

SENATE*Tuesday, January 27, 1998*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS
(DISHONOURED CHEQUES) BILL**

Bill to reform the law relating to dishonoured cheques and similar negotiable instruments brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister of Public Administration and Information*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate. [Hon. W. Mark]

Question put and agreed to.

PAPERS LAID

1. The Exchequer and Audit (Amendment to the First Schedule) Order, 1997. [*The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark)*]
2. Report on the Status of the Death Penalty in Trinidad and Tobago. [Hon. W. Mark]

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, before dealing with Motions, I seek leave to deal with the Bills Second Reading under "Private Business".

Agreed to.

**MESSAGE THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (INC'N.) BILL**

Question put and agreed to, That a Bill for the Incorporation of the Massage Therapy Association of Trinidad and Tobago and for matters incidental thereto, be now read a second time.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill referred to a special select committee of the Senate chosen by the President as follows: Sen. C. Cuffy-Dowlat (Chairperson); Sen. N. Baksh; Sen. C. Alfred; Sen. Dr. E. Mc Kenzie.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. President, I beg to move,

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

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

Be it resolved that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago take the lead in reorganizing and integrating the tertiary education system by creating a Technical University of Trinidad and Tobago so as to ensure efficiency and maintenance of high quality.

Mr. President, as you will recall, this Motion had been introduced by me in the previous session of Parliament but expired before we concluded debate. For this reason, I have reintroduced it now. Of course, it has to take its course in the usual way and, therefore, I have to speak again on it. I will not bore my Senatorial colleagues by repeating what I have said before. I will try to summarize, as concisely as possible, the points I made on the last occasion and hope that there will be a response. Since I did not sum up the last time, in summing up I may expand on some of these points. Indeed, really, it is the third time I am doing a similar Motion because I did so in July of 1995. I ask Senators who are particularly interested, to read the *Hansard* record debate which followed in July 1995 and, of course, the one in September of last year.

I want to introduce the topic this time by just reading a little from the summary of the *Higher Education in the learning society* which is a report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the United Kingdom, which is referred to as the Dearing Report after the name of the Chairman. One needs to consider a bit what one is looking for in education on the whole, in this case, tertiary education. I quote:

“A vision for 20 years: the learning society

Our title, ‘Higher Education in the learning society’, reflects the vision that informs this report. Over the next 20 years, the United Kingdom must create a society committed to learning throughout life. That commitment will be required from individuals, the state, employers and providers of education and training. Education is life enriching and desirable in its own right. It is fundamental to the achievement of an improved quality of life in the UK.

It should, therefore, be a national policy objective to be world class both in learning at all levels and in a range of research of different kinds. In higher education, this aspiration should be realised through a new compact involving institutions and their staff, students, government, employers and society in general. We see the historic boundaries between vocational and academic education breaking down, with increasingly active partnerships between higher education institutions and the worlds of industry, commerce and public service. In such a compact, each party should recognise its obligation to the others.”

Mr. President, in my view, that could have been written about Trinidad and Tobago because those, indeed, should be our objectives. One of the arguments that I have used and will use for having a university of Trinidad and Tobago is that a national institution is in a better position to achieve some of those goals than, perhaps, a regional institution. This business of looking at higher education goes back to 1977 when there was a White Paper on NIHERST and also part of it was on the University of the West Indies which proposed restructuring of the university. That restructuring takes a very long time. Twenty years ago some of the provisions that were recommended in that 1977 document were accepted by both sides of the Houses of Parliament at that time. There was no political division on that White Paper.

The university has been long in modifying itself to meet the suggestions outlined in that White Paper, one of the basic proposals being that there be more line management within the university rather than management by committee. The committee structure is one which is very democratic, but really does not lead to a great deal of efficiency or flexibility in the operations of the institution. The White Paper was set out and I think we had, twenty years ago, a very good vision for what we hoped to achieve in the area of higher education. Indeed, NIHERST is really intended to be a university of Trinidad and Tobago. We call it the institute of higher education but that was the original intention.

If one looks at the *Hansard* records for the debate on the setting up of NIHERST which took place in 1984, one will see that the original concept had undergone a very drastic modification by the time it eventually was presented to Parliament. Indeed, the Opposition speakers at that time, especially Dr. Brinsley Samaroo who was a member of the DLP of the House in those days, pointed out very clearly that the original concept being modified, no longer intended to incorporate a number of other tertiary levels into one strong central institution but had a rather nebulous role in co-ordinating the activities of these institutions. Of

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. SPENCE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

course, it really was unable to do so as one might have forecast, given the nature of individual institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. I do not think he has ever been able to incorporate the activities of John Donaldson Technical Institute or San Fernando Technical Institute. That, in my opinion, was lost opportunity.

I hope in this debate we would not take partisan positions because I do not think that higher education is one which requires that sort of approach. Indeed, in the United Kingdom, the Dearing Committee was set up by the Conservative Government but most of its recommendations were accepted by the Labour Government and are now being implemented. It is not a partisan discussion that we should enter into. I only mention the position taken by the Opposition to indicate that the change was not a unanimous one whereas the original proposal was accepted unanimously.

The question which immediately arises when one talks about setting up a university of Trinidad and Tobago is, does this mean that one is going to adversely affect the University of the West Indies? In my opinion such will not be the case. I have pointed out in previous presentations that in a country with a population of 1.2 million, it would be the norm if we were really going to advance, to have at least two universities. There are many countries where if you do the ratio of population to university, you would find that about a half million population is the size population which would have one university. You can do this for Singapore, United Kingdom and various countries. In Costa Rica the ratio comes out to be 500,000 to 600,000 people and there is a university. So two universities can quite comfortably exist, given the size of the population, therefore, the number of persons that one would want to have in tertiary education. I would say even moreso now because clearly, in the future, our economy is very much based on knowledge. It is knowledge that will propel us and bring us wealth as opposed to material things despite the fact that we still have substantial energy resources in Trinidad and Tobago. It is knowledge to exploit those resources that will propel us forward.

We need to have a much larger number of persons going through to tertiary education. The proportion in Trinidad is about 7 per cent. In the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries it is about 51 per cent and other developing countries like Trinidad and Tobago, somewhere in between. It is surprising for a country that has had such a strong secondary educational system for so many years.

What would, in fact, the University of the West Indies be? Let us look at the presentation made by Sir Allistair McIntyre who is the former Vice-Chancellor of the University, and gave a lecture in the Eric Williams Memorial Lecture series.

1.45 p.m.

At that stage he said that he looked forward to the future when a number of national institutions would operate more directly with the national communities, being linked together perhaps by the regional institution, the University of the West Indies, which might even become a post graduate institution in the future, rather than doing undergraduate teaching. Certainly, one can envisage that the University of the West Indies relieved of some of the pressures to do a number of technological subjects, might be able to concentrate more on its academic and regional role. To my mind, this would help the university rather than hinder it.

To me, it is an admirable arrangement if there can be two universities in a country such as Trinidad and Tobago. One with a more academic orientation which is necessary for the development of society, and the other one very closely linked with the business community with developments in the real world, not looking to research and future developments, but more concerned with the active dissipation in production purposes and the like in the society on a day-to-day basis. These two would be complementary rather than the reverse.

In any case, I do not think there should be a monopoly in university education. There will not be, because in this country a number of private initiatives are taking place. This is one of the reasons I keep trying to promote the idea of a national university. Many of these private initiatives are very good and helpful to society. They will continue to occur. Some may not be so good and may lack in quality. There should be at least one central system of which the population can be assured would have quality, flexibility and would be responsive to the needs of the society. Perhaps in certain areas it might not be as economically viable as those that would be needed to run a private institution.

That is not to say by any means, that I am suggesting that there should be a government run university. It should be closely linked to the private sector. If incorporating John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, San Fernando Technical Institute and the like is being thought about, those institutions could be privatized and would not be run in the way which they are, currently. If one is starting such an institution it would be useful to have both the human and physical resources which already exist at those institutions. I do not think that one needs to start from scratch because there is a base.

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. SPENCE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

One can take the institutions which now exist such as John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, San Fernando Technical Institute, Cipriani Labour College, Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, the College of Health Sciences, the College of Languages and others and add the extra mural department called the Continuing Studies Programme at the University of the West Indies which is a national system. This was set up by Edmund Ramesar. I have always marvelled at the fact that he was able to set up that extra mural department which is basically self-financing. The only additional resources it has is from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and not the university. I could see a national institution if it were well developed and functioning, taking over the function now performed by the Continuing Studies Department of the University of the West Indies and allow the university to concentrate more on its outreach to the other countries in the region, and not just Trinidad and Tobago.

I do not see a conflict there, but a complementarity, and perhaps, a little competition. I am not suggesting that a technical university would only offer university degrees. A point we should address is the alternatives. One alternative is to stay as we are with our technical institutes. I think there are many small institutions which do not have the critical mass within themselves to function effectively and with quality. I think at some stage we have to address the problems of these institutions and then allow the proliferation of all the private sector initiatives which occur, with the dangers that may carry. For example, in one of today's newspapers, a community college is being set up in Tobago. As far as I can understand from reading the article, it is a husband and wife team. I may be wrong. Perhaps the article does not fully explain what is happening.

That leads me to the point of community college. I would like to address the issue of the alternative—which has been suggested by both the NAR and PNM governments, and now the UNC Government—to the proposal of a technical university, that there should be a community college. I found it very difficult to determine what is meant when these governments say that they are setting up a community college. They never spelt out the idea to the population. It was mentioned in the budget presentation.

I looked at all the presentations by the Minister of Education, the Minister of Planning and Development and the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister to see what I could glean with respect to the proposal of the community college. Absolutely nothing was said. I do not know if it is intended to incorporate the existing institution or whether it is a new institution to be set up under the National

Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST). I do not think that the constitution of this institute is suitable to have the community college as an integral part. Is it spawned in setting it up separately? For none of these questions was I able to get answers. I look forward to responses from the Government in this debate to see what is meant by community college. Most people in Trinidad and Tobago know what the university is, but if they are asked what is a community college most of them would be puzzled because they do not know much about the concept. If we are going in that direction we have to explain carefully what we mean. I think we need to consult with the population. This decision seems to have been taken without much public consultation, as far as I am aware.

In 1980, after the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology was proposed, a steering committee was set up and some of us went to other countries to look at technology institutions, universities and community colleges. I eventually went to the United States and Canada to look at community colleges. Even there, there are differences in their orientation. Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Canada, which is probably a university by now, was at one level. There was another one which started from the system of literacy. They taught people how to read and write. Their education was a range of educational structures from literacy right through to associate degrees.

In some sense the two ideas are not conflicting. They both say we should go a step further than community college at this stage. Even if we are incorporating a technical university, there are aspects which we would want in a community college, such as continuing education as the Dearing Report says for higher education in the United Kingdom. We are now talking about a continuing learning society. Many years ago when I was graduating at Bristol University, while shaking hands with the Vice Chancellor, his address said, "Now Ladies and Gentlemen, you are students. For the rest of your lives you will be students. Some of you may be bad students and you may not study again, but some of you may be good students and would continue to study. Whatever the case, from now on you are students." Now I think more than ever, our society is understanding that concept.

I think we need to look for an institution which would be strongly based in new technologies both in learning and imparting information and meets the needs of today's world. There should be a sound academic base although there is no academic orientation.

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. SPENCE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

A few nights ago I was looking at the learning channel on television which advertises courses which many universities in the United States are now giving by sending out videos, which is distance education. I understand many persons in the country are taking these courses and they can respond on the Internet and get feedback from the professors. This is the new technology with which we are dealing. This is what would be used in the future.

One has to be careful especially in a small country where there are not many different institutions. Some would be of a very high standard and others would not. One of the gentlemen who was being interviewed on this advertisement of the college connection, as it is called, is a teacher. He said that he was very glad that he did those courses because as a teacher, his job is to impart information, and so he was able to learn about the new techniques in imparting information.

1.55 p.m.

Mr. President, that frightened me because, as far as I am concerned, a teacher must educate. Now, in order to educate he must impart information, but if we get to the stage where all he does by way of teaching is impart information and not teach people to think, then small countries like ourselves are in for a rough time. We would not be able to produce the skilled resources to deal with new problems. As long as we are dealing with the same problems, we will develop a routine and, I suppose, we can import the know-how from other countries. However, if we are to deal with our own problems, it is clear that we must have, in addition to the technology, to impart information, to educate our people, teaching them how to think. Sir Arthur Lewis said many years ago that the West Indies being small dots on the map must live by their wits. He did not mean be clever, he meant be well educated.

The other problem seems to be with the system we are developing whereby we are doing our degrees over the Internet, taking degrees from the Morgan University, the Andrews University and the Caribbean Union College. These universities will not be teaching about circumstances in Trinidad and Tobago. Quite naturally, they will be teaching about circumstances in the United States or the United Kingdom. They will be teaching people to think about those problems and not the sort of problems that we have here, which may be quite different. It seems to me important that, in addition to all these initiatives which one does not want stopped and which are welcome because we are part of the global village, we should be sure that we are doing it from a base of our own strong institutions.

I venture to suggest that the two strong institutions that we could have and should have are the University of the West Indies, with a greater academic orientation and a strong post-graduate programme, and a national university, which is more technologically oriented and driven, with close involvement, support and, perhaps, sponsoring by the private productive sector.

With that sort of introduction, I would like to hear what other persons think of the ideas, both in what I have said today and in the previous presentation, but particularly what the Government has for tertiary education, particularly the concept of the community college. I think it is time we did something like what was done in the United Kingdom with the Dearing Report, that is, we should look seriously at tertiary education.

We had a task force several years ago on secondary education and they just barely touched on tertiary education. That is why in the first motion that I moved in this Senate, the concluding motion was modified somewhat and we actually agreed to set up a working group to continue the process. The Government changed at that stage, the matter got lost and now we have set it up again.

On thinking about the sort of resources that there are in Trinidad and Tobago for advising on university structures, I found that there were 15 retired university professors in Trinidad and Tobago, all between the ages of 65 and 70 and so not quite yet in their dotage, and all of whom retired within the last two or three years. This is a wealth of talent that, I suggest, many countries might not have. In addition, there are at least two distinguished senior lecturers that I can think of, who are in the same status and category.

I think that the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, who has recently been dealing with curriculum vitae, would be interested to read the curriculum vitae of these 15 university professors. I am sure he would be impressed.

At this stage, I conclude my remarks.

Secoded by Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt.

Question proposed.

The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Trevor Sudama): Mr. President, I am happy to have this opportunity to participate in this debate giving the Government's views on tertiary education and its position in attempting to reorganize the whole education system.

Tertiary Education
[HON. T. SUDAMA]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

This Motion alludes to the importance of tertiary education with a science and technology orientation and the importance of that in human resource development. It is well known that human resource development, especially with such an orientation, will be a differentiating element in the progress of countries in the future. It is, indeed, critical to national development. However, I would like to spend a few minutes to indicate that the Government views this matter in a holistic manner: that tertiary education does not stand by itself; that the foundation for tertiary education must be well established to have that integration into the tertiary pool.

The Government has, therefore, taken the view that we should strengthen education at all levels and increase access to educational opportunities, starting with the pre-primary level, through primary, secondary and, of course, tertiary level.

Mr. President, you will understand that there is need to see what is taking place at these lower levels of our educational system. I want to indicate briefly that at the pre-primary and primary levels we are, at present, executing a loan obtained from the World Bank to strengthen the systems there, in order to have a greater emphasis on science and technology, particularly from the primary level onwards where we recognize the need to incorporate technological education in the curriculum. Indeed, as I speak, the task force on curriculum is addressing these concerns.

We are seeking, through this initiative at the primary level, both to expand access to primary education, to improve the facilities, to focus more on science and technology and to improve the management and the teacher training aspects of education.

2.05 p.m.

As you are aware, we want to decentralize the management of these schools in order to have greater efficiency and to be able to make decisions much quicker.

We are also looking at that area of the secondary level where we realize that there are a number of weaknesses and deficiencies. One of the critical issues is to expand access to secondary education to all. Not only that, Mr. President, but to reorient the curriculum of secondary education and to ensure that technical education becomes a core element in our secondary education system.

The report on the Consultation on Technical and Vocational Education is now available, and the Government has to take further action. It has in no ambiguous terms, recommended that Technology Education replace Industrial Arts on the curriculum at the lower secondary level, and that a pilot project be initiated, and that Technology Education be placed on the school curriculum as a compulsory subject for all students in the lower secondary level. This is to emphasize the fact that there is need to do that, there is need to build a base and upgrade the feeder system into tertiary education, and particularly tertiary education of a technical nature.

I may add that at this very moment, we are in the process of accessing a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank. The objective of the programme in which we are engaged would be to increase access to main stream secondary education, to improve equity and quality in secondary education, and to rationalize the Ministry of Education's role in technical and vocational education and training and, of course, to improve the internal and external efficiency of the secondary education system including supports for decentralization and improved educational management of the system. So that we want to broaden access to secondary education and we also want to rationalize the technical and vocational aspect of it.

We are also committed to meeting certain targets and you will recall that the Caricom Heads of Government met in July 1977 and recommended that all Governments should aim at achieving universal quality secondary education by the year 2005. In other words, quality secondary education should be available to all by the year 2005 and, therefore, we would have expanded the opportunities and facilities in order to realize that target. This is briefly what we are attempting to do at the primary and secondary levels.

At the tertiary level, where this Motion focusses, first of all, we have to acknowledge that the situation here in Trinidad and Tobago is not very encouraging. At the moment, only about 7 per cent of the post secondary age cohort is receiving tertiary education. This compares very poorly with other countries at similar stages of development as we are, in Trinidad and Tobago, and there are a number of other countries where that percentage is near to 20 per cent, in some cases, in excess of 20—25 and indeed to 30 per cent.

The Caricom Heads of Government recommendation is that we seek to achieve 15 per cent enrollment of this age cohort in tertiary education by the year 2005 and that the Government should make the appropriate investment in attempting to reach that target. Of course, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has accepted

Tertiary Education
[HON. T. SUDAMA]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

those recommendations and we are in the process of mobilizing for achieving that target and looking at all the implications, not the least of which being the financial implications of that goal.

Now, very briefly, what is the present situation with respect to tertiary education? I want to start off by talking about the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies which is the premier institution at the tertiary level in this country. At the moment what we have is total enrollment of about 5,700 full time equivalent students of which over 50 per cent are in the sciences, technology and management fields.

The university has plans to increase full-time student enrollment by 450 per year by the year 2002 when it is hoped that the combined fields of medical sciences, technology, management and entrepreneurship would account for 70 per cent of total enrollment with science and technology alone comprising 61 per cent of the total and at that date, we are hoping that postgraduate enrollment would reach the figure of 20 per cent. That is the perspective of the university with respect to its plans for improvement, expansion and reorientation in tertiary education. As you see, greater emphasis now has been placed on science, technology, management and so forth.

Certainly these plans are commendable, but we are convinced that the numbers graduating, and their range of skills and expertise would not be able to meet the demands of an expanding economy into the next millennium and, therefore, in order to increase the pool of available human resources at the tertiary level, the university has also pledged to work in close collaboration with non-university tertiary level institutions to attempt to lower costs, maintain standards and indeed achieve complementarity where it is felt that perhaps at the first and second year levels, teaching and education can better be handled at a non-university tertiary level institution.

2.15 p.m.

One would then integrate into the university level by having maintained standards which would be required at the first-year, second-year or third-year level, and one would then get into university and get accreditation at the university level. That seems to be the perspective of the university with respect to closer collaboration with the non-university tertiary level institutions which we support. It is hoped that sort of collaboration would bring the required benefits in the number of persons who may be able to access university or tertiary level education.

Mr. President, outside of the university there are many tertiary level-institutions—as, indeed, was mentioned by Sen. Prof. Spence—offering post-secondary education and training. They include technical and vocational institutions, teacher-training colleges, professional schools, schools for continuing studies and adult education programmes. In the last few years the National Skills Development Programme and the Youth Training and Employment Programme were added, which sort of straddles both the secondary and tertiary levels.

As a result of the unprecedented growth in private institutions due to the demand for such education, the non-university tertiary level sector, as characterized by a number of small disparate institutions offering a wide array of programmes and courses at different levels to many target groups, what the Government felt was needed was to develop a coherent integrated system of tertiary education which would facilitate both vertical and horizontal movement. One could move from one level to another without a great deal of difficulty, or one could move from one stream to another, maybe from a more academic to a more technical orientation and *vice versa*, without a great deal of difficulty.

One of the concerns was how the gap could be bridged between university and non-university institutions at the tertiary level. Therefore, Government's initiatives were focussed on integrating elements of the existing sector into a more cohesive tertiary level system. This is how the community college idea was proposed, where the entry requirements for various institutions, which would come under the college, would be comparable with the requirements for entry to the University of the West Indies. The college would bring several institutions under one umbrella body, and its major focus would, therefore, be on human resource development at the technician, technologist, paraprofessional and middle management level in various fields where, of course, today, there is a deficiency in these areas.

It was envisaged that the community college would form the nucleus of a technologically-oriented tertiary institute offering a range of qualifications in occupational fields from an associate degree, initially, to bachelor of applied technology degree, eventually. The community college would constitute a major element in Government's strategy to rationalize and co-ordinate various aspects of post-secondary, technical, vocational education and training. Many of these are, of course, undertaken by public sector organizations at this time.

It was also envisaged that the community college would facilitate the establishment of a unified credit accumulation and transfer scheme, into an integrated system which will promote the idea of life-long learning and career

Tertiary Education
[HON. T. SUDAMA]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

development. By so doing, it would also enhance and ensure that there is a more mobile and adaptable workforce. It was to promote coherence and enable flexibility in the system at the tertiary non-university level.

It was also felt that by establishing the community college there would be a measure of quality assurance, that is, these respective tertiary level institutions' educational standards would be set and monitored so that the Government would know that they are adhered to, and the accreditation which would be afforded would enable those graduates to present their diplomas and certificates and have them recognized for the purposes of employment, or for the purposes of entry into higher levels of tertiary education.

It was also felt that this process of rationalization would, perhaps, eliminate the duplication that is inherent in the system and we would, therefore, also encourage a larger, wider and more diversified pool of trained persons who would be utilized to promote the development effort.

Mr. President, it was felt that through this means, with the widening access to higher education and with an increasing proportion of the population better able to be engaged in the economy, to be productive and efficient, we would enhance our capacity to compete internationally and globally. It was also felt that the establishment of the community college would be an alternative route to acquire technological education by secondary school leavers who did not, at that particular time, have the requirements for university entry.

2.25 p.m.

As you are aware, Mr. President, the Government has accepted in principle the need for the establishment of a community college and NIHERST has been given the mandate to make all the preparations, do everything that is necessary, to get this community college off the ground. That is part of the decision to rationalize and transform public tertiary education outside of university. It is intended that the rationalization and transformation of this non-university public tertiary sector will be established through the development of the National Community College, and it will be based on, firstly, the NIHERST training divisions.

As you know, NIHERST has under its responsibility certain institutions. There is the Information Technology College, the School of Languages, the College of Nursing, the College of Health Science, the business programme, and the general education division. That is one element that will come under the purview of the National Community College. The Point Fortin Vocational Centre, John

Donaldson and San Fernando Technical Institutes are also centres for post-secondary technical education. Then it will bring under its umbrella the Ministry of Health's nursing programme and the Metal Industries Company Limited. As you know, they are focussed on training for heavy industry in particular. It is intended that the Joint Services Staff College and the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF) will also be brought under the purview of the community college.

It was felt that the community college will better serve in the development of tertiary education at the levels which I have already alluded to: the technician, technologists and paraprofessional levels, where there is a serious deficiency. It was also envisaged that the college will be a multi-campus institution that facilitates rapid response to educational and training needs of the diverse communities, the diverse populations that it serves, and that it would better facilitate innovation and initiative, and promote cost effectiveness and efficiency. This is important, because, the Motion addresses the question of creating a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Government has not ruled out that, as we establish the community college; it could then evolve at a later stage into a technical university.

There is no incompatibility in our view, with going ahead with establishing the community college and then, as it operates and develops, it could, in fact, mature into a technical university. Our feeling is that at this point in time, we perhaps should start with rationalizing what we have at the non-university tertiary level and then proceed at a later stage, because many community colleges the world over have, in fact, evolved into technical and technological universities of higher education.

Mr. President, we have no basic difference of view with the intent of this Motion. We recognize the need to develop our tertiary level education, and to make that education more accessible to all and sundry who wish to avail themselves of that education. We do not see any conflict with the development of this community college and its eventual evolution into a technical university. We do not see any conflict in that development with the role that the University of the West Indies has to play in tertiary education in Trinidad and Tobago.

As, indeed, Prof. Spence mentioned, the graduates of the community colleges, their focus as a technical university product would be more oriented to the world of work, more trained in a hands-on manner, will be more attuned to the requirements of industry, and so forth. If one has that sort of marginal

Tertiary Education
[HON. T. SUDAMA]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

specialization, and those who go to the University of the West Indies will have a more academic dent in orientation, then, in fact, we can look at the whole tertiary education in a comprehensive way and satisfy ourselves that we are serving all the needs and meeting all the requirements we ought to.

Just to mention a few other matters, Mr. President. We have found ourselves in a situation where we had to take some very quick decisions, particularly, with respect to post-secondary education and training to meet the demands of industry. The Metal Industries Company Limited has been mandated to organize the National Skills Development Programme which we have been doing for a number of years, but because of the upsurge of investment in the energy and industrial sectors, we took the decision in 1996 that we would have some short-term intensive programmes to meet the demands. In that year, we were able to produce 602 graduates from the National Skills Development Programme for them to be available to industry. In 1997, we accelerated to 1,100 graduates to go into industry. In the long-term programme where we expect people to go into higher levels in industry, 236 were able to graduate in 1996, and 253 were able to graduate in 1997. So, we are taking some steps to be able to meet that emergency demand with which we were confronted.

2.35 p.m.

The other issue I want to speak very briefly about is what we are thinking of in the area of technical and vocational education. Admittedly, we have been talking a lot on this issue, but certain recommendations are before us and the Government will be acting with some speed in order to look at these recommendations, then accept those which we feel are relevant and would bring the desired results. Basically, what we are endeavouring to do is to have a system from the primary level to the post primary. We can then get beyond that into Level 1 of technical/vocational education and training; from Level 1 to proceed to Level 2; and from Level 2 to Level 3; and then to Level 4 which will be the equivalent of a university first degree in the technical education area. Then, of course, there is also the opportunity to proceed from there to get into the university stream for postgraduate education and, indeed, to move from there to an advanced professional qualification.

So that we are looking at this. As I said, in order to streamline technical/vocational education and training in this country, we have got to look at the structure and then proceed to implement that and to provide the training and the resources that would be necessary to do so.

You will also recall that we have set up a company called the National Training Agency. The National Training Agency is a limited liability company which also has a mandate, and here we have to co-ordinate its activities with the community college that we will be creating and, indeed, into the old system of technical/vocational education. I indicate to this Senate that the purposes of setting up the National Training Agency are to promote and co-ordinate technical and vocational training; to develop and maintain a national training plan; to advise on matters related to technical and vocational training; to manage a national technical and vocational training system so as to ensure an adequate supply of trained manpower for national development; to develop and maintain a national manpower information system and to identify national training needs; to maintain, operate and regulate a system of apprenticeship and traineeship; to establish and maintain standards in technical and vocational training; and to ensure that appropriate training courses, places, syllabi, schedules and programmes are available in technical and community colleges in the industrial, commercial and public sectors in state enterprises, private establishments and in other places of employment.

So that one can see—

Sen. Prof. Spence: Thank you for giving way. Mr. President, I just wonder if the hon. Minister would give us something of the budget, because it seems to me that is a rather powerful mandate. If the company is to do all of that, it is going to have to have a tremendous in-house capability. So I just wondered if they had a lot of consultancies or if they had a lot of staff.

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. President, as I said, this National Training Agency has not yet got off the ground. One of the reasons is that we are looking at its mandate and looking to see how we could put that mandate into effect. One of the bugbears, of course, is finding the financial resources to do so, but it is something that we find necessary in order to deal with the requirement for technical training at a national level.

So that we are very mindful of the need to enhance tertiary education in this country and the need to do so in a globalized environment where we have to compete, and where the scientific and technical foundation of our educational system has to be sound in order for us to be able to go out and produce goods and services and to compete in the outside world. Therefore, it is necessary that our system of tertiary education should be up to the challenge, and this is acknowledged. We have started to reorganize and to rationalize through the

Tertiary Education
[HON. T. SUDAMA]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

establishment of a community college. Of course, as we do that, we would look into the prospects of its evolution into a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago.

We understand clearly that if we do not achieve this within a reasonable time-frame that we would be left behind. In fact, something like a community college has already been established and running in a number of CARICOM countries like Barbados, Antigua and elsewhere. They have already done it. Here in Trinidad and Tobago, we are saying that we are the most industrially advanced of the CARICOM economies and we have not yet got to the point of establishing a community college, let alone a technical university. This should have been done a long time ago, but it had not been done and, therefore, we have to take up that challenge now to see how quickly we can effect and implement this very necessary initiative in the area of tertiary education.

So Mr. President, I thought I would come today and just give a brief outline as to where we are, an outline as to how we view the problem. We have viewed it and we know the urgency at the tertiary level, but we also wish to view it in a holistic manner as one looks at the other levels of education in order to provide the proper foundation for tertiary education, and then one provides avenues from the secondary level where people can stream off into a more technical kind of tertiary education or to a more academic kind of tertiary education. Importantly, the opportunities must be available to all from the secondary level onwards. One prepares them at the secondary level to be able to take that option, to be able to avail themselves of the options which will be available at the tertiary level. This is our approach to this whole question.

We are indeed happy that Prof. Spence has raised this matter. We are also happy to let him know that the Government will be giving consideration to the establishment of a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago and we will hope to look into that question at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. President, with these few words, I thank you.

2.45 p.m.

Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny: Mr. President. this subject matter is of immense importance for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the cost of tertiary education. A look at the annual budget of the University of the West Indies (UWI) for 1997, St. Augustine campus and Mount Hope, it is perhaps \$250—\$260 million. This sort of money being spent suggests that we really have to look at tertiary education.

I support the proposal for a technical university for Trinidad and Tobago, again for the same reasons that Sen. Spence has argued. I am pleased to see that the hon. Minister of Planning and Development has put the debate in the proper perspective, which is, the foundation of what we do later on is really in the pre-school, primary, secondary and ultimately in the tertiary.

I cannot remember the actual figures, but in the previous debate Sen. Marshall pointed out what we spent per capita on primary, secondary and tertiary education. The enormous sums of money spent at the advanced levels is quite distorted. This, therefore, suggests that we ought to be thinking in terms of the efficiency with which we spend money.

Mr. President, it is impossible to talk about tertiary education without talking about the University of the West Indies. I have this document—which I hope every Member of the Senate has—*STRATEGIC PLAN 1997 - 2002 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES*. It is a very illuminating document. I must confess that the only way I could get one was by writing to the University and using the dodge of my Senate note paper, because normally when I write on my personal note paper I am ignored as usual. I do commend it to everyone because it is extremely illuminating. I would come back to it in due course because I want to talk about efficiency in tertiary education.

One of things that strikes me about our society is the use of the word "degree". The "degree" is a very important thing in small societies and clearly continues to be important. It does not necessarily mean that it is something whose quality we can accurately measure. There are many degrees and I would like to go into some problems which I have seen over the past few years in the University of the West Indies.

Just last week, in Saturday's *EXPRESS* there was a lovely letter from a university student, Rebecca Hardy, who is still waiting on her results. There is apparently some sort of industrial dispute going on. It happens every triennium. It is what I described as the "Waltz of the WIGUTs". The West Indian Group of University Teachers (WIGUT) is a union of academics and periodically they put some pressure on the university management. Instead of striking, as good labour people do—they withdraw their labour—they withhold marks and embarrass everybody. I would quote a bit of the letter because it gives one perception of the degree:

"Our fees pay the salaries of university employees and we are not paying these fees from the goodness of our hearts. We are paying for a reason—a golden commodity—a piece of paper—a degree."

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

This is coming out of St. Augustine today. I sympathize with the student.

Mr. President: You have read an excerpt, could you identify the name of the newspaper and the date?

Sen. Prof. J. Kenny: The *Express* of Saturday, January 24. I come back to this idea of the "degree" because sometimes it is very perplexing. I know that in some circumstances I might address Sen. Mannette as "Dr. Mannette"—I know that she would tease me about it—but she holds a JD which is an American legal qualification she tells me. That is not a doctorate. Other people do it. But the terms "degree" and "Dr." are very important. We have had people in our society with honorary degrees who actually got people to call them Dr. I have seen one case where this person has actually put the name on a shingle saying "Dr. So and So". It is just an honorary degree from the University of the West Indies. It is very important in this society.

One of things that has struck me about Prof. Spence's Motion is the observation that there is, in effect, a university out at St. Augustine other than UWI, St. Augustine. It is privately run, it is very expertly done, it does not cost taxpayers a single cent and people can get a range of qualifications including—not as wide as the University of the West Indies—law, accounting and management. These are from a proper accredited university, Brunel, which is part of the University of London. If you go through the newspapers you would see ads for Heriot Watt offering MBA's. This is an absolutely first grade institution in Edinburgh. I see the latest one is Lincolnshire and Humberside, that is a new one to me, but these are all offering degrees, but limited subjects through local agencies. These are proper university degrees of United Kingdom universities.

One of the reasons for Sen. Spence's Motion is that the Government has an obligation to protect people because there may be proper international universities offering these degrees through a local agency but there is no official accreditation system. This is where the University of the West Indies should play a very important role. Right now anyone can set up any kind of international university and offer these degrees and take people's money. You can do this at different levels from the community college going up to full post graduate MBA.

To return to my concern about the degree, I spent 30 years in the UWI between 1963 and 1993. In that period I was able to see the changes taking place in the university degree. I would explain my concern about this when I refer to one of the problems in tertiary education at university level.

When I joined UWI, for the first degree at Mona you had a choice of two: a special degree—which was a rigorous study in one subject like the University of London—or a general honours degree in two subjects. It was a very difficult study. There may be graduates of that period here—or there certainly are in Trinidad—and they know the rigours of that academic training. You went into your first year, did three introductory subjects and passed them all to advance. If you failed a single subject you got a supplemental. If you passed that, you could go ahead; if you did not, you repeated the entire year. Then you went into the advanced part of the degree where you spent two years and read your finals. That was the rigours of a University of London degree.

Since that time we have moved away. We have dropped the special honours degree and moved to a general honours degree with two subjects. Right now there is no longer a general honours degree, you do honours in one subject and many electives. Students can find their way through the university, get a piece of paper saying they have spent so much time and they have been certified.

2.55 p.m.

Mr. President, I commend the Government for its policy because we have to do something about raising the levels of technical education in the country. The plan in here is to expand the numbers, which is fine, and also to improve efficiency within the system. Before leaving St. Augustine campus five or six years ago, I did a study of the graduating year and these are students who came in for a three-year degree. These are people who came in with three A' levels in most cases. These are in the normal subjects Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Zoology and so on.

Of the 185 people graduating that year, 41 per cent completed in the normal three years, less than half of that cohort going in was doing a normal three-year degree, the rest had to spend more time. So 32 per cent of them took four years to graduate and 12 per cent of them took five years to graduate and there are still people in the system graduating after 10 years at the University of the West Indies. This is gross inefficiency, it is a waste of resources. I thought that perhaps it is because it is science which we like to think is a more rigorous discipline. I thought that perhaps this was because we are trying to do something like that because it is science.

If we go into this document where we look at the St. Augustine campus and, if I may read very slowly, because I think there is a chronic problem of proof reading or lack of proof reading, it is not only the school text or the Environmental

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Management Authority's annual report of the year before, but this is a little chapter on page 101 and it is taken from the strategic plan. I will just read the appropriate part slowly, the little paragraph deals with targets for graduates, that is what they are aiming for—throughputs. It says here that:

“Furthermore, efforts will be made to raise the throughput rate i.e. to reduce the number of years a student takes to graduate from the 3.7 years to 4.4 years for three-year degree programmes and 5.7 years to 6.2 years for four-year degree programmes.”

Obviously this has not been proof read. The target really was to reduce the rate. The average for a three-year degree is 4.4 years for what we consider to be a normal progression from A'levels and that for the four-year degree, which is from qualifications other than A' levels, the norm now is 6.2 years. This is for the entire St. Augustine campus—reducing it, they hope to 5.7 years for a four-year degree.

Mr. President, we are throwing money away. I can let you in on a little secret about when we met in examiners' meeting where we were deciding the fate, and you see the person's marks after so many years and you know the person should not be graduating, they should be failing. The test was you would ask yourself: ‘Am I prepared to have that person teach my children?’ It is a subjective thing but here you are, the university is telling you that there is gross inefficiency in the throughput rate, people are spending far too long. In the early days of the University of the West Indies it was quite the opposite. The three-year degree most people graduated in three-years. Now the average at St. Augustine is 6.2 years for a four-year degree and 4.4 for a three-year degree.

Mr. President, this is an issue that has to be addressed because we are spending vast sums of money, over \$200 million a year, at St. Augustine campus, plus, of course, the cost of the centre. It is not only that sort of a problem, the university has a vision of itself and I will just like to read a bit of bureaucratic rhetoric. It says—this is the General Overview:

“In both its training and research effort, the University will maintain the highest standards of professional excellence and sustain the high reputation which it enjoys in the constellation of world class Universities.”

Let us be realistic, the University of the West Indies is not a big international university. Less than one per cent of the students come from outside the region. There is clearly a problem in tertiary education and we have the contrast of the School of Accounting and Management in St. Augustine offering degrees of

Brunel and apparently doing it and students and their parents are paying for it and we have the University of the West Indies admitting that there is a major problem with throughput.

Mr. President, it brings me to raise the question of the nature of the university, where we ought to be headed, because the big problem we have experienced here in the West Indies is that we have tried to evolve from a university which did, at one time, have international standing. We have tried to retain the sort of intellectual community at the same time that we tried to develop mass education. The two things do not work. You either opt for a kind of institution where you have absolutely top rate scholarship being paid top rate international salaries or you opt for being an entirely different kind of institution, or you go for what is primarily a teaching institution, the mass university. There are many institutions of this kind in North America now and many, many more in Great Britain where the emphasis on research is shoved aside and they concentrate on the major thing which is throughput.

You set your target, you need so many computer science graduates and you engineer everything. Not only do you engineer it that way, you engineer the entry to it; you have specialist schools below aimed in that direction. The vision that we have, when you read it here, is that the University of the West Indies is going to be the only university and it is going to be international, a centre of excellence and it is going to have an enrollment of 20,000, or what have you, in the year 2000. It simply does not work, the resources are not there and I suggest that what Sen. Prof. Spence was proposing is really that we ought to broaden the discussion, we ought to, perhaps, give serious consideration to the establishment of a task force to look at tertiary education and to do evaluations right through.

I think we need to evaluate all these private institutions, we need to evaluate the state institutions like NIHERST and Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry. We also need to look at the University of the West Indies. One of the things that struck me in my career was that it appeared to be the holiest of holies. Governments were very, very loath to even enquire. Just simply go up to the council meetings and the council stands there and the government simply does what the council says. This strikes me as an issue of accountability. We really have to examine very, very deeply and carefully what has actually happened.

3.05 p.m.

Sen. Prof. Spence referred to the changes since the commission in governance and one of the things which has emerged is the reorganization in governance in the

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

faculties, but the centre, which is the bureaucracy, seems to have grown. To me, it is rather strange that the University of the West Indies should have its centre budget in—guess what currency? Barbados dollars. There is a very good reason for this. If the University of the West Indies is going to be a centre of academic work, then I suggest that it really wants to re-examine what it has said about research in this document, because the bulk of the research thrust is related to problems and teamwork in doing the research.

There is a curious little comment in the document about ‘curiosity-driven research’. This, of course, is in the tradition of universities that one does research because one is curious, and sometimes one does not see any obvious result down the road from it, but most of us who went into university careers, went in because of our curiosity. There are some very, very strange results which come out. It says that unless the curiosity-driven research is related to problems in the region, then it would not be supported.

I realize now that had I been applying for employment at the University of the West Indies, I certainly would not have been considered for employment because my interests are totally internally generated; I think many of the academics are. The trend now is to have somebody on top of democracy telling you what to do.

One of the strangest things that emerged from this document is that there must be gender-related research in all subjects. I find it very, very difficult to think that one of my interests—longshore movement of sand on the beach—in which I cannot see gender at all—would get support. It does not make sense. It is written in there that if you want to get support for your research, it has to be gender-related. I cannot imagine what gender the mathematicians see in their symbols. You see, this is what comes out of the detachment of the academic—the people who are actually pursuing knowledge and disseminating it—and the bureaucracy.

Mr. President, some years ago—I think it is only five or six years ago—I did a little study comparing the number of senior bureaucrats in the university with those in the British universities, and this, of course, is the cost of the University of the West Indies and the centre. I tried to relate the size of the student body with the number of vice-chancellors and pro vice-chancellors and a most remarkable picture emerged in that the university with the largest number of senior vice-chancellors and pro vice-chancellors was Manchester—exclude London because it is a strange institution—which had a vice-chancellor and five pro vice-chancellors. My inquiries told me that at Manchester all these people are full-time academics; they are still doing their work and administering the university.

The University of the West Indies, with an enrollment at the time of about 12,000, had no less than 10 of these people. So we have built up this immense bureaucracy. And who pays for it? This is not the United Kingdom and herein again, is the problem, getting efficiency into the system. It is not only the bureaucracy that runs the university but also amongst the academic staff.

We have a problem here in that we are not international; our salaries will not attract international scholars. We might get people coming on a sabbatical, but we most certainly would not get them coming to work here. The only non-West Indians who come here is a small minority. They may have family connections; they may, in fact, like the heat; they may, in fact, have been fired from another university and joined the University of the West Indies; this happens. But I would like to tell you a little more about the academic side; this is the other side of the equation. I have told you the throughput is unacceptable.

Now, we are judged as scholars in science by what we produce and what we produce is the scientific paper for the book; the other product is our graduates, be they first or higher degrees. And in the same study which I have referred to here—*Toward Consensus in the Development of the Faculty of Natural Sciences*. Incidentally, I sent this to the University of the West Indies. It was not acknowledged. Anyway, I went through all the senior staff in natural science and what I tried to find out was how our scientists were being seen internationally.

Now, there are different ways in which one can measure this. One way is to go through what is called the Science Citation Index, an annual that goes to several volumes and if you have done anything of any substance, some other scientist will refer to it and you will then see your name there. It is a system of finding out what is going on in science.

I did this study and I was most embarrassed because—well these are the comments I made to the principal:

“A cursory scan of the INDEX over the past few years indicates that we have a serious under-performance problem amongst the senior academic staff of the Faculty needing urgent attention. In categories from Senior Lecturer upward there are no less than five of 16 senior staff who have not attracted a single citation in the past five year period!”

This tells you that whatever they are doing, it is certainly not of interest to international science, because somebody working in similar science would have picked it up and so forth. I go on to say to the university:

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

“About one third of the senior staff of the Faculty clearly have no international or other standing in Science.”

Here we are paying \$200 million plus another \$60 million a year for Mount Hope and we have people who, by Trinidad and Tobago standards, are quite well paid, turning the screws on the Government.

Mr. President, it is very interesting to look at the salary scales which are under review now. I will just quote from an extract from any advertisement which lists the salary scales and it is very, very clever to see how it is done, because they have a salary scale and then they say allowances. There is something called a regional allowance, which they do not tell the public what it is; it is 30 per cent of the salary and then a 20 per cent housing allowance. I have looked at the salary scales as they exist today—and they are under review—and the average salary of a full professor, including the 30 per cent and 20 per cent and travel and so forth, amounts to \$22,000 per month; a senior lecturer at \$17,000 per month; a lecturer at \$13,500 and an assistant lecturer at \$9,000 per month.

3.15 p.m.

I think that many people are worth this. In fact, I would pay some of them more than that because they really are performing. But we have this spectacle of the unions, the West Indian Group of University Teachers (WIGUT)—and this is the waltz of the WIGUT. Years ago when I joined the university, we had a fully integrated regional university. There was one regional salary expressed in TT dollars, or Barbados dollars or Jamaican dollars, and we all had exactly the same terms of service. When the Jamaican economy went belly up, the local WIGUT here said, “we cannot have the same salaries as Jamaicans.” So they decided to opt out of the arrangement. So the WIGUT, then, parted company.

Since then, there has been this remarkable waltz that has been going on. Barbados increases the allowances or the salaries and then St. Augustine says, “well, we must have parity”, so they increase it; and then Jamaica says, “we cannot get staff”, so they increase it, and it keeps going up and up.

I have no problem with paying international salaries to people who are performing, but if we have people at the top end of science performing in this way, then I think there is need for a thorough independent evaluation of where the university is headed.

Having said that, I would like to come back to the technical university, because also in this document you will see where the university wants to, sort of, hive off some of the teaching to increase efficiency and it wants to collaborate with these other tertiary learning institutions. Apparently the philosophy or the orthodoxy of UWI is , “there shall be one university and we will collaborate with a number of tertiary learning institutions.” I think there is resistance to having other institutions being called universities.

This brings me back to the point I was making at the start, as to what is a degree. Sen. Spence told us about these new degrees in some of the British universities which he called “noddy” degrees. He did not give us an example of them, but you can imagine what a “noddy” degree is. It is a degree in a subject like—well, I would leave Sen. Spence in his winding up to give us an example of one.

To return to the National Technical University, how I envisage this working is, of Government, but independent, that is, a board of governors to organize and run the university but not an extension of the Ministry of Education; not under ministerial control. This would give a certain degree of independence.

Secondly, I would see this National Technical University as starting with those subject areas which are clearly in demand: Computer Science, Management, Law—for that matter—Environmental Science, aspects of engineering—I do not mean all the fields of engineering—Technologies, Information Systems. I would call them degrees right at the start. I do not see this distinction between what we are offering now and say, “this is a degree”, having seen the degradation of it over the 30 years. I have no problem with having someone do a degree in Management or in Computer Science in a national technical university, going through it, possibly taking as long as some of the UWI students. I have no problem with this.

Today there are so many things which are called degrees, but where the University of the West Indies will make its mark, I think, is actually in accrediting—advising Government about the quality of these degrees and, of course, the scholarship end of it, which is really the post-graduate training.

So I strongly support the National Technical University and suggest that what they have to do right at the start is to use two or three key institutions, the two technical institutes. If you go into the School of Management at St. Augustine, you would see everything is all networked. There should be no problem with telephone lines for a national technical university to function out of those institutions, and

Tertiary Education
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

then from this to build the offerings, but to offer degrees in limited areas. There is not much point, for example, in offering something in Geography, Zoology, Chemistry, some of the more advanced areas in Mathematics, but I see no reason they should not offer degrees in Mathematics.

Finally, how would you run this in terms of the intellectual pool that you need to run the courses? There are two things. You do not employ full time staff to any great degree. You want some top line managers, and then you get any face-to-face lecturing done by competent people you can recruit, who will go and give a course of lectures.

That is what the University of the West Indies is now trying in its plan. It is now suggesting that might be an option for them, to bring people in to lecture. I see it as a much simpler operation. I do not see any major research at this stage or in the next 10 years. I see it mainly as a teaching institution offering degrees.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Elizabeth Mannette: Mr. President, I am pleased to make a contribution on this Motion presented by Sen. Prof. Spence. I am particularly pleased to be able to make a contribution on tertiary education and education, in general, because, you see, I am a product of the education system of this country. I am also a proud product of the PNM education policies.

My first point, actually, is made much more important by this amendment which is being circulated. I know it is not yet before the House, but I think it is important for the Government to take the lead in education. I think it is very important for Government to ensure that there is opportunity for all and that the institutions which exist are serving some beneficial, social purpose.

I recall in the last session when this Motion was presented, one of my colleagues on the Independent Bench, Sen. Ramchand, made some comments about the current tertiary and secondary education systems and those comments were a bit frightening to me, because, as I understood it—and perhaps I misunderstood him—he was making some references back to the colonial system of education, indicating that he would have preferred if some aspects of that system were retained.

I was frightened by that, because, you see, under the colonial system of education neither of my parents was able to obtain secondary school education. It was because of free secondary school education introduced in this country by the

People's National Movement that, in one generation, thousands of students are able to obtain secondary school education.

So whatever the benefits of the colonial system, I do hope that they remain buried where they are and that as the Government takes the lead—which is its rightful role—in looking at the tertiary education system, it will take a very holistic and inclusive approach.

3.25 p.m.

The Minister of Planning and Development is absent at this time; I do not know if he is returning. He spoke at length about Government's plan with respect to a community college system to deal with the current Government institutions and Sen. Prof. Kenny also spoke about the University of the West Indies. The Minister mentioned, in passing, the proliferation of private institutions in the country. I am sure that I do not have to educate or inform Senators about all the private institutions which are springing up all over the country.

If one reads the daily newspapers, particularly around the August to September periods, one sees advertisements and notices about programmes on all different topics and all different courses. There are programmes on tourism and broadcasting. I even saw a programme offered by a school to teach you how to operate a casino. That was around last September. There was an ad: "If you want to be a casino operator, send information to this address". I do not know if the Minister of Finance and Minister of Tourism has some information about that school. If he does, we would be very happy to hear about it. I am concerned about the proliferation of all these private institutions not so much the ones that are affiliated with foreign universities but the ones which spring up around the corner, so to speak. There is a large amount of misrepresentation and fraud involved in these programmes. In fact, Mr. President, there is an article in a newspaper dated September 1997 where some students are suing a college which misrepresented it was affiliated to a certain university and misrepresented the qualifications of the managing director.

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

I am also personally aware of other individuals who pursue certain courses and after a certain number of weeks when they turn up at the location, they find that the building is padlocked and the owners or the principals have disappeared. I am aware that the fraud squad has been contacted and reports have been filed in connection with that particular instance and a number of others, but

Tertiary Education
[SEN. MANNETTE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

I am also concerned because the fraud squad is very busy these days. I heard the fraud squad is overworked because they are investigating allegations of fraud all over the Government, in the various state enterprises and ministries. This is no new news. We are talking about tertiary education. An important point is to ensure that these private institutions all over the country are monitored or registered in some way.

Mr. Vice-President, I tried to get some information with respect to some sort of register or listing of these privately-run post-secondary institutions and I was not able to obtain such a list. I contacted a number of different agencies. I even tried the Ministry of Education, and whilst they admitted they had some sort of list they said it was incomplete and outdated.

The National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, on a voluntary basis will compile information on these schools but no arm of the Government seems to be mandated to oversee and to monitor all these post-secondary school and institutions, the private ones.

It is important that the Government uses this opportunity to say to us whether or not it intends to introduce that sort of data. I am hearing someone muttering "PNM" across the Chamber. I want to just overlook that because I think it is important because there are many students who graduate from the secondary schools and they do not have the qualifications to pursue academic programmes at the University of the West Indies or they cannot afford to go abroad and so they see these private institutions as some sort of opportunity for them to gain qualification or to get some sort of skill that could be marketable.

If there is widespread fraud and misrepresentation, I think it is incumbent upon the Government, the Minister of National Security, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Community Development to ensure that these schools are properly set up, and that they are administered and licensed in some way.

I am also concerned about accreditation. I believe it was mentioned that this community college will have a role in accreditation but when everyone is offering a diploma or certificate, you need to ensure that the certificate that you received from school "X" is the same standard or up to some internationally accepted standard as that received by school "Y".

As I understand it, NIHERST was identified as the body to do this sort of accreditation. I heard the Minister saying that the community college would handle that. We are not too sure how the two will be related. NIHERST has informed me

that they do have some sort of accreditation programme or process, but it is a voluntary process and if a school approaches them they would do a review and make recommendations with respect to the quality of the courses and what needs to be changed, but they do not have any authority and any sort of programme to ensure that schools meet a certain standard or that programmes meet a certain standard. I think it is important that this be implemented on some quick scale before the community college becomes established because we know that would take quite some time. I would get to that in a short while but as of now, we need to ensure that NIHERST begins to get the authority to do accreditation of their own initiative and not just as a result of inquiries or concerns expressed by others.

With respect to the Government sponsored post-secondary schools and institutions, the Motion as I understood it, talks about creating a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago to bring together a number of different institutions which exist throughout the country. Certainly, this is a worthwhile Motion and endeavour, because we are all aware there are different institutions operating under different structures and there is duplication in many instances, as well as other inefficiencies. If bringing them together under an umbrella body will solve the problem then, certainly, that is the way to go.

At this point, I am not too clear whether or not bringing them under an umbrella body called a community college is the best route. I did not hear the Minister of Planning and Development state that this position was arrived at after consultation with various stakeholders. It seems to me that their ministry looked at the tertiary education system and decided that a community college was the way to go. I am not convinced that this position was arrived at after widespread consultation and I want to suggest, perhaps, that the Government does not consider a task force. I do not agree with a task force as suggested by Prof. Kenny to look into the University of the West Indies and so forth but certainly, to consider whether a community college as they are proposing, is the best way to go or a technical university as Sen. Prof. Spence is suggesting. I think it should certainly consult with all the different educators and stakeholders, as well as meet with the privately-run institutions and the employers to determine exactly what is the most effective and efficient structure for this type of institution.

In addition to looking at the structure of an institution, one has to consider the curriculum because indeed, the Motion in its second paragraph recognizes the need to develop the potential of our human resource to the highest level in order to compete in the current and future economic environment. Looking at the

Tertiary Education
[SEN. MANNETTE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

curriculum should be a priority as well. Curriculum development must take place at the same speed as structural development.

Mr. Vice-President, I wish to draw your attention to an article that was written in the daily newspaper dealing with the university and the proposed structures. In that article which can be found in the October 27, 1997 edition of the *Daily Express* is the headline: "Some tasks for a National University." It is an article by Mr. I.B. Beddeo formerly from the University of the West Indies, Faculty of Education. This author talks about a national university which differs somewhat from the technical university which is proposed by Sen. Prof. Spence and differs from the community college that the Government is proposing. Clearly there are all these different initiatives indeed, on the table, and one needs to ensure that all the options are being considered in the best possible light.

With respect to curriculum development, as Prof. Kenny pointed out, we need to ensure that these tertiary institutions are teaching the courses and the subjects which are needed in the current environment. Certainly information technology is at the top of everyone's list as is environmental studies and other technical fields.

3.35 p.m.

It is important to consider one point raised in this article by Mr. Beddoe and I quote:

"Universities in their haste to generate new knowledge and skills and their dissemination have often treated with benign neglect the humanising and transforming dimensions of an authentic education."

What the article suggests is that, in addition to all the technical areas, we need to include courses in philosophy, ethics and world religions and cultures. Given all the issues that were being raised in our political climate at the time, it is important that, perhaps, in tertiary education institutions we consider mandatory courses on ethics and what is right and wrong. In fact, I think I can say that last week someone told me that I am not the brightest person; a certain person in this community is brighter than I am—Mr. Soodhoo. I do not mind I am not the brightest; I never professed to be but I think it is important that we have bright, upright and ethical individuals. If universities are producing highly qualified persons with technical skills, we must also ensure that they have the ethical compulsion and consciences to go along with their skills because there are bright crooks as well.

In addition to curriculum development, I think that any sort of umbrella body created would have more than one campus. That is inevitable. The whole issue of security on campuses comes to mind because last week as Sen. Beckles raised the issue of the increase in the incidence of rape and mentioned the fact that there was an increased climate of fear on the university campuses, the hon. Minister of National Security was not with us so we did not benefit from his wisdom and intelligence. On the contrary, we were saddled with a statement that did not really tell us anything. So I think we should raise the issue once again that security on campuses cannot be put on a back burner. It is not enough to have an institution that provides you with good facilities, good teachers who are well trained and yet fails to put the value on your own personal life. There are students at present who cannot get the full benefit of the educational experience because they cannot stay on campuses and study or move about as they wish, all because of the increased incidence of rape and other crimes. I think this is something which must be addressed in the context of a community college or tertiary education initiatives.

Mr. Vice-President, when the Minister of Planning and Development was speaking, he mentioned the community college but he did not really mention the time-frame for this college. I have to raise that because it sounds very good to say you are allocating \$7.5 million to construct or bring together a community college but if you do not say exactly what the action plan is or the deadlines are, then we may all very well be debating the same Motion in the next three or four years because nothing would have happened. I think it would be useful if we find out exactly what the \$7.5 million is to be used for and the time-frame for the full completion of the establishment of the community college process.

We are also aware of the other things that the Government tried to impress upon the national community with respect to education. They claim they are building a national library and to date we have not seen any sort of progress being made in this area. The fact that they are planning to set up a community college and allocated \$7.5 million is no source of comfort to us. We want some specifics, we want some guidelines, we want some time-frames and we also want the truth. We do not want any propaganda or anything that is meant to impress us or persuade the public that you are serious about tertiary education.

Mr. Vice-President, I think that perhaps the comments I raised are the important ones that need to be addressed. I am hopeful that the Minister of Planning and Development would in some way be informed about what I said

Tertiary Education
[SEN. MANNETTE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

because he has chosen this time to absent himself from the Chamber, which I think is contemptuous and disrespectful but that is another point and another lesson. Nonetheless, Mr. Vice-President, I thank you for this opportunity and we look forward to the winding up by Sen. Prof. Spence and also the Government's position on some of the issues.

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie: Mr. Vice-President, I rise to support the Motion and I would just like to make a few comments. I would like to go back in time to technical vocational education. We started with the exposure in the primary schools where, after a certain age, the young men and women with no avenues to secondary education except through the limited college exhibition examination, were taken to what we called centres. That was the first exposure to a limited type of technical vocational education. The boys did a certain amount of woodwork and the girls did some home economics. It was limited and probably at the time it was sufficient as an introduction.

Then when you moved from that phase of primary education where you were sent to centres and had that limited exposure, if you had to go further you went into an apprenticeship scheme where parents apprenticed these young people to different types of trade and skills and much use was made of that. I can tell you very many of our trades people come out of that apprenticeship scheme. Later on, we had the introduction of the trade schools and youth camps. What we found was that there was no cadre of teachers. We did not have teachers to teach in these youth camps and trade schools. Where did they get the human resource to teach? They went back to the products of the apprenticeship scheme where these people were more or less employed, not particularly in industry, but in the Works Division or in the county councils. At that time they were called tradesmen—carpenters, plumbers and so forth. These trades people who were very good at their trade were made into teachers overnight, with no training to teach as such.

There was the big fallacy that if you were in a secondary school and were not “bright” to handle subjects such as physics and chemistry, then you should do a skill which is so much in the reverse. You really needed intelligent people to do a skill properly to teach it. This is where we had a fallacy and a myth that has counted up to today.

Mr. Vice-President, when the country began to go into this industrialized era, the need for people in technical vocational skills and training was very urgent. We had an appetite for technical vocational education that the state could not satisfy.

As a consequence, we had a number of private institutions offering technical vocational education. I can tell you in Tobago especially, we have had a large number of dissatisfied people who paid their moneys to organizations springing up in Trinidad, having agencies or whatever in Tobago, and offering technical vocational skills with big tuition fees. There was all sort of confusion when examination time came. I happened to be the co-ordinator for examinations for a number of years and these people would come to me with all sorts of dissatisfaction—there was no training; the tutors did not turn up after a time; there was nowhere to do the practicals; you always had the theory; the examination papers would not arrive; the people took their money and did not finish. Mr. Vice-President, I could go on about the woes.

Mr. Vice-President, what we found was a selfishness on the part of institutions funded and equipped by the state, to allow the use of their facilities either after school or during holidays, to people who were not teachers within the school. They were even debarring teachers from other schools from using the facilities of their particular school. One, because accountability rested with the principal of the school and if anything went wrong, any machinery was broken down or part missing, whatever happened the principal said, "I am accountable. As a consequence I would not allow anybody to come in and use it." Then we have the technical vocational schools which became another concept. People felt, okay, this was going to satisfy me but, again, lack of trained people to teach was one of the biggest drawbacks. Secondly, limited machinery and equipment. Do not talk about Tobago—no San Fernando Technical Institute, no John Donaldson Technical Institute, no nursing school; everything is stationed in Trinidad. For the young people in Tobago it became a very serious drawback.

We need to look at the training of people to teach and we have to be mindful of the fact that not everybody who is a skilled person could actually teach. We had the further limitation where teachers coming out of training college having only been exposed to a special skill at an elective level, were put to teach the skill up to a CXC level. We have it in the youth camps; we had it at Mount St. George. An evaluation team came out and what did they find? Tutors who were appointed at a certain time with a certain type of job specification and satisfied the requirements were now asked to teach up to the National Examination Council (NEC) level and they themselves did not have the NEC qualification.

Mr. Vice-President, the need to reorganize and integrate as stated in Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion, is urgent and really necessary—the duplication, the overlapping,

Tertiary Education
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

the disguised ways of announcing and naming the institutions. You hear this and that technical institute. They do not have anything technical within their curriculum but it is a sort of front to beguile people into a trap so we have to look at that.

That brings me to the point where I cannot understand how we can have institutions in the country offering education at a cost to people and our Ministry of Education does not have a register of who they are, what they are supposed to offer, what their staffing is like, *et cetera*. We do not only have to look at that in terms of the technical vocational institution. We have to look at it in terms of even where Government buys Common Entrance places in some of our private schools. Government has to monitor those schools all the time because what has been happening is that when these schools have been approached to buy the places for children in the Common Entrance examination, they have a lovely curriculum, they present a marvellous staff with high qualifications and very soon the turnover of staff is so frequent that when you look at what the children are being offered—and these are children who have gotten places at the lower end of the scale; these are children who need this special and varied type of curriculum—they are short-changed. We need to look at that.

3.50 p.m.

I advise the hon. Minister to look at this in its totality because I go along with the idea. We have to make pre-school, primary school and secondary school compulsory, important and significant, otherwise there would be no one to read and write to go in the technical/vocational areas. If we are not mindful of these necessities at this time, we would find ourselves in deeper trouble.

I endorse the concept as a stop gap of some sort of umbrella organization which would lead us into the technical university. When we look at the number of institutions offering technical/vocational education at this tertiary level, we cannot cut them off and drop them there. There must be a transition to the technical university. We need to do a total evaluation of who and where we are; who we have; who is doing what and try to integrate, reorganize and probably specialize. Probably, there are institutions which are trying to do too much and spread too thin. That transition is very necessary before we jump from who we are into the technical university.

We need to use the resources at our technical/vocational institutes. I think there is so much expensive equipment and machinery locked up in the schools for such long periods, that the ministry needs to do something to open these

institutions and make them available to more and more persons to satisfy our needs.

Another area I would look at is the question of some of these institutions offering courses, but there are no means of evaluating or assessing the certificates which are awarded at the end of these examinations. Who sets these examinations? Who awards these certificates? Which body is there to assess qualifications? I would like to get the answers. Several young persons have asked me if they take certain courses, if their certificates would be recognized. We need to say what types of certificates there would be and who would recognize them. Would the Government recognize them?

Another aspect to be satisfied is when we look at what is offered now. Sometimes there are persons who are over qualified for the jobs available. If the technical college or the community college is going to an associate degree, probably that is the level some people need to reach. They may not have to go to the University of the West Indies to get an engineering degree to do a job which calls for an associate degree. We need to look at this in its totality. I fully support the Motion. I believe with the proliferation of institutions offering technical/vocational education, at this stage, only the Government can do that reorganization and integration. I think the Government should take the lead in doing this, and probably at a later stage another body could deal with it.

Dr. Griffith: Thanks for giving way. I agree with the point the Member is making. It is important that we get some clarification on two points. Firstly, when the Member talks about the weaknesses with respect to the technical/vocational teachers, I know that she is fully aware that the Technical Teacher Training Institution has done some substantial work in preparing the teachers for the technical/vocational area. I wonder if she finds that system is adequate for preparing the kinds of teachers we need for that system.

Secondly, she spoke about transition. In closing she mentioned that the community college should specify on perhaps an associate degree. With respect to the transition she spoke about, does she believe that transition should allow for the person who is willing to go higher, that those credits or certification should be transferable to the university or other higher institutions?

Sen. Dr. E. Mc Kenzie: I know that the Minister is versed in this. We were in this together at one time when he was on the National Training Board. To your second question, I believe that people should be able to study up to the associate

Tertiary Education
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

degree, stop if they want, preserve their credits and go on to other institutions. That is why I think of an umbrella organization where there would be common standards as Sen. Kenny spoke about.

I am aware of technical/vocational training. Every Tuesday when returning to the airport there used to be students coming on. They are now at Scarborough Junior Secondary School. It is not enough because one can go to a certain level. Remember that some of the basic qualifications of some of these people are not high. They have the skill, but some only had a School Leaving Certificate. They do not have the level of mathematics to go on to teach at a higher level. It is necessary to upgrade and take some of these young bright graduates from the secondary schools and give them scholarships.

We have to get away from the fallacy that if the children are slow learners, they should do woodwork. People think that one does not have to be intelligent to do these things. For this reason, the students at Bishop's High School do not study electronics and they envy the students who attend Signal Hill Comprehensive School, because in addition to the academic subjects such as mathematics, chemistry and physics, they wanted to do the vocational subjects such as technical drawing, electronics and metal work, but there is no opportunity. We must go back to pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and all the other basic foundation educational institutions in the country.

I fully support the Motion. Some of the Government initiatives are not institutions. I stress that at this stage we need the Government to take the lead. Probably, after it has done a certain amount of groundwork, it can hand it over to a board to run with it. Government must take the lead!

Thank you.

4.00 p.m.

Sen. Dr. Eric B. St. Cyr: Mr. Vice-President, I want to join the debate by way of supporting Sen. Prof. Spence's Motion for the establishment of a technical university in Trinidad and Tobago, and to speak to the point which the hon. Minister of Planning and Development raised, that the thinking of the Government at the present time is that this should not be done, and that at this stage we should have a community college.

Before I do that, permit me to say that I agree with the hon. Minister of Planning and Development that we have to take a global look at the educational

system because the tertiary educational system is fed by the secondary school system which, in turn, is fed by the primary school system. I am heartened to see that it is the Government's plan to get into the pre-school where, I think, we can catch and deal with some of the genesis of our longer term human resource problems.

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

By and large, I do not think that after 30 years of grappling with this problem of education that, as a nation, we can say that we have a good handle on it. I do not think that we have mastered this problem area.

The American lexicographer, Noah Webster, I think, writing in 1828, the original book, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, pointed to education as the whole set of instructions and disciplines which sought to do a number of things. He identified four things: firstly, to enhance understanding, secondly, to correct temper; thirdly, to form the manners and habits of youth; fourthly, to prepare youths for useful positions in society thereafter.

If we take those four elements of the purpose of education and look at the broad mass of our youth in this country, I do not think that we can really say that we are doing a good job. We really are in need of a fundamental overhaul of the education system and we do pay a great deal of lip service to the view that our human resource is our most important and valuable resource and that participation in an international system is really knowledge driven rather than natural resource driven. The point I have been addressing there relates to the "why" of education.

If we look at the "how" of education, I think that the same writer Noah Webster refers to the four Rs. The first is Research, that is information gathering. That information has to be about our own environment, experience. Relevance, in other words, there is no point in debating how many angels can sit on the point of a needle. In one particular context, a school master asked his students which was the nearest channel to us and instead of talking about the Bocas, the student referred to the English Channel.

The third R is Reasoning round and about the information we gather. Logical thought and reasoning is a skill which needs to be developed.

Finally, we must record what has been gathered. These are the forms of expression—speaking, writing, arguing and so forth. Having spent a number of years teaching, I think that our system has really not put forward persons who have mastered those four Rs.

Tertiary Education
[SEN. DR. ST. CYR]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

That is the “why” and the “how”. The most important though is the “what”, the content. I want to say that I think that, on content, we are really in a confused area in our educational system. I want to put forward the view that we cannot start anywhere and go in any direction. There has to be a Principled Approach to education where we have to start from truth and reality, a firm factual basis, and trace, reason, argue, discuss from that firmly established point of departure. If we do not get that Principled Approach central to our educational system, there is no guarantee that we will not end up in all sorts of chaotic directions.

These are some preliminary remarks by way of saying that our educational system is really in need of a serious overhaul.

4.10 p.m.

The specific proposal in the Motion is that we should establish a Technical University of Trinidad and Tobago, and I want to say that I support that unreservedly and I think we should do it now. I know that there may be some concern as to what happened with the establishment of a technical university in Guyana. I am not bothered, because what I think Guyana did, and which we are not proposing, is that they severed all relationship from the University of the West Indies. I think that was a weakness in the direction in which they went, though the establishment of a University of Guyana as a technical university was in itself a correct move.

In Jamaica, the CAST is effectively the Technical University of Jamaica and it is doing, and has done very important work. One of the important things about having a country-based technical university, once the population base is right, is that one can focus on the specific industries right there. We in Trinidad and Tobago, would not for instance, spend a great deal of time studying bauxite, neither would they in Jamaica spend a great deal of time studying petroleum engineering. So that there can be a very focussed direction.

Sen. Prof. Spence: CAST is now the University of Technology in Jamaica.

Sen. Dr. E. St. Cyr: Thank you very much, Sen. Prof. Spence. I wonder whether the hon. Minister, if he were here, would say that it is necessary to go through that step. I think we could go straight to the Technical University of Trinidad and Tobago.

I revisited from my library a book entitled *Education in the British West Indies* by Dr. Eric Williams and as I listened to the debate here, it is clear that is exactly

the problem with which he was grappling in 1951. I know he referred to other things, but there is a very interesting paragraph on page 7 which I would like to quote as reinforcing the need for a principled approach to education. He says having discussed the rural nature of West Indian societies in the 1950s—

"The world of the working classes and peasantry has its disproportionate share of the evil spirits, jumbies and werewolves, which in one way or another are to be found in most backward communities."

He goes on to make the point that one of the purposes of education is to build character, form habits, and give direction to life.

He says in the same paragraph:

"Their lives are still coloured by the promiscuous habits and disregard of the legal sanctions to marriage which were so essential a part of the slave regime."

That is by way of teasing the issues out. In my understanding, the problem which was addressed by Dr. Williams in this book, was the proposal of the Irvine Commission on setting up a university in the West Indies. The Irvine Commission had unambiguously proposed a small, elite, research-oriented sort of Oxbridge institution, fully residential, located in one campus to promote regionalism, federalism and so forth. Dr. Williams agreed with that latter aspect of the proposal that the federal concept would have been enhanced by having a single campus, but he did not support much of the rest. In fact, it is clearly stated here that he had in mind a technical university such as what Sen. Prof. Spence is proposing. He referred to it as a university in overalls with a focus on the industries which are the economic base of the particular country.

In that time, there was a great focus on agriculture and the skills needed to run the oil industry, and a great emphasis on adult education, on the university personnel actively involved in the economic production. The professors or teachers, or what have you would actually be doing hands-on work, research, problem solving, training students, teaching and so forth. The sort of institution in Britain to which he referred is the alma mater of Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie and myself, the University of Manchester where the focus there is on the chemistry of textiles and so forth.

Tertiary Education
[SEN. DR. ST. CYR]

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

I say that there is need to look at this again, because I want to think that the solution which Dr. Williams proposed was not the correct one either. In other words, he would not go along with the Irvine Committee's report of a small—that is 400—500 students for the entire Caribbean—fully residential university. Instead he went for a larger university where as many persons would come in. I also think he had in mind—not full time study either—work and study and gradually complete your degree so that you never got the taste of the ivory tower and forgot how to get your hands dirty. I think both are needed, because lying behind the applied sciences, are the theoretical sciences so that the applied work would be done in the technical university such as being proposed in this Motion; while the theoretical work, where we link up with the international community of scientific workers, will be done in a sort of ivory tower with inwardly motivated research and less involved in the practical things around.

4.20 p.m.

I know that there is resistance in the present university circle to having both universities. It is natural that people tend to deal with competition before it comes on the scene—that is the best time to knock out a potential enemy, before he stands up. But I really think we need both. In fact, I think, we always needed both. It has become very clear to me, as we debate today, that if the University of the West Indies were given its proper sphere of work, it will do a far better job at that and be far more cost-effective. A separate technical university of Trinidad and Tobago will do far better, many of the things that the University of the West Indies, as structured at present, does at far too great a cost and rather inefficiently.

I ask the hon. Senators in ministerial office whether they would look at this matter again. I know the Minister of Planning and Development is not here, but I see the hon. Minister, Dr. Griffith, and I am saying that we should look at the problem, holistically, in its historical context and in the context of the search we have always had to put in place, the institutions to build the human resources for the purpose of developing this region as an area where we can all live with dignity and at a certain level.

The Rt. Hon. Dr. Williams had in mind that the university system would, principally, be the development arm of the state, doing the development of the human resource as the key element in development.

Mr. President, I strongly support the call in the Motion and, by implication, I am wondering whether the amendment, such as I think will be proposed, should be made at all.

I thank you very much, Sir.

GREETINGS

(Eid ul Fitr)

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, before I move the appropriate motion to adjourn this Senate, may I take this opportunity on behalf of the Government and Senators to extend greetings to the Muslim community as they celebrate *Eid ul Fitr* on Friday, January 30, 1998.

As you know, Mr. President, this is a very special occasion for the Muslim community and they have been fasting for the last few weeks. We take this opportunity to extend warmest greetings to our brothers and sisters in the Muslim community on this very auspicious occasion.

Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed: Mr. President, I, too, on behalf of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber and, indeed, the People's National Movement, take this opportunity to extend to the entire nation greetings on *Eid Mubarak* 1998.

As Sen. Mark pointed out a while ago, over the last several days Muslims throughout the world have been fasting and observing this very holy month. This is a time when much soul searching is done, a time of introspection, discipline and sacrifice. As we culminate this spiritual month, it is normally observed by the *Eid* celebrations and, certainly, while Friday is the public holiday there is a slight possibility that it might even be on Thursday. Whatever day it is, Friday is, in fact, a public holiday and we on this side would like to extend *Eid Mubarak*, particularly, to the Muslim community, and I personally would like to extend my warmest *Eid* greetings to my Muslim brothers in the Chamber, Sen. The hon. Sadiq Baksh and Sen. Nizam Baksh.

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. President, may I, on behalf of the Independent Senators, join my colleagues in extending greetings to the Muslim community on the occasion of *Eid ul Fitr*. I really do think it is wonderful to live in a country where one could celebrate each other's religious festivals in this way and live in peace.

Greetings

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, may I also take the opportunity to wish the Muslim community and, indeed, the national community, warmest greetings on the occasion of the celebration of *Eid ul Fitr* which would take place, perhaps, on Thursday, January 29, 1998, but most certainly not later than Friday, January 30, 1998.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate now adjourn to Tuesday, February 03, 1998, at 1.30 p.m.

On that day we would address the following Bills: continuation of the Maternity Protection Bill. We would then proceed to deal with an Act to amend the Consumer Protection and Safety Act, 1985; the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago (Amdt.) Act, 1997 and the Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Identification Bill, 1997.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 4.28 p.m.