

Leave of Absence

Tuesday, January 26, 1999

SENATE

Tuesday, January 26, 1999

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, leave of absence has been granted to the following Members: to Sen. Philip Hamel-Smith from today's sitting; to Sen. Carol Cuffy-Dowlat, for the period January 23 to January 27; to Sen. The Hon. Finbar Gangar, from January 23 to January 30, 1999.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Arthur N. R. ROBINSON, T.C., O.C.C.,
S.C., President and Commander-in-Chief of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/Arthur N. R. Robinson,
President.

To: MR. VINCENT CABRERA

WHEREAS Senator Carol Cuffy-Dowlat is incapable of performing her functions as a Senator by reason of her absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, VINCENT CABRERA, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Carol Cuffy-Dowlat.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 26th day of January, 1999.”

Senators' Appointment
[MR. PRESIDENT]

Tuesday, January 26, 1999

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Arthur N. R. ROBINSON, T.C.,
O.C.C., S.C., President and Commander-in-
Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and
Tobago.

/s/Arthur N. R. Robinson,
President.

TO: MR. KELVIN RAMNATH

WHEREAS Senator Finbar K. Gangar is incapable of performing his functions as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, KELVIN RAMNATH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 26th January, 1999 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Finbar K. Gangar.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the President
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the
Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 26th day
of January, 1999.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GUESTS

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I wish to acknowledge the presence of two ladies, in the distinguished gallery, from the United Kingdom; one of whom is a non-stipendiary magistrate in the United Kingdom. They are guests of Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny. *[Applause]*

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PETITION

Horticultural Society

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. President, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the Horticultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago of Lady Chancellor Road, St. Clair, Port of Spain.

Petition

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The petitioners are desirous of constituting the said organization into a corporate body by a private Bill so that its aims and objects could be more effectively achieved.

Mr. President, I must say that the Horticultural Society has been an important institution in Trinidad and Tobago for many years. As you are no doubt aware, it has held an annual flower show which has been very well attended and it has given pleasure and also horticultural expertise to many persons in Trinidad and Tobago.

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 That the promoters be allowed to proceed.

1.40 p.m.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Institute of Marine Affairs (Appointment of Board)

3. Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny asked the hon. Minister of Planning and Development:

Could the hon. Minister inform the Senate whether the Board of Governors of the Institute of Marine Affairs is appointed and functioning?

If the answer is in the affirmative, could the hon. Minister advise the Senate of the composition of the Board and its date of appointment?

If the answer is in the negative, could the hon. Minister:

- (a) inform the Senate of the date on which the previous board's term of office came to an end?
- (b) state how soon the new board will be appointed?

The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Trevor Sudama): Mr. President, Cabinet has agreed to the appointment of a chairman and nine members of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Marine Affairs, as well as nine alternates for a period of three years with effect from the date of instrument of their appointment.

Oral Answers to Questions
[HON. T. SUDAMA]

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The following people have been agreed to by Cabinet:

Chairman	Prof. Ramsey Saunders
Member	Alternate
Ms. Ann Marie Jobity	Mr. Carlyle Jordan
Dr. Selwyn Lee Young	Mr. Elam Taylor
Mr. Mark Ramkerrysingh	Major Cecil Bernard
Mr. Ronald Norbert	Mr. Murchison Pierre
Dr. Dave Mc Intosh	Ms. Marva Salvador-Arthur
Prof. Peter Bacon	Dr. Derek Gay
Mr. Graeme Percival	Mr. Garry Dalla Costa
Dr. Arthur Potts	Dr. Jesma Mac Farlane
Mr. Anthony Bartholomew	Mr. Eric James.

Mr. President, the instruments of appointment of the chairman and members signed by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will be issued to the chairman and members of the board.

Thank you.

Sen. Prof. J. Kenny: Mr. President, I have a supplemental question. The Act as amended describes the institute under section 3 as "the Institute shall be comprised of a Board of Governors established under section 10". Therefore, in my limited understanding of the law, if the board is not appointed then the institute does not exist and it means that the institute has been carrying on business for a little over 12 months when it did not exist. I think the expenditure is about \$8 million per year. I just wonder whether the Government plans to bring special legislation to regularize this anomaly.

Hon. T. Sudama: Mr. President, I would have to look at the legal implications of this, because it was under the understanding that the old board would continue until the new board is appointed.

Environmental Commission (Establishment of)

4. Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny asked the hon. Minister of Planning and Development:

Could the hon. Minister inform the Senate whether the Environmental Commission has been established?

If the answer is in the affirmative, could the hon. Minister advise the Senate of the composition of the Commission?

If the answer is in the negative, could the hon. Minister inform the Senate as to how soon the Commission would be established?

The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Trevor Sudama): Mr. President, to date, the Environmental Commission has not been established. There are a number of reasons for this, but one of the key reasons is that it has become necessary to amend the Environmental Management Act 1995 to allow for the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Commission to be appointed by the President on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. That was not in the original Act as the President had the authority without seeking the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission to make these appointments. This is in accordance with the constitutional provision for the appointment of officers of the High Court.

The commission when established will be a superior court of record. The appointment of commissioners has been deferred pending the amendment of the Act. While this is being done, the Government has been exploring various options for housing the commission, and it is expected that these matters would be concluded shortly and the commission would be established within the next three months.

Nariva Swamp
(Adoption of Environmental Impact Assessment)

5. Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny asked the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources:

- (a) Could the hon. Minister inform the Senate whether the final report for environmental impact assessment of the Nariva Swamp (Biche Bois Neuf area) dated July 1998 has been adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, could the hon. Minister state what the recommendations of the reports are concerning particularly future use of blocks A and B and the Nariva Swamp generally and the steps which will be taken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources to effect these recommendations?

- (c) If the answer is in the negative, could the hon. Minister state what are the grounds for no adoption of the report?
- (d) Could the hon. Minister inform the Senate of the costs of the environmental impact assessment study and of the sources of funding of this study?

The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land, and Marine Resources (Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj): Mr. President, the final report for the Environmental Impact Assessment of the Nariva Swamp, that is the Biche Bois Neuf area was submitted by the Institute of Marine Affairs to the Cabinet-appointed Monitoring Committee of the Environment Impact Assessment of the Nariva Swamp on August 7, 1998.

The report was reviewed by this committee and the following recommendations were submitted to the Cabinet-appointed Wildlife Conservation Committee and the National Wetlands Committee for consideration:

- 1) There should be no farming in block B;
- 2) The agricultural development of block A be maximized with all the supporting measures, such as land tenure, water availability and integrated crop management techniques have been put in place; and
- 3) Block B be rehabilitated to restore its biological diversity.

These recommendations were endorsed by the two latter committees and submitted to Cabinet for its consideration on October 15, 1998.

The ministry sought the advice of Cabinet on whether the recommendations of the National Wetlands Committee emanating from the environmental impact assessment report should be adopted by the ministry or not. Since rice production was a major activity in the Nariva Swamp, Cabinet recommended the establishment of a committee comprising technocrats from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and stakeholders in the rice subsector, to develop a policy for rice production in Trinidad and Tobago, taking into consideration the recommendations of the report.

The total cost of the environmental impact assessment study amounted to \$988,775.90. The Ramsa Convention on wetlands provided \$160,000 under its small grants funds, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago provided the remainder.

Thank you.

Sen. Prof. J. Kenny: Mr. President, I would actually like some clarification. I really want to know whether the ministry has adopted the report. I get the impression that the report was considered by other committees and the Government has been acting on the recommendations of those other committees. This is what confuses me, because I have now read the report, which is in the parliamentary library, and there is no clear recommendation coming out of this particular report as to a total cessation of rice production or agriculture in block B. The recommendations of the report are very vague. It says that if you are going to do rice cultivation then you ought to do so and so. It is quite uncertain.

My question really is, has the ministry adopted that particular report?

Sen. V. Tota-Maharaj: Mr. President, to my knowledge the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources is awaiting the report of the rice policy committee and then we would move ahead.

Economic Philosophy

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the question. [November 24, 1998]

Whereas in early post-war years the economy of Trinidad and Tobago was actively redirected to providing enhanced infrastructure and higher incomes to the population through a policy of localisation and industrialisation and planning; and

Whereas with the slowing down of the industrial boom worldwide in the sixties there evolved a policy of public participation in industrial enterprises culminating in the resource-based industries at Point Lisas; and

Whereas with the third oil shock and the new liberalisation paradigm there has been since the eighties a move towards divestment and trade liberalization; and

Whereas economic activity thrives best in an atmosphere of clearly understood and stable economic policies;

Be it resolved that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago articulate its broad economic policy particularly regarding public participation in industry, economic liberalisation and human resource management and its strategies for furthering the economic well-being of the nation.

Question again proposed.

Mr. President: I will point out that apart from the mover of the Motion, the following Senators have already spoken: the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, Sen. Muhammad Shabazz and Sen. Vincent Cabrera.

Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny: Mr. President, before actually going into the subject of my contribution, I would make an observation about the way in which we deal with Private Members' Motions.

We started debate on this Motion in late November, it is now two months later and we resume the debate. We have had three speakers.

1.55 p.m.

The subject matter of this debate is of enormous importance, not only to us debating it here, but to the citizens of this country who are hopefully listening, to get the message as to the basis of the philosophy of the Government as it has got to this point in its life. It is equally important that we have full participation in this debate because it is quite clear now that we are not escaping the effects of what is happening in the rest of the world.

The fact that NUCOR has been shut down—let us not fool ourselves; it has been shut down, not suspended—and NUCOR was one of the pioneers in recent times of investment using our energy. NUCOR has gone. Who is next? We hear the price of methanol, urea and all these things are depressed and we hear that there is a problem with steel, so it is very, very important that we have as wide a discussion on this matter.

Mr. President, I am going to take a little liberty with Sen. Dr. St. Cyr's Motion. While the main thrust I know is the industrialization policy, I maintain that industrialization is not just simply the use of our energy. Any society existing today—even the most primitive one—has a range of industries and I dare say that the services industry in Trinidad and Tobago is probably as important as say the tourism industry. So, although Sen. Dr. St. Cyr wanted to keep the broad issue, and I think he encouraged us not to get too involved in the individual sectors, I think a bit of exploration of some of the individual sectors would help us establish what is this policy.

I am glad that Sen. Cabrera is here because he has pointed out on another occasion that the Government has given us an immense volume of print material which we all ought to read, or many of us will have read, but my point is that reading print material is not the same as the primary way in which we

communicate, which is by speech. So that while I accept that we have a volume of stuff, it can be told by the body language of the speaker, the little nuances of what this means. I am not going to digress but I am going to try to put some body language into the concerns of mine on this very, very important Motion.

I start off by referring, as one normally does in a debate, to words spoken in the original debate. We have had a very, very clear statement in many respects from the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and I do not intend to be critical of his contribution because, in fact, he has given us a very, very clear understanding and I got the sense that the way in which we are exploiting our energy, we are taking a portion of this and injecting it into training which is part of the management of our human resource.

However, I wish to quote the Minister and dissect some of the terms. As I pointed out, with a debate of this kind, it is not as if we are taking a bill and passing it and talking about the merits or demerits and making amendments. We are talking about ideas and it is really, basically, an exploration and, indeed, I hope in this exploration that we will hear from Sen. Tota-Maharaj, because agriculture is quite important; I am sure that we will hear from the junior Sen. Baksh; but, I think we all ought to get involved in this debate. I will try to curtail my speaking time as much as I can so that we get this exploration taking place across the floor of this Senate.

Now, the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries said in his contribution:

“Mr. President, Government’s economic policy is based on some very simple fundamentals, that is providing for the citizens of this country an improved quality of life, while at the same time, promoting sustainable development.”

I have no problem with the Government’s fundamental, that is, it wishes to provide for the citizens of this country improved quality of life, and there is a great void needed to be filled in the quality of life when one reads the newspapers.

Mr. President, providing improved quality of life is a laudable goal. It is a goal. It is a goal rather like “total quality nation” and “world class” and all these other goals that some of us seem to get into trouble, Sen. Daly, when we use the terms.

Sen. Daly: I am still alive.

Sen. Prof. J. Kenny: I will not get into the subject of the goal of improved quality of life but I will, again, raise the subject of sustainable development

because there are some resources which are wasting and to talk about sustainable use of a wasting resource is nonsense.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries went on to say, in effect, that there are all sorts of definitions of sustainable development. He said that his interpretation of it was, and I quote his words from *Hansard*:

“...development in such a way where we, of this generation, will provide for ourselves without endangering too much, the ability of ensuing generations to provide for themselves.”

This is a mantra which is repeated through the original definition of “sustainable development”. But, I make the point that the only resources which we can manage sustainably are the renewable ones. This means our forests; it means our fisheries; it means our wildlife; and if we manage these things, ensuing generations will still have forests and will still have wildlife and will still have fish. However, if we take a wasting resource, like petroleum or natural gas and we use it at maximum rates of extraction, we are not using that resource sustainably. I will return to this point later on.

Why I raised this is that it is not just Trinidad and Tobago, but in many countries, we get this jargon that has crept into public life and debates and I would like, with your permission, Mr. President—and I would not be so ungracious to suggest that what is going on here is a mad tea party—to read just a bit of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. I am very sincere in what I am doing because it illustrates the point I wish to make, that words mean different things to different people.

At the “Mad Tea Party”, the Hatter asked Alice to solve the riddle and Alice replied:

“‘Exactly so’ said Alice

‘Then you should say what you mean’ the March Hare went on.

‘I do’ Alice replied; ‘at least—I mean what I say—that’s the same thing, you know’

‘Not the same thing a bit!’ said the Hatter. ‘Why, you might just as well say that ‘I see what I eat’ is the same thing as ‘I eat what I see’!’”

This is the problem when we prop ourselves up with sustainable development because it has very little meaning in terms of practical development. It is a lovely,

lofty wish about us trying to see where it has come—I would just give a brief background because it shows the weakness of it. The term, in fact, is an oxymoron. It is used by the United Nations and everyone else—sustainable development—and everyone has a different interpretation of what it means.

The original “sustainable development” comes from the Brundtland report which is the United Nations Commission on the Environment and Development and the interpretation of the Brundtland report, after saying the little mantra about meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, goes into the imperatives to which nobody pays attention. In fact, in our Environmental Management Act, we have a lovely preamble about sustainable development being a goal.

Now, the imperatives of sustainable development are firstly, the elimination of poverty. The Brundtland report says we have to eliminate poverty. Laudable, but can we do it? The second imperative is: Accelerated economic development in the Third World. We realize, of course, that if we have accelerated development in the Third World, we have accelerated consumption of resources, energy, material and pollution and everything that goes with it. Then we have an imperative which the Brundtland report calls for: Reduction of energy and resource consumption in the G7 countries and we are a sort of G7-plus country.

Here we have sustainable development demanding that we reduce resource consumption; we reduce energy consumption; and then, the final imperative of sustainable development, according to the authors of this idea, is: Bringing human population into harmony with resources. This is easier said than done.

Trinidad and Tobago has a population growth rate of about 1 per cent. By 2015, we are going to be 1.75 million people and people are supposedly our greatest resource, but they are also, in a sense, our greatest problem, because people need resources of one kind or another.

I would like, Mr. President, if you would permit me to just summarize resources. It is not only petroleum and natural gas. In any society, space is an important resource. We number about one citizen per acre. That is the population density and we see the problem of space utilization.

Now, the developmental process, to my mind, is a slightly chaotic one which seems to be moving in one direction where we get ribbon development and we get squatting development which is encouraged by eminent citizens in this country, including people coming from the political directorate.

2.10 p.m.

My question related to Dr. St. Cyr's Motion is, "Are we going to continue like this in the use of space, or are we going to move towards a planned new city where we do not have this clutter of an unscheduled, unplanned ribbon development occupying space over which we have very little control that makes great demands on policy of development? We ought to perhaps think of how we use space and whether we take that option of moving to a new planned city.

Mr. President, water is an incredibly important resource. Some people argue that water is a renewable resource depending on how it is used; others argue just the reverse, that water is a wasting resource because of the way we handle it. I question whether the policies which have emerged have given me the correct interpretation of where the Government's directions are headed. For instance, we have heard about the desalination plant. I have no problem with the desalination plant at Point Lisas, provided that Point Lisas invests in the desalination plant and it is done properly, but I do have a problem where we lose 50 per cent of our water for problems of leakage and maldistribution. In what is the wet tropics, we are going for the option of the tax revenues of the country being utilized for a desalination plant which is, in my view, a short-term fix. If we lose 50 per cent of the water by leakage, should we not be thinking in terms of stopping the leakage and doubling our water supply? Why desalination?

Mr. President, one of our equally important resources is our agricultural land. Only approximately 16 per cent of our land area is good, quality arable land and yet our development over the years has been alienation of agricultural land, replacement by housing industry; and here is a wasted resource. It is physical space which could be used to produce food. Should not the policy of the Government be geared toward making sure that there is no further alienation of any agricultural land? This is only a suggestion. Maybe the Government has other reasons for alienating agricultural land, but we pay the price.

There are other minerals that we use, apart from petroleum and gas. These are mainly material such as rock, gravel and sand, and we appear to have adequate supplies of this, but there seems to be something wrong with our system where we extract material and just leave the place like a bomb site. Sen. Prof. Spence and I worked some years ago on a quarry rehabilitation project where we planned out the rehabilitation in a certain area of Trinidad as part of an English consultancy. It was commissioned by the European Union. There is a superb report on it. It

actually goes down to telling us the kinds of plants and vegetation that we use. That report sits on the shelf.

We do have many non-petroleum mineral resources, but our problem is, we extract them willy-nilly, we tear up the beaches in Tobago, create pockmarks all over the countryside to the east of Trinidad and we just leave them for somebody else—another generation—to clean up. What does one's sustainable development mean when 25 years from now, young Trinidad, a population of 1.9 million, is faced with the problem of cleaning up the mess? Somebody has to stop it somewhere.

Mr. President, our biota—our plants and animals—is a very important resource. We are very well endowed. We are part of South America biologically and we have a wide range of plants and animals. One of the problems with our biota is that we do not use a very large proportion of species. We use, perhaps, 50 trees and exploit, perhaps, 50 or 60 different kinds of fish and hunt legally five or six species of game.

I refer to the problem of the forests. I think everyone is already aware of it and I hope they will bear with me while I just quote a rather alarming figure. On December 16 there was a symposium at the University of the West Indies hosted by the Department of Life Sciences related to our fresh waters and our catchments and the director of the Water Resources Agency made the observation that their consultants, after they assessed all of Trinidad, said that to maintain one's water supplies for the future required 5,785 hectares of reforestation.

Mr. President, I have asked questions at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and I have got answers. The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources admits to reforestation about 20 hectares a year. If we are to protect our water supply in accordance with this sustainable development idea, we have to either crank up the areas we are going to reforest each year, or we accept it and take 280 years to reforest what needs to be reforested. So, here we are parroting this “sustainable development”, present generations and future generations and clearly we are not doing it properly.

Mr. President, I would like to turn to another resource which I term, generally, the amenity resource. This country has a wide range of natural amenity as well as built amenity which can be used in the development of our civilization. I will not talk about the natural amenity because it is like an old gramophone record; I keep repeating it all the time, but I would like to talk a little about the heritage.

Economic Philosophy
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

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There has been a recent rehabilitation of Whitehall which has attracted, in my view, quite unwarranted criticism. [*Desk thumping*] I do not know the actual cost, nor am I going to ask, but Whitehall is an important part of our built heritage. One gets the impression from some people that the Government imported \$20 million worth of marble from Italy. This, of course, is nonsense. In the rehabilitation of Whitehall, for the first time in many, many years—and certainly in my lifetime—we have seen a Government take positive action to take one of our architectural treasures and upgrade it or reconstruct it in its original form and, at the same time, develop it for utility use.

I think that tribute must be paid both to the Government for grasping this method for doing it and to Miss Rudlynn Roberts who is the architect responsible. Whatever the sum was, I wonder whether people appreciate that this was an investment in special skills of restorative architecture. If we had not done it, it would have meant that we would have had to build up the skills if we wanted to rehabilitate it. There is a large group of highly skilled people now who have done Whitehall and I sincerely hope that we move next to this building—the Red House—which is a major heritage site. [*Desk thumping*]

While we are doing this, I would like to make a special appeal. Before the year 2002, I would like to see Nelson Island completely rehabilitated as a sort of national people's museum. [*Laughter*] A sort of Ellis Island, Alcatraz which was the gateway to the development of our culture. I will keep reminding the Government that this thing is of major historical significance. It will not cost what this building would cost or what Whitehall would have cost. I think that in the year 2002, the main building at Nelson Island, which was the reception centre for all of the settlers of Trinidad, should be refurbished. It was particularly noted as a reception centre for indentured labourers in Trinidad over an extended period of 80 years and it was a centre where several people who had opinions which the Government of the day did not like were incarcerated, including eminent members of the labour movement—two Trinity Cross holders—and I will make a monetary contribution to the erection of a plaque to the memory of Uriah Buzz Butler and George Weeks. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, I move on to human resource, and this is a matter which concerns me because we are frequently told that the greatest resource we have is our human resource. Now, a human resource is of very little value except this human resource is developed, educationally. I do not mean that people are trained to do jobs. I think we have to develop attitudes in our citizens. I do not know what

is the Government's policy. I do not know how to guide or advise. I could only raise the issue, but essentially, development or management of one's human resource presupposes sound education. As Sen. Prof. Ramchand repeats all the time, "Education, not training, at the primary and secondary levels for all citizens".

It is a fact that in our society it is very uneven. There are children who go through primary school to secondary to university without any difficulty, and there are others, when one gets into the remote parts of Trinidad: Matelot, the back of Biche or Moruga, let us face it, the quality of education that is being delivered is inadequate to the purpose of developing to the same level as other citizens. I think that when Sen. Prof. Ramchand read what primary school teachers are paid in this country, I understand why we have a problem. Mr. President, at the tertiary level—which is the subject area that interests me—I do not think that we place enough emphasis on technical training; we tend to put all our resources into the university degree. I have problems with the university degree today. It has been degraded not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but worldwide. You have problems where, you make it a business of delivering a degree.

2.25 p.m.

At St. Augustine Campus we have moved towards degrees in a subject and it is now degrees in courses. Let us face reality, this is a serious problem. Just recently you read in the newspapers—the university salaries, you cannot attract staff and so forth and this is a problem. But, do we continue devoting more and more resources to a narrow part of the top end that gives you a degree as opposed to taking options where you try to emphasize the technological training? I think that we are rather reassured by the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries with the National Skills Centre that something is developing which is going to lead in time, I hope, to a centre for advanced technological studies, which ought to be awarding degrees.

Now, the one thing that bothers me about development of human resource is the attitudes. You go to any culture in the world and you can get a broad paint brush of the essential features of the culture; and I find it extremely difficult to come to terms with the culture to which I belong, because you have this attitude of lawlessness that pervades the society.

Mr. President, I refer to Whitehall. This is a monument; and while it was being done all along in front of Whitehall the people who were doing it parked their cars on the sidewalk, so that a citizen could not walk along the sidewalk.

Economic Philosophy
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Now, this is a breach of the law. You are not permitted to park your vehicle on a sidewalk. It said so; and yet you saw a whole string of them from the Archbishop's Palace right to the end of Killaney which people call Stollmeyer's Castle, and they were all doing their job. But, it reflects the attitude towards law, and towards order in the society; and this I think is one of the things that ought to give us cause for concern.

How do we develop in the society a sense of wishing order? Look at the problem with this time of the year. I do not object to people and their Carnival behaviour. In fact, when Carnival comes I head in the opposite direction and I get away from the noise. But, people are crying out. Here we are and the culture of noise. We are a culture of noise. We are a culture of lawlessness, we are a culture of noise, and then when you look at the way in which industry operates in the country, we are a culture of pollution. If it is not the chicken plant up at Arima, it is the plant down at Claxton Bay. It just goes on.

How do we break this thing? How do we develop in society? I know that the populist approach to win votes is let everyone have a party, let us all enjoy ourselves. But, we have the future to think of. It is getting out of hand, in my view.

So, I think that the Governments policy for human resource development as related to this Motion, ought to at least project where we might be heading, to try to bring some order back into the society.

Mr. President, I was actually going to talk about the University of the West Indies, but in my wisdom now acquired, I decided to avoid. *[Laughter]*.

Mr. President, when I started this I was thinking of the Minister of Finance and the car culture to which we belong. You see, Mr. President, we have the highest car ownership density in the western hemisphere excluding the United States and Canada. This is admitted. I thought it was about six people per car, but I am told by the Minister, it is a bit better than that: it is about four per car.

Now, here we are, to go back to this idea of sustainable development. We are wasting resources; and, is there any possibility that policies might be re-arranged so that we spread out the use of wasting resources, so that another generation may have some of the energy that we are now consuming? It may be totally pie-in-the sky, it may be totally unrealistic, but policies ought to examine these as options. I would have thought that the national transportation policy which was emerging made a lot of sense to me until the official policy of the Government was to make cars

more readily available to people. It seems to me an inconsistency. I thought that we were heading towards mass transit and making private cars more expensive.

Mr. President, I would close by referring to what I was saying before, that is, that we are exploring. This is not a conventional debate, this is a very important Motion, and the Motion is one of exploration of where we are heading. I will usurp the authority of the Professor of English and quote a bit of 20th Century poetry with which he is familiar. It is taken from "*The Four Quartets*" called "*Little Gidding*" and it is Eliott who is the poet:

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

I sincerely hope that after this extensive debate, we will know the policy of the Government.

Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Trade & Industry and Consumer Affairs and Minister of Tourism (Hon. Mervyn Assam): Mr. President, I am indeed very pleased to be able to join in this very important debate on the Motion so eloquently moved by Sen. Dr. St. Cyr. in which he calls upon the Government in the resolution:

“Be it Resolved that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago articulate its broad economic philosophy particularly regarding public participation in industry, economic liberalization and human resource management and its strategies for furthering the economic well-being of the nation.”

Mr. President, it is always a pleasure to be in this distinguished Chamber and to listen to the erudition of these distinguished Senators. I was able to read the *Hansard* of Dr. St. Cyr’s presentation, and I just had the opportunity to listen to Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny. It is very difficult, Mr. President, to disagree with the contributions of these two distinguished gentlemen.

Indeed, the presentation of Sen. Prof. Kenny gives us an idea of the kind of resources that we need to pay special attention to, if we are to in fact preserve this country and to reap the benefits of sustained development. He went through the whole gamut of resources: human resource, space, water, agricultural land, rock, gravel, sand, animals, forest, amenity resources and so forth.

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I was very happy that he was able to disabuse the minds of some of our people, with respect to the restoration of Whitehall. I am absolutely sure that it is a policy that this Government will continue, as long as the resources are available, to restore the other important buildings that we consider to be our heritage, including Nelson Island. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, he made some reference to poverty and, indeed, Trinidad and Tobago is no exception. Like every country in the world, we are afflicted with poverty. In fact, I read recently, and I was quite astonished, that 11 per cent of the population of the United States is living below the poverty line. That is quite a revelation for a country that boasts of such high employment, high rates of economic growth, a robust economy, and a pretty civilized and modern state. But, 11 per cent of their people are living below the poverty line.

2.35 p.m.

We in Trinidad and Tobago have been attempting to address poverty in a number of ways. I do not have the time this afternoon to go into all of these various areas that the Government have been pursuing, but one institution that has been set up—and it is situated in the Ministry of Community and Social Development—is the Social Development Council For Poverty Alleviation and Equity Building. And we are hoping that over time, this institution will be able to come to terms with some of the pressing needs and the crushing poverty that exists in our society.

He spoke about the closure of Nucor. And I suspect that perhaps—and I am hoping that it will not happen—this is precisely what happens in situations where you have what the economist refers to as—and I am sure Prof. St. Cyr will know—business cycles. You have peaks and you have troughs, and consequently, when you have these troughs, you have industrial mortality. Nucor, unfortunately, is one of those companies that suffered mortality because it was, as you know, a new technology with which they were experimenting, and they never really got to the point where they had achieved full production capability to make it a sustainable and viable operation. For this we are very sorry and we hope that perhaps one day they will return.

He spoke about what is taking place in the other countries of the world and, indeed, Trinidad and Tobago does not have any vaccination to immunize it against some of the vicissitudes, economic and financial vicissitudes, of international economic life.

Indeed, Mr. President, the Asian contagion is one that perhaps can very well pass throughout the Caribbean Sea. But I must caution that the Asian contagion, as far as I understand it, and as far as I have read, arose largely out of economies that were involved in speculative portfolio investment activity; and Trinidad and Tobago fortunately, is not that type of economy. Most of the investments in Trinidad and Tobago are rooted in the ground: plant, machinery, equipment, raw material and end product; and for which we have fairly good and reliable markets.

So, I am not trying in any way to be immodest when I say that Trinidad and Tobago is a bit different from the economies of those Asian countries; and so different from Russia because, as you know, after Perestroika and the whole revolution that was initiated by President Gorbachev, Russia has never, or the Soviet Union and what is now the various states of the former Soviet Union, has never overcome the problems of over 70 years of a centrally controlled economy. The market economy has not developed in those states of the former Soviet Union, and they have moved from crisis to crisis, in terms of their currency, their productive capability, and the volatility of the entire economy. This is what has been happening in Russia, and it is happening in certain Latin American countries. Unfortunately, I see Brazil, whose currency had been stabilised for quite some time—their real is now slipping very, very precipitously. When I was in Brazil a little over a year ago it was one real to one US dollar. The latest reading is that it is 176 real to the US dollar. And so, Mr. President, again, even though we are close to Brazil, the Brazilian situation is still very different from that of Trinidad and Tobago.

I agree fully with Sen. Prof. Kenny when he spoke about too much emphasis, inordinate emphasis on getting a degree and placing too many resources in the tertiary sector. I agree that resource allocation is a critical activity of any government. This Government has been placing enormous emphasis on the pre-school, the primary school, the secondary school and technical schools to the extent that the Minister of Planning and Development announced sometime ago in the other place, the progress made towards the development of community colleges in Trinidad and Tobago, and the role NIHERST will be playing in the future, and the National Training Agency and the National Skills Development Centres. Again, he was correct when he said that we have an attitudinal problem in Trinidad and Tobago. How do we solve that, is a monumental task.

Many years ago, when Ben Bella became the first President of Algeria, he established a ministry called the Ministry of National Re-orientation, the purpose

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of which was to address the very problem identified by Sen. Prof. Kenny and so many others who have had to deal with it in public life in the discharge of our responsibilities.

I listened to the news recently, and Prime Minister Owen Arthur who just won a landslide victory in Barbados, has established a new ministry, and he calls it the Ministry of Social Transformation. Again, one would have thought that Barbados may not have had that problem, but apparently, in the wisdom of Prime Minister Arthur, he sees the need to establish a Ministry of Social Transformation.

A few years ago, Mr. President, the Government of Argentina did a similar exercise in terms of establishing a ministry, whose Spanish name I will not repeat here, but it is very similar to the Ministry of Social Transformation, recently established by the Prime Minister of Barbados. And it all goes to show that it is a world-wide problem. It is a phenomenon that is not unique to Trinidad and Tobago, although, of course, I am not attempting to suggest that we do not have the problem here, and we should not address it with a view to resolving it.

You see, coming out of the colonial period and entering into self-government and then into independence, there were certain attitudes that were allowed to fester, which have now become open sores. The very example that he gave to this distinguished House, where workers park on the sidewalk in violation of the law, is an example that I see every day, to the extent that people abuse you when you are attempting to observe the law. They are so impatient that they want you to go through red lights; so when you stop at a red light, they abuse you.

I remember very well a few years ago, Mr. President—and that is why people say that when you have your car glass up you are a big shot, and you do not want to talk to the ordinary man. But I remember the glass of my door was down while driving, and I was struck in my face and I almost got disoriented. Somebody was eating a piece of watermelon and threw the skin, that hard part, out of his or her car, and struck me on my face

I remember a second example of attitudes—and I would not bore you too much. At that time I was Chairman of the St. George East County Council—and this employee was on a compactor, at the back of the compactor. He was eating doubles and he had a can of coke in his hands. After he had completed his meal—and it was about 7.30 a.m.—instead of throwing the empty can and the brown paper that had the doubles in it, into the compactor, he threw them on the street. It just shows you—attitudes. And even where you live in your neighbourhood,

people will clean in front of their place, but they will strew garbage in front of other people's homes. It is a national problem. And all of us, leaders, whether we are politicians, parents, teachers, managers, community leaders, university people, all of us must join in a crusade to help eliminate and transform these unfortunate, deformed attitudes that persist among our inhabitants in Trinidad and Tobago. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. President, in the opening salvo of Sen. Dr. St. Cry's contribution, he said:

"Mr. President, the Government has now completed three years in office, by which time it should have learnt the realities of the management of the nation and the economic system in particular, so that this is an appropriate juncture at which to request of it, I may say probably more strongly require of it, a full statement of its economic philosophy and its perceptions of how the economic life of the nation should be conducted."

He is perfectly right to demand it; to require of this Government to give an account of its stewardship in unambiguous language.

I take this opportunity today, Mr. President, to make my little contribution to clarify, or to elucidate the very question that the distinguished Senator is asking us.

2.45 p.m.

I had the honour, Mr. President, to lay in the other House three documents during the three years of my stewardship as Minister of Trade and Industry. As Minister of Consumer Affairs I also laid another document to which he alluded in his presentation as the National Consumer Policy, but I did lay the Industrial Policy 1996—2000. I also laid the Trade Policy of the Republic 1997—2001; I also laid Creating a Nation of Entrepreneurs, An Action Plan for Future Direction of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1999—2001.

The Minister of Finance in his successive budget speeches has also indicated the broad economic policies of this Government over the last four years. In addition to which, he has tabled in this honourable House the *Medium Term Policy Framework*, a document which tells the nation precisely the way forward. The Minister of Planning and Development has also brought to this honourable House in successive years, the *Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP)*

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Mr. President, one of the most important planks of the economic philosophy and strategy of this Government is in its Trade Policy with respect to market access. What we want to do, is to create market space in every country that we can possibly penetrate in order that our manufacturers can export their goods, to create the employment possibilities, to create foreign exchange, and to grow and expand the economy for Trinidad and Tobago. As a consequence of that, we have targeted a number of countries or group of countries in order to achieve this goal of market space enhancement. We have done a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Republic of Colombia and that is in place, that is operational at this point in time, a reciprocal free trade agreement.

We are almost at the point of concluding one with the Dominican Republic. Unfortunately, there was a bit of delay but I just returned from Guyana on the weekend and the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) has agreed to move forward with some of the suggestions that I made to the Cabinet of this country, which were approved. I have circulated my letter and our proposals to all the Ministers of Trade in the Caribbean, supported interestingly enough, by a letter from the President of Suriname whose letter almost coincided with my letter to the various Ministers of Trade. So I am hoping that the Dominican Republic trade negotiations should be on stream once more and we should be signing that free trade agreement before long.

We also intend to sign or to begin negotiations for a free trade agreement with the Republic of Panama and we are hoping that we should be doing something in Panama, very shortly. We will be attending a trade fair and we are hoping to signal the start of negotiations with the Republic of Panama. We also got word from the Republic of Ecuador that they want to do a free trade agreement with us and we are hoping to start in about three months' time. Also the President of Costa Rica was here late last year, 1998, and we have signalled that we will start to negotiate a free trade agreement come March 1, 1999. We have also started to talk with the Andean Community and we are hoping that before the second quarter of 1999 we will commence negotiations. We commenced negotiations with the Republic of Mexico in September 1998 and we are hoping that those negotiations will continue.

In addition to all these negotiations that I have just enunciated, Mr. President, we have established what we call a Regional Negotiating Machinery which is responsible for the negotiations that have started in Brussels in order to achieve an enhanced Post Lomé IV Agreement. You know there is an agreement with the

African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) nations with the European Community and we are hoping that we will have an enhanced Post Lomé IV which probably will be Lomé V. These negotiations have started and, in fact, a number of trade Ministers or Ministers responsible for external relations will be in Dakar very shortly to continue negotiations so that the ACP will have a firm negotiating position with the European Community. Parallel to all of this, are the negotiations for the Free Trade Areas of the Americas (FTAA) which are going on simultaneously.

So you see the capacity, both in terms of financial, human and intellectual resources of this country, is being strained to the limit. I think our country is doing very well in terms of these various challenges and I am sure they will all bear fruit and Trinidad and Tobago will be better off in terms of the kind of free trade agreements we would have negotiated, the kind of market space we would have created and the kind of economic possibilities we would have created for the manufacturing community of this country and the benefits that the entire population will derive in terms of technological, financial, employment and so forth.

In terms of our industrial policy, Mr. President, articulated in this document we are placing an enormous amount of emphasis on the non-oil sector. Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny is right, that some of us think that our resources are oil and gas. I want to make it abundantly clear that it is the policy of this Government to ensure that in the next five years or so, we would be not as dependent on oil and gas as we have hitherto. In fact, Mr. President, if you look at trade statistics during 1998, although we are in a deficit in terms of our balance of trade, you will see it is the very important contribution of the non-oil sector that has been responsible for the deficit not being as large as it is. In fact, in the third quarter of 1998 the non-oil sector contributed an increase of 11 per cent over its previous contribution of the first two quarters of 1998.

Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny is right, steel prices are flat. The foreign exchange earning capacity, the revenue that we derive from these commodities, has in fact decreased and, therefore, we are relying even more on the non-oil sector to carry the economy along. So that the industrial policy is geared towards diversification of this economy in terms of manufacturing, agro-processing, informatics, information technology, telecommunications, arts, crafts, entertainment and, of course, the services industry, whether they are financial services, legal services, construction services, tourism, or what have you.

2.55 p.m.

To the extent that we are tempted to do all of this, we are trying, Mr. President, to attract as much investment as possible, whether they are local, regional or foreign investment, into Trinidad and Tobago.

At this point in time, we have almost completed the Investment Promotion Bill of 1999 which will replace the Foreign Investment Act. We are hoping to have in that new Bill, a framework within which we would be able to attract investors into this country, to give them the comfort that Trinidad and Tobago is a destination that is preferred, that will create the environment for everyone to do business in a transparent fashion, for them to be able to get a proper return on their investment, that there will be no hindrance to their repatriation of dividends or profits; and that the laws of the country will be administered in an equitable and transparent fashion. This is what we are attempting to do, Mr. President. All of this will help in the liberalization process and this will articulate, I hope to the satisfaction of Sen. St. Cyr, the economic philosophy with respect to investment and transparency of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

In terms of services, Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago hitherto did not place much emphasis on the tourism industry and we have tinkered with it for a long time: many people felt that there were certain adverse consequences associated with mass tourism. This was adumbrated many years ago by the first Prime Minister of this country, who felt that tourism could bring in all kinds of ill-effects such as prostitution, drugs, money laundering; all kinds of social evils could be visited upon our people.

However, it is well known, Mr. President, that tourism is one of the largest growth industries in the world. The services sector, the tourism sector, the knowledge and information industries, are the growth poles—the growth industries of the future. In fact, in the United States close to 60 per cent of persons employed in the labour force are employed in those sectors. Therefore, what we have seen is the agrarian revolution displaced by the industrial revolution, and the industrial revolution, with all its smokestacks, is being replaced by the knowledge, information and services revolution.

Trinidad and Tobago must position itself in order to take advantage of these growing sectors; to address the various problems of poverty alleviation, shelter, provision of water, jobs, and growing the economy as a whole. This is what this Government is poised to do.

Soon we are going to be bringing a Bill to modify the Telecommunications Bill that was passed in this House—I think it was in 1991, or so—so that it will enable Trinidad and Tobago to take advantage of the many investment opportunities being proffered to it; to move away from this system of monopoly; to give business persons and all citizens an opportunity to take advantage of the information revolution, where telephony could become more accessible to everyone and cheaper in terms of conducting business which will redound to the economic benefits of all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

I come back to tourism, Mr. President. As Minister of Tourism, I intend to lay in this Parliament before long, a new Bill: the Tourism Development Bill, which will replace—just as how the Investment Promotion Act is going to replace the Foreign Investment Act—the Tourism Development Bill will replace the Hotel Development Bill; it will expand the whole concept of what we consider to be part and parcel of the tourism industry; and it will incentivize this whole industry, in terms of small, medium and large operators in this sub-sector. So that this Government is very serious in terms of how it is approaching the liberalization, the development, and the diversification of the economy; in order to provide maximum and optimum opportunities for all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.
[Desk thumping]

Mr. President, another important area is small business, and this document speaks to it. It speaks of creating a nation of entrepreneurs, an action plan for the future direction of micro, small and medium enterprise development in Trinidad and Tobago. It is no secret that most of the industrialized countries of the world—whether large, medium or small; whether it is Ireland or the United States; whether it is Singapore or Korea, Japan or Hong Kong—all these countries had been able to take advantage of developing small business.

But you see, Mr. President, we had a rather unfortunate understanding of “small business”—very myopic, very narrow. I am not, in any way, attempting to derogate against these efforts, because they are important, extremely important. We will continue to encourage them. People thought that small business was snow-cone, benne balls, toolum, sugar cakes, and importing a suitcase of underwear from Carriacou, Margarita, Curacao and Miami. They deemed this as “small business”. As I said, I am not derogating against these activities because the people are doing them honestly and are earning a living to take care of their families. No problem! But that is a wrong understanding of what small business is all about. We have to do a complete re-evaluation.

You see, small businesses could only survive, prosper, and grow if they are directly linked to medium and large businesses—that is how it operates in Korea and Japan—so that small businesses feed into medium and into large. And they provide, more or less, like the feedstock for the medium and large. That is how it must be structured, how it must operate in Trinidad and Tobago. So that a person does not have to go to the Small Business Development Company, take a proposal for which he/she has to pay some money, have it vetted by the SBDC, and then authorized by the SBDC to go to a financial institution to borrow 75 per cent of their capital requirement, and pay 17 per cent/18 per cent/19 per cent/20 per cent interest.

Small business cannot survive with that kind of formula, in that kind of environment; because you are actually competing with big business. So you are a non-starter from day one; and invariably and sometimes inevitably, you are putting a death sentence on a poor person who has borrowed \$10,000 or \$20,000, even before that person has started. That system cannot work.

I have got the Cabinet to agree to the establishment of a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Mr. Neil Rolingson, the CEO of PLIPDECO. We are going to be reviewing and revamping completely, our approach to the development of small business. We have already signalled in the 1998/1999 Budget, that venture capital will now come under the aegis of the SBDC. We are going to be providing \$150 million in soft loans to small businesses, and we are going to be providing them with an enormous amount of managerial and technical expertise. We are going to ensure that small businesses survive. We are going to provide and develop the links between small/micro businesses, to the medium and large enterprises.

Therefore, in that kind of scenario, we are expecting a tremendous growth in the small business sector, that will provide not only self-employment, but will create employment of four/five/ten persons in each of these enterprises, over time. That is how you grow the economy; how you develop local skills and entrepreneurship; how you use local raw material; how you take people off the streets, in some form or fashion—it is not the only way, but it is one of the ways—so that people take pride in their own enterprises.

3.05 p.m.

Therefore, small business is going to be an important pillar and focus of the economic strategy and industrial policy of Trinidad and Tobago. We also included in this, the concept of enterprise zones as contained in our industrial policy. What

do we mean by this? It is not a new concept, I did not invent it. In some countries it is called a "lagging development concept" or a "remote economic policy concept". It takes on different nomenclatures in different countries, but it is the same thinking; that is, you give incentives to business persons and investors to go into certain parts of your country to erect and establish businesses so that there could be more even and integrated development throughout your country; so there would not only be pockets of development.

We want to have businessmen going to Morvant, Sea Lots, Beetham, Laventille, Guayaguayare, Mayaro, St. Helena, Matelot, Gran Riviere, Penal, Debe, Oropouche and Cedros to take advantage of the enterprise zones policy, and give them incentives to go there, to develop the places, employ the labour and use the raw materials.

Someone came to me recently and said that he wanted to open a meal factory in Point Lisas. I asked him why he wanted to do that when he could go to fishing villages like Matelot, Toco or Cedros, because they all have shrimp and fish, so that should be the place to locate the industry. The raw materials and labour are there and we would give him the incentives to put up the factory. That is how we would develop the concept of the enterprise zones and operationalize it. These are some of the economic tools and mechanisms that this Government is putting in place to address the problem of economic security and sustainable development into the 21st Century.

As Minister of Trade and Industry and Consumer Affairs, through our national consumer policy we are using every possible means to ensure sustainable development. I am sure the distinguished Senators would remember that we had a trilogy of symposiums put on by the Ministry over the last three years—where we emphasized sustainable development and consumption in all of them—to commemorate World Consumers Rights Day. The documents are available for everyone to scrutinize and to make inputs, because we welcome the inputs of everyone in this Senate and, indeed, the public at large of Trinidad and Tobago. There is a certain synergistic approach between the three portfolios I hold: trade and industry, consumer affairs, and tourism, in terms of the economic direction, strategy and thrust for developing Trinidad and Tobago.

Another issue is human resource development which was spoken about by Sen. Dr. St. Cyr and Sen. Prof. Kenny. This is precisely what this Government has been doing and what has agitated our thinking over the last three years. This is not

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a criticism of the past, I want you to understand that. I am not here to criticize anybody but to give an explanation of what we are trying to do.

When we came into office there was training in about 50 institutions in the country and one could not optimize all the resources being spent in all these diverse training areas. What we tried to do was pull all of them together under the umbrella of the National Training Agency (NTA). We are having skills development centres established in all parts of Trinidad and in Tobago in order to ensure that we bring the skills of the people to the standard of a technological society, ready to enter the 21st Century and the new millennium.

As a consequence of that, we are also trying, at the same time, to introduce computer literacy to all schools at all levels, including pre-schools wherever they have been established, primary, secondary and so forth. Increasingly, we would have more computers available in all these institutions to ensure that all our children have the kind of education that would prepare them for the world of work and to deal with the simple, technological and routine matters when they get into the world of work.

As a consequence of all this, the Prime Minister has a vision of the establishment—and I know it has been criticized and pooh-poohed, and some people have said that we are imitating Singapore and that we are not Singapore. I read in the *Guardian* recently where Archbishop Pantin wrote in an article, "Ask Me Another " that we must learn to dream. The great Spanish philosopher, Garcia Lorca, once said, "La vida es sueño", which means, "life is a dream". If you do not dream the impossible dream as Don Quixote De La Mancha did, you cannot get anywhere. You must dream and have a vision. Even though transforming Trinidad and Tobago into a quality nation may be a dream, we are going to start with a dream. [*Desk thumping*]

Notwithstanding what is perceived to be squalor, substandard attitudes and operations all around us, we would continue to dream this, perhaps, impossible dream. We may not be alive because, perhaps, transforming a country like this with the attitudes that have been described by Sen. Prof. Kenny over this long period, may take a long time, but it is my view that one day we will be a quality nation. I am absolutely sure!

Mr. President, when you put all these things together in the equation, you will find that Trinidad and Tobago is on the right road towards economic development, sustainable development and human resource development for the 21st Century.

But one of the important things about development—and as Minister of Trade I am very aware of it—just as how there are two sides of the coin, trade and investment, there is another coin: trade and the environment. We are painfully aware of the necessity to maintain our environment. Degradation of environment is a mortal sin, and we all must ensure that we take all the necessary steps, not only the Government.

This is not a governmental activity but one for the private sector, the university, the churches, the schools, the communities and everyone, to ensure that we protect our environment. Notwithstanding the whole list of resources that Sen. Prof. Kenny gave us, to me one of the most important resources is the environment. It is a critical resource, because if we do not protect it we would all die. It is like international trade which is like oxygenated blood to the human body: if you do not have it you would die. If we do not have international trade our economy would shrink and die, that is why market space and market access are so important to us, and so is the environment.

If we do not have a healthy, clean environment we will die before long. Whether it is climate change, the ozone layer or CFCs, or whatever it is, we will die. Therefore, this country has to invest, not only in ensuring a clean, healthy, sustainable environment, but also do whatever we can to engage in what we call "environmental remediation", which must be undertaken posthaste. This Government is addressing, not only the environment, but also environmental remediation. We are going to be passing laws in terms of emission, industrial waste toxicity, whatever you call it, noise pollution and so forth, to deal with serious environmental problems that are going to affect sustainable development now and into the future. [*Desk thumping*]

I am coming to the next point before I wind up. It is a question of Government policy with respect to private sector involvement and what the Government is doing to move away from the whole question of state enterprises which is one of the areas touched upon by Sen. Dr. St. Cyr.

This Government has studied the whole question of state enterprises and has come up with a policy document with respect to how it is going to proceed. In fact, during our term we got rid of the TCL shares. I think we had 9 per cent there, and we sold those shares. In the budget debate of 1998/1999 the Government signalled its intention to sell all NHA houses and apartments in a habitable condition, to persons who want to buy them. That is another signal that it wants to

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get out of this business and have a share-owning democracy and a home-owning democracy.

Government is now privatizing the Unit Trust and is going to the stock market so that people who want to invest in the Unit Trust can buy shares on the stock market. We are doing the same thing with all the industries. We are taking a very serious look at all of them, and when the time is propitious, the Government will be making statements on every individual state enterprise that is wholly owned, majority owned or in which it just has a minority interest, with a view to disposing of them once that industry is not one which we deem to be sensitive to the national interest.

Sen. Daly: Mr. President, I would, therefore, ask the Minister whether what we hear about the Government's—I am sorry.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Minister's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. W. Mark*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Daly: I thank the Minister for giving way. Could he indicate whether the proposals that we have read with regard to the Government's involvement in horse racing are an exception to the privatization doctrine that he is now espousing?

Hon. M. Assam: The Government has always been involved in horse racing. I am surprised that the distinguished Senator should make that statement. The turf clubs were given the opportunity to promote it, but the Government has always been involved and has pumped millions of dollars over the years, into horse racing. I am surprised that the distinguished Senator does not know that.

What the Government is doing now is simply saying that we have pumped in so many millions, the turf clubs have not done a good job in developing the horse racing industry, so we will now take a shot at it in collaboration with the other players; not exclusively. It is not a Government monopoly because the private betting shop owners continue to operate. The race horse owners, the stud farm owners and all the players would have a say. There is no monopoly, except that the Government would now have more say in the management and direction in order to develop the racing industry. That is precisely what is happening. Government has the right to do that.

Wherever industries have failed to meet national and public expectations, it behoves—it is imperative for the Government to step in and do something about it. It happens in all countries of the world, not only Trinidad and Tobago. It has happened in the United States, England, Canada, Japan and all developed industrialized societies, so this is nothing new.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. President, I was saying that wherever we deem a state enterprise to have strategic importance in terms of the national interest, the Government will reserve its right. The basic broad policy of this Government with respect to state enterprises is that over time we will be divesting state enterprises and, as I said, we have already started to do it in the three years since we have been in office. As a consequence of that, I assure Sen. Dr. St. Cyr that this country has nothing to worry about in terms of this Government wanting to hold on tenaciously to a state enterprise sector where the particular state enterprise belongs to the private sector, more than it should the public sector.

I think that I have attempted in my contribution to give an overview of Government's basic policy objectives, the strategies we intend to employ, the various areas of concern raised by both Sen. Dr. St. Cyr and Sen. Prof. Kenny. Further, you have been made aware of what the Government is about to do and will continue to do, to ensure economic liberalization, sustainable development, economic growth and poverty alleviation; how we propose to treat with the environment, using the various resources enumerated by Sen. Prof. Kenny and how we intend to use them, and give the country the opportunity to see the kind of market access that we are trying to create for industry and exporters in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, I thank you very much for allowing me to make this intervention and contribution.

Sen. Cynthia Alfred: Mr. President, I thank you for affording me this opportunity of speaking on this Motion by Sen. Dr. St. Cyr. Before I go into the Motion, I must say that having listened to the Minister of Trade and Industry and Consumer Affairs, I believe he was actually carried away by his own euphoria when he spoke in lavish terms of his Government's policy. He spoke in glorious terms of dreams that one must dream, but I must remind him that one day one must cease to dream and dreams must become reality. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister spoke about attracting investors to this country, but I also want to let him know that according to James Allen, in his book *As A Man Thinketh*, he must remember and this Government will do well to remember that:

“Men are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are unwilling to improve themselves; they therefore remain bound.”

So, when we hear about attracting investors to this country, it is all well and good to say attract them; those are the external circumstances; but we, of ourselves—in particular, this Government of itself—must be able to generate the type of economy and the type of situation into which investors would want to come to this country.

I would like to ask a question. I heard talk about finances and so forth and growth and economy. What is the position with respect to Caricom? I ask the question because in the Trade Policy—Vision for Trade Development in Trinidad and Tobago, part of the opening says, “and facilitate the meaningful integration of Trinidad and Tobago into the liberalized global economy”.

I am asking myself: What about Caricom? We have heard about Asia; we have heard about South Africa; we have heard about Colombia; we have heard about Belize. But, what is the position with respect to Caricom? Between 1991—

Mr. Assam: I thought I said I just came back from COTED, the Council of Trade and Economic Development of Caricom and what we had done at Caricom. I thought that is what I said. Maybe the Senator did not hear what I said about the meeting at Caricom, so I am amazed that she could say that I said nothing about Caricom.

Sen. C. Alfred: Mr. President, it is very easy to say we have had a meeting of Caricom and if we look at the record of this Government, we recognize that there has been talk about meetings which have been attended and, up to the present, we are not getting anything with which we can work.

Yes, there was the Caricom meeting, but did they discuss about having Trinidad and Tobago as the financial and business sector in the Caribbean? Were those things discussed? In any case, I would like this Minister, as well as this Government, to take into consideration the fact that over the years they have not established a proper economic policy and those policies that in fact, have been put together, I believe because of the urgings of Sen. Dr. St. Cyr, leave a lot to be desired and I shall speak about that as I go further.

Let me return to the very beginning. It is not surprising that a Motion of such quality and depth and with such potentially far-reaching consequences, has come from Sen. Dr. St. Cyr for, indeed, as a man thinketh so is he, or as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.

Sen. Dr. St. Cyr taught me at Bishop's High School. In those days, he taught geography, a subject which I did not particularly like for whatever reason, and he is the one who inspired me to like the subject and to be able to do quite well when I did my examinations. Sen. Dr. St. Cyr had a particular quality, that of being able to spot examination questions. He had a remarkable capacity for doing this. In other words, before the examination, perhaps he would go through past papers, but however he did it, he would spot the questions.

In my particular case, when I took the examination, there was one particular section having to do with spurs, valleys and so forth and the very questions which Sen. Dr. St. Cyr gave us prior to the examination, those very questions came up in the examination. So, since then, he has been recognized as someone who thought deeply about things like the economy, *et cetera*, but in those days he definitely thought about the children he taught. It was not just luck but it was an in-depth study of the system which then existed, that enabled him to arrive at his findings and he was invariably correct.

So it is, that this particular Motion has obviously emerged because of Sen. Dr. St. Cyr's analysis of the economy over the past 50 years or so in Trinidad and Tobago. The very first preamble of his Motion reminds us and I quote. It says:

"Whereas in early post-war years the economy of Trinidad and Tobago was actively redirected to providing enhanced infrastructure and higher incomes to the population through a policy of localisation and industrialisation and planning; and"

Having looked at that, I would like to go back to 1943, as a matter of fact, to 1946. In 1946, just after the second world war, a letter was written by the Right Honourable George Henry Hall to the then Colonial Secretary. This was in 1946, one year after the end of the second world war. This was in respect of Trinidad and Tobago. I would like to make mention here that an economic policy was being worked on from 1943. Even while the war was raging, a policy was being worked out for Trinidad and Tobago.

I quote from this document, the name of which is Sketch Plan of the Development Scheme 1946—1955:

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“Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the memorandum on the future development of Trinidad and Tobago which I discussed with the then Secretary of State and officials of the Colonial Office in the Autumn of 1943 and to the large scale map illustrating the various projects which was left with the Colonial Office, and to report certain modifications...”

This was May 30, 1946.

The point I make here is that a party does not wait until it gets into Government before articulating a policy. If a party expects to get into government, prior to elections, that party would get together, have its manifesto and start to articulate what it hopes to do when it gets into government. But I am of the strong impression that this Government did not really expect to get into power and it has taken it all of three to three and a half years to start articulating its policies.

In the year 2000, all things being equal there will be an election. This is 1999 and it is only now, yes, some policies have—1997, 1998—but it is only now, because of Sen. Dr. St. Cyr’s Motion that we are having policies articulated and when we look at some of the policies, we realize that they have been put together to allay the fears expressed by Sen. Dr. St. Cyr and a number of us.

I would like to quote a bit more from the same document, that is the letter written by George Henry Hall:

“From a purely economic angle it seems that the railway should be eliminated (at present it would have substantial scrap value) in favour of the development of road and water transport.”

It was in this very Senate, sometime ago, that it was said that this Government articulated one policy, that is, of bringing back the railway. The PNM government was castigated for getting rid of the railway, but here it is in 1946, whatever may have been said about the system then because it was the colonial system and so forth, they saw in 1946 that the railway was not operative; it was not financially viable and, therefore, they said to get rid of the railway but this Government wants to bring back the railway.

Sen. Tota-Maharaj: Who said that?

Sen. C. Alfred: Mr. President, I go further in the same document—Sketch Plan of the Development Scheme 1946—1955.

“The second important factor is the report of the Agricultural Policy Committee issued in 1943. Trinidad is an oil-bearing country, but oilfields are susceptible of exhaustion. It is capable of supporting certain manufacturing industries, but in the absence of large mineral deposits...it is never likely to become an industrial country in the modern acceptance of that word.”

3.35 p.m.

It goes further:

“The one permanent asset which it possesses is the fertility of its soil; and the one sure basis for its economy is a prosperous agriculture.

When we see what is being done to the agricultural sector, then we have to ask ourselves certain questions.

It goes further to say:

“It is with the provision of these things that the development scheme is principally concerned in the town as well as in the country, for town and country are, in large measure, inter-dependent.”

Mr. President, I make this particular point because we have been seeing over the past few months, in particular, where people in the rural areas are complaining about the state of their roads, they are obstructing the roads and setting fire to them, and I suspect that it is because this particular Government, in its policy—which it may not have—is not thinking of the linkage between town and country. One cannot continue to develop one area at the expense of the other. I am sure this Government will have recognized that in forgetting, to a great extent, the urban population, it comes under great fire.

There is a *Draft Third Five-Year Plan 1969—1973* and in this plan, Dr. Eric Williams, the then Prime Minister said:

“We must become a Nation of savers and exporters; but the first claim on our expenditure must be those things which we ourselves produce.”

Then he goes on to ask the question:

“But the fundamental question posed is this: can a tiny country with a clouded and unpropitious history rise above its past and assure to each and every citizen his or her full measure of human dignity by building a humane and equal society with a political, economic and cultural identity of its own? I have no doubt about the answer.”

When we look on the cultural policy as articulated, as I would make reference to later, when we look at what was happening in terms of almost all the sectors, then we ask ourselves the question, “Can we survive?” Yes, we are a small country, comparatively speaking, but if we do not have economic policies put in place, then the people of this country will ultimately suffer.

There is a document called *Accounting For The Petro Dollar 1973—1983*. This Government will do well to read that document because it has a very comprehensive statement on how the petro dollar was used. Is this Government going to wait until it gets out of power in the year 2000 before accounting for the petro dollar? Perhaps, but this Government must remember that once it goes out of power it will not be credible if it then wants to articulate how it spent its petro dollars.

Indeed, the Minister of Energy, in his presentation, spoke about lessening dependency on oil and gas—which is good. He also spoke about the energy sector being committed to widening the human resource base in Trinidad and Tobago. He spoke about some millions of dollars that we are supposed to get from the United States, but he did not say when we are going to get these dollars so they could be spent. Then, having got those millions of dollars, how we are going to spend them.

Then we come to some of the policies. We have the National Environmental Policy, especially this particular area on health. It says, “Health which is a state of complete...”

Mr. President: Senator, for future guidance, when you are quoting from a document, quote not only the document but the page from which you are reading so that one can identify and authenticate it.

Sen. C. Alfred: Thank you, Mr. President. This comes from the *National Environmental Policy, June 1998*, Chap. 2, page 1:

“Health

Health, which is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity, is a fundamental right and the attainment of the highest possible level of health is an important social goal for the country.”

Mr. President, I agree totally with this statement, but we are aware that all is not well in the health sector. We are aware that the Ministry of Health is one of the major ministries from which moneys are taken at the end or, perhaps, before the end of a financial year.

If it is, in fact, that the social well-being of the individual is so important, why is it that the Ministry of Health, having received so much money, is usually one of the ministries from which money is taken? *[Laughter]* Then we hear complaints about the Port of Spain General Hospital, the San Fernando General Hospital. We hear complaints about nurses leaving this country by the scores. We hear about doctors complaining. If the health sector is so important, why then, when I spoke about dreams and reality, does this Government not come out of the dream stage and come to reality by putting policies in place that will enhance the general health of the individual and, by extension, the country?

Mr. President, I come to the *Medium Term Policy Framework 1999—2001*. This document is versed in rhetoric. Many words may sound good, but when one examines the concept, that is where we fall short. At page 21 dealing with Social Services:

“Government will strengthen its existing programmes and implement new strategies and measures to improve the welfare of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. These programmes include a wide range of services to individuals, families, community groups and communities...”

Then I went down the document and I am not seeing anything specific. I see one mention made in the case of senior citizens that Government will ensure an adequate standard of living, but there is a notable absence of the disabled. Mention was made during the 1999 budget about the disabled, but I noticed there is not one single word here about the disabled.

I then go to page 20 of the same document and when I look under “Social Services” it says:

“Emphasis will also be placed on the development of the talents and abilities of individuals within communities in the area of Culture, the Arts and Sports through involvement in the Best Village Programme.”

I am asking myself, which Best Village Programme? As far as I know, there is one Best Village Programme, and in order for these things to be put in place, the Best Village Programme has to be greatly enhanced. As it is now, it is a watered-down version of what it originally was, and to mention culture, the arts and sports, through the Best Village programme, I believe these expressions were just thrown in here. At a glance, they may sound good, but what about the other areas.

When I go to culture on page 21, it says:

“Culture

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Government will promote cultural values which would create a more positive, dynamic and creative individual. Particular emphasis will be placed on the youth of the nation as we seek to define and appreciate our rich and varied culture, in order to foster a deeper sense of identity to Trinidad and Tobago.”

Words. Mere words.

I go further and it says:

“Emphasis will be placed on (various things including) development of infrastructure in the establishment of the Carnival Institute, the Centre for Carnival Arts, a Theatre for Performing Arts in the proposed Association of Caribbean States (ACS) facilities...”

There is nothing about SICLAC.

SICLAC is about cultural systems to be put in place not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but throughout the Caribbean. There was this great conference in 1994 about improving the communication culturally between the English-speaking Caribbean and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. In this policy, there is not one single word about SICLAC. Has SICLAC died a natural death? I know for a fact that in the Ministry of Culture there exist some of the systems having to do with SICLAC. They have never been put in place. Some of the systems have come and they are residing there in the Ministry of Culture. These came as an experiment, so Trinidad and Tobago might be the only country, having received these systems that has not put anything in place. Therefore, Trinidad and Tobago will not be able to communicate culturally with the rest of the English- and Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Whither culture, Mr. President? The policy therefore is lacking.

3.50 p.m.

Then I look at page 23, Mr. President. This deals with health. Part of it says:

“With key focus on quality as achieved through application of the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement.”

Is that the reason doctors complain? Is this the reason, why up to now there can be no proper rationale between the hospitals as they exist, and the National Health Authority? Unless and until these things are rationalized, we will continue to be plagued with problems in the health sector.

Then we look at page 24, Mr. President; this has to do with housing. It says:

“Government is committed to facilitating the development of viable, sustainable settlements with acceptable and affordable shelter for all citizens.”

Would one call Toruba, Mr. President, acceptable shelter? Everyone in this country knows—and those perhaps who have come here as visitors—that Toruba is an eyesore.

The Minister of Housing and Settlements came here and he spoke in great terms about Regularization of Squatters—yes, that is okay. But it says here, “acceptable”. Toruba, Mr. President, is not an acceptable settlement. And not only Toruba, there are others. So if the Housing Policy is indeed to provide sustainable settlements with acceptable and affordable shelter, then Mr. President, the Government must look at what it has, look at what it is doing, and not say one thing, and do something else. [*Desk thumping*].

And this one, Mr. President—National Security. I have great admiration for the Minister of National Security, but something is not right here. It says:

“Government will continue to maintain law and order and ensure the safety and security of the citizens and territory of Trinidad and Tobago.”

Mr. President, I do not know, I do not think anybody knows what is going wrong in this country; but, we know about the escalating state of crime in the country. Every day there are terrible crimes being committed; and—not just talk about it, something definite and positive has to be done with respect to crime in this country.

If it entails having perhaps a seminar or something, get the views of the national population; because the national population is quite articulate on what they would like to see with respect to crime. Get the views of the national population, because every day the situation is worsening and I will not be surprised if very soon a state of emergency will have to be declared in this country.

We cannot afford to have crime get out of hand as it indeed is; and therefore, something has to be done.

But the part that really got me, Mr. President, is this:

“The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service will focus on the development of a more positive image through improvement in its relationship with the public.

In this regard, strategies will be developed to combat crime nationwide including the offering of rewards to informants.”

Mr. President, if one thinks that the state of the country now is not bad enough—stating as part of the National Security Policy that this ministry is going to offer rewards to informants, can you imagine the state, Mr. President? Can you imagine a crime is committed and you say we are going to pay informants? You are going to get all sorts of people who are going to implicate people who have nothing to do with the crime.

Mr. President, even if the national security ministry intends to offer rewards to informants, it must never say so. It must never put it in its policy.

Sen. Brig. Theodore: This is transparency.

Sen. C. Alfred: In respect of transparency, Mr. President, the recently re-elected Prime Minister of Grenada, said: “not transparency, but visibility. “Transparency” you can always see through. “Visibility” you can see in front of you. So, no longer “transparency” rather “visibility”.

4.10 pm

Sen. Philip Marshall: Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to make a small contribution to the hon. Senator’s very timely and important Motion on the communication by the Government of its economic policy framework.

We had some very important contributions, so far today, but I would like to refer to Sen. Prof Julian Kenny’s example of a report that was made some time ago and lay undusted on the shelf of non-implementation.

Mr. President, they say that even in visionary companies in the private sector that vision is 1 per cent vision and 99 per cent implementation and one of the challenges which I believe that we face, is that the quality of our vision, the quality of the various reports put forward by governments over the past decade or two, is first rate. The problem is, How do we ensure implementation? Mr. President, the whole objective of good economic policies is not just simply achieving the macro economic fundamentals but in fact, far greater objectives which I would classify along the following lines.

Increased economic growth that will hopefully result in increased employment would be one objective. Another in the Trinidad and Tobago scenario, would be the diversification of our non-energy and non-oil sector and maybe the improvement of strategic clusters covering agriculture, tourism and, possibly, our

development of our experience economy. When I say our experience economy I mean that product such as Carnival where people play not only for the product or the service but the total experience, like Madri Gras of the combination of product, service, environment and atmosphere. In fact, there was a good article, I think it was last year in *Harvard Business Review*, about the experience economy and we as Trinidadians and Tobagonians have a natural talent in putting our skills together to deliver that experience economy.

Another objective would be increased exports, more equitable distribution of income and poverty alleviation and, of course, the overall competitiveness of our nation. Now, how do we achieve those things? What are the drivers to achieve such a state, such components of our economic development? One would be, Mr. President, macro economic stability and political stability. Macro economic stability would cover adequate control of inflation, the management of our internal and external public debt and Government's ability to make policy decisions that improve our competitiveness.

We must also develop a framework whereby we can adapt successfully to the external shocks to our terms of trade. Our political stability would cover issues such as the creation of an overall business environment which can be seen as transparent and non-discretionary. So those would be the basic objectives. How do we get there? We have to get there by understanding Government's policy that would promote domestic savings and investment, that would develop our human resources, that would establish our priorities for education and would equip us to continue to be successful in the global and trade environment that is now extremely open and liberalized.

The degree of integration into the liberalized environment, the formulae is fairly simple: what is the total of your exports, what is the total of your imports and what is that total as a percentage of gross domestic product. The total of our exports plus our imports, I think, represents something like 85 per cent of our gross domestic product so it is evident that Trinidad and Tobago, definitely, is integrated in the global environment and, therefore, we have to ensure that we can develop despite whatever unplanned adverse changes may take place to challenge our macro economic stability.

Before moving on, let us take stock, let us present a balanced score card of where we are in economic terms. Let us therefore, before moving on, before

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attempting to just level criticisms of how bad we are, start by looking at what have we achieved. I am going to quote from a report represented last week by the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank on Trinidad's Survival of the Oil Industry in a low-priced Environment, and in that presentation he provided and shared with the audience some very important statistics. Many of these are presently quoted in US dollars but it would give us an overview of our macro economic position.

“Our growth official reserves in US dollars at the end of 1998 is US \$716 million and by comparison up from US \$35 million at the end of 1995.”

4.20 p.m.

So during the term of our present Government, for example, our gross official reserves increased from \$352 million to \$716 million. However, we must not look at that in isolation. What does that represent in number of months import cover? At the end of 1998, it represented 2.6 months of import cover; at the end of 1995, 2.3 months of import cover. So although, Mr. President, we have had a substantial increase in our gross official reserves, the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, as we integrate into the world economy, our level of imports has risen concomitantly.

This is why—I believe the last time I made mention of this, when I was talking about us needing access to the savings of foreigners, and also to continue to encourage domestic investors—although we are having substantial investment in foreign direct investments, represented in plant, significant plant in Trinidad and Tobago, this has also changed our consumption patterns somewhat. We have increased our level of imports, but because of the capital transfers from the foreign direct investment, our balance of payments situation has been rectified, although we may not have direct access in foreign currency terms to that foreign direct investment.

I continue. Over the past few years, Mr. President, our unemployment rate has improved—reduced, so that we have had higher levels of employment. We have gone from 16.3 per cent unemployment in 1996, to 15 per cent in 1997, to 13.9 per cent in 1998. Our inflation rate: 1996—3.3 per cent; 1997—3.7 per cent; 1998—an increase to 4.0 per cent. I understand that the major, underlying reason for this, unfortunately, has been the inflation in our food items which I believe represents an annual inflation rate compounded of about 10.5 per cent. If we took out of the competition the food items, I believe our inflation rate in non-food items may be as low as about 2 per cent.

This really affects the whole issue, the key and critical issue that we need to hear from the Government, its exchange rate policy. The Deputy Governor of the Central Bank really said that one of the key issues is to ensure that our exchange rate would remain in a manner that would continue to ensure our macro-economic stability. Our inflation rate must ensure that our competitiveness remains. The difference in the inherent rate of inflation between Trinidad and Tobago and our main trading partner, the United States, dictates the essential pressure we may have in maintaining our exchange rate.

Mr. President, another key area of monetary policy that the Central Bank has said it is going to continue to address is the whole issue of our interest rates, and the issue of open market operations. At the present time, our interest rates between local deposits and say foreign interest rates, that interest rates differential is fairly high. It has to be used to ensure that we do not have excess liquidity and possibly result in further imports in consumption items.

As the Central Bank indulges more in open market operations, what then happens is, we are able to mop up that excess liquidity, and thereby ensure that interest rates can gradually fall in a very controlled manner without, in any way, causing people to want to convert from TT dollars, or deposits held in TT currency, to foreign denominated currencies.

The reduction in our interest rates would promote, hopefully, further, an increased investment in the manufacturing and domestic-led industries and also continue to promote the ability of entrepreneurs to develop into new arenas without this high risk of not being able to survive because of our interest rate policies.

So from an economic perspective, Mr. President, this country has done very well. And one of the things that is important in this—starting from the Minister in 1986, the Minister of Finance, Selby Wilson; then through to Minister Mottley; now through to Minister Kuei Tung—one of the key and important issues is that the strategies for the management of the economy were followed and built upon. Those three Ministers of Finance passed the baton in a manner that continued to build upon the restructuring that had been started. This is a very important issue.

I mentioned in my contribution to the budget debate, Mr. President, that as Governments—Governments with a big G, as Sen. Daly refers to it—we have to understand what are some of the fundamental policies that we need to implement

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to transition Trinidad and Tobago. Those policies must not change even though there may be a change of government. They are some fundamental issues so germane to what is required, they must not be the victim of politics, they must not be the victim of a five-year cycle.

This is something that I have always mentioned: the difference between the “urgent” and the “important”. So often, from a political perspective, governments of the day have to deal with urgent matters, because they have a five-year election cycle; when really and truly, the important matters—the people infrastructure, the education—the cycle is 10/15/20 years; where when we spend the money, we cannot visibly see the signs of success when the five-year cycle comes around. In fact, we are winning at the national level, but the people of the day may not perceive that we are winning because we are imbued in materiality as evidence of success; where the things that we may not be able to see immediately—the intellectual capital and enhancement of our people—are the important things.

If there is one thing I would like to see out of this policy debate, is this agreement—regardless of government in power. In future, we will set strategies that will invest in our intellectual and people infrastructure, and almost reverse, possibly, the priorities—at present in our development and Public Sector Investment Programme, if you look at how we spend our money, we tend to spend the money on physical infrastructure, instead of people infrastructure. [*Desk thumping*]

We heard the Minister of Trade and Industry talk about one of the most important issues right now—and when I look at the PSIP I am not seeing it in his budget—knowledge and information. If we are to develop an export-oriented, export-led manufacturing sector, what we need now is significant investment in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, in the TIDCOs of this world, to really search out for our entrepreneurs what are the market opportunities, what are the detail processes, capabilities, competencies, know-how, cultural norms, language barriers. They have to unearth all these things for us, as a collective good and service, which any one entity may not and cannot hope to afford on its own. These are important issues that will in fact redound economically in the future.

Back to my model of development.

4.30 p.m.

Mr. President, our effective expenditure on education has been dwindling. This is why I am saying that in spite of our strategies and fantastic documents

what, in fact, we do sometimes is totally different in terms of the strategies we enunciate or espouse. We have to align our budget expenditure to the philosophies that we communicate in this debate. That is why Sen. Dr. St. Cyr's Motion is so important. What we agreed and what we said when he put forward the Motion is that if this Senate could agree on the priority of the different policies and their relative importance, when the time comes for the budget debate, the policies having been understood, the matter of the amount that we spend on each would, in fact, be just mainly an accounting effort.

What we have right now in the budget debate, in one fell swoop, in a very short elapsed time-frame, is a debate on economic policy and funding all in one, with no clear distinction between policy and the implementation of that policy. Maybe we try to do too many things at once, thereby dissipating the expenditure available and not being able to follow through and complete any one successfully.

I referred to this in an article from a magazine called *Finance and Development* December 1996. The article was by Mr. John Dickson and Mr. Kurt Hamilton called "Expanding the Measure of Wealth". They call it the "Wealth Accountants Tool Kit". This is the information and the comparison being drawn. It tries to compare the wealth per capita in a developed nation with the wealth per capita in a developing nation like Trinidad and Tobago. It also attempted to demonstrate the difference in the components of that wealth. The components were: learning, human resource or intellectual capital, produced assets in terms of goods and services, and natural capital being the natural resources: the lakes, forests, natural gas and oil with which we are endowed. I could possibly finish this very quickly before we break for tea. [*Laughter*]

The article stated that in the United States the wealth per capita is US \$325,000 per person. Therefore, the valuation based on this article, 200 million people by US \$325,00, is the market capatilization of the United States. This is how it was broken down:

Natural capital, lakes, rivers, oil reserves	US \$15,000 per person
Produced goods	US \$61,000 per person
Intellectual capital	US \$248,000 per person

I would now give the comparative figures for the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago is not separated from the other regions of the Caribbean. For the

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Caribbean, the total wealth is US \$47,000, as opposed to US \$325,000; natural resources, US \$5,000 per person, as opposed to US \$15,000 per person.

This is saying that, inherently, the natural wealth per capital in the United States, the God-given wealth—oil, gas and so forth—is only US \$10,000 more per capita than in the Caribbean. But when you come to the human resource, the intellectual component, in the Caribbean it is US \$32,000 as opposed to US \$248, 000. The significance of this statement is this: I was just reading an article on page 51 of this week's *Economist*, "Reading, Writing and Enrichment" which said that 42 million adults in America are functionally illiterate. Out of a total population of some 200 million that means 20 per cent of their adults are functionally illiterate. I believe that the equivalent figure in Trinidad and Tobago is about the same.

Remember that the conventional description of the literacy test is that once you have attended primary school you are classed as being literate. Thus, our official rates are, in fact, 96 per cent. Functional literacy is a test applied where an adult is questioned and given two fairly simple questions and asked to make some form of decision. What it represents is the application of basic cognitive life experience, knowledge and so forth. The United States is no better off than Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, it is probably worse off. The results in their schools show that 40 per cent of American 10-year olds cannot pass a basic reading test.

I have just described to you in terms of the *Wealth Accountant* that they are almost eight times richer than us in inventory intellectual capital, but inherently they have no advantage over us. Why do we not spend our money on people? The new world is going to be knowledge industries, 60 per cent of the American labour force is in service industries. The new world is going to depend on intellectual capital and intellectual capability. We are letting Barbados out-compete us.

There is a firm in Barbados, PRT, that employs 325 programmers writing software for American banking companies. There is Bangalore in India that is probably now writing about \$1 billion worth of software per year. We have that capability in Trinidad and Tobago. Let us take the offshore sector for instance. In Barbados the offshore sector brings in about \$33 million in taxes, because there is a lower rate of tax for what they call international business companies. The benefit is that, when these companies have to hold their annual general meetings or employ people, Barbados actually gets nearly US \$200 million from a by-product of the off-shore sector. People come down, use the hotels, there are transactions and more sophisticated opportunities and jobs available to the

citizens of Barbados. These are very important issues of which we should take advantage.

We heard the Minister talk about our bilateral treaties. We have in Trinidad and Tobago our environment of intellectual property rights that should be second to none. This is a fantastic arena for foreign direct investors to come here and set up their plants. We heard about the temporary demise of NUCOR, and not only that company, but I believe NUCOR, Cleveland Cliffs and so forth, are all testing out new technologies in Trinidad and Tobago.

Our intellectual capital protection would mean that if these things succeed, even though people are exposed to their methodologies, learning or experience, they are protected, because of our legislative environment. Wherever they go, this is an important impetus and advantage, together with our double taxation and investment protection treaties, to set up a knowledge environment in Trinidad and Tobago that could be expanded with our proximity to the markets of South America, our location and position between Europe and the United States. Let us focus on those issues.

Mr. President, I was thinking that—and I see the over-burdened Minister of Works and Transport—transport has become a major problem in Trinidad and Tobago; a problem of such gravity that it is impacting on the economic and wealth creation ability of our people. The frustration, the effort; look at our traffic jams! When people get to work I am sure their capacity must be dissipated by about 50 per cent. I really think that we should seriously look at some alternative means of getting people to work, home or school, and it would pay for itself. The additional productivity would pay for itself. That is an item of top priority.

Also, the people in whose hands we have delegated the responsibility for transport—I am talking about the maxi taxis—are destroying our social fabric with their behaviour; not all of them, but many who I see. The way they drive, they go through traffic lights, they block the road, they own the road! They have almost become the Sicilians of the roads! We have to change those issues.

There is nothing wrong with the thought process of the several governments that have governed this country in the past few years. We have one simple problem: we do not implement, we have no consequence management! If we begin to put people in jail when they break traffic lights and fine them, that is the only way our behavior would change. I could assure you that this social anarchy in

terms of behaviours, for a large number of our people, is ruining our ability to compete. To compete successfully there must be discipline. Let us take charge!

Look at that awful incident yesterday—I am sorry to be talking about it—when a school boy was killed. I am not going to say too much about it but as reported in the newspapers, the driver drove away. That is all I am going to say. I would like to see what is going to happen in that case. I am making no other observation. I am not saying that the child looked left or right, I do not know. It was reported in the newspapers that a school boy was killed, the passenger got out and the driver drove away. I would like us to remember that incident and follow it up. I want to see what the society is going to do. We have to implement.

The Minister talked about the environment. I see people throwing rubbish in the Botanic Gardens! They come up by me and dump their dogs. They cannot do that! That is a tourist environment. Let us start with that. If we start to implement and change those behaviours, this country would become recognizable as a competitive nation in a few years.

Mr. President, back to our economic policies.

Mr. President: I think that we have gone way beyond the stipulated tea time. We will break for tea at this stage and resume at 5.15 p.m.

4.43 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.18 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. P. Marshall: Mr. President, I would not be much longer. I just want to grab our attention with a tale of two countries. When I was at QRC, I remember doing for O'levels, *A Tale Of Two Cities*, but this is a tale of two countries and their economic indicators. One was a developing country; the other was a super power.

For one, the GDP growth rate was minus 5 per cent and the inflation rate was 110 per cent and for the other, the GDP growth rate was 4 per cent and the inflation rate was 4 per cent. Listen to the two comparative statistics. One country with 4 per cent GDP growth—positive, 4 per cent inflation; the other country, 110 per cent inflation and minus 5 per cent GDP growth rate, or a negative GDP growth. The super power and the developing country.

I do not know, Mr. President, if you know those two countries. The 4 per cent GDP growth rate and the 4 per cent inflation rate—Trinidad and Tobago; and the 110 per cent inflation rate and minus 5 per cent GDP growth rate—the Soviet

Union, formerly Russia, on CNN last night. They did not publish Trinidad and Tobago's statistics; not yet; we will get there one day.

The purpose of the comparison is to show that we are not doing all that bad. I think it is important that we have a number of challenges in the country but it is not falling apart. We have almost a billion US dollars; we have our growth reserves; we have many things to fix but we are doing okay.

Let me, by way of further comparison, just refresh the Senate from an extract of one of the documents we received last week, *The Parliamentarian*. It talks about economic transformation in New Zealand by the Right Honourable Bill Birch. Here are the five simple fundamentals that New Zealand used to improve its whole economic situation. Maybe as I read it, we could compare it to Trinidad and Tobago.

He said, based on the terrible situation in which New Zealand found itself, here was its strategy:

“Open competitive markets must be developed for goods and capital instead of quantitative import controls and export subsidies. This lets New Zealand producers make decisions based on proper market signals. New Zealand, which aims to eliminate tariff protection well ahead of the deadline in year 2010 agreed by the Asian Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) grouping...”

Now, Trinidad and Tobago, fully liberalized in trade and in finance with a common external tariff to be reduced by 2005, so we already have that basic policy in place.

The next one for New Zealand:

“Flexible labour markets which encourage reward and innovation, enterprise and rapid adjustment to new opportunities which must exist in place of a traditional system founded on rigid national awards and relativities defined on the basis of past history.”

My understanding, in terms of the whole issue of trade and development, is that the Government has resuscitated the tripartite partnership between private sector, government and the labour unions. We need to ensure that the message and the communication of our vision and competitiveness, that we will, with the other components communicated by the Minister of Finance—with pension funds,

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ESOPs and greater incentives—get a greater labour movement that would be focussed on productivity and competitiveness in the national arena.

Let me make a very brief comparison of two separate issues. We must never confuse labour rate and labour cost. I talked about this last Wednesday. A person may be paid a labour rate of \$20 an hour; another person may be paid a labour rate of \$40 an hour; if the person who gets \$20 an hour is one-fifth as productive as the person who is paid \$40 an hour, he is, in fact, a higher labour cost.

What we have to really begin to focus on, when we look at gain sharing, when we look at improvements in the take-home pay of our labour market participants, we must encourage our entrepreneurs and our private sector people to invest in knowledge, equipment, know-how and processes that enhance the ability to be more productive and that cost will, in fact, reduce a lower component labour cost.

If there was one strategy which I find not sufficiently supported right now, it is our manufacturing sector which I believe is in need of further investment support, maybe with capital allowances and to encourage it to re-tool and put in technology that could enable us to be more competitive on a global marketplace. We must have the mindset from the perspective of those who lead our labour markets that this gain sharing and transparency, a mutual productivity and profitability, would be shared in terms of a vision that would ultimately redound to the benefit of all concerned.

Back to New Zealand and the comparison. New Zealand used to have a tax rate of 66 cents on the dollar—highest marginal tax—now reduced to 33 cents on the dollar and they replaced their indirect taxes with a VAT of 12½ per cent. We have rationalized and consolidated our corporation tax rates and our individual tax rates to 35 per cent. New Zealand is embarking on a programme to further reduce their direct taxation and corporation tax to 25 per cent.

We have heard the Minister of Finance say that is also his objective, not necessarily 25 per cent, but a continual lowering of the tax rates with a concomitant increase in broadening the net and ensuring we have better collection. During debate on the Finance (Variation of Appropriation) Bill, he stated that despite the challenges in economic terms, we collected more in VAT and corporation tax than we have ever done before. Therefore, the whole aspect of improvement in the revenue collection unit will enable us to drive the whole issue

of lowering of tax rates which the economists say, generally lead to greater investments and disposable incomes.

A low inflation environment was targeted by the New Zealand government. We have to improve on that, especially in our food items. Somehow—and it comes back to agriculture—we are having much importation of food items; it is the major component of the inflation that we face and it is that which hits the people at the lowest rung of the economic ladder the hardest. We have to improve on that. I do not know what government policies are needed to be enforced apart from what was laid out in the last budget on the agricultural sector.

Last, the fiscal policies. We did have fiscal deficits in the years of hard times, but we now have fiscal policies that are prudent; fiscal surpluses which I think represent about 0.6 per cent of our gross domestic product.

When we measure up what New Zealand set out as five simple strategies, I can assure you, Mr. President, that this country has mirrored all those strategies, so in terms of the fundamentals of our macro-economic performance, we are okay. However, the problem which still remains is the relative priorities used to establish or sequence our expenditure. We were talking about the problems with education.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Thank you, Mr. President, I wonder if Sen. Marshall would be able to say whether there is any data to indicate the level of local investment which has taken place since we have lowered our income tax rates for corporation tax.

Sen. P. Marshall: Mr. President, I do not have that data. What I can tell you is that the investment rate in Trinidad and Tobago has been very low and, in fact, the gap has mainly been in the private sector.

Sen. Kuei Tung: Senator, while you are on your feet, I wonder whether you would make a comment as to whether the lowering of tax rates, together with the lowering of interest rates, would influence the increase in the local investments.

5.30 p.m.

Sen. P. Marshall: That is a challenging issue. Traditionally, looking at the statistics over the past few years—in fact, I have them here—what I have seen is that we do have quite an imbalance in our investment and savings rate. Let me get the figure out for you. Our gross investment in both the public and private sector

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has been about 21.8 per cent of gross domestic product per annum but our gross savings has mainly been about 9.6 per cent and the deficit has mainly been in the private sector. In other words, our savings is having to be made up. The Government is on an even keel because the Government is adopting prudent fiscal policies.

When a Government has a deficit, what should result from that is that private individuals should save more because the Government is taking a part of the economic cost of his goods and services, but we have been balanced so far over the last few years. Where our saving, our investment, is generally coming from, is foreign investment. The challenge is, how can we ensure that with a lowering of the interest rates, more Trinidadians will invest in their domestic economy? I believe that is not going to happen until we have greater linkages between our agricultural sector, our tourism sector and our manufacturing sector. I think we really have fallen behind in the development of those sectors.

I know I have not answered the question, but let me give some aspect of the relationship between investment required in these sectors and the jobs created. I will start with sharing the ratio of amount of capital invested per person employed in different sectors. In the agricultural sector, there is \$6,500 of capital invested for every person employed. Put another way, new investment amounting to TT \$1 million creates 154 jobs in agriculture, or \$6,500 per job. Compare that possibly with the petroleum industry. The ratio is TT \$1.3 million to employ one person, or \$700,000 required investment for one job in the petrochemical industry as opposed to \$6,500 in agriculture. In tourism, distribution, restaurants, that is about 46 jobs for every TT \$1 million of investment.

What we have to focus on, as Minister Assam talked about, are the tourism sector and the manufacturing sector. Developing those sectors and moving away from the reliance for job creation on the energy sector is going to be critical. I believe that if we have that well sprung of economic activity, the lowering of interest rates is going to provide the confidence level for our nationals to invest. If the labour movement—that part of the tripartite movement—shared the same vision and displayed the same confidence of productivity and gain sharing, people, I hope, would say that their money is safe by investing it in the real productive sector instead of saying they cannot take on the hassles of dealing with whether their share price is going to be maintained or whether their business is going to succeed or fail. Maybe the safest thing for them is to get a lower return

interest and put the money in a US denominated foreign bank account. That, basically, is our challenge.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. P. Marshall: Mr. President, Minister Assam talked about the importance of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises. Just for your information, there are over 1,200 establishments which employ less than 10 people. We have another 52 employing between 100 and 253 and we only have two organizations in Trinidad and Tobago that employ more than 1,000 people in the manufacturing sector. So, our profile in terms of employment opportunities is definitely related to the non-energy sector, the smaller type organization. This is why it is so important that organizations like TIDCO can provide the support services in identifying markets and technology to share the cost of such research and development.

In terms of economic policy, therefore, here are the items from small manufacturing enterprises which they have said had hindered their development: high interest rates; the approval time for new investments—I am sorry the Minister of Planning and Development is not here, but this is also a comment I have heard from time to time with respect to large foreign multinational corporations, and I know in our Planning Bill what we said we would do in front is have areas demarcated where pre-environmental assessment studies would have been done, because when a new foreign investor applies to set up a plant, we could have half the work done. We are competing today the terms of location for the investment of foreigners, and they are going to base time as a key attribute of whether they should locate here—apart from Trinidad being the number one place they want to be.

Another aspect the Minister of Finance talked about is that we need an improvement somehow in the whole venture capital mechanism. We need to look at an increasing use of joint ventures between foreign partners and local investors, and this really should be enabled by our intellectual and patent laws and copyright Acts. These are some of the challenges at which the Government should really look.

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I am going to begin to wind down my contribution—because I have so much material here—on going back to schools and then basically talking about the *Medium Term Policy Framework*. In this week's *Economist*, at page 21 the article is, *A Contract on Schools*. It is about why handing education over to companies can make sense. Because of the dissatisfaction with schools, many private enterprises are now taking over the management of schools and running the schools, providing remedial training and special private tuition, and it ends up by basically the question: “So, should commercial companies be running schools for the state?” The answer is, “Of course they should”. It goes further:

“There is a huge unmet demand for good education. In the developing world, the World Bank's commercial arm, the ISC, is fostering commercial investment in schooling to meet similar demand from people who see education as so essential that they will pay for what Governments have failed to supply. In its role, the state should become that of regulator, not school master.”

Again, the whole point, I know it may cost us more. Our challenge in Trinidad and Tobago is performance management. We do not have the ability. Because of the archaic and obsolete remuneration provisions in our Public Service Commission and our Teaching Service Commission, we cannot differentiate between good and bad performance. That is the problem. If people got paid according to the number of classes they taught in a week or on the basis of their rating by their students, their behaviour is going to change, because they will be rewarded and motivated.

Back to the Minister of Works and Transport, looking at some of the problems hindering our education, many of our school children in the lowest economic quantile could not attend school because of the cost of transport. The poverty line is estimated at TT \$2,300 per annum. School transport could amount to \$1000 per year. The whole issue of transport is a key aspect of our economic policy because we cannot get people to school. They lose time and productivity. We have to go back and look at those issues in great detail.

Really, when we have these representations maybe we should always walk with our *Medium Term Policy Framework* and our *Review of the Economy*, because it is very hard to follow, but what I have started to do is to list all the initiatives in the *Medium Term Policy Framework*—all 153 of them—against what they are intended to achieve. So, a key fundamental objective is the increasing of our savings and investment, and it so happened that the first four initiatives directly support that: a pension reform programme that would ensure

that we now have available under the pension fund, managers just like Singapore, a greater amount of more easily accessible savings to go into well managed private sector enterprises; a fully operational Securities and Exchange Commission—the legislation for that will continue to give people confidence that we could have a stock exchange that would hold its value because our reporting and other information sharing relationships would demand such an integrity supported by our Companies Act.

The introduction of mutual funds legislation will bring us greater returns as people are prepared, once they have the legislative framework, to share the risk of equity investment rather than getting a lower return by just putting an amount on deposit. They would benefit from the higher returns that equities can realize and in turn give good and emerging entrepreneurs the benefit to look or seek from the stock exchange a source of financing. The last one is introducing new comprehensive Employee Share-Ownership Plans (ESOP) legislation that will enhance the productivity of our labour partner but at the same time assist us in the whole issue of savings and investment.

I think it would be a good exercise that when we discuss our budget and look at the strategic initiatives, what we should really try to do is ensure that the development plans we establish address the critical issues. Do they address the critical issues? That is the role and responsibility I believe we should debate in this Senate. Are the strategic initiatives aligned to the important issues of Trinidad and Tobago as opposed to the urgent issues?

Mr. President, I thank Dr. St. Cyr for really focussing and ensuring that we have this discussion, and for the Government to put the importance of this debate forward on its very busy, urgent and important agenda.

Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, before moving to adjourn this honourable Senate, may I inform my colleagues that next Tuesday, February 2, 1999, we would be continuing with the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amdt.) Regulations debate and we will then proceed to the Legal Aid (Amdt.) Bill, as well as the Evidence (Amdt.) Bill.

There has been a constant complaint in this Parliament in terms of trying to provide senatorial colleagues with some kind of legislative programme. I have sought to provide my colleagues with a preliminary legislative agenda for 1999

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and there is a proviso that it is subject to change. *[Laughter]* We have additional bills coming and as they come forward we will make them available to Senators so that they will know exactly what the agenda is like for 1999.

Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, February 2, 1999 at 1.30 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.45 p.m.