copy of the National Task Force on Education which was prepared in 1994. I would like to read the first two paragraphs of this particular document. It is an education policy paper which, if my memory serves me right, the hon. Minister of Education very early in his term of office did indicate that his Government was, in fact, committed to this particular white paper on education.

In the introduction to this White Paper it says:

“This Policy Paper recommends for adoption as a guiding philosophy for educational development in Trinidad and Tobago over the next decade, some

principles and commitments which guided the National Task Force on Education in its assessment of past and current educational development in our nation state. These principles and commitments were arrived at after careful study of the many documents on social and educational development which have been produced by groups, organisations, major political parties and other institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. Needless to say, the National Task Force after its examination of the stated and implied philosophical orientations in these documents used its own judgment, based on its knowledge and understanding of past and current social development in Trinidad and Tobago, in formulating these philosophical principles and commitments.

The policy paper also presents policy options through which both the current deficiencies in the education system and the future challenges which it will face can be efficiently and effectively addressed in the years between now and the turn of the century.

These policy options are operationalised in an Action Plan...”

And the document goes on:

“The policy paper focuses on the urgent and permanent need to develop and sustain a vision of educational development as both a means and an end in the Human Resource Development thrust to which the national community has been sensitised and to which it must become committed. It focuses on ways and means of promoting meaningful participation by the national community in the educational effort as the only method by which constant improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the system can be guaranteed.”

Mr. Vice-President, when I look at those members of the task force at the front of this document, there is a listing of the individuals who comprised this task force. I see Mr. Carol Keller, Chairman, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine; Dr. Ewart Taylor, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine; Mr. Kenrick Seepersad, Director of Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education; Mr. Holison Gift, Director, Educational Planning Unit, Ministry of Education; Dr. Esla Lynch, Special Educator; Mr. Justin Paul, Director—I wonder where he is now? Technical/Vocational Education and Training—Well at that time I believe he was in the Ministry of Education. Now I do not know where the hon. Minister of Education has caused him to go. Mrs. Maureen Manchouck, Ag. President,

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National Institute of Higher Education (Research, Science and Technology); Miss Carol Logie, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine; Mrs. Edna Borde-Williams, Principal II, Junior Secondary School; Mr. Ibrahim Ishmael, Principal II, Senior Comprehensive School; Sr. Paul D'Ornellas, Retired Educator and former Principal of St. Joseph's Convent Port of Spain, a person for whom I am sure many of us have tremendous respect and regard; Dr. Eric Drue, Guidance Officer, Guidance Unit, Ministry of Education; Dr. Karen Moore, Guidance Officer Guidance Unit, Ministry of Education; Fr. Gerard Pantin, Director, SERVOL Life Centre; Dr. Clyde Maurice, Educator; Mr. Josh Henry, Administrative Services and Human Resource Manager, Trinidad Cement Limited; Mrs. Yvonne Pinder, Principal I, Primary School; Ms. Savitri Pargass, First Vice-President (TTUTA) (Professional Development); Mrs. Nella Todd, Teacher Educator, Valsayn Teachers' College; Mrs. Pamella Benson, Library Services, Office of the Prime Minister; Dr. Claudia Harvey, Ag. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs; Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie (who is not here today) Educator, Tobago; and Mr. Lennox Bernard, Curriculum Officer, Ministry of Education.

Mr. Vice-President, I specifically made mention of these persons who comprised this task force because, in my respectful view, they represent a very broad cross-section of all those persons and institutions that are, in fact, involved in our education system in Trinidad and Tobago. They are well recognized people. They are persons who have experience in the field of education and certainly, in terms of their report, it is my respectful view that this task force report is really a comprehensive, holistic view of our education system in Trinidad and Tobago.

I raise this point in light of Prof. Ramchand's concerns that he expressed because whilst I agree with some of the points that he has made, I was in fact a bit apprehensive about some of the other comments that he made. I, myself, like so many of us in this honourable Chamber, have passed through a system where we have done our 'O' levels, 'A' levels, CXC. and have passed through the University of the West Indies. I am sure my friend, Sen. Carol Cuffy-Dowlal and Sen. Penelope Beckles will concur with me that there are many others who are today holding positions as Ministers in Government who did, in fact, pass through the University of the West Indies system.

Whilst we recognize that there are problems, at the same time, the nature of the education that we had in that institution was really a true form of education. We were fortunate, especially those of us who did law, to be at the Cave Hill

Campus of the University of the West Indies and if ever you would learn about the culture, the society, the politics of our region at large it is at an institution like the University of the West Indies. It is a fact that at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies all students of the Caribbean who are pursuing degrees in law must in fact go to the Cave Hill Campus for the second and third year of their LL.B. degree, and indeed, there are two law schools that students of the Caribbean must attend: the Norman Manley Law School and the Hugh Wooding Law School.

3.45 p.m.

I must say that these institutions do play a very significant role insofar as the regional integration is concerned. Sen. Prof. Ramchand made mention of the bureaucrats who will argue in favour of regional integration and the need for the University of the West Indies. Well, at the risk of being labelled or dubbed a bureaucrat, certainly, we, on this side, would like to re-affirm our commitment to the regional institution of the University of the West Indies. It is an institution—

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Mr. Vice-President, through you, I would just like to explain to the Senator—and I thought I made it very clear—that my proposals about an autonomous college of the University of the West Indies were in no way intended to suggest a dismantling of the University of the West Indies or to be any kind of impediment to regional integration. In fact, my plans and proposals for a slimming down and a more effective agenda within the university have very much to do with strengthening the University of the West Indies and strengthening the regional integration movement.

Sen. N. Mohammed: Mr. Vice-President, I appreciate the clarification by Sen. Prof. Ramchand. I made the point for the simple reason of putting on record our position insofar as the University of the West Indies is concerned. We certainly support Sen. Prof. Ramchand when he speaks of the need to rationalize the actual system in the university. There is, of course, need to update, to rationalize, in terms of programmes, of courses and so forth. There would always be that need to update the system.

With respect to the Motion that Sen. Prof. Spence has before us, in the context of the University of the West Indies, our view is that we need to strengthen the University of the West Indies and moreso, the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies. Recently there were problems when students were demonstrating because of an impending hike in fees. I can tell you from my own experience that in the days when I entered the University of the West Indies, I paid

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a nominal entrance fee; I think it was \$200-odd, with a caution fee of \$150. By the time I entered law school, because of the changing economic circumstances in the country, a Cess had been imposed, and in terms of our tertiary education level it became a situation where greater fees had to be paid. I understand recently the proposed fee hike would go from \$4,000 to approximately \$7,000. I do not have the actual figures with me, but that, generally, would be the economic cost per student. We understand the economic climate, but at the same time we would hope that efforts would be made to assist those students who are in need of help.

Under the People's National Movement, one of the cornerstones of our policies on education has been with respect to equality of opportunity for all. Under the PNM it is a fact that free primary and secondary school places were guaranteed and, to an extent, our tertiary level for many years, was, in fact, subsidized. Our position remains that of equality of opportunity. So that not because a person cannot afford to pay the university fees, he would be denied that opportunity to have access to a tertiary level of education, but he would be able to do so on the basis of merit. Over the years, that was one policy of the People's National Movement that could hardly be criticized.

We do recognize, however, as Sen. Prof. Ramchand has pointed out, that there is a gap from our secondary school system into our university. He put it as the 20,000 grouping; some 20,000 post-secondary students who have difficulty finding places in other higher levels of education in the country. We recognize that there is that gap and certainly we are of the view that very close attention has to be paid in this particular area. It needs a coming together of the minds.

In fact, I think the White Paper deals with the whole question of further education and it distinguishes between a subsector one and subsector two category. There is even reference in this White Paper to the community college concept which, I believe, originated under the NAR administration. I am quite curious to know whether it has been pursued and what is the present Government's position with respect to these matters.

We acknowledge and recognize that there is this need to have a greater level of co-ordination in terms of our higher educational institutions that exist in the country today. We need a framework to bring about that level of co-ordination. Sen. Prof. Spence made mention of the establishment of NIHERST and mention has been made about the White Paper in 1977 that led to the establishment of NIHERST. Today I understand that NIHERST operates at basically two levels; there

is a science and technology part of NIHERST; there is a school of languages; I understand, a college of health sciences; nursing, and I believe, information and technology.

Our position is that NIHERST is perhaps in the best position to be the core of this type of co-ordinating agency. I remember a few months ago when the Immigration (Caribbean Community Skilled Nationals) Bill was being debated in this Chamber, the question of accreditation was raised. Insofar as these higher education institutes are concerned, we believe that, perhaps, NIHERST could be the body to focus on accreditation because it is a very important aspect of our tertiary level of education.

We know that NIHERST's main purpose had been for the preparation of a science and technology policy for the Government. I know for a fact that in 1995 when the then PNM administration demitted office that NIHERST was in the process of preparing such a policy. We are very curious to know what is the status of that science and technology policy. I understand, as well, that way back in 1995, I believe a committee had been set up to treat with the concept of a NIHERST-type college. Perhaps we would be able to get some more information on the workings of this particular committee and what has been the outcome.

3.55 p.m.

We believe however we set up this coordinating agency, or however the framework comes about, there has to be some kind of link with the University of the West Indies. We believe that link is very important. We are also a bit apprehensive about calling it a university of Trinidad and Tobago. As I mentioned before, we are committed to the University of the West Indies and we feel that we need to strengthen the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Vice-President, Prof. Ramchand, in referring to the White Paper made mention of some of the other problems with further education. I am sure many Senators would know that as one drives throughout the country, on the East/West Corridor, Chaguanas and south Trinidad, one sees that there has been a recent surge of privately run schools being set up. I know for a fact that many students who have passed through our secondary schools and may have attained "A" level passes and so forth, but who were unable to get into the University of the West Indies, or who preferred not to go there, are sent by their parents to these privately-run institutions to pursue further education from international institutions.

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We are a bit concerned about the standard and quality of the courses being offered to these unsuspecting students. I know for a fact that there are programmes as the ABE, the AAT and ACCA which are very good, and at the end I think one may get a diploma or degree. However, we feel there ought to be mechanisms in place to monitor and regulate these privately-run institutions simply to ensure that people are getting quality, because in some cases one has to pay very exorbitant tuition fees and yet when one goes to a particular institution there may not be any tutors. What is there to protect and seek the students' interests? I am sure in many instances some people can be easily ripped off. I am not referring to any institution in particular, but it is in fact a development in recent times in our country.

Mr. Vice-President, the hon. Minister of Education graced us with his presence last week—he is here again today—when he made a contribution which reminded me of a little rhyme we used to say in school about going around the mulberry bush. He is going around dealing with every other aspect of our education system except at the tertiary level, and I wish he had said a little more about the Government's position with respect to that.

The reports that I have read in the newspapers about the Minister's contribution last week seem to suggest that this UNC administration is, in fact, responsible for introducing Spanish in primary schools. For the record, I feel I need to reiterate, as my colleague Sen. Alfred pointed out last week, that since 1994, at a meeting organized by the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs, that decision pertaining to the need to have Spanish introduced in our primary schools was discussed and a decision had been taken to that effect.

Mr. Vice-President, I say this because as we just heard from the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was here a short while ago, under the PNM administration a tremendous amount of energy and focus was placed in making Trinidad and Tobago the gateway for the Americas. We were establishing ourselves as the financial and diplomatic centre not just for the Caribbean but also the Latin American nations. There was the setting up of the ACS headquarters right here in Trinidad and Tobago under the Manning administration, and with all these developments taking place in terms of our trade relations and so forth. Also, our nearest neighbours are Spanish-speaking people hence we feel that Spanish is, indeed, an important subject that ought to be taught in our schools.

Indeed, given the cosmopolitan nature of our society, we believe too, that if the denominational boards wish to introduce Arabic or Hindi into the syllabus they may do so, and I am sure Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj would support that move.

Mr. Vice-President, once again I wish to indicate our support for Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion and to reaffirm our commitment to the University of the West Indies.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. Vice-President, I was hoping to put a question to the hon. Senator before she concluded, would you allow me to put the question to her?

Mr. Vice-President: Yes, Senator.

Sen. Prof. Spence: The Senator seemed to have been suggesting that there could not be two universities in Trinidad and Tobago, I wonder if she can say why she thinks there cannot be two universities with a population of our size?

Sen. N. Mohammed: Mr. Vice-President, for the simple reason that already with the one university that we have there is a problem of funding. There will be an economic cost attached to it. I think it is a matter of dollars and cents, so we would have some concerns.

Sen. Nirupa Oudit: Mr. Vice-President, I am very pleased to be able to support Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion on tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago. I think it is very appropriate, particularly, that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago should take the lead in reorganizing the tertiary education system to ensure efficiency, continuity and the maintenance of high quality. It is particularly appropriate that the Government should do it, because as we have heard from the contributions of many other Senators, there are many entrepreneurs setting up in Trinidad and Tobago providing educational or quasi-educational facilities and it is very important that the people who are users of these facilities be safeguarded.

The more important reason, of course, is that just as the 20th Century was one in which industry and the industrial revolution was paramount, so it is that in the 21st Century knowledge is going to be the currency of growth. That, to me, is the single most important reason. If knowledge is going to be the currency of growth

of the 21st Century, the Government of the country must take charge of that simply because it manages the important resources of the country. Knowledge must be invested in our human resources. From that point of view it is very important that the Government takes the lead in this process.

Mr. Vice-President, we have heard good things and bad things about the tertiary education in the country, and I would single out one institution which has been created within the last five or six years, that, in my opinion has contributed significantly to education. That institute is the Institute of Business, which in the short time of its existence, I think, has made a significant contribution to managerial and business education in the country. By singling it out for the good work that it is doing, I do not mean by extension to seem to be saying negative things about other institutions. There are other institutions that have also done very well, but in my experience, the Institute of Business has done quite well. It has made internationally high calibre of experts in management and business available to the local business community especially, at affordable rates. The value of this exercise in bringing local skills and experience up to international standards, I believe, has not yet been quantified. I would like to recognize the contribution that it has made.

4.05 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, the second point I wish to make concerns education in general in the country. I wish very much that there would be less of a holiday-driven approach to education in the country. I am not talking only about the latest incident where, because it is a leap year next year, I understand there will be five days off at carnival. I am talking of the concept that every time there is a celebration in education, a holiday is granted. If a school wins scholarships, a holiday is granted; if it is the mid-term, a holiday is granted. This latest incident of the carnival week holiday is just one more example of our holiday-driven approach to education. I know there have been many reasons advanced and I am sure many more reasons can be advanced as to why we have to have five days away from school.

I wonder, do we ever take the approach at the Ministry of Education to call in principals whenever there is an opportunity like this—five days, because of whatever reason, or three days in addition, that the Ministry would call in principals, TUTTA and whoever else might be involved—to see what we can do with the children.

I make that comment in light of the fact that if we are preparing our country to be an international player, while we are at home celebrating all our major occasions with holidays, other children in other countries are learning more and more, while children are at home in Trinidad and Tobago. The children in Singapore, India and parts of Europe are learning additional skills and being exposed to additional ideas which will better equip them to face the life that they have to face. Our children should have that same opportunity. I make that comment as a concerned parent and as someone who interviews people for jobs and find a high percentage unemployable. Sometimes one has to interview 300 persons, and two are found to be employable—although all 300 would have the qualifications. There is so much work to be done with our human resources.

Having made those two comments, I wish to propose an amendment to be moved on behalf of Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand to Motion 1 under Private Business standing in the name of Prof. Sen. J. Spence.

Delete the period at the end of the resolution and add the following: “by:

- (1) the creation of a Technical University of Trinidad and Tobago comprising the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, the San Fernando Technical Institute and all other Government funded tertiary institutions of learning research and development; and
- (2) giving to this Technical University of Trinidad and Tobago responsibility for evaluating, accrediting and rationalizing into a coherent system all other institutions, courses and programmes from post-primary to university not part of either the formal secondary school system or the University of the West Indies.”

I thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

Question put and agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung): Mr. Vice-President, before I move the adjournment of the sitting, I wish to indicate to this honourable Senate that I would like to have the Variation of Appropriation Bill, which I will introduce in the Senate, taken through all its stages at the next sitting.

I now wish to propose that this Senate do now adjourn to Thursday, August, 7, at 2.00 p.m.

Adjournment

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Mr. Vice-President: Before we consider the Motion for the adjournment, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 11, I have granted leave to Sen. Danny Montano to raise the following matter with the appropriate Minister on the Motion for the adjournment, the interference by the Minister of Finance into the affairs of the First Citizens Bank.

Because of the terms of this matter to be raised, I direct the hon. Senator's attention to Standing Order 35(4) and (5) and trust that he would adhere to the spirit of these clauses.

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Sen. Danny Montano: Mr. Vice-President, I certainly will make every effort to confine myself to the subject matter and within the Standing Orders. The subject really became a bit of an issue in the newspaper sometime recently.

I will like to merely recount the facts as I have them. Of course, if I say anything wrong I would like the Minister to make any corrections.

The facts are pretty well set out in a newspaper article in the *Daily Express* of July 5, 1997 and I would like to read from the article. As I understand it the facts are fairly accurate. I quote:

“...the current impasse between Kuei Tung and senior bank executives had its origins in a meeting on February 19 attended by Minister Kuei Tung; chairman of the National Gas Company (NGC), Steve Ferguson; chairman of Petrotrin, Donald Baldeosingh; Carl Manakee of the Ministry of Finance and FCB's Hannays ...”

—who was at the time chairman of the First Citizens Bank. It went on to say and I quote:

“that meeting centered around the exchange ratein particular, the impact on the rate of the injection of some US \$8 million into the banking system by NGC and Petrotrin..

...Hannays refused to comply until the proposal and all its implications were analysed by the bank's Ag. CEO Larry Howai and his technical team.

On Monday, February 24, Hannays, accompanied by Howai, again met with Minister Kuei Tung to discuss the bank's position, forwarded in a written document. The bank's position was that the minister's proposal

would be inimical to the bank's interest and to the financial sector as a whole because FCB's technical team felt it would fuel speculation in the foreign exchange market."

4.15 p.m.

The TV 6 news report said that Kuei Tung rejected First Citizens Bank position. The report went on to say:

"Hannays met with Prime Minister Basdeo Panday the next day (February 25), and briefed him on meetings with Kuei Tung and the advice against the minister's proposal for the exchange rate. Hannays also offered his resignation which was rejected by Panday, who told Hannays to go with the advice of the bank's technical team."

That sort of sets the stage and is basically the issue that we are talking about. My understanding is that the Minister of Finance called this meeting in order to create a situation by the injection of US funds from the state-owned enterprises, into the banking sector in order to cause a reduction in the rate of exchange.

In June of this year, there were many reports in the newspaper that the Chief Executive Officer of the First Citizens Bank—Mr. Howai, who is acting in the position, was to be confirmed in the position by the board of directors. It is my understanding that the Minister of Finance directed the board not to do so before an executive search was conducted. It appears that a search was done by a consultant, and four or five names were put forward. It is my understanding—and again, the Minister can correct me if it is not so—that a certain gentleman by the name of David Hackett, who is a director of Petrotrin, and also a senior executive of the Royal Bank, was not on that list but the board was directed by the Minister to interview. I am advised that his resumé was forwarded to the bank from the Minister's office. That is my understanding, Sir.

On June 28, 1997, notwithstanding the interviews, and in consideration of the recommendations of other consultants, Mr. Howai was confirmed in the position as the Chief Executive Officer and I understand that was done with the concurrence and blessings of the Central Bank.

By July 8, 1997 there is now considerable confusion and a headline in the *Independent* says, "Kuei-Tung—Hannays must go". Whatever Mr. Hannays' sins were, we do not know for certain, other than the fact that there seems to be two

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issues on which he disagreed with the Minister of Finance; one seems to be the management of the exchange rate, and the other seems to be the selection of the Chief Executive Officer. So he seems to have gone against the wishes of the Minister on two occasions.

Resulting from that, the chairman, Mr. Hannays was told to resign or a special meeting would be called and he would be dismissed. It begs the question, why? Why was Mr. Hannays' head put on the chopping block? These are the two issues that we know about; if there were others, I beg the Minister to advise us exactly what they were. Looking at it like this, and considering the moves of the Minister to attempt to cause a correction and an adjustment in the rate of exchange, two issues seem to be involved.

One is the propriety of the move by the Minister in trying to adjust the rate of exchange in the way he did. In other words, was it proper for the Minister to interfere directly with a commercial bank, state-owned or not in order to create an adjustment to the exchange rate?

The second issue is, what was the Minister's motive for that interference? One could assume that the intention was to create a situation where the rate of exchange begins to fall, if that is so, then it becomes a gross—

Mr. Vice-President: I would ask the Senator not to speculate on the Minister's motive. More particularly, as a result of the Standing Order to which I referred you which talks about imputing improper motives. I would prefer if you keep your contribution towards the factual side of the discourse and not speculate on the question of the motives of the Minister.

Sen. D. Montano: I will be guided, Mr. Vice-President.

As I said, it begs the question, why has the Minister done this. I would read a part of an article which appeared in the *Daily Express* on Monday, July 28, 1997 which was written by the economist Dennis Pantin and he has put his fingers on the issues quite nicely. It says:

"The less rigid of the advocates of economic liberalisation would identify some role for a Central Bank in terms of 'managing' a floating exchange rate system."

In that context, I would draw the attention of Senators to the fact that when I read the first article, one would notice that none from the Central Bank was in that meeting. It is my understanding that in Trinidad and Tobago as well as other western countries, it is primarily the Central Bank which manages the rate of exchange and it is not done by the direct interference of the Minister of Finance.

The article goes on to say:

"The discussion here turns on the fact that speculative interventions can be very destabilising. First, there is a greater than anticipated and unexplained change in the currency, whether depreciation or appreciation. Second, the market responds like a rubber ball that has been dropped from hip-level. That is, it hardly ever simply returns to the original level from which it was dropped but 'over-shoots'. In this process of wild gyration, a tremendous amount of money can be made.

It is for these reasons that the neo-liberal literature concedes to an assumed independent Central Bank utilising the country's foreign exchange reserves to minimise some types of exchange rate fluctuation.

Interestingly, none of the comments have raised the fact that this intervention contradicts the very case for the so-called float and it is in direct contradiction of the theology of the neo-liberal model. Remember, market forces—not finance ministers—are supposed to be the superior determinant of the exchange rate. "

In other words, Kuei Tung sought to achieve a revaluation of the TT\$ by a process involving the two largest gross earners of foreign exchange in the economy."

It goes on:

"Washington must be furious; not the White House but the multilateral agencies."

Look who's forcing the foreign exchange market in Trinidad and Tobago: Kuei Tung, Ferguson and Baldeosingh!

The question that arises is whether the enforcers of the foreign exchange market will now meet with the new Central Bank Governor, Winston Dookeran, and seek to get this institution to intervene in the foreign exchange market to achieve the same originally requested revaluation from the FCB?"

4.25 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, in the last budget debate we had in this honourable Senate, I raised the question of the foreign exchange and the Minister's response was that a budget debate was not the place for a debate on the foreign exchange. I did not have a chance to reply but my question is: What better place is there to discuss the

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foreign exchange in the country? [*Desk thumping*] In the budget, he created a measure whereby deposits of US dollars would be taxed at the rate of 10 per cent which was in order to stabilize the rate of exchange.

Mr. Vice-President, what I had said was that there are many things that he could do and that every morning the first thing on his mind should be, "What could I do about the rate of foreign exchange?" I certainly never imagined that he would directly interfere with the administration or management of a commercial bank to do so. There are many other things, not the least of which would be to create a commercial bias to hold TT dollars as opposed to US dollars, in terms of the taxation of interest and so forth, but we have had none of that. What we have had is a very dangerous and damaging speculative move upon the management of foreign exchange.

Mr. Vice-President, in terms of the interference by the Minister, I have had telephone calls from individuals, advising me that it did not only begin and end with the exchange rate, but it also involved letters from the Ministry of Finance to the First Citizens Bank, requesting information on individual files, which was totally improper. If I am wrong, the Minister of Finance can say that it never happened, but that is what I was advised. If that is so, then it is completely wrong.

One has to look at the assets of the First Citizens Bank and wonder what is being done here. Is the company about to be put on the chopping block or auctioned off to close associates of the UNC Government and the Minister? Is that what we are likely to be seeing, Sir? Is that the reason for the interference? The long and short of it is that there can be no justification by the Minister of Finance in the affairs of the First Citizens Bank and, specifically, in this kind of management of foreign exchange.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

The Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism (Sen. The Hon. Brian Kuei Tung): Mr. Vice-President, I know that Sen. Montano has ministerial ambition. [*Laughter*] I know that he is going to have a long period of stewardship, at least until the year 2015 and I hope that by that time, he would have learnt some lessons from this Minister of Finance as well as other Ministers, as to how to behave himself as a Government Minister. [*Interruption*] Does the Senator want to join the debate? I would welcome a contribution from her. [*Interruption*] I have

already said that we are bringing a dangerous dogs bill. *[Laughter]* We would muzzle people whose bark is worse than their bite!*[Laughter]*

Mr. Vice-President, one of the first lessons I would like Sen. Montano to be aware of is that he should not believe anything that people say. Worse yet, what he sees in black and white he should either accept with a pinch of salt or not accept at all. The hon. Senator made an entire contribution, not based upon facts that he researched or determined for himself but, instead, based upon pure speculation.

Certainly, this honourable Senate does not expect that I would come here and debate the private and confidential business of any bank, far more a bank of which I am the Corporation Sole. It is just not right. It is not the done thing, but then this so-called minister-in-waiting does not understand what Government is. I do not think he understands what the private sector is. As Corporation Sole, I have every right, obligation and responsibility to give general and specific directions to the Board of Directors of the companies of which I am Corporation Sole. *[Desk thumping]* That is a fact! As I said, the Senator is going to learn some lessons in what the Minister of Finance is supposed to do. He has built a case based upon pure hearsay and reports he has read in the newspaper which he does not know to be facts. He admitted that in his presentation. He said, "if it is true", "if he is so advised". He has made an "if" presentation.

Mr. Vice-President, I suggest to him, therefore, that if there was a meeting in February, it was meant to discuss the bank's business which I am not prepared to divulge in public, not even to this honourable Senate, regrettably, because it is the bank's business.

The Member said, from his understanding, that the Central Bank is responsible for First Citizens Bank. Again, he does not seem to understand that the Central Bank—*[Interruption]* The Senator said that the Central Bank is a regulator of commercial banks. *[Crosstalk]*

Hon. Senators: He never said that.

Hon. B. Kuei Tung: Therefore, the Central Bank cannot dictate to First Citizens Bank about anything. I represent the shareholders—*[Interruption]*

Sen. Montano: Hon. Minister, thank you for giving way. Mr. Vice-President, I did not say that at all. I said that the Central Bank was charged primarily with a responsibility for the management of the rate of exchange. That is what I said.

Hon. B. Kuei Tung: Mr. Vice-President, it is tea-time so I would not bother to wait and ask the *Hansard* to give me a copy of it. It does not really add to anything the hon. Senator has said.

Mr. Vice-President, the point is that I want to endorse, in this honourable Senate, the fact that as Corporation Sole, the chairman and the board report to the shareholder, not to me as Minister of Finance as Corporation Sole.

I just want to read two quick passages for the Senate to understand what role I played in this. As a matter of fact, I enjoy a reputation among all the other companies that report to me as Corporation Sole, as being the one who hardly ever gets involved. I do not have anything to say with respect to the operations of these companies, but where it has financial and legal matters, as Corporation Sole, as I said, I have to give general and specific directions to these boards.

In the case of the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer—let me state categorically that I had absolutely no interest in any candidate for the job of Chief Executive Officer—in March, 1997, the Permanent Secretary advised the Chairman in a letter which says:

“The First Citizens Bank should take steps to advertise and fill the position of Chief Executive Officer as it had an acting CEO for a long time. Please note that the approval of the Minister is required, prior to making such appointment.”

It was written by the Permanent Secretary.

What transpired thereafter, is that the chairman decided that he, without any reference to the Minister, has the authority to appoint who he wants. I have no argument with that. If he feels he has that decision then he should put himself in the role of the Corporation Sole, but he cannot be chairman and ignore the request—which is a legitimate one—from the Ministry of Finance through its Permanent Secretary, that the approval of the Minister of Finance is needed before making such an appointment.

Lo and behold, I think it was on June 26, I was sitting at home and saw on the news, that the chairman announced the appointment of Mr. Larry Howai. I take umbrage to that. I take umbrage to the fact he had been given a directive and he blatantly refused to carry it out. I take umbrage by saying, that if this is one issue where he is not going to follow the directives, on which issue is he going to follow directives? I then made moves to have him removed because I realized that he did

not plan to co-operate with the Minister of Finance or the Corporation Sole. I am sorry about his behaviour and I am also sorry that he chose to behave in the way he did.

Mr. Vice-President, I can give one other piece of information which I think, would assist me in refuting the Senator's wild allegations. On July 14, after he had resigned, the Chairman, Mr. Vishnu Ramlogan, wrote me saying that the board has directed that a full report be prepared that will give all the facts and circumstances surrounding the appointment of Mr. Larry Howai as the Chief Executive Officer. In researching the matter, a letter dated June 25, 1997 written by the former chairman was found. This letter—and they included a copy of the letter for me—is a full account of the caption subject except for one detail. At paragraph 8, page 3, the letter omits to say:

“That the Board advised the former Chairman to follow the instruction stated, ‘please note, that the approval of the Minister, as required, prior to the making of such an appointment’. It seems that this advice was ignored.”

He just refused because he felt that he could have assumed powers onto himself that he did not have. In light of that, I said, if this is the way he plans to behave I am sorry, there is no way I could work with a chairman in whom I have lost total confidence.

Mr. Vice-President, that is my case.

I thank you very much.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 4.36 p.m.