

SENATE*Tuesday, June 16, 1998*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE WORKING PAPER**

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following communication from the Hon. Hector McClean, Speaker of the House of Representatives. It is addressed to the Senate, and it reads:

“Senator Philip Hamel-Smith
Vice-President of the Senate
Office of the President of the Senate
Parliament
The Red House
Abercromby Street
Port of Spain.

Dear Mr. Vice-President,

At a sitting of the House of Representatives held on Friday June 12, 1998, the House of Representatives passed the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to consider the Working Paper entitled ‘the Reform of the Management Structure of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago’ and to report to Parliament thereon.’

The decision of the House of the Representatives is forwarded for the attention of the Senate.

Yours sincerely

Hon. Hector McClean, MP”

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, I wish to state that at the appropriate stage I shall be seeking leave of this honourable Senate to move a Motion in connection with the letter which you have just read.

SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMDT.) BILL

Bill to amend the Summary Offences Act, Chap. 11:02, to update the law dealing with the holding of public meetings and public marches and other related matters; brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister of National Security*]; 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.

COHABITATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BILL

Bill to confer on cohabitants rights and obligations, to give the courts jurisdiction to make orders with respect to interests in property and maintenance, to make provision for the enforcement of agreements and for matters incidental thereto, brought from the House of Representatives [*The Attorney General*]; 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.

PETITION**United Islamic Organisations**

Sen. Nizam Baksh: Mr. Vice-President, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the United Islamic Organisations of Trinidad of No. 73, Eastern Main Road, Curepe, in the Ward of Tacarigua, in the island of Trinidad, hereinafter referred to as the UIO.

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

Petition read.

Question put and agreed to.

PAPERS LAID

1. The Water Improvement Rate (Point Lisas Industrial Estate) Order, 1998.
[*The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark)*]
2. The Water Improvement (Point Lisas Industrial Estate) Area Order, 1998.
[*Hon. W. Mark*]

3. Green Paper for Proposed Energy Policy for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Hon. W. Mark*]
4. Working Paper on the Reform of the Management Structure of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Hon. W. Mark*]
5. Annual Report and accounts of the Unit Trust Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1997. [*Hon. W. Mark*]
6. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Sport and Culture Fund for the year ended December 31, 1992. [*Hon. W. Mark*]
7. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Sport and Culture Fund for the year ended December 31, 1993. [*Hon. W. Mark*]
8. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Sport and Culture Fund for the year ended December 31, 1994. [*Hon. W. Mark*]

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, in accordance with Standing Order 25, I seek your leave and that of hon. Senators, to dispense with notice with respect to a Motion which I propose to move and which I referred to earlier in the proceedings.

Question put and agreed to.

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The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that this Senate concur with the resolution of the House of the Representatives and conveyed in the letter to the Hon. Vice-President of the Senate which was read at an earlier stage of the proceedings:

“Be it resolved that a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to consider the Working Paper entitled ‘the Reform of the Management Structure of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago’ and to report to Parliament thereon.”

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to consider the Working Paper entitled “the Reform of the Management Structure of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago” and to report to Parliament thereon.

**WATER IMPROVEMENT RATE
(POINT LISAS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE) ORDER**

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move the following Motion:

Whereas it is provided by section 11(B) of the Waterworks and Water Conservation Act, Chap. 54:41 (hereinafter called “the Act”) that the Minister may by Order impose water improvement rates in respect of all or any classes of such lands and to provide for the methods of calculation and the times and manner of payment of such rates;

And whereas it is also provided by section 11 of the Act that every Order made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

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

Be it resolved that the Water Improvement Rate (Point Lisas Industrial Estate) Order, 1998 be approved.

Mr. Vice-President, Motions Nos. 1 and 2 are interrelated. I therefore beg to move that they be dealt with together.

1.45 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, on May 21, 1998 I piloted the Waterworks and Water Conservation (Amdt.) Bill, 1998 in this honourable House. The Bill was assented to by the President on June 4, 1998. The main purpose of the Bill was to provide for the undertaking of waterworks in industrial or commercial sites or estates and to strengthen the provisions for the collection of water improvement rates.

In accordance with the Act, as amended by Act No. 10 of 1998, the Minister is now authorized to enable the competent authority to collect improvement rates by first publishing orders for the purposes of classifying lands to be considered water improvement areas and prescribing the rate to be paid by the customers located in that area and to provide for the methods of calculation and the time and manner of payment of such rates. These Orders require affirmative resolution of Parliament

before they can take effect and have already received the affirmative resolution of the Lower House on June 12, 1998.

Consequently, Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that:

1. the Point Lisas Industrial Estate be declared a water improvement area, that is the area of land situate in the ward of Couva in the county of Caroni bounded as follows: on the North by the Waterloo Road; on the South by the area designated as reclamation area; on the East by the Old Southern Main Road; and on the West by the Gulf of Paria; and
2. a water improvement rate of \$4.00 per cubic metre payable by customers located in that area be the applicable rate.

Mr. Vice-President, the water improvement rate of \$4.00 per cubic metre will exist alongside the present water rate for industrial users of \$3.50 per cubic metre established by the Public Utilities Commission under Order 83.

The question is, why declare the Point Lisas Industrial Estate a water improvement area and how was the water improvement rate of \$4.00 per cubic metre arrived at? I will attempt to address these questions by (a) briefly describing the present situation in the water sector; (b) giving an idea of the projections for the demand over the next few years; (c) indicating the aims and objectives of Government in the medium to long term; and (d) describing the rate setting methodology.

WASA presently has 95 water sources. Seventy per cent of total water production is from surface water and the rest is of ground water origin. There are four major surface-water sources in Trinidad which together account for 60 per cent of production, namely: Hollis, Navet, Caroni/Arena and North Oropouche. There are no major raw-water sources in South Trinidad.

The combined ground water potential of the four aquifers in Trinidad is estimated to be 72 million gallons of which the current usage is 44 million gallons compared with a water resource management recommendation maximum intake of 51 million gallons. Therefore, although there is significant long-term potential for the ground-water sources in North and Central Trinidad, there is no further scope for development in the Point Lisas area as there are already concerns that the existing wells may be over-extracted.

Currently, the total water production in Trinidad and Tobago is about 178 million gallons. The total safe yield is about 170 million gallons during the rainy

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season and 156 million gallons during the dry season. Unaccounted for water is estimated to be as high as 50 per cent of total production. In addition, per capita water consumption is extremely high. It is also estimated that the demand for water for all uses is likely to increase from 124 million gallons in 1998 to 136 million gallons in 2005.

It is evident that when losses in the system are taken into account the available supply is insufficient to meet the total demand for water resulting in a deficit of approximately 28 million gallons daily. Clearly, unless something urgent is done, water shortages and scheduling will intensify well into the next decade. This is a very serious situation. Furthermore, the priority assigned to meeting the current demand at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate has resulted in a significant deficit in the national water supply, particularly, to the domestic consumers in Central and South Trinidad.

Apart from the resource deficiency in the country, the condition of the transmission and distribution system is such that pipelines cannot transmit the required volumes of water because of pipe size, age and encrustation. When one considers that the replacement of these corroded and encrusted pipes can only be executed at the rate of approximately 100 kilometres per year, with the available resources in Trinidad and Tobago, and recognizing that the network contains some 3,900 kilometres of pipeline which have not been attended to with any degree of urgency for decades, it is easy to estimate that it will take about 39 years to completely replace the present network. By that time we will have to start all over again. In other words, we will be forever playing catch up.

Notwithstanding the above, it was recently estimated that the replacement cost for 1,000 kilometres of the most dilapidated pipelines in the network spanning over the next 10 years would be TT \$950 million. The development of dams to meet any short or medium-term increases in demand can only be considered in relation to time and cost factors associated with such development works.

Generally, the phases involved in the development of a dam project consist of the following:

1. feasibility;
2. design;
3. tendering or procurement;
4. construction.

Estimation for preconstruction and construction phases for the development of new dams in Moruga, North Oropouche and Matura indicate that phased commissioning can best be achieved by the year 2005 at the earliest, if all are immediately commenced. In other words, the development of any new dams in the areas which appear most feasible will take no less than seven years.

In 1996 a study of the potential expenditure and yield for certain identified dam schemes which are targeted to be developed in the medium to long term, indicate the following: Moruga development and transmission, approximate cost \$400 million; North Oropouche, approximate cost \$430 million; Matura, approximate cost \$300 million; service reservoirs and feed mains, approximate cost \$230 million. Judging from the above estimates it is clear that approximately \$1.36 billion would need to be invested to develop the required supplies which would only be effective after no less than seven years from today's date.

If no dams in the short term, then what is the solution? The question is, therefore, what do we do in the meantime while the demands—

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. Vice-President, I wonder if the hon. Minister would give us the cost of a dam specifically for Point Lisas. Not the general dams that he has referred to which will take seven years but the cost and the time for a dam specifically to supply the requirement of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. If he cannot give us that then I do not think we have a discussion.

Hon. G. Singh: I think that the hon. Senator would—the pre-feasibility studies that are being done point to the areas of Moruga, North Oropouche, Matura and Marianne. With respect, therefore, a dam takes a certain period of time whether it is for any specific area. There is the necessity of a time period for construction and for pre-feasibility; it takes a certain period of time. I am advised it takes at least seven years to create the conditions for building a dam whether it is for Point Lisas or any other area.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Do I take it then that those studies are done for a specific dam for the Point Lisas estate?

Hon. G. Singh: These studies are done for dams that are catchment areas for the production of potable water whether that water is designated for other areas—the question of where it is distributed does not arise. If no dams then what is the solution?

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The question is, what do we do in the meantime while the demands are increasing almost exponentially, especially in the industrial sector and, more particularly, at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate? Time does not allow us to vacillate with illusive solutions. A careful analysis would show that a combination of measures needs to be adopted.

Mr. Vice-President, owing to the present situation and the forecasted deficit, Government's priority focus will be on:

1. refurbishment and rehabilitation of the existing water supply;
2. significant reduction of losses in the system to a level consistent with efficient operation;
3. replacing, increasing and upgrading of the transmission and distribution capacities;
4. development of new sources of supply; and
5. conservation of the water resources of the country.

All these measures will require a significant capital outlay and would take an extended period of time to accomplish. In the meantime, however, dedicated works must be carried out to guarantee a secure and flexible supply to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate since this is the area which is generating the greatest demand in the short term.

The Point Lisas Industrial Estate now accommodates some 22 major firms together with several small industries, commercial enterprises and offices. The expansion of the estate, now in progress, will allow for the accommodation of 20 to 25 additional firms and the resulting demand for water at the estate is expected to rise from 12 to 15 million gallons daily, currently, to 33 million gallons by the year 2005. This is a significant increase when compared to WASA's current total production of 178 million gallons. This rapidly increasing demand for water at the estate must be seen against the background of a current daily water deficit in the country of some 28 million gallons per day and where only about 11.5 per cent of the population receive 24 hours continuous supply of water.

The development works identified as being urgent for satisfying the increasing demand at this industrial estate comprise, *inter alia*, the following:

1. priority works, the development and refurbishment of wells in the Las Lomas area, the supply to Farmlands and the reinforcement of the local infrastructure at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate;

2. expansion of the Caroni water treatment plant; and
3. other associated works, rehabilitation of the Caroni water treatment plant and transmission system, strengthening of the Caroni water treatment plant pumping capacity;
4. improvements in transmission and distribution network.

These new infrastructure works to meet the industrial demand at the Point Lisas Estate are estimated to cost over \$260 million. These works are critical and essential and must be undertaken so as not to impede the development of the industries at the estate. Having regard to the substantial capital outlay, it is only fair that these works must generate cash flows sufficient to service the debt. WASA's present revenue base derived from the Public Utilities Commission's 1993 rates of \$3.50 per cubic metre is not sufficient to provide for the servicing of loans which would be required for the capital expenditure involved in these works.

2.00 p.m.

At the current cost of \$3.50 per cubic metre, the cost of water as a percentage of total operating expenses of the firms at Point Lisas is only 0.8 per cent. The cost of water as a percentage of total gross output is only 0.4 per cent. At the proposed rate of an additional \$4.00 per cubic metre, the cost of water as a percentage of total gross output will increase to 0.86 per cent, that is, less than 1 per cent of the gross output of the firms at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

A comparison of water prices in other countries indicate that the price of water in Trinidad and Tobago is not only the cheapest, but a mere fraction of prices in some other countries.

It is calculated that the revenues to accrue from customers at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate with the imposition of the water improvement rate of \$4.00 per cubic metre would be adequate to service the contemplated debt and also to cover all operating and maintenance costs at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Mr. Vice-President: While the question proposed relates to Motion No. 1, Senators can speak on both Motions which have been consolidated.

Sen. Cynthia Alfred: Thank you, Mr. Vice-President, for the opportunity of talking on this Motion.

As was mentioned, there are two Motions but they are interrelated—one deals with the water improvement area that is at Point Lisas, which is the area targeted to be designated a water improvement area but, at the same time, that there be a special rate for this area.

The first thing I will like to mention is that I think that in a presentation, especially one of this nature, the Minister should have taken time to make this point rather than rush through the speech.

Sen. Shabazz: Script!

Sen. C. Alfred: Script. At least if he took his time, it would have given us an opportunity to make notes, but the Minister went at a galloping pace and I suspect that the intention was that we would not have time to make our notes.

Anyway, I did manage to get one or two points and I will speak on those. But I think if anyone is making a presentation, he or she should do so in a manner that will enable the listeners to get a proper picture of what the presenter is trying to impart.

Mr. Vice-President, I was not clear on one thing. Perhaps the Minister could clarify. I heard mention of \$3.50 and then \$4.00 and at one point, I got the impression that it was \$4.00 to be added to the \$3.50, then at the end, the Minister said \$4.00. Could the Minister just clarify that point?

Mr. Singh: Hon. Senator, what I said is that the water improvement rate to be imposed is that of \$4.00. It exists alongside the Public Utilities Commission rate of \$3.50, so that together, it is \$7.50.

Sen. C. Alfred: Thank you, Minister.

The Minister gave reasons why these improvements are necessary, why the rates are necessary and why Point Lisas should be declared a specific area. We do not have a problem actually with the targeting of Point Lisas because we know, as was mentioned, that Point Lisas is a very important industrial estate. Of course, it was developed by the People's National Movement. That need not be said but I have to say it.

The Minister did not actually say how the Government intends to fund the project. We know it is \$260 million but the means by which the Minister said it is to be funded is not clear. He mentioned that so many new dams would take seven years to be put in operation and \$1.36 billion had to be invested to develop supplies.

The Minister evaded a question posed by Sen. Prof. John Spence and that question, to me, is critical. The question was, how much would it cost for one dam to be put in place for Point Lisas. Now, the Minister, I believe, was not prepared for such a question so the answer given, I must say, was not very satisfactory. When the Minister tells us how they are going to supply all the extra water then we may have a clearer idea, because so far I have not been able to determine which would cost less: putting down one dam specifically for Point Lisas, or the other method, whatever it may be. I suspect that it is the whole question of the desalination plant which came up in this Senate before and which I believe is the system. But, Mr. Vice-President, the questions still arise: Which would be more beneficial? Which would cost less? One dam, or the desalination plant?

The Minister also mentioned illusive solutions. Now, one would assume that the whole question of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate was well researched but, as I said, the Minister went so fast, we could not really tell. I return to the question of whether or not it would be more cost effective to have one dam for the Point Lisas Industrial Estate as against desalination?

I would like to ask another question. What is the role of Severn Trent in this whole Point Lisas endeavour? The reason I ask is we know that Severn Trent is the authority that is supposed to produce water in Trinidad and Tobago and I have heard—correct me if I am wrong—no mention of Severn Trent and we want to know what is its role in this whole exercise. We are not sure whether WASA, through Severn Trent, will be the agent which will be handling the project or whether, indeed, the Government intends to give it to another body.

I expect that will come out later, but if Severn Trent is the authority in Trinidad and Tobago to win water for the population of Trinidad and Tobago, then somehow I think there must be a significant role. Perhaps I should assume that it is Severn Trent, but I am assuming nothing, Mr. Vice-President. I am sure the Minister will provide the appropriate answer.

Mr. Vice-President, the Minister gave justification why indeed this Government wants to increase the rate to \$7.50 per cubic metre, an additional

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\$4.00. From my layman's point of view, the rate appears to be fairly high but then the Minister said that, in fact, it would appear to be a comfortable rate taking into consideration worldwide trends. If that is the case, then we say fine, go for it. But whereas in principle, of course, we support the Motion, we would like to have some answers. What is Severn Trent's role? What would it cost to have one dam against the other method? Perhaps when we do get those answers, we would be able to come to some logical conclusion.

As I said, overall we support the principle, because we know that Point Lisas is providing an excellent source of revenue for this country, of course, through the foresight of the People's National Movement, and we would like to support any motion that would facilitate Point Lisas getting maximum production, but at the same time, being able to pay the rate that will indeed be beneficial to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Vice-President, I thank you for the opportunity of speaking on the Motion, but we would like some answers. When those answers are forthcoming, then we would feel much more comfortable, but in principle, we support the Motions.

Sen. Dr. Eric St. Cyr: Mr. Vice-President, before I could decide to support or not, I need some additional information. It is not clear what will be the source of the water that would be collected in this area, whether it will be ground water or surface water, or whether we take it from the sea.

Mr. Singh: My apologies for proceeding at a pace. I just want to clarify that position. The \$260 million would be expended in several wells in the Las Lomas area. It would be done for the debottlenecking of the Caroni/Arena Water Treatment Plant and, also, additional rehabilitation works in the transmissioning in order to provide this water to Point Lisas, so it is surface water and it is ground water.

Sen. Dr. E. St. Cyr: Yes. So I take it we would not be putting up the desalination plant.

Mr. Singh: Not for purposes at this particular time.

Sen. Jagmohan: Good news!

Sen. Dr. E. St. Cyr: Not at this time!

I would also want to be sure that the executing agency would be named and if it is going to be WASA or whomever, this would be critical. I do not know whether the Minister would choose to respond at this time on that.

Mr. Singh: The Point Lisas Water Assurance Scheme is part of a comprehensive package called the South Water Project. This is one component of it and the executing agency is WASA and the Trinidad and Tobago Water Services agency (TTWS).

Sen. Daly: Oh! Oh! That is the one with the government guarantee.

Sen. Dr. E. St. Cyr: Yes. I was searching my memory for a little phrase I learnt when I studied French, which went something like this "*Faire d'une pierre deux coups*"—to kill two birds with one stone. And I was wondering, with all the water flooding the Central area at this time, whether the supply of water and the protection of our agricultural resources and people's homes, could not have been better combined as a long-term infrastructure project. I know we are in a hurry to supply water to the estate, but sometimes we do better by planning and taking a little more time.

I thank you, Sir, for the hearing.

2.15 p.m.

Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny: Mr. Vice-President, I have no difficulty at all with supporting the Order with respect to Point Lisas. I have some problems, however, with the other Order with respect to the rates. I mention this because I happen to have one of the very unusual metered water service at my property in Blanchisseuse and the rate is actually \$15.50 per cubic metre. I can show proof of this in the form of a communication from WASA. Perhaps WASA has had me over the years, but I think we need clarification on the actual rate.

I would like the Minister to expand a little on his statement about how our rates are the lowest. I would like to know what are the rates for industrial users in other parts of the world, for example, in Europe and the United States of America. This would help me decide whether I can support what appears to me, to be a give away of water at \$7.50 per cubic metre.

Mr. Vice-President, again, we are dealing with a policy matter, and again we are tinkering with it. We are not really dealing with the long-term policy regarding water. Now, one of the things that concern me, before we get to the Point Lisas issue, is whether we ever learn from the history of our own development. With respect to the sugar industry, which is quite self-sufficient in water, the factory at Usine Ste. Madeleine operated on a dam. Our oil industry at Pointe-a-Pierre functioned for heaven knows how many years with water that was collected and

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delivered to the dams or fell from the skies. I wondered why we are using potable water for industrial development. It really does bother me that we do not seem to have learnt anything from a couple hundred years of history.

One of the things that concern me about the Point Lisas matter is that no statement is made as to what the water requirements are for processes as opposed to water requirements for cooling. To me this is a rather important figure that we ought to understand before we give full support to the Order regarding the price.

Mr. Vice-President, I was rather taken by the hon. Minister's stressing on the importance of water conservation. I appear to have put some blight on the country, according to Sen. Prof. Spence, by predicting what was going to happen after this extended dry season. We see these lovely television images of the sugarcane fields and the roads flooded with water. Rainfalls of 20 mm over a weekend on a sugarcane field is not actually the cause of that kind of flood. What causes it is the catchment areas and the fast runoff from these areas.

This is our problem, Mr. Vice-President, that we do not seem ever able to address. I remind this Senate that during this dry season when it was entirely predictable as to what would happen, firstly, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, in the middle of April decided to close some of the forest reserves—in the middle of April after everything was burning. Secondly, at the end of the dry season the Ministry of National Security, the helicopter service and the fire service got together to resuscitate the bambi buckets which were sitting in Chaguaramas since the devastating season of 1987 and here we are, again, talking about water conservation when we do not address, or appear incapable of addressing, the subject of management of watersheds.

Santa Cruz is one of our major aquifers and all the evidence indicate that the recharge rate of the aquifers in Santa Cruz is substantially lower than the extraction rate. This thing can be multiplied all across the board. So, when we start talking of water conservation we have to be talking about management of our catchment areas.

I think that most Senators would remember the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources responding to a question of mine about the reforestation of our watersheds. While I cannot remember the actual figures, in some years about 20 hectares of state lands were reforested—sometimes it was 30 hectares and in some years there were none. The official figure that comes out of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is that somehow there were about 10,000

hectares of fires this year. When this happens and one sees a fire burning hillside, which is the catchment areas, and goes to the Ministry of National Security to say that there is a fire up there, one is asked, "Is it threatening any private property?" If it is not threatening any private property they are told, "Let it burn." Yet, here we are talking about conservation of our water.

Mr. Vice-President, it is a very simple fact of life that it rains and we are in the wet tropics. I pointed out before that our lowest rainfall is about 1,200 mm per year and our highest is about 3,600 mm per year. In the driest part of Trinidad our rainfall is actually higher than the United Kingdom, the home of Severn Trent, and they do not use desalination plants.

Why are we talking about conservation if we cannot intergrate the planning of our use of water with the management of the catchment areas? It is not the floods out there in the flat areas, it is really in the highlands where we have removed the forest cover and the 20 or 30 mm of rainfall and, of course, when it gets down to the level of the flat areas, that, of course, is the problem. We have to manage our watersheds. Just look at the Northern Range, now that we have a flush of green leaves, you can see where the fires have burnt. One can see the places that are going to become grass and when the rain falls we would have exactly the same thing over and over.

One of the things I would like the Minister to clarify for me is the policy, if there is in fact one, about recycling water. This is related to the question that I raised earlier about Point Lisas. If all the requirements of Point Lisas are for water for processing, that has to be potable water, then there is not the big argument for recycling other sources of water.

2.25 p.m.

If there is any significant use of fresh water for cooling from Point Lisas, then, where is the recycling? Do we just allow it to go down to the sea? I know that the question of a desalination plant does not arise in this debate but when we talk desalination, we really must be told about the process of desalination. One can remove salt from water in a variety of ways; where energy is very cheap, where you flare in natural gas or, you can use the reverse, osmosis. Both of them are expensive. I would like to hear of the thinking and the studies which have already been done about the possible use of a desalination plant.

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The point I made earlier about our history where, in our industrial development, we used surface water at Usine Ste. Madeleine, Aripéro, Point Fortin, Pointe-a-Pierre, Reform Sugar Estate virtually anywhere where there is any sort of industrial development, whether it is the agro-industry or the petroleum industry, one invariably had a development of some kind of catchment system that one caught water from an area or, by gravity from a water shed along a pipe or so forth.

It puzzles me that the question both Sen. Prof. Spence and Sen. Alfred raised has not really been addressed. It is possible that one can write off the Couva River because the industry has already poisoned it and that you can impound vast quantities with simple levees. In other words, you can make a dam comparatively easy. I do not know what the demands are for crude water for cooling purposes as opposed to water for processing, but it is striking to me that it is rather important to know there have been detailed feasibility studies concerning sourcing water specifically for Point Lisas.

Finally, I was rather saddened to see that there are lots of important people touring the flooded areas, including the Environmental Management Authority. If one believes some of the things that are stated one wonders where have all these people been over the past 50 years because, what we are seeing and experiencing here is a product of our wilful neglect of the process of degradation of our catchment areas.

Mr. Vice-President, thank you.

Sen. Martin Daly: Mr. Vice-President, it is rather ironic that we should be discussing today how to find more water in the circumstances that presently prevail in a great deal of the country, some of which is in the heartland constituencies of this Government. I am not as urbane or as gentle as some of my colleagues. I think it is very important to tell the Government “we told you so.” We told the Government so on the occasion of the debate to amend the Bill which is now producing these Orders.

Water first and foremost remains a political tool in Trinidad and Tobago. As Sen. Prof. Kenny constantly repeats, the complete misunderstanding of successive governments on how to conserve water in the absence of any policy on the environment—it makes me very angry because I do say I have the advantage of watching the news every evening and they show us what is happening in the real world. Last night we saw a Mr. Roy who was waist deep in water. I assumed

whoever is the government of the day do not watch television otherwise they would commit themselves to doing something about these issues.

Mr. Roy is only symbolic of what happens in this country every year. It does not seem to bother anybody. I do not see anybody who is in authority in the country very bothered and we know, of course, there is going to be much discussion about the evils of Severn Trent in the course of this debate where both of the political sides' hands are not clean. One brought Severn Trent to the Parliament and signed the agreement just before the election and the present Government ratified those arrangements when the world knows that those arrangements were made in breach of the requests for proposals in that a government guarantee was given to the Trinidad and Tobago Water Services which is the executing agency for this project. So, we are actually sanctioning something today in relation to an agency that was given an advantage not catered for in the request for proposals. I say that as a warning shot across the bowels of the two official political sides. Sooner or later they are going to realize that neither of them has the moral authority to discuss the Severn Trent arrangements. We need to move on and forget about this aspect of the matter and get down to the business of when are we going to be civilized enough to provide people with a water supply.

I do not want to repeat what Prof. Kenny has said. I would just like to put my own gloss on it. I heard the Minister rattle off, and if he rattled it off because he would be shameful to say it more slowly—I did hear him say that 70 per cent of our source of water is surface water. One can look at their beleaguered constituencies today and see that. One does not need to hire a foreign consultant from London to tell us that.

I thought for a minute there the Minister was going to correct me about the 70 per cent, but at times nearly 70 per cent of heavily populated Trinidad is covered with surface water. We do not need London economics to tell us anymore than we need Canadians to tell us what to do about the environment.

Mr. Vice-President, it is quite clear that this \$7.50 rate, which apparently is a combination of rates, is based on nothing at all. My suspicion is—and I hope I am wrong—that this \$7.50 is a rate which the Government has privately negotiated with the users at Point Lisas; probably with certain international agencies in the background. Remember, they keep dictating to us all the time what are the requirements for foreign investment in Trinidad and Tobago. It is no good the

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Minister shaking his head because they told him that if he did not overlook the breach of the request for proposals and sign the agreement, we would get a bad name in the international community. We are in a same khaki pants situation. Previous governments could do nothing about the water situation. This Government can do nothing about the water situation because the basic problem is being misunderstood.

I am very unhappy about this \$7.50 rate. I do not think it is based on any kind of rational study and those who are scientifically qualified have pointed out some of the things that need to be taken into consideration.

It is little over US \$1. Where in the world are these foreign investors going to go and get potable drinking water, as I understand it, supplied for a little over US \$1? There is nowhere in the world they are going to get that. It is no good brow-beating us or suggesting to us that they would not invest in Trinidad and Tobago or they will take their investments out of Trinidad and Tobago if we charge them more than US \$1.20 for their supply of water. The Minister has said this is a fraction of what they would pay in other parts of the world. What is our justification for charging the users at the Point Lisas Estate a fraction of what is charged in the rest of the world? I strongly suspect this rate has been informally negotiated. Everyone will deny it and say "not my Ministry" but, there are ways one can do these things. You can tell people, wherever the good, the high and the noble meet, "we are thinking of doing this," and they would say, "no, that is too high." It is extreme deniability. These things, as you know, Mr. Vice-President, can be done very informally. You can fly a kite, you can find out—so that you have extreme deniability.

2.35 p.m.

The Minister of Energy can say they never took instructions about this \$7.50 rate. Over a chicken bouché or two, they may well have informally tested the market. I hope they would be careful with what they say about how this \$7.50 was arrived at. It seems to be scandalously low. I repeat on all these occasions, I am a capitalist; I am a businessman, but that does not mean that I cannot recognize a bargain when I see it. In fact, it qualifies me to recognize a bargain when I see it. I need a great deal of persuasion before I cast an affirmative vote for this \$7.50 rate. It really does not seem to be based on any scientific study.

I think it is important to ram home the point that all this has come about because of continual mismanagement of the environment. When I lived in one

particular part in Diego Martin, in the 1970s, it flooded every year. It was the same area some residents were discussing on the television the other night. They showed pictures. I do not know if it would be suggested that these pictures were manufactured. It is not very easy for the media to manufacture pictures of the Diego Martin River. Assuming the road is not flooded, one can drive down the road to see it. The residents were complaining that the Diego Martin River had become a savannah. It was a silt covered field with long grass growing on it. One could have made a 'bwana' movie, given the long grass which was growing there.

It was reported that the Ministry of Works and Transport had a committee looking into the matter. I hope the committee hurries up before the whole Diego Martin Valley does not look like the heartland constituency of the present Government. There is complete neglect. These areas which these residents are complaining about that have been flooding since I lived there in the 1970s will flood again. The officials who responded to these complaints last night said, "Look here, Mr. Roy, while you are losing all your tomatoes and standing waist deep in water"—with some coral snakes in it, no doubt—"we have a committee looking into the situation in Diego Martin." I am sure that the zoologist would confirm that coral snakes and flood water go hand in hand. "It could be worse." They said that on the television last night. One man was crying. He said that was all he had to say and he turned away before he burst into tears. We have too many crying footballers. The average Trinidadian knows that it is not a good thing to cry in front of the television.

Here we have a country which we say is very hospitable and there are hordes of persons whose homes have been destroyed. They are living in unsanitary conditions; some are losing their businesses and crops and the officials are telling them it could be worse. I suppose they could have died. The flood could have been like the one in Italy and it could have carried them away. Is that an appropriate governmental response: "It could have been worse and the rainfall was heavy?"

As far as I know Robin is not part of the media that are perpetrating any conspiracy on the Government. He is just a meteorologist describing the weather as he sees it. He explained that there was more rain in June 1983 than this June. We have had an ease for years to think about it. These technocrats were telling the people that it could be worse. They were giving them all kinds of figures and telling them that these new projects were designed to meet a rainfall of so much. God forbid, but if the man upstairs is a little careless about how much rain he deposits, he does not seem to have any tolerance or leverage, lest he deposits the

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average rainfall for Trinidad, Mr. Roy would lose his crops again. They are not building the drains with any tolerance or possibility of an extraordinary event.

It is interesting to hear Sen. Prof. Kenny talk about levees. The entire southern states that run along the Mississippi are covered in levees designed to prevent flooding and conserve water. Here we are talking about these things and it is a simple problem. We have the water, but it goes in the wrong place. How to get the water out of the wrong place into the right place is what we are discussing today.

I would finish with the story of "Curry Mouth". That is a source which I am quoting in relation to this debate. "Curry Mouth" is a friend of mine. Contrary to the racial stereo types which are being bandied about now, he is just a good "Trini". Genetically, he qualifies to be a French Creole. He got his nickname from his favourite dish. He chain smokes Broadway; drinks Vat; has a white collar job, but drives a pick-up. If we were in the Southern United States, he would have some of the characteristics of a red neck. I happen to know that in certain circumstances he has preferred one political party to another which broadens his affiliation. He is a bit of a character. He is also a fisherman and a conservationist of sorts. He is definitely not a foreign consultant of any kind.

He was speaking to me on the phone about my insurance business, because he is my insurance agent. He said, "Martin, what is going on? You have Senate today? I find you are very quiet these days." I said, "Curry boy, we are going to have a very boring afternoon. We are going to talk about sugar again and water again." He said, "Water for where?" I said, "Water for Point Lisas." He characterized the Government, but I would not repeat the characterization. He said, "Why don't you tell that Government that if they want water for Point Lisas, take the water out of all the people place in Central and put it in Point Lisas, and all yuh could go home early." That is a very practical piece of advice from a true "Trini". He cannot understand why we are coming here today to discuss water for Point Lisas, when in the same geographical vicinity there is water for Point Lisas. This is very good homely advice. I thought I should repeat it. He would never forgive me because I did not tell him that I thought it was worthy of repetition. It is important to underline the ridiculousness of what we do here. I keep harping on the ridiculousness of us coming here and discussing some of these matters when the bottom line is how to get the water which we have in over abundance from the wrong place to the right place. The problem is simple to state, but not so simple to resolve.

For heaven's sake, if we have to give 40,000 gallons per day of our usable water to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, we have to arrive at a proper competitive charge for it, particularly when we are blessed with an over abundance of it. I do not think that Sen. Prof. Spence's enquiry should be treated with ill temper. Surely, it must be possible. Let us use the "Curry Mouth" formula. It must be possible to catch all that rain in Central and direct it into Point Lisas. When I was a child people in Mayaro used to exist on rain water. In the rainy season, the rain was caught in tanks from the roof and it lasted through the dry season.

2.45 p.m.

I think it is very important that the Minister gets serious and tell us why it is not possible to apply the "curry-mouth" theory. We have all the water we need in the central area, right where Point Lisas is located, why is it not possible to catch it and, instead of having it destroying the lives of people in the heartland constituencies, redirect it to Point Lisas and solve some of the problems?

I thank you.

Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams: Mr. Vice-President, I would like to raise one or two concerns. Probably the Minister alluded to them, but I may have missed them as I went along. I hope he will excuse me.

We are concerned, as all citizens are, about the supply of water in this country. We recognize the need to improve the quality of our water supply. The previous administration had attempted to do so on a short- and long-term basis. I wonder, though, in what we are doing today, whether the Minister has departed from the programme which was in place at the time and is now asking the Senate to declare a specific area a water improvement area with a specific rate. I say this because I am concerned that the Point Lisas Industrial Estate is the first of several areas.

Like Sen. Daly, I am concerned about the \$7.50. In fact, before the Minister explained how he got \$7.50, I felt that it was an arbitrary figure and I would really like to know how he arrived at it. A precedent is being set this afternoon where we are making this specific area a water improvement area. When we do that for another area, arbitrarily, we can then decide on a price for the water in that particular area. Someone tells me that is opening the door to private treaty. I say no more about this.

It seems to me that when they have discussions with persons in the particular area, for whatever reason, nobody can tell the criteria or what is under the cover. I

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do not want to allude to anything, but it does lead one to feel that this whole matter of transparency which the Government has been articulating is not being very evident.

I understand that we have the capacity for 160 million gallons per day but I think that today the Minister might have shifted that figure. At present, Point Lisas uses about 15 million gallons but I see that there is an increased requirement. In the form in which the Minister has brought the Motion into the Senate today, he is clearly by-passing the Public Utilities Commission. We will not say that we do not think he should have increased the rate, but I am saying that this is a precedent. He is no longer using the Public Utilities Commission; he is putting in his own system and the mechanism worries me.

I heard someone talk about a desalination plant. I know that this was not in this Motion, but could this open the door for someone to erect such a plant and charge for the water? I cannot tell, and I am subject to correction.

Mr. Vice-President, allow me to make one comment. I know that there are desalination plants all over the world. I know that there are also some in the Caribbean, but I wish that we do not have any in Trinidad in terms of the environment. I am not quite sure what process we will use, but I understand that when the water has been processed much brine will be pumped into the Gulf of Paria. The Gulf of Paria is not our province alone. It is shared by our neighbours and we need to look at our eco-systems as we think about it. As I said before, I can clearly see the opportunity for introducing such a treatment plant in Trinidad and Tobago and I would vigorously oppose such.

When I look at the use to which the money would be put—and I wanted to ask the Minister whether work had started and what work was going to be done—it seems that the works are not only for Point Lisas, but will be shared with other areas. What is really behind all of this? Is it really a water shortage? As we heard this afternoon, there is no water shortage in Trinidad and Tobago.

I would like to look at Caroni (1975) Limited for a while. The records show that WASA metres Caroni (1975) Limited—and again I am subject to correction—for one million gallons per day. I have been told that in the height of the crop time Caroni would use up to 10 million gallons per day. I would, therefore, like to know where the 9 million gallons comes from. This is probably money which WASA has not collected.

I saw on the television some time ago that two illegal connections were found somewhere in Caroni and probably if I were to find out about the other 9 million gallons, there might be 18 other illegal connections. Therefore, when we talk about the revenue base of WASA, if we could find those connections, maybe someone else could be made to pay for the water being used. The problem, Mr. Vice-President, is not necessarily Point Lisas alone, but other places with which we need to deal. I think Caroni is one.

If we continue with this and look for other estates, at any point in time we can have the Minister declaring another water improvement area. Because of that, I am concerned. Will it stop at Point Lisas? Will it stop with the arbitrariness of the cost? What is the basis of what we are doing here this afternoon? We have been asked to look at these two Motions, but this seems to be superficial.

My research tells me that some time ago there was a treatment plant in San Fernando which supplied five million gallons of industrial water to Point Lisas. I wonder whether the Minister has ever considered the Beetham sewage treatment plant. I understand that if that water is treated, one can find water there which could be supplied to Point Lisas. I think that those are alternative considerations that the Minister can think about, that would not hamper the eco-systems of this country.

Somewhere along the line I heard about the privatization of WASA. I am concerned about what would happen to the revenue and all that we are now putting into the area. Who will own the properties and what we are now putting into this industrial area?

Mr. Vice-President, I remember that before the last administration demitted office, it recognized that under the Public Utilities Commission, it took quite a long time for complaints to be decided. In fact, sometimes it took up to the three years simply because people would come, they would have to bring their lawyers, and there were to be these public hearings and so forth. Before we left office, we were concerned with setting up a regulated industries commission similar to that of the United Kingdom where groups of experts from the utilities would sit with those from the industries and they would have negotiated a rate and that would have taken about three months. Now we have moved from that mechanism to another one which is very private in terms of how the negotiations are done. I would like some feedback from the hon. Minister if that has ever been considered.

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In fact, at the time the administration demitted office, they had already sent persons to London to understand how that system operated.

2.55 p.m.

I am also concerned because I know that some money was given from the World Bank for work in Trinidad and Tobago and if my figures are correct, about TT \$50 million was set aside for leak repairs and about \$65 million for refurbishment which are short-term projects. We were trying to put in place in the long term a very modern system which exists on the Thames where one can, at any time, identify through a computerized system, where there were leaks in any part of the country so repairs could be done quickly and if they could not have been done then, the complainants were given some notification as to when they could be done. That cost was about US \$350 million, which is about TT \$2.2 billion and that would have taken us about seven to ten years to complete, but in the interim, we had set aside about \$995 million to do work so that we would have a capability to supply this country.

I remember work had started on the Saddle Road in Maraval where some 75-year-old mains were removed and some asbestos cement pipes were taken out and today I looked at the *Newsday* and I saw where it stated: “\$950M cost to Govt to solve water problems”. It seems to me that since the PNM demitted office, we are still at the starting point because that was the money which was supposed to be allocated for this short-term measure while we worked on getting the money to do a complete renovation of the system.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister what happened with the programme and whether it had gone any further. I was surprised to see it is still at this point. What you are asking us to approve today, and whereas we would say that those at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate can afford to pay for the water and should be made to pay—someone just calculated and the rate they are offering is 3.2 cents per gallon, whatever it may be—we have further concerns that it may not stop here. I would like the Minister to tell us if this is going to be the practice of declaring other places and apparently if it is, it would be his prerogative to decide on which areas, declare them improvement areas and come up with the cost. This again is a kind of *ad hoc* way of dealing with the matters and for what people would wish to say, I believe when the Government came into office it would have met some kind of structured programme going on and, therefore, it is not right to take pieces from different places and as problems occur, try to patch up. We would

prefer to see you declare to us the programme you are doing and how structured it is and where things would go from there. There is only one piece of legislation like this, and it seems to me that several other pieces would come before this honourable Senate.

Those are some of the main concerns which I have and I would really like the hon. Minister to give some kind of answer as to how this cost was structured, where do we go from here, whether there are other areas he would wish to designate as water improvement areas, what criteria he has used, and whether there is a programme into which all of this fits, because it is important that we have a programme and not this *ad hoc* type of management of the water supply.

In closing, I say to the hon. Minister that part of the work which had already been done and, in fact, some people talked about Severn Trent and we would still like to know what part they are playing in the water programme, or if they are still involved and to what extent they are involved. It is important to us because regardless of what you may think, although some people may not agree, that was a programme which was on stream and we need to find out certain things about it. It is not that I wish to criticize what the Minister wants to do, but clearly, I have concerns beyond Point Lisas. I have concerns about what could happen on the line because sometimes legislation comes to the Parliament and what one sees is not always the end of the story, it might just be giving an opening for a number of other things to happen over which the Parliament then would have no control. Therefore, I am very concerned whether or not the Minister intends to continue with this pattern, *ad hoc* as it may be, in terms of declaring areas, the cost, and how it fits into a pattern for water rehabilitation for the particular Government. As I said before, there is so much water, and so many alternatives, and I am sure although the hon. Minister would say that the desalination plant is not in this Order, I would like to hear a comment on it because I am also one who fears that subtly it could come into this Order.

Thank you.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Finbar Gangar): Mr. Vice-President, as I rise to support the Bill as put forward by my colleague, the Minister of Public Utilities, may I say that water is always an emotive issue and anytime one talks on this particular subject, either within the confines of this Senate or outside, it seems to provoke certain emotions and quite understandably, since water is an essential component of life.

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In this particular circumstance where my colleague is, in fact, moving to remedy a situation which, by a combination of circumstances in which we have found ourselves, it is important that we understand the context in which we are making this particular amendment. I take us back in time to two and a half years ago. In 1995, when this Government came into office, we met an agreement which was signed by the then administration and Wimpey/Severn Trent with respect to the management of water in Trinidad and Tobago. This particular arrangement underwent a certain amount of scrutiny by the new administration, and together with my distinguished colleague, the Minister of Public Utilities, we were a part of the committee which looked in some detail at this particular agreement.

In our review of the plans and strategies for WASA as propagated at that time, there was one strategy—or should I say one omission—which came immediately to our attention and that is, there were no plans in place to win any additional water in order to supply the increasing domestic and industrial demands of Trinidad and Tobago. The strategy which we gleaned at that time was all that was required, was to fix the leaks which existed in the system and our water problems would have been solved.

When one looks at that strategy, simplistic as it may sound, there is some logic to it because the estimate at that time, and even now is approximately between 40 and 50 per cent of the water which we produce is lost to leakage in the system. As my colleague just mentioned in his presentation, the network of mains in this country comprises about 3,900 kilometres and with the resources available to us, our optimum rate of repair and change of lines is approximately 100 kilometres per year. My simple arithmetic computation would lead me to conclude that it would take us 39 years to fix the entire system and then we would have to start all over again.

The simple strategy which we met in place was not thought to be feasible and it was not practicable in order to meet the demands of water in our country. I sat here, and I was here on May 21, 1998 and we have repeated much of the arguments which were made at that time, today.

The first point I want to make is that a strategy for winning water was absent when we took office. The other scenario which we must put into context is what is happening at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate and all of us in this country would be aware that our industrialization thrust in the country is undergoing phenomenal growth and development. Already for this year, three plants have been

commissioned. They are the two ammonia plants, one owned by Potash Chemical of Saskatchewan (PCS) which was formerly Arcadian; and the other one by Farmlands Incorporated and, of course, we have Methanol Four which is owned by a consortium headed by CL Financial.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, already for this year three major industrial plants have come into operation, of course, with the attendant increase in water demand. I will explain that a little more as we go along. By year's end we expect two more plants to come on stream which would be major industrial consumers: Cliffs and Associates DRI Plant and Ispat DRI Omega Module. In one year alone, 1998, five major industrial consumers would be added to the Point Lisas Estate, in terms of water consumption.

Again, this must be put into another national context. As you know, Mr. Vice-President, in this country's thrust to attract investors, we have been given a package of incentives: we have natural gas pricing at a very attractive rate, a package of fiscal incentives which is currently being revised and; an electricity rate which is still—even with the increase applied for—the second cheapest in the western hemisphere. As my colleague also said, we have a very cheap rate of water, even with the increase to \$7.50 per cubic metre.

That is not all, Mr. Vice-President. I just want to explain from a technical aspect of this particular matter where, by our previous policies, we have encouraged the use of our cheaply priced potable water. Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny is absolutely correct when he made the point as to why expensive potable water must be used for industrial purposes. Water is used in industrial processes for two main reasons: one, as process water and two, as a cooling medium. There are a variety of ways in which one could use various mechanisms for process cooling:

- (1) use of potable water;
- (2) use of sea water;
- (3) use of air cooling.

In all the cases, economics normally prevail and, of course, to use potable water is less than half the price of using either sea water or air cooling, for the simple reason that when potable water is used, which is a higher quality water, it is less corrosive than sea water and less expensive than air cooling. When sea water is

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used the metallurgy of the heat exchangers goes from aluminum brass to a titanium; when normal potable water is used the metallurgy is normal carbon steel.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Hon. Minister, did you leave out one source of water that is non-potable, non-sea water?

Hon. F. Gangar: I will come to that in a while, Sen. Prof. Spence. Those are the options which are available to us with respect to using water as process cooling. Of course, we have, by our policies over the last 20 years, unwittingly encouraged the profligate use of cooling by potable water in process industries, and by doing so we have virtually sold our domestic consumers very short. Therefore, one of the policies of this Government is that we are now discouraging the use of potable water as a source of cooling. In fact, in our aluminum smelters and in other areas, we are pushing our investors more towards salt water cooling and air cooling as the preferred option, rather than using potable water for cooling. That is how cooling water is being dealt with.

Then, Mr. Vice-President, we have the case of process water. Process water is normally water which we convert into steam for process use, for example, in the synthesis process to produce methanol. When water is used to produce steam, the quality of the water must be absolutely right otherwise the steam boilers would be corroded or clogged when solids are deposited in them.

How does one produce water for these boilers? The water is treated through the various iron exchange mechanisms. Of course, as Sen. Prof. Spence said, potable water is of a much higher quality than industrial water. Industrial water is raw or untreated water from the dams and wells. If industrial water is used as input to produce boiler-feed water, then the intermediate processes for cleaning the water is much more expensive. Therefore, by our policy decisions, with respect to allowing our investors to use the most appropriate mechanisms for their processes, potable water has been used for both process water and process cooling.

Sen. Prof. Kenny has hit on the major point where we have, deliberately or otherwise, probably in our ignorance, encouraged our investors to exploit the water resources of the country. Therefore, Mr. Vice-President, I just want to make the point that this Government has shifted its policies in that direction. That gives hon. Senators an idea as to how we have arrived at a particular situation.

Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt: Mr. Vice-President, while the hon. Minister is on his feet, I wonder if he would give us an idea of the regulations the Government has

put in place to deal with the problem of cooling the water as it is being recycled and reused, and of the emission of heat into the air and how this affects the environment.

Hon. F. Gangar: The Government has not reached that particular part of its policy directives as yet. That is a very complex matter. I assume that my colleague, the Minister of Public Utilities would, in fact, address this particular issue. In different countries throughout the world there are very strict measures with respect to how one insulates the various processes to prohibit the loss of heat through convection, conduction and evaporation. However, those are energy conservation matters with respect to water which I am sure my colleague will address.

3.20 p.m.

The other issue which Sen. Prof. Spence talked about was the desalinization versus a dam. Now, we all appreciate the importance of a dam. I think my colleague was very right to say that whether one builds a dam in Moruga, Caroni/Arena or in North Oropouche, the philosophy is the same, and the cost is going to be the same, because one puts a dam to supply water in any case. As I said, our policy, among other things, is to actively discourage the use of high-valued, high-quality potable water for industrial processes.

Also, with the rapid increase in industrial expansion in Point Lisas, we are now faced with the need for immediate action. Mr. Vice-President, you yourself would be aware of the difficulties with which the Government is faced with respect to providing water for Point Lisas. The option simply, at this point in time, is either one or the other. We literally starve our domestic consumers, particularly in the southern part of the country, La Brea included, and/or supply our estate in Point Lisas. The Minister has given a very comprehensive plan as to how we intend to tackle this problem in the short and medium term. Also, one of the options which the Government is considering at this point in time is the issue of desalinization. I do not want to steal the Minister's thunder, because I am sure he is going to address that in his winding-up remarks.

Finally, I want to take exception to the very frivolous and cavalier manner in which Sen. Daly seemed to treat this particular debate. I normally expect a higher standard of contribution from the hon. Senator. I refer to his remarks with respect to how the Government arrived at the current tariff structure of \$7.50 per cubic metre. He alluded to the fact that we did it by guess, we did it over the cocktail

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party circuit and we just pulled a figure out of our heads. I just borrowed from my distinguished colleague, this report here, *A WASA Tariff Study, Draft Final Report by London Economics*. He mentioned this report in his contribution and yet, Sen. Daly went along on a tangent to severely criticize the Government or really imply improper motives. I will just quote one extract from this report. Page 162, Box 9.3:

"Recommended Point Lisas tariff \$7.50 per cubic metre of water consumed." That is the recommendation.

So, Mr. Vice-President, with those few words I end my contribution.

I thank you.

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. Vice-President, in principle, I see no difficulty with the concept of charging a rate for development of water resources. I think that is quite clear to most of us, an improvement rate really is something that we want to do. In other words, the areas which are going to benefit from the infrastructural investment should at least, in part, pay for the improvements; that I have no difficulty with at all. I have to accept the hon. Minister of Energy's statement as to calculations done for the particular charge. I have no way of assessing, so I must accept his concepts, especially as he quoted it from this particular report.

I also have no difficulty with the fact that immediately, it is important to improve the infrastructure for the delivery of water. I would expect, and I would hope the Minister, in his winding-up, would say to us that the water which is being provided in the short term at Point Lisas, since it is potable, would very soon be made available to the domestic users because some other mechanism is going to be used to supply the water for Point Lisas. If he is going to say that that mechanism will be the desalination plant, then I must say in advance, that I take issue with that. To me it is almost farcical to think that a country with a water supply, a rainfall that Trinidad has, should be even thinking about desalination. The countries which have desalination plants are, by and large, those that are very short of annual rainfall.

I would also like to emphasize the point, and my hon. colleague, Sen. Prof. Kenny has stated the case in excellent terms, he leaves little for me to say on that point, except this, that I agree with him that there needs to be some overall concept of water management which, perhaps, is being developed, but which we have not seen. What has worried me a little is recent changes in portfolio

allocations to the Cabinet. Now, I would have thought that what Prof. Kenny has been saying means that there has to be central planning on a short- and long-term basis in order to address this issue. So that I would have thought that the impetus with this would come from the Ministry of Planning, but I note that there have been changes made recently which seem to me to make it very difficult for the Ministry of Planning to proceed in this way. They now have economic planning and development, and a lot of other things that are not really strictly related to planning, except perhaps population and, of course, the environment.

Town and Country Planning, which I would have thought would have played a major part in the planning for water supply, has been moved from that ministry and put into the Ministry of Housing. Now, the Ministry of Housing, of course, has a vested interest in town and country planning. It seems to me most unfortunate that a line ministry should be given that sort of responsibility, which certainly must be in a central planning area. Economic and social planning does not exist in a vacuum and, certainly, the case of town and country planning must be a part of that.

More than that, I see in the Ministry of Housing there is responsibility for lands and surveys, and hydrographic surveys. How this comes a part of the Ministry of Housing is extremely difficult for me to understand.

Mr. Vice-President, I am entirely at one with Prof. Kenny as to how we should approach it.

Sen. Cuffy-Dowlat: Mr. Vice-President, I think the ministry is the Ministry of Housing and Settlements.

Sen. Daly: Settlement of water. *[Laughter]*

Sen. Prof. J. Spence: I presume that comment is taken to mean that water is not used by other than housing and settlements; there is no water for agriculture, nor industrial use, there is no water for anything else except housing and settlements, and therein lies the problem. Because we have been discussing this afternoon water for industrial use, not water for housing or settlements. So, to have hydrographic surveys in that ministry, to me is a complete mystery. Perhaps the hon. Minister would be able to clear up that point for me also.

I thank the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries for addressing the issue I had raised which, I think, in a sense was avoided in the response by the hon.

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Minister of Public Utilities. I think even he did not quite address the issue, because simply what I was saying was, if we are going to have to supply water to Point Lisas, and I am not complaining, quarrelling or disagreeing with the immediate improvement in infrastructure for a greater supply of potable water, because that water, subsequently, could be diverted to domestic use. So I have no problem with that, that is good in any case.

What I have not gleaned from the comments which have been made was whether there was a serious look at alternative supplies of water to Point Lisas, particularly use of surface water by way of catchment areas of various sorts. If I could have been assured that this had been done, or at least was being done, then I would be a little happier about diverting more domestic water to Point Lisas in the short term, because clearly, there is an urgent situation to be dealt with. But certainly, one hopes that at some time we will recognize the two points: one made by Prof. Kenny that we have a problem with the loss of vegetation in the Northern Range; and two, that we will be making this worse by not attending to what is happening in the eastern part of the Northern Range. The western part has gone, the people who extract wood are now attacking the eastern part; three, we may be making it even worse by building a road across the north coast of Trinidad and Tobago which will give easy access to those persons who exploit the forests incorrectly and, therefore, leading to another advance of the denudation of the Northern Range.

So, Mr. Vice-President, I would be extremely grateful if I could have an assessment, statement or some indication that the alternatives have been looked at, both in physical feasibility terms and in financial terms. Although the hon. Minister did not mention desalination in his presentation, the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries did. I would like, at some stage, to have a very complete justification for a move in that direction, which, seems to me, so illogical in a country such as ours.

Thank you very much.

Sen. Muhammad Shabazz: Mr. Vice-President, it is important to note that water conservation or raising the water rates for Point Lisas is something, after we have looked again at the issues which were put forward, that we should support.

One of my colleagues raised the point again about the haste and speed at which the hon. Minister brought forward his presentation. I am saying it again, because on this side we are of the opinion that it was a deliberate act. I feel so because, when we looked at him presenting the last time in this Senate, his manner

was different. We felt it was done this way because in this Bill there are some things that are either hidden or not clearly brought forward and these are some of the things that we would like to get clear from him.

As a matter of fact, in the first instance, I guess if the question was not asked here and we had just looked at this Order, we would have thought that the increase would have gone to \$4.00 from \$3.50. It was by asking questions we understood that it is \$4.00 in addition to the \$3.50. As has been said before, we think that the figure is a good one and it could even have been higher. It is indeed, still a very low figure. The point is though, that on this side we do not think that the bringing of this Order will solve the problem. As the other Senator on this side has asked: is this going to be the end of it? Or would the Minister be able to declare any place that he chooses as a water area or an area where he can go in and raise the rates of water? To us this is not the end, this is only the beginning. Knowing how this regime operates, we know that this is indeed only the beginning.

Recently, we debated the desalination project. All the water Bills are concerning Point Lisas, but the Minister came here and did not mention the desalination project. As a matter of fact, when he was asked he said he did not mention it because it is not a part of this situation. It is strange though, that the contribution of the hon. Minister for Energy and Energy Industries seemed to have been on this desalination project, as though indeed and in fact, he was defending the presenter. If that was not part of the issue, there was no need for all that talk about it, if it was not a question of defending the desalination project.

3.35 p.m.

Mr. Vice-President, of course, water is to be taken into Point Lisas and we welcome that, but it is not just getting water there. You should also deal with other areas. Priority was given to the development of the Las Lomas area, a supply to Farmland, the reinforcement of the local infrastructure of the Point Lisas Estate, the expansion of the Caroni Water Treatment Plant and other associated works, including the rehabilitation and strengthening of the plant's pumping capacity, and the improvement of transmission and distribution. Point Lisas seemed to be the focal point, this is what they keep showing us.

The Bill and these two Motions are not only about supplying water to Point Lisas, we are quite clear on that. Of course, we are not disagreeing, supply water, because the Minister at another place spoke about water being supplied only in certain areas and not in others. Yes, supply water in these areas, but come to us

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and let us know that you will supply water to those areas where it was not going. I think that would be very honest. The point is, Point Lisas is the area targeted. They continue talking about supplying water to Point Lisas, but to us on this side there seems to be more to it than just that.

The Government at this point in time should not consider the desalination project at all. Firstly, it is very expensive to put down that type of infrastructure at this time. Secondly, the type of energy needed to keep a desalination project going would cost a whole lot now and would continue to do so. As a matter of fact, it is believed that is one of the most expensive ways to supply water at this time. Thirdly, it is going to interfere with the natural resources like the fishing in the Gulf of Paria—it is going to kill the marine life. This regime has to be extremely careful how it deals with the marine life in Trinidad since it has already killed some of it by its water projects. Fishing in the Gulf of Paria is no longer possible and the Government has already made it difficult, by its foreign policy, for us to go to Venezuela. Therefore, the Government should be careful when it does the desalination project that the marine life is not killed because this would make it harder for the people here, as far as fishing is concerned. Take that into consideration and forget about the desalination project.

I said to the Minister that we feel most of these money projects are really to raise funds again. Although it seems that the idea is to bring water to the area, it is to bring money to the people who supported them. The Government wants to bring these capital projects to get money to give to the people who support them. My reason for saying that is, the hon. Minister defended the question of Severn Trent. He said when the two ministers came into Government they sat on a committee that dealt with Severn Trent. I guess he brought that up because he wanted to convince us that they took Severn Trent. The point has come up before that we are the ones who signed for Severn Trent, but they endorsed and accepted it. They are now saying that they did not take into consideration the question of laying pipes or how to get new water, but it was only to stop leaks in the pipeline in order to bring more water to the country. That point is not good enough.

All the water projects the Government is talking about concerns WASA and some other water board; nowhere is it talking about Severn Trent. If Severn Trent is no longer needed to carry out the water programme in Trinidad and Tobago—as a matter of fact, when you listen to the Minister, Severn Trent seems now to be "Severed Trent"; "like dey cut dem off", no longer considering them to make water decisions. If that is so, fire all those people who are making big money with Severn

Trent and save that money. But from records, this Government seems not to have the ability to fire "big money" people. We saw the National Petroleum situation, they could not and did not fire anyone, and all the issues that came up with other big money people, they did not fire them. Are they going to keep Severn Trent here for the next year, continue to pay them and do not take any kind of advice from them? I want the Minister to tell us, in all of this, what is happening with Severn Trent and what kind of advice is he taking from them. I think that is important at this time.

The Minister spoke about the question of water, but today, instead of debating this Motion—and I do not want to be disrespectful to him—he could have brought some kind of motion or emergency bill to talk about what is happening in his and other constituencies with flood waters. I would have felt good if he had spoken about some measure to help these people. Before they came into power they spoke about solving the water problems and what we were doing wrong. The Minister should tell us what he is going to be doing for these people who were flooded out and, as Sen. Daly said, were standing chest high in water. Today was ideal to bring that type of bill to the Senate to show concern for your constituents and people in this country who suffer because of flooding. They will take the same old course and say that it is flooding because of us, the same old run they normally take. The truth is, the flooding situation is very bad in their constituencies, and today I feel that would have been a more meaningful debate and better in some way to assist the people of this country at this time.

If the Minister is saying we have water problems, let us start by solving them at the top, from WASA. What is his real plan? The Minister keeps telling us that the pipelines cannot be changed, only 100 metres could be changed, and to change all would take 39 years. He did not say that when we were in power, instead he said that we should change them immediately. If he is saying it is going to take 39 years, I cannot understand that logic. He said it would take seven years to build a dam, as though it is cast in concrete.

This is just a simple example, but if you employ 50 men to change 100 metres of lines in one year, could you not employ 100 men to do it in shorter time? Give me the technical aspect of it. Why must it take 39 years to change these pipes? Why must it take seven years to build a dam? How did he come to that conclusion? Because although they are saying water for all by the year 2001, there are certain ways they want to go in the next three years.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Vice-President, with the Senator's knowledge of URP, could he say how many years it would take to build a proper dam in this country?
[*Laughter*]

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. Vice-President, I understand the laughter. He could not say how much it would cost and he is the Minister. I am now aspiring, not to be in his Ministry, but to get somebody from here to take over his Ministry to build a dam in less than six years, but he is asking me how long it would take to do it. I do not have that knowledge. As a matter of fact, the reason I asked is because I thought he had the answer. Now that the Minister has asked me, I would do research and look to the future, speak to past ministers from our team and our next minister who would be taking over the Ministry of Public Utilities, Eric Williams, who is designed to take his position, and he will tell us how long it will take.

The Minister really does not know how long it will take; he just said seven years. Why is he asking me? "Dey getting vex when yuh say dey pull an arbitrary number out of de ting", but they have no plan at all for water. The plan they have is the one we left with them, up to Severn Trent, and they do not know how to go further. They cannot and will not go further. Everything they are doing here is a kind of patching up, "playing dey doh want Severn Trent, dey spinning top in mud". They really need Severn Trent to carry them through this crisis. How are they arriving at these figures?

When the Minister spoke about how much a dam would cost and how much water they are supplying, nowhere did he say how much the desalination project would cost. They cannot come up with a cost for that as yet. They pretend they know, of course, but they cannot, "but dey looking to get big figures only to talk big money" in order to carry it—I do not like to say it, but I believe it is true—to their party supporters to help them remain well-entrenched and keep this regime going. Mr. Vice-President, that would not happen at all.

In a statement the Minister said:

"For instance, the following have been the declines in production at WASA's facilities:

North Oropouche - 20 mgd to 13 mgd

Hollis Dam reduction from 8.2 mgd to 6 mgd"

Mr. Singh: Would the Senator please indicate to this Senate what document he is quoting from and subsequent to that, say whether that was a reflection of the impact of El Niño on reservoir sources?

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. Vice President, he said that in another place when he spoke about the Waterworks and Water Conservation (Amdt.) Bill. He was correct when he said that it was about El Niño.

My point is, if water has been reducing to those levels at all these dams, the hon. Minister at no point in time told this House what he would be doing about lifting the water levels and carrying them back to the standard they should be. All the time "dey keep pushing dis Point Lisas ting down our throat" and I feel there is a reason. I do not want to attach any kind of funny motive to them because they are honourable men indeed, but there is the feeling that the reason they are bringing these Motions is because there is another motive. I want the hon. Minister to be clear to this Senate and say whether there are, indeed, other motives. Do not push another Minister to answer the Senate so that when he leaves here somebody and that Senator would be annoyed with each other here. I want the Minister of Public Utilities to please answer clearly and effectively! [*Interruption*]

I feel the Member is calling URP for a reason. I do not know why, but he should say it. I have no sinister move in URP, if he wants to say something he should. Every time he comes to this Senate he speaks about URP, "like yuh want to be the Minister of URP or wha?". [*Interruption*] Let him start by taking this connection with WASA from the top, put his Ministry in order, and stop thinking about URP so constantly. I do not know if some of the water trucks that he took while he was giving out water, came from the URP, but he seems to have a certain kind of obsession with URP and myself.

Mr. Singh: Your legacy in URP. I hope you have enough money to pay for maintenance.

Sen. M. Shabazz: While he is speaking about my legacy in the URP, let him understand that his constituents—some of my very friends in the URP—are flooding out and he is doing nothing about it, after he was voted to be their Minister. It is a shame that Central is flooding out and this hon. Minister is not talking about anything for them; no water for Central. This Minister is one who seemed to have had the potential to take WASA and transform it into something beautiful. That was the hope he came with. He could not even talk until the Prime Minister got up and said that Severn Trent is not working.

3.50 p.m.

I would like to take this opportunity to warn the Minister to be mindful that Dr. Griffith, a PNM man, gets one of his positions; be careful one is not given to Dr. Lasse because Government is taking positions and giving it to PNM Members on its side. I urge the Minister to be careful and try to do his work.

Mr. Vice-President, I do not want to talk about the Ministry of Information and others but, please, let me stay away from that. I just want the Minister to be careful; Dr. Griffith and Dr. Lasse are taking positions from their ministries. In respect of the Ministry of Public Utilities, the Minister might only hold on to public and lose utilities. I urge the Minister to be careful because he seems not to be doing his job in a structured way. He seems to be talking about Trinidad and WASA, but not in a structured way. The Minister is only talking in the House; he cannot talk outside of the House.

Mr. Vice-President, if we look at what is happening and continue to do so, we would like again, to say, yes, let them do certain things. For instance, why the Point Lisas issue? It was said in another place and it seems to be a correct thing, about whether we will understand how they operate. Somebody spoke about the illegal connections of WASA; probably where over \$1 million in water goes through Caroni in the dry season, and furthermore when they are seeing about cane, as well as there being illegal connections. Apart from reading it in the newspapers, nothing else came up about those illegal connections. I do not even think we heard anything from the Minister on the amount of water going to Caroni through illegal connections, and two were found. I am not certain, but we understood that after those two were found a number were disconnected secretly, because there were many more and the Minister said nothing about that.

Those are the issues the Minister needs to look at: how we are losing water; how we are losing it illegally; how we are losing it through state enterprises, especially those in his area, of which Caroni is a part. The Minister is coming to talk water, yet there is water by flooding, illegal water going through his area and nothing is being said about that. The way it is going, it seems like “water more than flour”; flour with which the Minister has a problem as well. Mr. Vice-President, we will deal with that as we go along and try not to get them mixed up.

Apart from the illegal connection, somewhere we spoke about the fires during the dry season. Where are the new ideas to trap all this water; to stop the bush fires that are taking away from the water industry? Would the Minister tell us, not

in a vexed manner when he speaks, but in a serious manner, what are the plans and where are the new ideas to come up with something new in Trinidad and Tobago to change the water situation? The Minister keeps telling us what cannot be done: a dam cannot be built in seven years; the pipes cannot be changed in less than 40 years. By then the Minister might be 80 and long out of office, so we cannot take that. We are asking the Minister to come up with an idea as to what he can do, when he will do it and how he will do it at this point in time.

Mr. Vice-President, I want the Minister to know that I will not be his best help because I cannot help him. I do not have the technocrats and all things he has around him to help at this point in time. However, maybe at some other point in time, very soon, I might be able to answer his questions.

Sen. Cuffy-Dowlat: Welcome to this side.

Sen. M. Shabazz: "At all!"

Although I have considered the Minister to be honourable, as he went along speaking about URP, I seemed to be losing some regard for him. I do not know if one of the reasons motivating the Minister to carry water to Point Lisas is because the Chairman of WASA is also the Chairman of a company at Point Lisas. I do not know if that is where the Minister is getting his advice, but if that is so he should go back to Severn Trent to get his advice.

We are asking the hon. Minister to start from the beginning; consider WASA from Severn Trent; structure the office; move away from the idea of whether they are going to privatize WASA more; see how all this water that is being lost could be captured. Come up with a proper plan other than Point Lisas and a desalination plant which is being considered, as to how to get water coming to this country. At the end of the day when the Minister is finished speaking, he must tell us his plans to bring water to this country positively and effectively; how much it would cost for all the things needed to be done; and how long it would take, not just telling us that it cannot be done. If the Minister feels that it cannot be done in seven years, I am willing to ask other Members on this side to form a special committee to help him find out how to do it in less than that period of time.

Mr. Vice-President, I thank you for the opportunity.

Sen. Danny Montano: Mr. Vice-President, I had not really intended to make a contribution this afternoon, but I rise on a matter that the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries raised in his contribution where he chastized Sen. Daly for

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raising the questions as to where the \$7.50 came from. Notwithstanding the manner of the delivery of Sen. Daly's contribution, I thought it was quite good and the question was a worthwhile one. Certainly, I felt that the answer was less than credible in this sense.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries said that the reason for piping potable water to the industrial estate was that it was half the cost of sea water and air-dried mechanisms. Mr. Vice-President, I would have to assume that the Minister is using the \$7.50 as the benchmark price.

Sen. Gangar: On a matter of clarification, would the hon. Senator please give way?

Mr. Vice-President, what I said and what was clearly implied, was that when you are designing a plant, because of metallurgy considerations in designing and building the plant, the cost when you use potable water is less than if sea water or air cooling is used.

Sen. D. Montano: Mr. Vice-President, that is not quite what he said. However, it does not change the point at all because the fact of the matter is, there are alternatives. I do not see that this Government or any other government has any obligation to provide those industries with what they want at a price they want. The fact of the matter is, I still have no explanations as to why they are being offered \$7.50 while Sen. Prof. Kenny is paying \$15 a cubic metre. We do not have an explanation for that and I would certainly like one.

The other factor which I did not hear is, a utility like WASA has two distinct functions. One is a social obligation to provide potable water to the society at large, and the price that is set there need not necessarily be a market-driven price because of social obligations of the Government of the day and their perceptions of their duties. However, when it comes to the supply of water to industry, the parameters are completely different. The price in that situation must be driven by normal market forces—supply and demand. What I did not hear—the question was asked—and I believe that Sen. Daly's question hit the root of it, was exactly that. The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries rose and waved around a document saying it was recommended at \$7.50.

I could appreciate that, maybe, the \$7.50 might be a viable price for WASA to sell it at. The question is, in the open marketplace, is that the highest and best price we can get for our water in that situation and under those circumstances? I have

not heard that at all. All I have heard is that somehow the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries seems to feel that we have an obligation to save money for those industries. I understand that we must provide a climate in which it must be attractive for them to come here, but I was not hearing that the price was negotiated. If anybody else heard that, then tell me that. That is the problem I have with that matter.

Mr. Vice-President, that is all I have to say on that matter. I thank you.

Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand: Mr. Vice-President, before I begin, I wonder if there is a textual problem in the Order because we hear that it is going to be \$7.50 but the Order states that the rate of \$4 per cubic metre is hereby declared. I know that the Minister said alongside the \$3.50, but should the Order not reflect \$7.50?

Mr. Singh: Mr. Vice-President, just for clarification, it is a water improvement rate of \$4, so the Order speaks of a water improvement rate. Administratively, it would exist alongside the \$3.50.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Thank you.

Mr. Vice-President, first of all I want to make a general reflection which will be in tune with the remarks of many of my colleagues, including Sen. Prof. Kenny and Sen. Daly. Although they have said it, I feel I must put my little lash on the "bobolee" too. I suppose it is ironic, but I also want to say it is a matter for serious reflection on our lack of planning, vision and imagination, that while Sen. Baksh is hydrofoiling all over the country, lamenting that there is too much water, the hon. Minister stands in one of the few dry places in this Chamber, in the entire Red House, talking about difficulties in increasing the water supply and difficulties in transmission. [*Laughter*]

A proper water collection and distribution policy, devised to deal with a country of our size and physical disposition, would include plans to make use of the water that now causes floods and inflicts so much physical damage and mental suffering. We have to think of our water policy in the integrated way that Sen. Prof. Kenny has been talking about. I do not want to rub it in, but I have to make the point that other Senators have been making, that greater care seems to be devoted to the supply of water for industrial and commercial purposes than for domestic users. This seems to me to be a very reprehensible imbalance in our attitude.

4.05 p.m.

I am not satisfied with the Minister's explanation of how the rate was arrived at. First of all, I cannot believe that a bunch of foreign consultants can come here and tell the Minister and the country what we ought to charge for the water. I will come to that in a little while. I am not satisfied with the Minister's explanation about why there cannot be wells or dams in the Point Lisas area. It certainly does not wash with me that there is no ground water. If there is no ground water, is it not possible to lead surface water there? Could we not get engineers to address the peculiar characteristics of the Point Lisas area and say, "all right, in this area for us to get a well or a dam we have to capture the water in this adjacent place and bring it in here?" Why can water not be captured from the nearest possible place and distributed to Point Lisas?

Sen. Prof. Spence has brought it up and he has been answered but I do not think satisfactorily. The general price for the construction of a well or a dam which the Minister has quoted and the general time factor that he has given cannot be a satisfactory account of the difficulty of putting down a well. If we are dealing with Point Lisas, a specific feasibility study has to be made of that area and the surrounding areas. If you are determined to put down a well or a dam, if other things were not distracting you, you would find a way to put down a well or a dam. I am not at all satisfied, not only in relation to Point Lisas but in relation to the whole country, that enough thought has been given to the possibilities of directing water from areas that have abundant supplies to areas that have an inadequate supply. That should be a major plan in any water policy.

After hearing Sen. Dr. St. Cyr, Sen. Prof. Kenny and Sen. Daly I do not have to repeat the possibility of killing several birds with one stone; or should we perhaps avoid such anti-environmental figures of speech and indulge in the current economic ethos and point out that if you divert the water from the areas that are prone to flooding into the areas that do not have enough water, you will buy one and get one free.

Mr. Vice-President, there is one note in the Minister's presentation that I did not like. He spoke in a rush but rush was also one of his driving forces. "We cannot do this because it will take 10 years. We cannot do this because it will take seven years. If we want it now we have got to do so and so." We have suffered for so many years and it has not killed us. I am willing to suffer for a few more years to get it right. If what we have to do is to wait for 15 years to get the water

supply properly established, I will use barrel and pitch-oil tin and bathe in the river. I will wait for 15 years and I think many people in the country would not find that is a hard thing if they knew that in 15 to 20 years we would have solved the water supply problem. They would prefer that than the *ad hoc* measures that are being used. We have suffered for many years and it has not killed us; we can wait.

Why do we have to think in five-year units? I wish our political system would allow our leaders to develop a less pugnacious attitude or relationship to time. You do not have to fight the five-year period. Adopt a different attitude to time so you can put your mind to long-term measures, to lasting measures instead of cosmetic *ad hocism* and self-advertisement aimed at the exam that you have to write within five years.

Mr. Vice-President, there are arguments about how long it would take to patch the leaking mains. I suppose we would not even know how to find them. I doubt that there is, any where in this country, a map that can show you where all these underground pipes are in every place. I doubt it very much. Sometimes I sit and think about—I want to know, why do people have to bury these pipes? The oil companies do not bury the pipes and they do not suffer from leakage. One sees pipes carrying oil all about and the pipes are not leaking. Why have we accepted this technical notion that all the water pipes have to be buried? I wish somebody could give me a technical explanation as to why, in a tropical country, people have to bury the water pipes. In my little yard, when I have problems every time I have to change a pipe and the plumber comes I say, “Do not bury my pipe because I want my pipe on top so that when it is leaking I want to fix it myself. I am not calling you back.” Gradually, all the pipes in my yard are becoming surface pipes. I have to be careful about the boy with the lawn mower and I have to think about my land use and there are places where I will have to bury the pipes. But there are plenty places where I can put my pipe on the surface. I would say that with all these leaking, damaged and encrusted pipes that you have there, write them off. Put in new pipes. Everybody getting bypass. Bypass those old pipes and put up new pipes and consider whether some of them cannot be on the surface.

Coming back to the pricing, Mr. Vice-President, Sen. Daly spoke very suggestively and, to my mind, very worldly and wisely about how the price was arrived at. While he was speaking I wanted to paraphrase Vidia Naipaul and say this man is clear sighted, even cynical. And I have to say—Sen. Gangar may scold me—that I share his cynicism. I do not want to go, however, into that aspect of the pricing.

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I want to go a bit into something that worries me a lot. The issue has come up here again with the use of a foreign firm to arrive at the price to be charged. What knowledge of the cost of living and standard of living in this country does that foreign firm have? What comparison can they make with other users, domestic and industrial, in this country? What knowledge do they have of the use being made by the Point Lisas firms of our water; of the amount of profits they are making; of the amount of profits that are being repatriated in US dollars or foreign currency; of the benefits that this country is not getting or getting from those industrial plants at Point Lisas? They have no knowledge. They are mathematicians, maybe, or accountants. They do not have the knowledge base or the experience of how we live in this place to come and tell us, “charge those fellas \$7.50”.

Apart from that, it is an insult. You want to tell me that in Trinidad and Tobago we do not have people qualified to look at this whole situation and tell you, as nationalists we say—because the foreign consultants are not nationalists; they are not there to get the best price possible for you. It is not wrong. Do not try to be objective and neutral. It is your water, you are selling it. People are making profits off your water, therefore, you want the best possible price for your water. You do not want to drive away the investor but you want the best possible price so you get native consultants to look at the problem and say, “Try them at \$15.00”. If they say, “No, we cannot pay \$15.00”. You say, “Show us your books. Let us see why you cannot pay \$15.00. We will negotiate and we might come down to \$12.00”. But you need a consulting firm that is a nationalist, that is working in the country’s interest and determined not to let our resources be more exploited than they already are. I think it is an insult to the qualified people in this country that the Government has to go to a firm of foreign consultants to decide on the price of water for the firms at Point Lisas.

As for making comparisons: “We have the cheapest electricity rate in the western hemisphere, we have the second lowest water rate or we have the greatest PhD in the world.” As far as these comparisons are concerned, they are meaningless. We are cheaper in some things and more expensive in some other things. You cannot go for my cheap thing and say—if I go against all my policies that we should not be importing foreign wine and decide I have to take a little wine, the cheapest bottle of potable wine is \$80.00. If I am in London or Paris it is not \$80.00. Wine is cheap there. I am paying plenty for wine and I am paying a little less for electricity, therefore, the thing balances off. The people who are

setting prices cannot come and say the price of electricity in Trinidad is pretty low when compared with America so you can up the price on their head. Lower the prices on the other things if you are going to do that. These comparisons do not work. One has to compare total systems and total economies. I am bracing myself because every time they increase the cost of electricity or the cost of water they tell me we are still the third lowest in the world; that is not fair. If I complain about the roads they say you should see the roads in Nigeria; that is not fair. I am not living in Nigeria. I am living here and paying my taxes here and I have certain expectations.

I do not want to labour the point that I am not buying the Government's arguments based upon comparisons that this price is right because we are the cheapest or the second cheapest in the world. In fact, I feel a certain amount of dismay, Mr. Vice-President, because this question, the use of foreign consultants, this whole matter of relying upon other people to tell you that you need a desalination plant. It is bad enough that we have accepted that in economic terms, we have to try to fit in. I do not really accept that, but the world thinks that and the country thinks that, so go like that. If it were me I would just lock myself up in the hill and grow baigan, bhagi and my own hill rice and everything and I would not buy anything. But a country cannot do that; it cannot be totally self-sufficient.

Certainly, I do not think a country has to go totally independent. Granting that we have economic policies that are more or less accepted all over the world about the need to encourage foreign investment and the need to give them concessions and so forth, let us go along with that. All the more necessary then is it, in such a regime, to maintain your mental independence; to maintain your cultural sovereignty; to maintain your intellectual independence. Therefore, if I come to you and say, "Please lend me some money to buy a Corolla", you must not say, "No, you really need a Mercedes Benz. We will lend you the money to buy a Mercedes Benz".

Do not force me to change my lifestyle because you want to get a bigger interest on the loan. I have decided I want a Corolla. If you really want to help me, lend me the money to buy a Corolla. I have decided; I have thought about it; I have spoken to my friends; a Corolla is what I want. Do not make me buy what you are selling because you are giving me the loan.

4.20 p.m.

We must have a policy; we must have a plan; we have to know what our priorities are and when we go to these agencies, we must show them that although our cap is in hand, the cap is not really in hand, you know. I see governments return celebrating, "Ay, we get a loan!" Getting a loan is not an occasion to celebrate. A loan means that you are poor; a loan means that you are probably stupid because you are going to pay a lot of interest. I am not going to boast and say, "Ay, the IDB give us a loan, boy!" "The IMF says we are the best country to give a loan to!"

What are they? The Salvation Army. If they say we are the best country to give a loan to, they mean we are the ones who will never threaten, "We ain't paying. Do what you like." We are obedient. We will pay back.

Sen. Daly: That is it!

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: We are obedient!

Sen. Daly: We signing contract!

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: We are signing contracts and we want to get out of it; they say, "No." We cannot get out of it; they will sue us. Do you think I care if Severn Trent sues us? I will boot them out of this country so fast. They negotiated with an illegal regime, with a non-regime. [*Laughter*] It was an interregnum. There was no government.

Sen. Mark: There was no government!

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Those were the fellows they negotiated with. They were in a crooked deal. The international community would say of the UNC Government if it kicked out Severn Trent, "What a wonderful government"!

Hon. Senator: They were obedient!

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: But you all got obedient, too.

Mr. Vice-President, I do not want to go too far in all of this. We must come up with the solutions to our problems. We must come up with what the educationists call our own needs-assessment and if we have to borrow money, we go there with a conviction that we want to borrow money to do this; this is what we are going to do. We are not going to say, "We have a water problem and we want to borrow some money to solve it. What do you think we should do?" A bunch of flying

Dutch men come in; they do not know anything about our environment, or the whole Caribbean. They say, “Well, you know, we sell Antigua desalination. Why do you not take it, too?” [*Laughter*] And, “If you take it, we will get the IMF to give you the loan.” They go in Cabinet and say, “Antigua have it; we should have it, too. Nothing is wrong with it.”

Jamaica is the land of wood and water. It is a total absurdity that Jamaica should have a desalination plant, but I do not know how Jamaica did it. Jamaica convinced them “fellas” to give them money to build a desalination plant. Jamaica “ketch” them, boy! Jamaica “ketch” itself! Jamaica is the land of wood and water. What is Jamaica doing with a desalination plant? And why come here to tell us, “We want it because Jamaica has it.” Antigua has the right to have it; Antigua has no rain.

Mr. Vice-President, as a country under economic pressure to join up with the rest of the trading nations, to attach ourselves to all these financial arrangements that are not designed by us, the corollary of that is that we should be much more vigilant about our intellectual independence, much more careful about the choices we make and do not allow our bankers to tell us what to do. We have a greater responsibility than ever to express our independence by choosing the right things for us.

I close with a warning that I have seen in the press, quotations of the Minister saying that we are getting a desalination plant. I am not aware that has been discussed in the other place and I know it has not been discussed in this place. They cannot tell me that a desalination plant is a matter of national security so Cabinet has to do it “shoo shoo” and quiet; they cannot tell me it is a matter of confidentiality so we cannot be told about it.

Sen. Gangar: It was discussed here on May 21.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: I beg your pardon.

Sen. Gangar: It was discussed here on May 21.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Desalination plant?

Sen. Shabazz: It was not approved.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Mr. Vice-President, if it is true that this Senate has passed legislation to allow us to—

Hon. Senator: No, there is no legislation. It was just the matter of dealing with it.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Well, I think that this desalination plant is such a traumatic and controversial matter.

Sen. Gangar: Traumatic and controversial?

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Yes. It has to come to Parliament. I would think that this Government is contributing to the trivializing and sidelining of Parliament if Cabinet signs an agreement with anybody to set up a desalination plant without there being a full discussion in both Houses of Parliament in which native experts on our environment and natives who know about desalination are allowed to make an input and the Parliament really becomes a Parliament and the nation decides, "Yes, all of us stupid. We are going for desalination."

I thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Senators, the time is almost 4.30 p.m.. We will take our tea break now and resume at 5.00 o'clock.

4.27 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh): Mr. Vice-President, I thank hon. Senators for their contributions in this debate. It was for me in a sense almost *deja vu* because I have been through these questions. On May 21 these very issues were raised and discussed and the response would be the same. Perhaps, maybe a bit of the nuances were quite different on this occasion.

I want to remind hon. Senators that on that occasion I quoted from a document that pointed to the development of a Water Resource Management Strategy for this country. In that document, we spoke of a Dutch firm, DHV Consultants, and I want to remind Senators, because it seems with the passage of time, and maybe with the flood waters, there is some measure of a lapse in memory. I quote:

"The Government wishes to use this consultancy to address several weaknesses and persistent problems evident in the management of the country's water resources. Among the most significant of these are:

- A. Inadequate institutional and legislative framework to manage the water resources effectively for sustainable use and development.
- B. Variations in the quantity of raw water available contributing to instability in production, capability and acute shortages.

- C. Regional supply demand imbalances that are likely to be further aggravated by the emergence of increased demand for water in the expanding petrochemical industrial sector and for tourism.
- D. Secular trend towards declining production capacity of some important surface and ground water sources.
- E. Threats to water supply production quality and quantity caused by environmental degradation from such sources as squatting, slash and burn agriculture, quarrying, indiscriminate construction on steep slopes and removal of forest cover resulting in high runoff rates in key water shed areas and adversely affecting aquifer recharge areas.
- F. Pollution of surface and ground water resources from malfunctioning municipal and privately owned sewage treatment systems, and threats from waste water disposal practices in the absence of such systems.
- G. Threats to water quality generated by industrial pollution, leaking underground tanks for storage of petroleum products and toxic chemicals, residues from agricultural chemicals, land fills and the indiscriminate disposal of solid waste.
- H. Inefficient water allocation and use patterns.
- I. Inadequate measure of ground water resources to reliably quantify the resource.
- K. Poor mechanism for data and information exchange.”

Mr. Vice-President, the main output of this consultancy is the detailing of a clearly articulated Water Resource Management Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago to meet the projected medium and long-term water needs of the country on a sustainable basis. This strategy which should be comprehensive in scope—

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: I thank the hon. Minister for giving way. Mr. Vice-President, I wonder if the hon. Minister can tell this honourable Senate whether the holders of the management contract hired these consultants, or is it the Trinidad and Tobago Government that is hiring the consultants?

Hon. G. Singh: Mr. Vice-President, by way of information, these consultants were hired by the Ministry of Planning and Development under the Water Sector Institutional Strengthening Loan of the World Bank.

“This strategy which should be comprehensive in scope must cover domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural, tourism, recreational and other major uses. The key concerns of national water production potential, water demand, water conservation, water quality, waste water generation and disposal, irrigation and flood control, flood plain management, and environmental preservation must be explicitly and strategically addressed. The strategy must take into account the environmental and health impact related to the options recommended.

The Water Resource Management strategy must at least include the following elements:

- a. A review of existing information on hydrologic water balances, water potential, development, production and demand-supply balances for water.
- b. The preparation of projected water balances over 10, 15 and 20 year horizons and refinement of projections as warranted.
- c. Assessment of potential for future development of surface water sources and ground water sources.
- d. Assessment of feasible water abstraction, production rates for all major water sources.
- e. Reasoned, practical and cost-effective proposal for conserving water resources including: re-use, recycling and artificial recharge techniques for improving the efficiency of water use.
- f. Recommendations for integrated management controls to protect key watershed areas and aquifers from the standpoint of water production, volumes and quality.
- g. Recommended water resource allocation patterns for each hydrometric area and methodologies for dealing with conflicting demands.
- h. Recommended water quality targets and specific monitoring control and enforcement measures to facilitate the achievement of those targets and ensure compliance with established recommended international standards.
- i. Recommended land use policies and practices in watersheds to facilitate water resource conservation and protection.

Mr. Vice-President, it is clear that on the last occasion we addressed this issue of the emerging water policy for this country—

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. Vice-President, I wonder if a copy of that report can be placed in the parliamentary library so that we may look at it?

Hon. G. Singh: Mr. Vice-President, once the report is completed, we will make it available to Sen. Prof. John Spence, and will place a copy in the library. This is a matter that should really inform the debate in this honourable Senate.

What is emerging is that there is the planning process for a comprehensive water policy. That is why I am a bit surprised at the level of contribution of hon. Senators, but I do not blame them. Maybe, the flooding focusses their attention. I was a bit surprised because I got the distinct impression that what we had here this afternoon is what I call tabloid contributions, in some instances with cocktail party solutions.

5.10 p.m.

There was no serious thinking as to how we would deal with this matter. Senators spoke about the issue of pricing over cocktails. We indicated that we had done a tariff study which outlined all the principles which took into consideration certain elements. I will read from a *Comprehensive Guide to Water and Waste Water Finance and Pricing*, Second Edition by George A. Raftellis. Page 75 states:

“Several pricing criteria should be considered.

1. Equity

Is the fee equitable in that it recovers the cost fairly from the beneficiaries of the service? Does it allocate the cost of capital facilities appropriately between existing and new customers?

2. Revenue potential

Are revenues from the charge adequate to fund appropriate levels of system expansion?

3. Legality and the potential for litigation

Does the system development charge structure comply with the appropriate local, state and federal requirements? How likely is it that capital recovery chart structure will result in litigation from developers or new water and waste water users? What are the financial ramifications of a successful suit via successful thinking?

4. Implementation

How difficult is it to implement the charge structure? Will extensive costs be incurred in implementing the charge? What will be the impact on the customer information system? How will customers react to the charge? Will a public information programme be necessary?

5. Simplicity

How easy is the charge structure to explain and update in future years? Will customer service and personnel be able to understand and explain the charge?

6. Impact on economic development

Does the implementation of a charge structure on fairly burdened growth? What will be the impact of these charges?"

It is clear from the initial contribution. Members say that I moved quickly. I thought that we had gone through this on the 21st and they would be familiar. But for Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams, they were all here. If she had a complaint, I would see a great deal of merit in that. We did not act arbitrarily. Whether the consultants be foreign or local, the nationality is not the issue. It is the content of their report and they have dealt with the issues. This xenophobia in a global world today, I find it very alarming. One would not expect this measure of xenophobic thinking from those who should know better.

I will say a bit about the pricing structure. There are several rates which WASA charges currently. With the domestic rate, up to 150 cubic metres, it is \$1.75 per cubic metre; over 150 cubic metres, it is \$3.50 per cubic metre of water. There is the cottage rate, agricultural rate and the commercial/industrial rate. The highest rate at any point in time is \$3.50 per cubic metre. If anybody tells you otherwise, they are acting outside the ambit of the law.

I would deal with the contribution of individual Senators. Sen. Alfred wanted to find out who would be the executing agency. It is part of a comprehensive plan of work. Point Lisas' water supply is not existing in a vacuum. Sen. Prof. Ramchand raised the point. If we are going to provide water at the expense of domestic customers, then that is a heinous crime. He did not say it like that, but I agree that it would be heinous. As the previous regime did, they deprived domestic customers of water and provided water for Point Lisas.

The presentation was made to me as Minister, that we are going to provide water for industrial customers because that was part of the agreement. It was for the estate at Brighton where one could not have built anything. They spent about \$230 million on the estate at La Brea and nothing could have been built on it. That was the plan for industrial water. When the presentation was made to me, and they said it would cost \$260 million to provide water for the estate in Point Lisas, my question was, how would this improve the level of water available to domestic customers in the area, and South and Central Trinidad?

They told me that there would only be a marginal improvement. I said to the technocrats that was unacceptable. That is how they came up with the South Water Project. [*Interruption*] You do not know anything. You only know how to run URP project and exploit people in URP project.

Sen. Shabazz: Watch what you are saying, Ganga.

Hon. G. Singh: The South Water Project has been targeted in accordance with a request from the Ministry of Public Utilities to address in the short and medium term, relief of the acute water supply deficit in South/Central Trinidad and the upcoming exponential increase in industrial demand under the IOA, between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, WASA and Trinidad and Tobago Water Services. The principal goal of the project is to meet the domestic requirements of the South and the increased demand of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate to the year 2005.

When the South Water Project was presented to my technical people, we then found out that with this increased demand, we are going to raise people from Class V supply, which is less than 48 hours per week. That is once every nine days. In some areas in South and significant parts of Central Trinidad, the people do not get water at all. By virtue of this South Water Project, we were going to raise their level to Class II which is 120 hours per week; that is five days per week.

If we raise it at the end of 1999, because of the demand at Point Lisas, one then begins to withdraw the water from South and Central Trinidad, then in 2001, they would revert to Class V. That is totally unacceptable. What do we do? At present we have drilled 23 wells. I am surprised at Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams. She comes from South with a knowledge of the oil industry and would know what the drilling of oil and the injection of steam is doing to the water aquifers in the south. It is affecting all the aquifers, so that the level of abstraction is less than what it used to be. That is the reality. We maximized the intake from the water wells, but

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the demand cannot be met in 2001. After giving people a taste, there would be rising expectation of the solution to the problem.

5.20 p.m.

I heard Sen. Prof. Ramchand say—I want to quote him properly, he is a literary man—he is willing to bathe in a barrel, to bathe with a cup, we have suffered for so many years. I know the Senator is willing to do that because he is a man of tremendous consciousness, I see him as Chief Seattle on the television reading, and he has significant love for this country and tremendous environmental consideration to bathe in a barrel and to bathe with a cup.

Mr. Vice-President, in the height of the dry season I went to Naparima and a young, beautiful woman told me that she does not know what it is to take a shower because there is no water running in the tap. They have to dig a hole in the ground in order to get water from the pipeline. That is the reality. So she bathes with a cup and bathes with a bucket. She does not know what is a shower, it is like a dream to her, that is what she told me.

Mr. Vice-President, I always look to the future, I am not into retro, and I am not going back in times.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: I think the Minister misheard me. I said if I knew that they were going to get the water supply right within 10 or 15 years, I would be willing to put up with the suffering for that period. I would bathe with a bucket and barrel and pitch-oil tin for 15 years, if I knew that after the 15 years I would get a proper water supply. That is what I said. I do not want to go back in time to do that forever and ever, not at all!

Hon. G. Singh: Thank you for the clarification. I would not want to confine the Senator to be a hermit; Ram went to Lanka for 14 years but I do not want the Senator to go back to bathe in a bucket or a barrel for 14 or 15 years.

How does one deal with this situation? I have listened to Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny who says to build levees, but I would really like to know how long would it take to construct these levees? What are the environmental considerations and the impact that those levees would have as we seek to inundate a significant part of the land mass with levees? What is it? Tell me. None of my technical people came up with that solution. Build levees. I am open. Tell me the time-frame in which we are going to build these levees. This is an island. What is the land mass which is going to be covered with those levees? What is the cost of maintaining those levees?

What is going to be the environmental considerations for developing those levees? That is the only solution. I heard nothing else. Build a dam. I have dealt with that. I indicated that the consultants told us the areas in which dams are built and I dealt with that on the last occasion, and I can deal with it again. The Mariannene, the Yarra, the Moruga, the Matura and the North Oropouche and what it costs.

I have a former URP foreman telling me—

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. Vice-President, may I clarify an issue? The hon. Minister presented a number of proposals for dams for large supplies of water to large areas for general use. I raised a specific issue which he has not yet answered and that is, has the Minister looked at building a dam specifically for Point Lisas to supply the water which is needed when the demand increases, and has he assessed the cost of that? If he tells me his technical people have not come up with that, all I would say is that he should ask them specifically to look at levees, but in my case, I want to know about that alternative.

Hon. G. Singh: We would take on board the suggestion of Sen. Prof. Spence, but I would tell him what the experts have indicated to me. I would read from Water Resource Management Strategy, a memorandum which was sent out to Mr. A. Scott who is the co-ordinator for this.

“The initial screening of potential reservoir sites has reduced significantly in number of options. Originally, multiple options were also possible for the same river, example three potential sites on the Yarra River. The screening has been made on the following criteria:

1. Potential storage yield.
2. Topographic position, that is populated area access.
3. Distance from major demand centre.
4. Water quality aspects.

This screening has led to the following selection: North Oropouche, Matura, Yarra, Mariannene, Tumpuna in its Moruga intake, Salibia, South Oropouche, combination of sites. The second item is the raising of existing dams. This is considered for the following reservoirs: Hollis, upper Navet, Hillsborough.”

Those are the considerations, but with respect to the Senator’s specific request, that is something I would take on board.

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Mr. Vice-President, I learnt a long time ago that we need to find solutions, one has to be pragmatic when in Public Utilities, and I heard Sen. Yuille-Williams talk about \$995 million. I do not know where that money is. I certainly did not have access to it. It is not a loan programme, but what I do know is when I entered the Ministry of Public Utilities there was no leadership because in the previous regime it was what I call a political gulag. One was placed there to be punished, that is why Ralph Maraj, Morris Marshall, John Eckstein, Linda Baboolal were placed there. It was a profusion, a parade of Ministers of Public Utilities and absolutely no plan in place except to bring in Severn Trent. That was the plan of the previous administration.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: Mr. Vice-President, it was not the last regime to which the Minister was referring when he said John Eckstein and Linda Baboolal. Barry Barnes was the last Minister there, so he could take off those two names.

Hon. G. Singh: I hope you could also remember that Ralph Maraj and one who was dear to you, Morris Marshall and, of course, you are one of the keepers of the secret of Patrick Manning who was also Minister of Public Utilities.

Hon. Senator: What secret?

Hon. G. Singh: When he was going to Cuba, the Senator knew.

Mr. Vice-President, the point is, what kind of solutions are we going to come up with in this country? How are we, as a people, going to deal with the deprivation of those communities? When one is going to Rio Claro, there is a big sign by the Regional Corporation which says: "Boil water before drinking" and there is an open wall. How many of us leave our rarefied atmospheres, and our air-conditioned environments to go into the communities and see the level of deprivation? I know Sen. Daly spoke about Ravine Sable, if he has been there recently, he would recognize that they are now getting a 24-hour water supply, seven days a week. *[Desk thumping]* It is clear to me, that in the short term we need to give us, as a people, room to manoeuvre and that is how desalination came about. It did not come about because of some master plan, it went through an evolutionary process. From where is the water going to come? The pipelines cannot be replaced in time, another source cannot be found in time. Where are we going to meet the demand? Extract it from the people and give to the industrialists? Is that what you are going to do? There must be sustainable balance.

I heard Sen. Shabazz talk about the capital projects. Who is saying that this Government is going to do it? What we are interested in is water quality, price and volume. We are not interested in getting the public sector to do this, because we recognize that public sector is a poor provider. Therefore, what we are interested in competitively is price, quality and volume, and we would solve the water problems which exist in this country because we would be having 15 million gallons of potable water of which the hon. Finbar Gangar spoke. One does not give potable water to industrialists to use. One diverts the potable water. There is a dedicated water supply for Point Lisas so it can expand as much as it can and not impact on the public sector's water supply, so the days of deprivation of the domestic customers would be over.

I can understand why the Opposition has a problem with that, it had 34 years to solve it and it could not solve it. Do you know why? They had no semblance of thinking how it should be done. When we divert the water which is currently going to Point Lisas into the transmission system which is meant for the domestic and other users in that terrain, there would be a Class I service for everybody. We would jump from 11.5 per cent together with the capital works we are now doing and we would have a Class I service. This would make much of the talk which goes on here irrelevant. It would make the whole cost for water and the deprivation of water which people suffer every dry season, irrelevant. That is what we are interested in. If other persons are not interested in that, they may have their own agenda and motivation. My job as the Minister of Public Utilities is to solve that problem, not to allow others to solve it.

I agree we have to plant the trees on the hills, we have to have drainage and catchment areas for agricultural water. We are going to do all that, but there is a sense of timing. Our timing is that by the year 2000 we would solve the water problem in this country, so that in the year 2001, there would not be a reversion. Those who want to have that reversion are not sitting on this side in a sense, because they want to have that. They talk about this, that, and the other, we cannot build a dam and so forth.

Mr. Vice-President, do you know how long it took to build the last dam? It took eight years and six months and you, URP foreman, would have built it in less time.

Sen. Shabazz: When was the last dam built?

Hon. G. Singh: The last dam which was built was the Caroni/Arena dam, it was commissioned in 1985. It took eight years and six months. *[Interruption]* You were not the URP foreman then?

5.35 p.m.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. Vice-President, is it appropriate for a Minister to refer to a Senator as “URP foreman”? I would be grateful for your ruling.

Hon. G. Singh: Mr. Vice-President, I would withdraw that—

Hon. Senator: The Vice-President has to rule.

Mr. Vice-President: Hon. Minister, you are required to withdraw that remark. We want proper references made to hon. Senators.

Hon. G. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Vice-President, the hon. Senator, who in another capacity, was a URP foreman.

Sen. Shabazz: Mr. Vice-President, if it is me to whom the hon. Minister is referring, I was never a URP foreman. *[Laughter]*

Hon. G. Singh: Very well, Mr. Vice-President—well as a Programme Director or something in URP.

It is our intention to solve this problem and to ensure that water is not a problem for our country in the new millennium. We have a solution and we are sticking to it unless someone could come up with a better solution. That is the challenge! The challenge is, if your solution is better I would adopt it! They say build levees, build a new dam, I will explore both of them. However, the point is, I am pragmatic and practical and I am interested in solutions. I am not going to regurgitate and enter into the realm of abstraction of the way it was because of the lack of pre-planning by those on the other side. I have to deal with the reality now and that is our reality. The reality is, we have a plan for water for all by the year 2000.

Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: Mr. Vice-President, I am sorry but the hon. Minister was really moving fast. I was trying not to interrupt him but this is a very serious debate. Could I ask one question of the hon. Minister, please? I know the hon. Minister is a little angry but please—

Hon. G. Singh: No.

Sen. Shabazz: You are.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: I notice that the hon. Minister talked about the South Water Project and this \$950 million cost to the Government and I really wanted to find out, in terms of the Severn Trent agreement and what is happening in the South, whether any funding was coming from that agreement? Is this a new programme that has been put in? How is it being funded? What has happened to that Severn Trent agreement?

Secondly, the Minister spoke about a desalination plant and I was not quite clear whether it was on Government's agenda. The Minister moved very quickly and I really want to be quite clear whether the Government intends putting that in place.

Probably I am going a little ahead of time, I did ask whether the possibility is that other areas could be designed as these water specific areas leading out of this.

Hon. G. Singh: Mr. Vice-President, I will take the last question first. Other areas under the legislation cannot be declared water improvement areas unless development works take place to justify the imposition of our water improvement rates. Yes, it can be, provided that there is work to justify that. So here there is work for \$260 million taking place and, therefore, there is need to have a mechanism to pay for this developmental works; unless this work takes place in commercial industrial areas, then that is the criterion.

With respect to the issue of whether or not Seven Trent is involved—this South Water Project, as I indicated when I read the summary, is WASA/TTWS, an initiative of the Ministry of Public Utilities.

Hon. Senator: Which Minister initiated that project?

Hon. G. Singh: Mr. Morris Marshall.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: What has happened to the plan Seven Trent had for the South? Has that been stopped?

Hon. G. Singh: There were no plans. Remember when the PNM regime brought them into being they were going to provide water in the St. Patrick pipeline. That line is run but there is no water to full that pipeline. Therefore, the last administration had no plan for south Trinidad apart from the St. Patrick pipeline which did not have the water resource.

Sen. Prof. Kenny: Mr. Vice-President, where could we find a definitive statement on the policy of the Government regarding reforestation of our watersheds?

Hon. G. Singh: Mr. Vice-President, I wish I could honestly answer the hon. Senator as to where he would find that. One would think that could be found in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. What I do know is that by virtue of this study on the water resource management strategy there is a combination: drainage, watershed management and water resource development; those three intertwined and that is how the emerging water policy would come about. That is the extent of my knowledge in that area.

Sen. Yuille-Williams: Could the hon. Minister say whether it is part of Government's agenda to build the desalination plant?

Hon. G. Singh: But I have indicated that. If Senators opposite could come up with another solution as to how water could be provided, then tell me. I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the Water Improvement Rate (Point Lisas Industrial Estate) Order, 1998 be approved.

**WATER IMPROVEMENT (POINT LISAS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE)
AREA ORDER**

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move the following Motion:

Whereas it is provided by section 10(1)(a) of the Waterworks and Water Conservation Act, Chap. 54:41 (hereinafter called 'the Act') that the Minister may by Order declare any area in Trinidad and Tobago to be a Water Improvement area;

And whereas it is also provided by section 10(1) of the Act that every Order made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

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

Be it resolved that the Water Improvement (Point Lisas Industrial Estate) Area Order, 1998 be approved.

I beg to move.

Water Improvement Area Order

Tuesday, June 16, 1998

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the Water Improvement (Point Lisas Industrial Estate) Area Order, 1998 be approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, June 23, 1998 at 1.30 p.m. As you know, Mr. Vice-President, next Tuesday is Private Members' Day and we are going to continue with a Motion in the name of Sen. Prof. Spence. Hopefully we would conclude that and commence debate on Sen. Dr. Eric St. Cyr's Motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.45 p.m.