

Leave of Absence

Monday, October 25, 1999

SENATE

Monday, October 25, 1999

The Senate met at 10.00 a.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, leave of absence has been granted to Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand from today's sitting and to Sen. Nizam Baksh for the period October 25—November 26, 1999.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following communication 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: DR. GEORGE DHANNY

WHEREAS Senator Nizam Baksh 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, GEORGE DHANNY, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 25th October, 1999 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Nizam Baksh.

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 21st day of October, 1999.”

**SESSIONAL SELECT COMMITTEES
(APPOINTMENT OF)**

Mr. President: Hon Senators, in accordance with Standing Order 64, I wish to appoint the following Members to serve on the following Sessional Select Committees for the 1999—2000 session of this Senate:

Standing Orders Committee

Mr. Ganace Ramdial	Chairman
Dr. Daphne Phillips	Member
Mr. Nathaniel Moore	Member
Mrs. Nafeesa Mohammed	Member
Mrs. Dianna Mahabir-Wyatt	Member

House Committee

Mr. Ganace Ramdial	Chairman
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Rev. Barbara Gray-Burke	Member
Mrs. Nafeesa Mohammed	Member
Prof. John Spence	Member

Committee of Privileges

Mr. Ganace Ramdial	Chairman
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Mr. Philip Hamel-Smith	Member
Mrs. Nafeesa Mohammed	Member

Statutory Instruments Committee

Mr. Ganace Ramdial	Chairman
Ms. Carol Cuffy Dowlal	Member
Mr. Selwyn John	Member
Mr. Mahadeo Jagmohan	Member
Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh	Member

Oath of Allegiance

Monday, October 25, 1999

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Sen. Dr. George Danny took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

PETITION

Trinidad and Tobago Mutual Aid Scheme

The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore): Mr. President, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago Emergency Mutual Aid Scheme.

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.

PAPERS LAID

1. The Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Caroni County Council for the year ended December 31, 1987. [*The Minister of Information and Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark)*]
2. The Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Caroni County Council for the year ended December 31, 1988. [*Hon. W. Mark*]

**HUMAN REPRODUCTIVE AND GENETIC
TECHNOLOGIES (NO.2) BILL**

Bill respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction [*The Minister of Health*]; read the first time.

Motion made: That the next stage of the Bill be taken at the next sitting of the Senate. [*Sen. The Hon. W. Mark*]

Question put and agreed to.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

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

Agreed to.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ASSOCIATION OF
PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS (INC'N.) BILL**

Question put and agreed to, That a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Professional Psychologists and for matters related thereto, be now read a second time.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, before proceeding to "Bills Second Reading" under "Government Business", I wish to announce the following Senators to serve on the Special Select Committee to consider and report on a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Professional Psychologists and for related matters thereto:

Mr. Nizam Baksh	Chairman
Mrs. Agnes Williams	Member
Mrs. Joan Yuille-Williams	Member
Prof. Kenneth Ramchand	Member

**APPROPRIATION BILL
(BUDGET)**

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [October 22, 1999]:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. President: Any contributions? [*Laughter*]

Question again proposed.

10.15 a.m.

Sen. Muhummad Shabazz: Mr. President, larger pension for retirees, increase in National Insurance payments, lower rates of inflation, lowest levels of unemployment, high foreign reserves, \$100.00 for old age pension.

Of course, while they take thousands for themselves and millions for their friends and family, this regime presented a budget dubbed the "people's budget". After the joy and happiness I saw on their faces today, I am certain that they are puzzled as to how a people could react in such a way to a budget that they see as doing so many good things for the people.

From the Town Meetings to the masterful reply from the Leader of the Opposition who, indeed, asserted himself as the real Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, to the point where for the first time in a budget we did not hear the duly constituted Prime Minister speak—but I will deal with that situation later.

Why such a reaction, Mr. President? It is because people do not trust this Government. They feel that their behaviour over the last three years is such that is done with a number of wrong motives.

Long ago when you were not sure of someone you would take what they say with a pinch of salt, but with this Government, you have to take what it says with a spoonful of salt.

Mr. President, that was the beginning of my budget contribution last year. It is the same beginning this year. Do you know why it sounds applicable at this point in time? Because they have been presenting the same budget for the last five years. When they say they have presented five budgets, I now tell them they have presented part five of the same budget. It is the same thing. They come to this Senate over and over again and tell us that figures—I cannot see how the Government can present a financial document where figures do not matter. But I will get into that as I go along.

I made a point last year—and I can still make it today—for one time we have seen Trinidad and Tobago divided into three parts: the East/West Corridor—and I will develop on that—Tobago and Central Trinidad.

Mr. President, they dubbed this “the poor man’s budget”. It was interesting to hear the hon. Minister making an appeal that he was a poor boy: he could not go to school because his pants was in the laundry. When I could not go to school it was because my pants was in the washtub. Do you see how poor he was, Mr. President?

What is this budget doing? One of the things we need to look at is, whether your Government is functioning effectively, one must look at how one’s ministries are functioning. I would take the ministries and go along step by step to make the Government understand that there are a number of things that need to be corrected. There are many ineffective things happening in the ministries, that I cannot see how this Government can be proud of what it is doing.

Let us start with the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) in Laventille. The Unemployment Relief Programme is now under the Ministry of Local Government. What was the Unemployment Relief Programme all about? A

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

number of people—moreso, Members on that side—seem to think that the Unemployment Relief Programme was just a handout which was making people depend, or fall into what they call the dependency syndrome. The Unemployment Relief Programme was never about that. If anyone heard Sen. Montano's contribution you would know that there are a number of things which could be done if this Government sits and thinks and tries to come up with new ideas. This Government is continuing to implement the ideas that have been set up and carried out by the People's National Movement Government.

Persons were trained to do skilled work under the Unemployment Relief Programme. There are a number of buildings which were built by workers under the Unemployment Relief Programme. Infrastructure that went into place in our areas was done by the workers of the Unemployment Relief Programme. The Unemployment Relief Programme was not a programme where persons did nothing and were given money, it was about serious work, training people and allowing things to happen. Not only did the Unemployment Relief Programme provide skilled labour but it also provided labour throughout the offices. There were clerical staff who got jobs in offices and managed situations. URP was a point that controlled or provided labour at all levels throughout the society.

The Unemployment Relief Programme provided emergency work. Whenever there were hurricanes or floods the staff of the Unemployment Relief Programme were the ones who were called out to work. The Unemployment Relief Programme did beautification projects and a number of other projects.

What this Government sought to do when it came into power—this is the truth—was to take the Unemployment Relief Programme and use it as a political tool to get political mileage to help them get stronger and become better in the eyes of the public.

The Government sent a minister into areas where URP was heavily concentrated like Laventille. The minister made it appear as though he was doing everything: helping the people in Laventille, reaching out to them and helping them. When the minister realized after all that he did, he did not get their support—he was unable to win them over—he stopped visiting the area. As a matter of fact, the minister has stopped doing anything in Laventille.

Mr. President, could you imagine today that the roads in Laventille are in such a bad condition? Even though the people of Laventille are paying tax they are unable to go over Laventille Hill in a smooth way. Presently there is a demonstration taking place in Laventille and the hon. Minister cannot be seen.

Two years ago, if anything was taking place in Laventille, the Minister's face could have been seen. One could have seen the Minister running with solutions as though he was willing and ready to solve whatever problems Laventille came up with.

It is sad. We saw Caroni (1975) Limited given approximately \$400 million: even more than Tobago and four times as much as the URP. As I have told you before, Mr. President, Caroni (1975) Limited is an employment relief programme. The Government is putting its money into Caroni (1975) Limited to ensure that it operates. The Unemployment Relief Programme throughout the country needs that kind of help in Trinidad and Tobago.

We know that this year the Government is going to try to put funds in the Unemployment Relief Programme to say it is developing the programme and helping Laventille. We are telling the Government to bring the money, the people will take it, use it and still will not vote for them. That is what has been happening to the Government to date, why they are not doing anything in Laventille. No roads are being fixed, no drains are being cleaned, nothing is happening in Laventille. I think the same minister has now been assigned to see about marginal seats. I wish him the best.

What has the Government done? Indeed, the Government seems to have destroyed the whole system of local government, by only playing politics. The Government seems to have destroyed the whole system of local government because they are not coming up with anything creative. While the Government uses the Unemployment Relief Programme as a political tool, what is coming out of this whole scenario of local government is that people are being made into political fools. I do not want to go into it because those people are now in the folklore and calypso of Trinidad and Tobago, so let them continue. What I do know is, we will not allow the Government to continue playing those games. We are seeing what is happening. The Government has to be taken to court in local government areas. We have to do a number of things which include taking the Government to court and fighting them to make sure that we get the type of conditions that we want. We will continue to do that for the good of the people of this country. [*Desk thumping*]

Let us look at housing. Page 27 of the *Medium Term Policy Framework 2000—2002* states:

“Government will continue to establish viable and sustainable settlements through an integrated planning process which will develop and make land available at affordable prices for home construction.”

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

What we know for sure is that no government has built a house in Trinidad and Tobago except the People's National Movement government. We know that the houses that were built by the People's National Movement government—since this Government has come into power—are not being given out by this Government. The Government has people suffering.

Look at what is happening at Almond Drive, the houses are completed and persons are not moving into them. Look at what is happening at Aranguez and the John John Towers. The John John Towers was the biggest game ever played with any housing development in Trinidad and Tobago. As a matter of fact, the Government tried to give the towers to their friends, they tried to keep it for themselves, but the Government does not want to give the towers to the people of John John and they still have not done anything. The Government ran a lotto, they did all these things and we see the Government continuing to play games with the housing policy that the PNM has set up in this country.

10.25 a.m.

Mr. President, let them continue. They are raising rent where they want. They are not painting buildings. They are not doing anything and, of course, they will put the blame back on us. We will develop it when we come along and we will do what needs to be done.

Housing must be a policy. To some people houses must be rented to. To some people houses must be sold to. To some people land must be given to. This Government has one policy which I call the Sou Sou Land Policy. They give people land somewhere in the back of some area, do not put in proper roads and infrastructure, let it be developed how they want, and that is how they think housing should be developed in this country.

I want to tell them here and now, they cannot change crime in this country by building more police stations, you know. Build more houses and put people in more homes, let family life develop, let the things be better, follow on the plans that we were doing, and it would help in some way to solve crime in this country. Build more houses.

Mr. President, you know what is bad and sad about them, they were talking about breaking down houses, you know. They were opposing the PNM any time that we had to remove or talk to people about removing their houses. Today they have started to break down houses. The hon. Minister—and I am even involved now with the Parliamentary Secretary in that area—who was so vigilant and against breaking down people's houses and felt that the PNM was this and that, and

they were going to regularize and do all these things; today we see them breaking down squatters' houses; moving people away and mashing up their houses. We know that this is what this Government has always been about and continues to be about, and it has another year to continue in that way, let it go ahead that way.

Sen. Cuffy Dowlat: Is that a threat?

Sen. M. Shabazz: It is.

I remember before, when the Minister of Housing and Settlements first came into power under the NAR, people were running all about and just seizing land, because they knew that his philosophy was to take land. Now you all are no longer doing that, and I would like to hear the Parliamentary Secretary, when she gets up to speak, develop on that.

Let us go on to page 26 and talk about education. I think they understand after four years, that education was badly handled. They tried to defend it for four years. Now they know that they were doing a good job, they did the proper thing. They moved the Minister. Well, he says that he got a promotion, I do not know how he worked that out. Maybe his arithmetic is not good, and the way he analyzed this thing, it was never good. That is why you all moved him. Congratulations on that to start with. But you need to set up and have a better direction for education that is far better than the "ole talk" that they have been giving us all the time.

What I would like to touch on in education is this; I remember coming to the Senate when they said that they were going to remove Common Entrance. It was in a newspaper clipping, I have not found it, where I told them "Do not play games with the minds of the young people of Trinidad and Tobago". They say they are removing the Common Entrance, but they are giving us an entrance examination. I do not know, maybe that is not common. Maybe they did not like the word "common", but an entrance examination is an entrance examination regardless. So you prepare the minds of the nation out there, all the young children, that they are going to have no examination, an assessment will be done to send them to schools, and that never happened. You have fooled down to the young people of this country.

Again, you were saying one book, two books and we know that those things are not going to happen. A number of the things that the Government says it will give to the children of this nation, indeed, you are not giving them.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

One thing I can say about the budget presentation of this Minister is that he did not make as many promises as he did before. Promises like \$25 million for single mothers, a computer for every class in every school, and money for various things. He did not make those promises, but the issue of a computer in every school and every class is important. You have again fooled the young people of the country. I understand now that instead of lending \$15,000 for the computer loan, they dropped it down to \$10,000 without even telling the nation, but we will deal with that as we go along.

Sen. Kuei Tung: You are misleading the House, man. You have any evidence of that? You are misleading the House. You could have said that they dropped it down to \$2,000. Give me evidence of this!

Sen. M. Shabazz: I am glad the Minister got up and spoke, because that is a man to whom figures do not matter, Mr. President! He does not care about figures.

Mr. President: Senator, that is not the point.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, as I said, I think, and I have heard through the grapevine. This is not positive, my intent was never to mislead, but I would like to say here that figures are indeed important. As long as the figures go against them, they will always object. When it goes in their favour, they have nothing to say, they are nice and happy. I am glad that I said what I said because figures are indeed important.

There are things under education like the library service. They have been building a library in this country for four years. It is not happening. It only going up step by step, and they are stopping it and moving to other projects. We need to look at that. If they want to help the young people of this country, if they want to educate the people, library facilities are very important. Let them look at it and let them deal with that.

Let us go to page 28 of the *Medium Term Policy Framework* and talk about Sport and Youth Affairs. It says:

“Over the medium-term, Government will continue to establish sport and recreational programmes which seek to improve the quality of life of all citizens and equip the young people in our society to face the challenges of the twenty first century.”

We keep hearing that in every budget presentation made by this Minister.

During the period of the People's National Movement, there were a number of community centres in Trinidad and Tobago. As a matter of fact, some areas have

three or four community centres. What this Government should do—and what we were doing—is upgrade the community centres to meet the needs of the community at this point in time. When those community centres were built, they were built because the community was into crochet, draughts, all fours, knitting and things like that. The community has now gone beyond that. The community is now playing basketball, badminton, and all those other indoor games. The community is into computers.

Take the community centres in the area and develop each community centre to do something positive to take the children off the street, to do things that would help them develop and grow. That is the first thing they need to do, upgrade these community centres in such a way that they could deal with the present needs of the communities at this point in time.

They are not doing that at all. They keep saying they are going to build community centres, we hear a lot of talk about the different programmes that they are going to do and nothing is happening.

I want to say this here again. I do not have much confidence in the Sport Minister. I told him that the last time he was here, and I would like him to know that. This is the Minister who said that Best Village, Village Olympics, things that held the community together, things like the sports and culture that brought people together, helped people develop, helped people understand themselves better—when I hear the Minister saying that Best Village seems to be too repetitive and it is a bit too boring; something touches me inside here. I feel that if he does not understand that the communities need to develop that way and need to be done in a positive way through these kinds of programmes, something makes me feel very uncomfortable. The way they have treated Best Village that has produced some of the best actors, dancers, all fields; the way they are dealing with it, I am very concerned about that.

I know the Minister does not like to hear me say this. He will come back and say something else. Because that is the same Minister who said Lara should have not been selected. It is the same Minister who came back after and said something else.

It is the same minister involved with the blind people. I would deal with that a little later. Even the blind are seeing what they are doing to this country. When blind people could strike and lock up themselves for 10 days, they understand what these people are doing. Do not feel that the country is not going aground. Think!

When the trade union movement people have said that this is going to be the best labour government that we have ever seen, and when you look around, you

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

are seeing for three times in one year people are marching to Ministers' houses. Whether we agree or disagree with them, it is a signal to let this labour Government know that something is wrong. Three times! Three times labour people have gone to homes of Ministers in this country in the last year. Do not wait for it to become a big thing. Let it be known that that is a signal that things are not going right and people do not appreciate the way that the Government is moving in this country.

Mr. President, let us take a look at what is happening. We had instituted a number of youth programmes in this country: GAP, Civilian Conservation Corps—well, we know they are against national service, that is the feeling, so they interfered with the Civilian Conservation Corps, and interfered with a number of young people operated programmes in this country and a number of opportunities. A number of the youth programmes they are interfering with them, like the On-the-Job Training programme and all the programmes we instituted to help the youth in this country; they are just “mashing” them up and doing what they want.

The youth camps are in a state at this point in time. As a matter of fact, it is believed that there is a sort of plan to change the direction of the youth camps and make them into what we call a paying concern. What we are seeing here is that since they came to power in 1995 one of the things that we are aware of is that all of a sudden, the El Dorado Youth Camp seems to be no longer functioning. The El Dorado Youth Camp, and most of the youth camps are places that have presented or given this country a number of people doing a number of skilled things, trades people and we have a list of names here. We have seen people trained in dressmaking. At Presto Praesto we have seen people who are police officers, book binders, a number of different things coming out of all these youth camps. I have seen Oscar B, who is a singer with Byron Lee, coming out of the youth camp. There are people who came through the youth camp who are now working with the credit union league, and a number of other things. What is happening with El Dorado? It seems as though El Dorado has come to a standstill.

This is a Government that cares about young people, you know, and which says that it understands that the future is in the hands of the youths. What are they doing? Why are they interfering with all these programmes? Is it because they are not getting sufficient political mileage from it? Because, as far as we are concerned, and the feeling out there is that public relations is really what they are all about.

Not only that, there was a child care centre at the home that brought people in, people brought their children in, people who worked around, there were school

teachers and the working people in that area who brought their children into the home for child care. That has stopped. They fired the teacher. They have sent the teacher home. Computers are lying there and nothing is being done with them. Also, the nursery school which took care of children in the area, nothing is happening. All these things that people were trained to do. There was an agro-processing unit set up there, nothing is happening there. All the equipment, everything is just lying there and nothing is happening. They spent over \$50,000 to get this equipment.

We understand—and I would like to say this—we have been informed that the computers are there and nobody is using them. I understand a church group is going on a Saturday, they use the computers, there are reasons the teacher comes there and teaches the people. Why is that happening? Up to this date we do not know. It is said that the church group would say: Maybe the church group is teaching people from within the community to use computers; the community itself does not really believe that.

The trainees were given a stipend of \$45; they are seeking to take that away from them. They are talking in a way as though it is their intention to privatize the whole trade school system and have people pay to come there. One of the reasons that make us believe this is this letter coming from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. They are talking about empowering people, but they are now putting a board of management, and that board of management would have control of income and expenditure. Somewhere inside of here, they are talking about:

“In an effort to encourage the principle of self-reliance, stipends and other allowances to trainees should be discontinued in preference to a system of productive rewards.”

Sen. Mark: Could the hon. Senator quote what he is reading from? We do not know exactly what he is reading from, and the date, please.

Mr. President: Yes, Senator. Could you quote the source of the document, the date and all other relevant information?

10.40 a.m.

Sen. M. Shabazz: It is a document from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs dated July 02, 1999. It states:

“However, it must be noted that a significant number of entrants to this programme are from low-income homes, therefore, it must be necessary to provide support to enable beneficiaries to remain in the programme.”

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Their aim is to privatize; their aim is to take away the stipend from the youth; their aim is to make the youth and young people coming from low-income homes—from that same poor area the Minister of Finance has spoken about—to pay to go to these youth camps. That is what they are about. And they are using these programmes to affect and interfere with the young minds in our community. Mr. President, if the Government wants to stop crime, let them help the youth camps to function positively and effectively. Police stations will not do that; if the youths get help here, they would be stopped from having to go to the prisons.

Mr. President, let us look a bit at what is happening to the Ministry of National Security. The first thing I must tell the hon. Minister of National Security is when soldiers, policemen, military and para-military people are coming to the Opposition to talk to us, to fight for certain conditions for them, it tells you that something is wrong in the country. And when these people are coming to us it is a dangerous step, although we will entertain them; although they know that we can be trusted; although we will bring up their cases and their situations here and hope they will act upon it, it is a sign of mistrust and no confidence in the Government and in the people who are running the ministries and departments.

I am in a good position—and when I say so, the Minister of National Security is cool and all of that but it is a matter that he must look at—that they are coming to us: one, conditions about pay; things about their conditions. As a matter of fact, they have promised to pay a number of people—some of them were being paid, and I would like to congratulate the Minister for having taken up the issue with the soldiers and paid the people their money, but yet still some of the reserves are saying that there is money outstanding to them. So Mr. President, I would like the Government to do something to bring the soldiers and the police service up to mark.

Not only that, there are other conditions: We are now hearing—and again, if I am wrong, somebody could get up and tell me—that there are Chinese soldiers training the people inside of there. They are undergoing a course, and we want to let it be known that the soldiers are looking at that in a certain kind of way. I would like to hear the Minister get up and develop that as we go along.
[Laughter]

Sen. Brig. Theodore: Mr. President, on a point of correction. There was a visit from a Chinese delegation, they are not still here, they were allowed to return to China. *[Laughter]* So the hon. Senator is correct.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, I am glad to know that they have left because it was causing—I think that Government, really, is about Chinese soldiers. *[Laughter]* But it is good to know that I was correct. With respect to the SRPs, this was sent to me, again, a position that keeps bothering me in this country. I have spoken with the Minister on a number of occasions, and he has always shown me that he is working on it and I believe that from some of the things I have seen, he has taken some steps but the steps are a bit very slow. I feel the problem is because he is not getting the type of finances that he should be getting. I do not know what are the problems but, I think, the SRPs have sent memoranda with clippings to ask again, that their case must be brought up here. This was in the *Trinidad Guardian* of Saturday December 07, 1997 which says;

“‘Good times’ ahead for the SRP.”

Attorney General Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj yesterday revealed that the injustices to the Special Reserve Police Officers will be corrected by the Commissioner of Police in January 1997.

Mr. President, we are nearly in January 2000 and nothing has happened; no correction and the situation is still the same.

Let us look at the *Newsday* of Monday, May 06, 1996 which says,

“Cpl Hayde: Government dragging its feet on compensation issue for police.”

How could the Government, really, be talking about solving the crime situation and the police are disgruntled in this country? It continues:

“President of the Police Second Division...is accusing Government of dragging its feet in the passing of legislation, making compensation mandatory for officers injured in the execution of their duties.”

He went on to speak about:

“Corporal Hayde explained that no terms and conditions exist for Special Reserve Police...”

Mr. President, the sad thing is they may say just as they have asked: how long has this been happening? The thing is, though, that there are police officers here who are working as SRPs full time, and there is nothing coming to them, and the Government’s big issue is about giving pensions to people. Where are the pensions for these people who are serving this country so honourably and doing such a good job about it? Why are they not considered? Why? As we are on pensions, what about the retired T&TEC people whose pension fund has been sold

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

out or something and they are looking for their money and they are not getting it? What is the Government doing about it? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! All the pension talk that they speak is a mamaguy in order to build up their public relations.

The *Newsday* of Sunday April 13, 1997 states:

“SRPs cry betrayal over their status

Special Reserve Police officers are accusing the government—and the Police Second Division of turning a blind eye to their call for 500 SRP officers to be regularized.”

I continue—*Newsday* of Friday August 15, 1997:

“SRP officers to be regularized.

Prime Minister Basdeo Panday has promised executive members of the Police Second Division, that Government is considering a proposal to regularize more than 700 Special Reserve Police Officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

The promise came during a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Second Division on Monday afternoon.”

Mr. President, the year 2000 is approaching and nothing is happening. And we go on and on with respect to “The Ombudsman’s 18th Report—[*Interruption*] and they asked, why we did not do it. [*Interruption*] That is history. The point is why have they not done it? After four years of effective Government, why have they not done it? [*Interruption*]

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, let the Member make his contribution, please.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, when a Government chooses to govern it must govern and it must not look at what other people did not do to say, well, that is why they are not doing it. The Government has chosen to govern for the last four years, please govern the country. Mr. President, please let the Government implement the plans that it says it is going to do. It should not just be a talking Government because at the end of five years its record would show that it only promised and really did not do much.

On page 25 of the same document, let us look at culture. I want to be very honest. On this side, I really should not be feeling sorry for anybody on that side. When they are under pressure let them take their pressure, but somehow my heart reaches out to the Minister of Culture and Gender Affairs. [*Laughter*] I think that

if they would co-operate with her she would be a much more effective Minister. I do not think that her ineffectiveness is mainly her fault, I could be wrong, but I would like to think differently, maybe, because my heart, as I said, reaches out to her. And I quote:

“Over the period 2000—2002, Government will promote and preserve the cultural heritage of Trinidad and Tobago, and support culture and the arts so that our citizens will be motivated and empowered to discover the fullness of their creativity and humanity.”

[Interruption]

Mr. President: Hon. Senator, just let me remind you again, if you are reading from any document, identify it please.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, I am very sorry, Sir, I did say that I was quoting from the *Medium Term Policy Framework for the year 2000—2002*, page 25. Mr. President, all they are talking about—for four years we are hearing about this cultural hall for culture. They have not even turned the sod as yet because if they did there would have been a big ceremony: cameras, ribbon to cut; and to stick a fork in the hole to turn the sod. They are just talking that. They have not done anything. Seventy-eight million, at least in Chaguaramas to break down, to remove, and nothing for the cultural hall. That is a sad statement and a sad indictment on this Government!

10.50 a.m.

They went in and leased a place from a man who had leased the place so they could use it after and that is very sad. I just looked at World Beat which cost \$8.5 million and to come out of it, I heard the CEO of the organization say at least although he knows they are under pressure he expects only to lose \$0.5 million. You are spending \$8.5 million to lose \$0 5 million. Where is the mathematics?

Mr. President, they have lost over \$4 million. I would like the hon. Minister of Finance to explain that. Somebody said to you that you are doing everything to put this country on the map. World carnival was to put this country on the map: it never happened. Please use the millions of dollars that you are spending, and not putting us on the map to develop culture, to develop the infrastructure, to deal with the people who promote culture in Trinidad and Tobago and who are looking to take calypso to the world market. Deal with them and ensure they have money.

Give a million to Martineau, give some money to Caribbean Prestige Production, give money and help these people to be your promoters rather than

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

give Donald Trump all the millions and he leaves and nothing happens in your country. Help the local promoters to do a more efficient job, and I am giving you the guarantee, that is what would help to take your culture to the world. [*Desk thumping*]

Not only that, there is a document from COTT with four times the amount of money paid for copyright here sent to foreign artistes rather than to local artistes. You need to look at that. I have brought it up here before, I thought you all had taken it seriously, but you have not. These are the kinds of things we would like you to do. Ensure that you build the local market and the local people. Make them stronger, make them richer because the hon. Minister who says he was poor has now gotten rich and he will understand. He should be in the best position to understand how to make poor people rich. I do not know if he does not want to share the ideas. I do not know if he wants poor people to stay poor so that he would continue to be rich. I do not know what it is, but he is in a better position than most people to help poor people get rich. Help them and when you do that, it is a sure way to help your country to become better. I am appealing to you. You have some help around, use it.

When one goes in to Pizza Boys in the airport, one sees all the foreign artistes in the world, James Brown and not a calypso, not a pan man. You see all the foreign artistes and not a local artiste in that place. I appealed to the owner who promised me he will change that, but I have not been back there. These are things you should look at as a Government. Try to help the culture of the people of Trinidad to become stronger. Do not only get down on them when they sing calypsoes against you or when they do things that do not promote you as a Government. If it is for the good of the country, whether it goes against you, or us or anybody else, it is your duty to help and promote it. We expect you to do that.

Mr. President, this Government has spent so much time in just only looking to develop themselves to make people look at them as doing good, and serious and important decisions that they should make for the country when they think it would not make them look good, they leave it alone, or put it aside to do something that makes them look good.

I am not for hanging, Mr. President, but do you remember what happened when they were having elections? Because they wanted to show people that they were effective, they hanged about 10 persons and today, because there is no election, they just stopped hanging. When election comes around again, I bet three more persons will be hanged.. They feel that by hanging people they are making a point to the nation that they are really fighting crime. I take the position

that my party takes. If hanging is the law, then go ahead, but they cannot be only using the law to develop public relations. How they hang nine one time?

As a matter of fact, they got more international press coverage for that event than any other event they have staged in this country. They got more press coverage for that than Miss Universe. If hanging is the right thing, go ahead, but do not do it to get election and public relations mileage. That is what they are all about and people would understand that as we go along. If hanging is the right thing, do it.

There are a number of other things. They talked about national days and festivals, the national archives facility talk we are hearing in every presentation made by the hon. Minister of Finance which is not happening.

I go to agriculture. This was the Government, besides being one of labour, one of agriculture. In the 1997 budget statement under Agriculture it says:

“Mr. Speaker, for many years successive governments have repeatedly acknowledged the need to diversify the economy, yet the economic base is still narrow and lopsided. This Government will not pay lip service to this urgent priority. Government will ‘walk the talk’ in developing the non-oil sectors of the economy, particularly, the sectors which have the potential to make a significant impact on the unemployment levels. Accordingly, Government’s policy for the agriculture sector will be designed to:

- Increase employment opportunities;
- Facilitate the development of agriculture in Tobago.”

This was never done. They have not touched agriculture or looked at it in Tobago. That was in 1997, Mr. President.

In 1998 they told us something similar:

“Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture sector is of strategic importance to the national economy, contributing some \$480 million to Gross Domestic Product in 1998, and employing 6 per cent of the labour force. This sector is also important to the provision of national food and nutrition security, and to the sustainable development and management of the natural resource base of land, water, forests and marine resources.

Mr. Speaker, previous efforts to transform the sector have not produced the desired outcomes. Farmers have generally not used the incentives that are available to them, due to a lack of information on these incentives...”

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Do you hear what they are saying, Mr. President. It went on:

“Mr. Speaker, in examining the Agriculture Sector one must also address the issue of Caroni (1975) Limited. This enigma continues to present a seemingly daunting challenge, and tinkering is not the solution.”

Do you hear what they have said? And they increased the amount of money to Caroni (1975) Limited. They loaned them money throughout the year. If Tobago was considered an enigma, do you feel they would have gotten any more money? They would have cut them off the national budget. The Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) was considered that to them, they cut them off the national budget, but Caroni (1975) Limited has gotten more money this year than they got any other time and I will read it again because I feel it is important that they hear it and think about doing something about it.

“...in examining the Agriculture Sector one must also address the issue of Caroni (1975) Limited. This enigma continues to present a seemingly daunting challenge, and tinkering is not the solution.

Mr. Speaker, the company is comprised of a number of integrated operating divisions, many of which, if not all, are making losses. A proposal which is geared to converting these divisions into separate distinct profit centres is presently under consideration. It is proposed that these divisions be restructured to become ‘stand alone’ companies.”

What has happened with that proposal? I do not understand these people. Give them more money than Tobago and they did absolutely nothing about agriculture in this country. They are not developing it and are just keeping it as a political base for them. Go ahead, continue, do what you have to do.

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. D. Montano*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Thanks, Mr. President. Maybe it is because of these documents they have removed the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources from that ministry. He too has found that he got a promotion. I like how they work out their promotions.

Appropriation Bill

Monday, October 25, 1999

Last year they talked about the Tobago House of Assembly and what they are going to do. I think someone here will talk about Tobago and I will leave that for the person to deal with.

One of the things I would like to deal with is health. How can one talk about developing a country and the health situation is as bad as it is? How can one talk about helping old people, giving them more money and when they get it, it has to be spent on medicine? How could they be talking that, Mr. President?

I thought I might have been able to read all these documents. All these clippings tell of the health situation in Trinidad and Tobago. All. The only one missing here is 1998. I will read some from 1997.

Trinidad Guardian, July 04, 1997, “National Health Service the ‘first step’ to improved care”. Nothing has happened since then.

Trinidad Guardian Saturday July 12, 1997 “Hospital horrors. South doctors stay away today”.

Trinidad Guardian Sunday July 13, 1997 “Gopeesingh—striving for change Still no emergency care at San F’do General Hospital”.

Sunday Express, July 20, 1997 Big headline: “Keep far from South Hospital”.

Trinidad Guardian, Monday, July 21, 1997 “Hospital facing crisis say Junior Doctors”

Trinidad Guardian Tuesday, July 22, 1997 “Rafeeq: RHA, not me, to deal with doctors’ issues”.

Always putting the blame on somebody else, it is never them to do it.

Independent Tuesday, July 22, 1997 “Hospital deserted”.

Ghost town at San Fernando Hospital. Article after article.

There were no hospitals built in Tobago, only talk about the hospital in Tobago. To run a proper health service there must be a sort of communication between the major stakeholders. Today the doctors and nurses are running from the hospitals as fast as they could. The patients are suffering, poor guy and this poor, get rich Minister does not seem to understand that.

Trinidad Express Friday, July 25, 1997 “A matter of life and death”

The Independent Tuesday, July 29, 1997 “Doctors appeal injunction”.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Newsday Saturday, July 26, 1997 “Doctors Breaking The Law”.

Newsday Saturday, July 26, 1997 “A threat to nation’s health”.

The Independent Saturday, July 26, 1997 “Sick of health care system”.

And the woe goes on and on.

Trinidad Guardian Monday, July 28, 1997 “Doctors: Authority playing waiting game”.

These are all problems in the health service; all, all. Not only that, there was a problem in September 1997 when Dr. Wagner was here and made certain statements which they kicked up against. Most of those statements seem to be true to date.

Sunday Guardian, August 10, 1997 What is really going on in Health Ministry?

Trinidad Guardian Tuesday, August 12, 1997 “Doctors: Govt bluffing Crisis will be aired at public meetings”

They normally bluff in every issue. Again, more and more.

11.05 a.m.

Mr. President, in the *Express* newspaper dated Friday, August 15, 1997 there is the following article: “Dr. Rafeeq: Reform moving at its own pace

One year after implementing a US \$134 million health sector reform programme, Government is still a long way from achieving its goal.

But he maintained: ‘While an analysis of the reform process so far may indicate that change is not taking place fast enough, we must also be conscious of the realities of the situation and understand that reform of this nature and magnitude is unprecedented in the history of Trinidad and Tobago.’”

That is how the Minister puts it and that is why he is not doing the work that he should be doing.

The *Express* newspaper dated Monday, August 25, 1999: “Emergency operation only”. In the *Newsday* newspapers “Disabled persons’ pension to be increased” “Now anaesthetists express disgust over lack of equipment and drugs” and the woe goes on and on. I have 1997 and 1998 but I cannot go into all of them. Every day for the last four years there are only problems in the health sector.

“In 1999 expect more dengue cases:” In the *Newsday* newspaper dated Thursday, May 6th, 1999: “DON’T TRY TO SILENCE DR CHATTOORGOON”
 “Chatoorgoon denies disobeying PSC’s orders”

There are problems with the stakeholders. Doctors and ministers cannot get along with each other and a whole number of things are happening.

Mr. President, tetanus serum out of stock and a man dies, as a result of not having tetanus serum under this administration, in the hospital. This is an administration that is supposed to be good, positive and effective. This was reported in the *Express* newspaper on Wednesday, June 30, 1999: “Nurses threaten to shutdown hospitals”. The nurses are now running from the hospital and the woe goes on and on. The last newspaper clipping I have Sir, is this week, where Dr. Chatoorgoon is saying that the Minister of Health should also be fired. Mr. President, I understand the Minister but I feel sorry for him. I also understand his plight.

I remember reading in the newspapers when the Minister had a heart attack. The Minister said he had all the signs a week before but because he wanted to carry on the work of the Government, he did not go to the hospital. A doctor who has to administer to other patients? It is important to understand that somehow the institution is running, but it is not running properly and the signs are there to make you understand it.

Mr. President, in closing, what we are seeing here is, that during the year 1999/2000, the Minister expects that inflation will increase by 6.9 per cent and growth by approximately 2 per cent. How did the Minister challenge these figures? It is the other way around Sir; growth will increase by 6.9 per cent.

We look at something in unemployment figures—and we thought that this is very important and many people probably missed this point. Listen to this, unemployment which was measured at 15.1 per cent for the last quarter of 1998, was reduced to 14.1. The unemployment rate for males continues to shift downwards to 11.6 per cent whilst that for females shifted upwards to 19.5 per cent.

Mr. President, so when the Minister came and gave us the unemployment rate, he gave it for males. If he had taken both and brought them together, we would see that unemployment is still approximately 14 to 15 per cent in Trinidad. I was sad when I read that because the unemployment rate for females is going up. Mothers of this country are suffering. They are under pressure and this government is seeking to hide that. The same Minister who “mamaguy” them and

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

said he would give single mothers \$25,000 every year. The Minister came and told us that the unemployment rate is 11.5 per cent and he did not tell us that it was for males. It is annoying to see that the unemployment rate for women is going up and the Minister or no one seems to care. The Minister seeks to hide that in a document and hopes that nobody sees it. I am annoyed! Ah vex! *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. President, I want to tell the Minister that he cannot operate like that. Tell the people the truth about the figures. Do not say that 4 per cent does not count. Do you know why 4 per cent does not count? Four per cent does not count because with all these big deals that are taking place like InnCogen and so forth, the first 4 per cent, they have moved it away and 4 per cent of \$12 billion is plenty money. I have it written down here. Four per cent of InnCogen is over \$40 million. That is what the Government has moved away because 4, 5 and 2 per cent do not count. That is why they are seeking to give all these big contracts to their friends and family. That is what they are doing and 4 per cent does not matter.

[Sen. John rose on a point of order]

What is the point of order? He is trying to stall me.

Sen. John: Mr. President, the Senator is imputing improper motives on Members of the Senate.

Sen. M. Shabazz: What is the point of order?

Mr. President: What is the point you are making Senator?

Sen. John: The Member is saying that to every project the Government is involved in, the first four or whatever per cent is taken away to give to their friends. The Member should be called upon to justify the statement he made.

Sen. M. Shabazz: I never said that.

Mr. President: May you explain what you have said? I am not too sure that I got that out of what the Senator said.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, I am not so bright. I will have to go to the *Hansard* because I cannot remember. What I believe I said, and I am saying it again is, that the Government said that 4 per cent does not matter and when they are giving these big contracts, how could they say that 4 per cent does not matter. The desalination plant is \$120 million.

Mr. President: The question is, that you are imputing that that 4 per cent goes to friends of the ruling party before the balance is spent on anything. This is what I am asking.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, with all due respect, I never imputed any bad motives but I may have to go back to the *Hansard*. I was so taken up in watching the time, it slipped me. I cannot remember, honestly.

Mr. President: Hon. Senator, I would ask that you steer clear of those kinds of statements, which can be misinterpreted.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, thank you. When we look at the type of projects such as InnCogen \$600 million, 4 per cent is approximately \$24 million.

Mr. President: Explain what you are saying. This is what we are trying to get from you. What is meant by 4 per cent is approximately \$24 million? What is the reference?

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, I am referring to the Minister making a statement, that 4 per cent and 2 per cent in his budget, are not really important and figures are also not important. I am saying that when we are talking about running a country and we look at the big projects that are being undertaken and the amount of money involved what 4 per cent worked out to be. I hope they will make it important. That is the point I want to make and that 4 per cent is not important when we are talking in terms of \$10.00 and \$5.00. When we are talking about \$600 million and \$120 million and a budget that is over \$12 billion dollars that 4 per cent must be important and the people understand that. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, just for the records, will I be getting back some time?

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. M. Shabazz: Mr. President, just for the record, in closing, I would like to say that the big matter in this budget is no taxes. I do not think that is so. One of the areas that I would like to point out where taxes have been paid and where the Government is bringing it on, is really a tax for motor cars in these new garages. You have to carry your car and your licences are taken away from you, then you have to go back and deal with some sort of payment for your motor car. I feel that is a tax in itself. Even if the Government is not going to tax people to build the health services and do other things, maybe it is best they are taxed and are given these benefits.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. SHABAZZ]

Monday, October 25, 1999

I remember when I was going to school and my mother sent me in the shop, normally, every time I bring home one pound of sugar, she will say that is not 16 ounces, it is 14 ounces. I still feel that we are getting 14 ounces for a pound budget.

11.15 a.m.

No longer are we getting ten ounces for a half-pound but they keep giving us 14 ounces for a pound. Mr. Minister, you cannot fool the people. The mistake that he has made this time is that he seemed to only give us 12 ounces for that very pound. The people are seeing it. They understand it. They made you understand that they understood you when the last local government election came up. They are going to make you understand that they understand you when the next general election comes up and you are going to see that they understand that you are not fooling them. You cannot fool them. You will not be able to fool them. You look around.

There is a document that I have here, but I think I have to close, where your Prime Minister showed how we took over the cane union, the games that he played with Rampartarsingh to gain control of the union. It is the same games they seem to be playing with the nation. The truth is, if the head does not want to work and only wants to travel and enjoy itself around the world, the rest of the body cannot do better.

On this note, before I sit I congratulate the hon. Vimala Tota-Maharaj on her promotion. You are going to a very hard and serious Ministry. I do not know if you could change it or if you could make a difference, but if you do, on behalf of the people of this country I will be very happy. I wish you all the best. [*Desk thumping*] I also welcome the new Senator. I also—well, I welcome him. I hope that he will do what they have asked him to but to be forewarned is to be forearmed. It is tough.

I would tell him, though, that when you become a public figure your business really is no longer private. So that when you see what is happening in the press, understand it. However, on behalf of the Senators on this side, welcome and enjoy your stay here, as you said, for the next year—enjoy. Mr. President, God be with you and thanks again for being so patient. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh: Mr. President, I join with the many persons who congratulated the hon. Minister at least for mercifully saving us from the agony of a dreary, burdensome discourse. I am going to follow him today. He reminds us that brevity is the soul of wit. I want to congratulate him, nevertheless,

for his condensed documents and the package of expanded notes in these various estimates. Also, Mr. President, I want to join with all the others in warmly complimenting Sen. Tota-Maharaj on her promotion in the Ministry of Health as a junior troubleshooter. [*Desk thumping*] Best wishes to you and I extend a most warm and gracious welcome to Sen. Gillette to this honourable Senate. He is not here. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, on these matters of promotions, very important in the budget that is people-oriented, I want to talk about people a little. On these matters of promotions and reshuffle and additions to ministerial rank, I find the *Trinidad Guardian's* political interpretation in pictorial form on October 21, 1999 to be most amusing but important, with certain Cabinet Ministers representing cards in a pack now reshuffled. I think it is sad and unfortunate for us to interpret, and maybe it is a part of our tradition, that failures in a Ministry should be laid at the feet of the Minister. I know we are accustomed saying that the buck stops here. Forget the concept of shuffling so that we could change around talent. Reshuffling the cards will not necessarily bring changes in these critical Ministries such as Health, Education, Agriculture or any other such portfolio.

I believe that these Ministries and all others that are struggling should be receiving the attention of the total Cabinet and the total Government continuously. No one Minister can solve the difficulties in, let us say, health or education where problems are endemic. I contend that such Ministries, where there is failure, should cause the executive to pool all its resources to straighten out these social service areas where you have problems. Therefore, I believe an individual troubleshooter is hardly a necessity if, in Cabinet functioning, there is a keen sense of corporate responsibility. I really believe that. Troubleshooting in all ministries should have begun in earnestness four years ago for this administration. Whether or not there was sufficient troubleshooting in previous administrations, well that is debatable.

Furthermore, in any pack of cards, I do not know if you are aware of some of these games, every single card is important. Do you know, Mr. President, if one card is missing from a pack you cannot play a game? There is no pack. I remember Charlie Brown having a problem and going to his little friend who was playing psychiatrist, and he said: "I feel so depressed, down and out. Sometimes I feel I do not belong. I do not belong at all in the pack. There are Kings and the Aces and the Queens and the tens. I do not belong. Sometimes I feel I am only like the duce in the pack". His friend said to him, "Charlie Brown, without the duce there is no pack and, you know, sometimes the duce makes a point now and

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. REV. TEELUCKSINGH]

Monday, October 25, 1999

then". That is so true. For all of us who know about all fours, if you hold a duce you have a sure point in your hand.

Mr. President, the budget statement is people-focussed and people-centred. The budget is not only about getting the sums right, it is about the people for whom the sums are designed and I am glad that the Minister is understanding how people-focussed all our budgets ought to be. In the year under review and in the decades prior to that I have been greatly disturbed at the frequency and the intensity of charges of corruption, and there has been no end of charges for the fiscal year closing.

There is no comfort for the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago to listen, every time there are charges of corruption, to the exchanges between the Government and the Opposition accusing each other as to who is more corrupt. I have heard for several years about "jobs for the boys"—I am not talking about this regime. We have inherited this thing—massive cost overruns on multimillion-dollar projects, irresponsible spending, secret deals, kickbacks, distorted tendering procedures and cronyism. Mr. President, these are part of the regular vocabulary in Government's and Opposition's quest to destroy each other all through the years.

I have been troubled, I am very disturbed and I wonder if we cannot find, as a people, an answer to this. Where there is truth in corruption charges, the country is going to suffer if we do not curtail and ultimately eliminate corruption. Last year it was the InnCogen deal, the National Flour Mills rice fiasco, the airport project and others. What about the years prior to 1995? Volumes could be written about the same thing and this continues all through the years. We are bringing this into the new fiscal year. It is very much a part of the contributions of so many persons in the other place and here. For this year already it is the desalination plant.

I am not a career politician and so there are thousands and thousands in this country who will sit down and try to understand that we have decided to get involved in a project worth about an estimated TT \$756 million, or let us say US \$120 million in the desalination plant, while Barbados got theirs for about \$9 million, although that is smaller. Are we asking ourselves whether we need a plant. That is a debatable question. How much we debated it in this country, I do not know. We have opened ourselves again for all this talk about corruption. I am not saying anybody is corrupt, I am just saying we are tired as a nation and we are not finding an answer when these exchanges are made on these two benches.

We ask, why should WASA buy water from the proposed Ionics plant at an estimated \$91 million every year in a land of many waters? Have we discussed this? Have we considered all the relevant issues? No wonder we are opening up ourselves to a continuing story, a continuing dogfight of who could be more corrupt. There have been allegations of tainted airport contracts by the local arm of Transparency International and others and responses by the Government. Mr. President, I do not know who and what to believe but the nation is being committed, our children and our children's children and we are not making an effort to deal with the problem of charges of corruption.

Mr. President, I want to believe in someone but I insist that all mega projects and long-term contracts and those irreversible agreements, decisions or deals that are of national importance, those 10-year, 20-year, 25-year contracts involving and binding the citizenry of this country, ought to be carefully considered by every government and any government because general elections are never a 20-year contract; never in this country. No government has a contract with its people for 20 or 25 years so why do you bind us without sufficient consultation for 20 or 25 years? We do not give you that mandate but you give us a mandate. You take heavy loans to the tune of millions and we have to pay long after you go out of office.

We as a people need to initiate constitutional reform so that executive decisions involving massive expenditures, long-term debt commitments or long-term award of contracts, should receive at least national or total parliamentary consensus and not merely ministerial or Cabinet approval. This is a colonial relic, Mr. President, when, many years ago, long, long before Independence, the Governor had a chosen few. They were handpicked officials and they all made financial decisions in a little clique. At one time it was the Governor and six officials. Some were called official representatives appointed by the Governor and others were unofficials but the Governor had this handpicked group who would make all financial decisions for the colony. Mr. President, we are still in that area of darkness.

We need wider consultation in these matters. National approval is essential in enormous public spending of the magnitude that will bind us to these long-term commitments for gigantic financial projects, massive public spending on certain projects, heavy indebtedness both to foreign and local organizations and institutions which will impact on the present generation and generations to come. In this matter of consultation and consensus, leaders and rulers—I am using the word rulers, I know what I am talking about—those in Government and

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. REV. TEELUCKSINGH]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Opposition must compromise for the national good. We need a new understanding of national rule and governance in Trinidad and Tobago. We must have it. This is our only hope.

You cannot have one set of rulers, especially when you have an election and the results were 17-17. You would have two sets of rulers and they would all have equal rights. Maybe we are in the present predicament, Mr. President, because government, once it gets into power, believes that it has a God-given right to bind heavy burdens for all of us to carry, for this generation and the next and many more. There is also a problem, Mr. President. You see this business of obstructionism in our parliamentary governance and behaviour? Obstructionism is an inherited feature in the role of the Opposition.

11.30 a.m.

It is part of our parliamentary curse, and that curse we have inherited from the Westminster system, and we continue to be shackled to that. That is why, I believe, we are not making the kind of progress that we ought to make as an independent country, a republic. I hope the day will come, when in all financial affairs, we will not rule by decree but through consensus, called consultation and compromise, for the national well-being.

Mr. President, I want to share another concern with you on that main platform of the budget itself and that is to be people-focussed and people-centred. In the schedule accompanying the Bill, the allocation to the Judiciary is approximately \$82 million—some other document says \$86 million—and this means a welcome increase of approximately \$10 million over the 1998 subvention to the Judiciary. I hope that this means that the Executive cares for the judicial arm of the state with no strings attached.

The recent unfortunate stand-off between Government and the Judiciary has been protracted for too long and I am very concerned, and I am certain you are. I read sometime ago the Attorney General saying in the *Express* of April 29, 1999, “No one, whether he be the Chief Justice, or whether he be the Ombudsman, whether he be the Chairman of the Public Service Commission; no one is above scrutiny.”

I also hear Government's concern for accountability. There was a feeling that judges should be made accountable to Parliament. I do not know if accountability has to do with this \$82 million or \$86 million, or much more than that. This thing has to be spelt out. I also heard the response of our Government that it supports the independence of the Judiciary and the separation of powers, that legislative, executive and judicial powers should be independent. I also hear that.

Mr. President, you know well of others who have been suspicious of the recent Constitution (Amdt.) (No. 3) Bill, many who thought and still believe—and this might be the source of the controversy—that this was a definite move, some people think, by the Government to interfere with the work of the Judiciary which, traditionally, remained insulated in its independent domain, protected by the Constitution with historical antecedents. But this ball game is a very interesting one. It is not about approximately \$80 million or \$10 million more added to the judicial allocation.

I want to compliment the Government. That was the Constitution (Amdt.) (No. 3) Bill. I still remember the debate we had, when Government, sensing what was happening and, at the same time, insisting that Government was going to protect the independence of the Judiciary and Government, in a most magnanimous way, acceded to a set of amendments. I want to give the Government the benefit of the doubt.

I thought that was a great evening for Government. I thought that was a real magnanimous move for Government, if your Judiciary is upset and disturbed, we are going to listen. It is a pity that the listening process was not earlier and we had a very serious conflict. In fact, something had started and that can hardly be defined.

It is certainly disturbing to see today the polarization of certain important interest groups associated with these institutions and the continuing tension, and what you would call an uneasy peace which exists among the powerful estates of the realm. I really believe that now is the time when we need a healing of tensions between the Executive and the Judiciary in this country. The removal of suspicions is required immediately, the restoration of basic trust and confidence that must exist between the Executive and the judicial arm of the state. We need that now.

Therefore, I most respectfully call for an independent commission or a committee whose terms of reference will be reconciliation to bring leaders of powerful estates together—

Mr. President: Senator, I have allowed you quite a lot of latitude because it is a budget contribution, but I think you are moving way out of the budget debate and I ask you to revert.

Sen. Rev. D. Teelucksingh: Thank you very much. If you will allow me to complete this one sentence, I will stop. That is the place where I am stopping and I am going to the Solomon Hochoy Highway after. I think it is important. It bothers me. I just want to explain why I am spending so much time on this topic.

Mr. President: That is not required.

Sen. Rev. D. Teelucksingh: Let me complete my sentence, only the sentence.

I most respectfully call for an independent commission or committee whose terms of reference will be reconciliation to bring our leaders together for the purpose of resolving differences and the immediate establishment of understanding and harmony between the Executive and the Judiciary. Honestly, that is the end of my comments.

The next point I will talk about is the Solomon Hochoy Highway. Other speakers made reference to the rehabilitation works. I know we are spending money. As I said, the budget is not only about figures; it is about people: it is about judges and magistrates; it is about workers; it is about teachers; teachers in 40-odd schools who are suffering because of our failure to deal with the asbestos problem, not in 1999 but long before that. What about those people who have been responsible for bringing the asbestos here and those who have been advising us? I do not think we made asbestos in Trinidad and Tobago at the time when the schools were built. But asbestos was created by those First World countries who had to find somebody to buy their stuff although they knew that it was dangerous. We are talking about people, all the people, otherwise the budget is only figures.

I talk about the people who use the Solomon Hochoy Highway. I want to advise the Government, not this government alone, but any government, that whatever the repairs to that main north/south artery, never again must you allow your motorists and your travelling public to suffer as we did at the hands of people like Comlysa Lain, or any other contractor or firm, whether it be international or local. Never again. Not this government or any other government.

The work done by Comlysa Lain must rank among the worst highway surfaces in this country. At what cost? Inconvenience for your people, poor workmanship, a breach of contract.

Mr. President, I suggest to the Government, not only the hon. Minister, I know the European Union has promised or pledged \$120 million for the repair of the highway. I understand they continue to insist that we go for international tendering. I have said this and I say it again. If international tendering means our people must suffer as we did for about two years, then let the European Union keep their \$120 million—every taxi driver in Trinidad will tell you that—and take the \$200 million taxes we collect every year for road repair and maintenance and let the European Union keep their money. I really believe that.

Do not punish this population again as you did because we are getting a gift. I think that we as a government should complain bitterly to the European Union, the donors of that grant, and let them know of our problems and suggest to them that if they are really interested in development here that they give to the Government the money and let the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago be responsible for restoring its own highway. That is the way I would go. We have enough money to fix that highway rather than sacrifice our people because of a gift from people who do not know what we go through here in these parts.

I close, Mr. President. I read the front page of the *Trinidad Guardian* this morning, a very nice article, commending the people of Trinidad and Tobago for that historic rescue in the mission of beached whales. I liked that article, Sir.

Mr. President, I feel that the budget is as a beached whale floundering in shallow waters and waiting to be pushed out to sea. [*Desk thumping*] A beached whale that seems to be stranded is the budget, stranded in shallow waters. No, it does not have to die. That is the story in today's *Guardian*. It does not have to die. A whale that is beached in the shallow waters of many promises; a budget that is beached in the shallow waters of allegations, of alleged charges of corruption and so forth; the crime spiral has made the waters so shallow for your budget, beached in the shallow waters of poverty running across the society; beached in the shallow waters of juvenile delinquency and crime; of a restless society. That is a beautiful story; the scientists who came and realized that so many whales were pushed out to sea in the rescue mission.

If this beautiful monster, our budget, must survive, it must not be beached and we need the collective efforts of all the social partners to very gently and willingly push this out to sea in deeper waters where there is sure survival, not for the budget but for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We need the sympathetic, collective efforts of all, mobilizing our efforts, our strengths, our talents and our gifts, if we are to survive as a people. Our national hope is that there be the collective efforts of all our people.

Total quality can only be achieved with total will-power and we need some of that in this land. We have been polarized for too long between Opposition and Government. We need to get together—this is our dream—otherwise that whale is not going to survive. We have to be together, joined; we need to unite in order that we will not die in the shallows of selfishness, greed and political self-importance, that has been disturbing this country for too long.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. REV. TEELUCKSINGH]

Monday, October 25, 1999

If there was a historic rescue mission in Manzanilla, this is the time in the history of this nation when we need another rescue, not for the sake of any government or any party, but for the sake of the people of this wonderful twin-island state.

I thank you very much, Sir. [*Desk thumping*]

11.45 a.m.

The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore): Mr. President, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance for a budget that gives ministries and ministers the opportunity to carry out their programmes. In the case of my Ministry, for the fiscal year 1999/2000, the Ministry of National Security has received a total allocation of \$1,154 million of which \$78.2 million goes towards the Public Service Investment Programme.

Mr. President, this morning I will address those concerns that have been expressed over the year about the shortcomings of the Ministry of National Security. I will also show how we plan to utilize the money that has been allocated to deal with those matters to give this country a far more effective police service and crime management system.

The matters we know that have been cause for concern are the dilapidated state of some of the police stations and fire stations, the availability of police vehicles at the stations, training for the police service, a strategy to deal with crime, the welfare of the members of the police service and, of course, the more recent issue that has been highlighted, that of domestic violence.

It has been the approach of my Ministry to take corrective measures to strengthen the capabilities of the agencies responsible for detecting and preventing crime. The police service and the Coast Guard, which has been tasked with protecting our coastline and territorial waters, have been addressed to great measure during the course of the last fiscal year, and we intend to continue those programmes in the year 1999/2000. In general, such projects were aimed at improving not only the divisions of National Security, but the accommodation and general operating circumstances of the civil servants who work at the headquarters of the Ministry.

The focus of the Ministry of National Security is to place emphasis on preventive maintenance. We have received several complaints about the condition of stations. We have the more recent issue of the fire station on Harris Promenade

in San Fernando which made the headlines simply because despite a plan to have the fire service members relocated, the availability of the station to which they should go was not immediately completed. The result is that we are now fixing a temporary fire station to temporarily relocate those people from Harris Promenade and, eventually, we will build a permanent station in San Fernando for that sub-unit.

Mr. President, in the case of the police stations, I would like to deal with what the Ministry has done during this past year and show where the construction will continue. I would like to point out that refurbishment has begun on the San Juan Police Station. The annex had to be rebuilt and the main police station is being dealt with right now. It is anticipated that work will be completed by the end of this year.

There is the matter of the expenditure on the old police hospital at the St. James Barracks. We had to re-do the entire roof and repair the floors. Again, that job is being completed by the use of the Police Artisan Corps. Work was started on the Blanchisseuse Police Station. Again, it is expected that this work will be completed by January, 2000. Approximately, \$.88 million was spent to complete the Cunupia Police Station which was opened on June 14, 1999 at the final cost of \$2.8 million.

There is the building known as the "Mirror Building" at the corner of Richmond Street and Park Street which is under construction and is designed to house the Fraud Squad and the Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit. Right now, the work being done on that building has to do with air-conditioning, plumbing and electrical work, Mr. President, and we anticipate by the second quarter of this fiscal year, between January and March, 2000 that the unit will be ready for occupation.

The effect would be to give the Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit and the Fraud Squad a home and a building where they will not have to beg a lodging but where they will be working continuously. It will also make the Woodbrook Police Station completely available for the residents of that area.

The Arouca Police Station was also started, and is expected to be completed by December 1999, and the construction of the Debe/Penal Police Post was also started. Our plans as far as these stations are concerned, for this fiscal year, include the completion of the Arouca Police Station, the Rio Claro Police Station and the Freeport Police Station. When I say Freeport, I do not mean the main station which has already been completed and is in use, but there is the old

building in the front which the Ministry has identified as a building that should not be destroyed but rather reinstated for us to maintain the original architecture. That little building in front will be the charge room, and the building at the back, which is in use right now, will be for the offices and accommodation.

Improvement works will be undertaken at the police stations at San Juan and Caroni, there will be refurbishment of the San Fernando Police Station, and the design of police stations for Gasparillo, Tunapuna and Roxborough, and completion of the Police Post at Debe.

All in all, although \$61 million of the budget is allocated to the police service, we will be able to appreciate, as we go along, that this money is for major items of expenditure. For instance, under the E-999 programme, we have to complete payment of \$20 million for the work that is ongoing with the enhancement of the E-999 system. In order to complete the programme—which I will go into in more detail later—there is another \$15.3 million that has to be paid.

We are also seeing that there is \$10 million for computerization, so in effect, there is really a balance of about \$16 million to carry out the work on these various police posts and stations. Because the majority of stations are all in a state of disrepair, it means that we have had to prioritize which stations to fix. In order to do that, the Ministry met with the Police Second Division Association and the Commissioner of Police and members of his executive, together with our project implementation manager, to determine which are the stations that should be given priority. These are the stations that came out, and I am not suggesting that there will not be other stations that will require repairs and maintenance during the course of the year, but in order to deal with the issue, we come to the familiar cry that the police do not really have a maintenance programme for either their buildings or their vehicles.

What is intended this year is to contract a firm or firms to undertake maintenance of all the police stations to be determined by a police management team. These repairs will be done either on a regular basis, on a schedule, or as the emergencies arise. The important thing is that we want to put in place a system whereby when matters go bad in a police station—when the lights go bad or the plumbing goes bad—it does not remain to deteriorate, but the decline is arrested in the shortest possible time to ensure that the police station remains habitable for use by the officers.

Similarly, we have taken action as far as the fire stations are concerned. A number of fire stations which were built this year will have to be maintained and a

certain amount of repairs and refurbishment will have to take place. Mr. President, we find that in the fire service, there is not the problem which exists with the police service as far as the number of stations or the use to which the stations are put, but generally, the upkeep of the fire stations is done by the Artisan Corps of the fire service.

Mr. President, you will find that the buildings we are primarily concerned with belong to the police service and the fire service. I should like to just deal with some of the fire stations which we are repairing. Most of them have started work this year and we have gone over into the new financial year for work to be continued and the various fire stations will be dealt with.

The other problem that surfaced has to do with the availability of police vehicles. At a meeting with the Commissioner of Police some time ago, I enquired of him what was his vehicle shortage, and he pointed out to me that there was no shortage. I guess, like anybody else here, I was rather shocked to hear that there was no shortage when we were receiving complaints that the police were unable to respond.

The problem lay with the number of vehicles that were unserviceable and awaiting repair. Approximately 50 per cent of the fleet is down, and the money we got last year was utilized maintaining the 100 cars and jeeps we had leased, to undertake their maintenance. The majority of those cars and jeeps are still on the road and we have, in fact, paid for them, so they now belong completely to the police.

This has introduced a new dimension, Mr. President. Now that they belong to the police, the police have to maintain them, and like the buildings, we have already started negotiations to have a number of garages prequalified to undertake these repairs. I said this last year, but the problem was that we simply never got around to getting all the garages that had been qualified to repair these vehicles that needed repairing. This is what we plan to undertake as early as next month.

The problem with the vehicles is the constant use to which they are put, but I am confident that with the funds we have available to purchase specialized vehicles for the police service—like ambulances, a wrecker and buses—we will be in a position to ensure that at least 80 per cent of the fleet becomes operable on a constant basis.

What this means, in effect, is that there will be enough vehicles to be available at each police station. One vehicle, we know, is not sufficient because if that vehicle breaks down and there is not an immediate replacement, the police have

Appropriation Bill
[HON. J. THEODORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

no vehicle. So, the intention, as part of our maintenance programme, is to ensure that we maintain the integrity of the fleet and that a small number of vehicles will be reserved for replacement so that the matter of availability would not be an issue.

Generally, what we see happening, Mr. President, is that we are putting systems in place to ensure that as soon as the vehicle is inspected by the police, if minor repairs can be done, they will be carried out by the police. Should the extent of the work be beyond their capability, we will be in a position to have the vehicle sent to a garage where the necessary repairs will be carried out at an acceptable cost and within budget.

With this plan in mind, I expect that before the end of the year, the problem of a shortage of vehicles plaguing the police will be removed and the important thing, Mr. President, is that we will be able to maintain the fleet in an operational level from now on.

12.00 noon

This also leads to the training for the police. We have heard people say it is all well and good to buy vehicles for the police, and give them radios, but if they are not trained they will probably mash them up or not be able to perform.

Defensive driving courses are being conducted for all police drivers. That is something that is taking place right now. The Government tried to start a highway patrol to try to deal with the poor driving habits that can be seen on our highways. The problem, again, was the shortage of vehicles. It is anticipated that with the programme the Government has put in place, there will be sufficient vehicles to man a highway patrol round-the-clock. Drivers are being trained, but unfortunately the few vehicles that are put on the road—which are old vehicles, some of them are vehicles that were seized by the previous administration and were handed over to the police by Customs and Excise—keep breaking down all the time. I am afraid we do not have a very efficient highway patrol. Again, the plan is to make enough vehicles available for the highway patrol to be an efficient sub-unit of the police service.

In the matter of training—besides the issue of defensive driving that the police have to do—training programmes were organized throughout the year for all levels of police. I would like to spend some time indicating the sort of programmes that were followed, and that we intend to continue in this new financial year. I think it is important for Senators and the public to appreciate that the training that goes on in the police service is of a high level and goes on throughout the year.

At the level of recruitment training, the teaching of courses in the humanities intensified. The service is pursuing its vision of being a customer-driven organization, able to manage its relationship with the general public in an acceptable manner. Training of officers was carried out in the following areas—this is in addition to the officers who are already trained:

Community Policing	12 officers
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Training was also carried out in other related matters such as:

Anger Management	12 officers
Domestic Violence Issues	477 officers
Mediation	12 officers
Court Procedures	25 officers
Defensive Driving	768 officers
Crime Scene Management	180 officers

At the level of middle managers of the police service, since 1977 the Joint Services Staff College has been organizing two-week professional development seminars to train these officers. What the ministry did in 1977 was to instruct that the Joint Services Staff College should shift its intake of students to have more students from the police service join the courses than any of the other departments of the ministry, for example the Regiment, Coast Guard, Fire Service, Immigration and Prison Service. With that in mind, although the courses were not exclusive to the police, the majority of students came from the police service.

These two-week professional development seminars have been going on. In April 1999, those who received such training the year before, were required to return to the college for module 2 of the programme.

Some of the training conducted was in the area of change process, team building, performance appraisal, supervisory skills, leadership, conflict management, occupational health and stress management. The Joint Services Staff College has also been conducting training in management studies. In March 1999, the Joint Services Staff College held a graduation exercise for the participants of its 18th one-year diploma programme in management studies which included 20 police officers.

What this college has done is made it possible for a number of police officers who did not have the educational qualifications to be accepted at university, to

Appropriation Bill
[HON. J. THEODORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

gain that acceptance. The University of the West Indies accepts the certificate from this college as meeting the entry requirements to become a student at the campus. This has made a great difference because there are a number of police officers who have since gone on to get their degrees. The same holds for members of the Regiment and the Coast Guard who, otherwise, would not have been accepted at the university. The Joint Services Staff College has done an excellent job. It now forms part of the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts that is now in the process of formation. I know Sen. Prof. Spence would have preferred university, but for the time being this is how we will have to regard the organization. It is continuing and we are still to work out how much say the Ministry of National Security would have in the Joint Services Staff College when it becomes part of the larger organization. We are hoping that they will still continue to conduct the courses that they do now.

In fact, last year the college graduated its first batch of students with an Associate Degree in Criminology. Again, we seem to have been heading in the right direction. I think it would not take much for the Joint Services Staff College to become part of this new community college.

As far as foreign training goes, a total of 50 police officers received training abroad during the fiscal year 1998/1999 in areas such as collection and preservation of crime scene evidence; again a major complaint, that these officers do not know how to behave on a crime scene and the matter of evidence is crucial to the cases that go before the court. Tourist-related policing; this course was started after there were some problems in Tobago—I would deal specifically with Tobago as I go along—to deal with the sort of crimes that are normally carried out against tourists as opposed to people who live in the country. There is the information technology; law enforcement; advanced fingerprint science, money laundering, illicit traffic in firearms; narcotics investigations and intelligence gathering analysis.

Side by side with this, Mr. President, the Government has continued to put measures in place to assist police officers in coping with the demands of their profession. This is a matter that came up. We did not get an opportunity to debate the motion but it does deal with the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The Government has made the services of a trained psychiatrist available to the police, virtually on a full-time basis. During the month of August the psychiatrist went around the country to all the police divisions informing them of his presence and what he was capable of doing and encouraging them to come and speak with him should they have problems.

The Government has also recruited, on contract, two welfare officers whose responsibility would include reviewing the welfare system in the police service and making recommendations. What I see this group of people doing is addressing the concerns of the police, of family and of a social nature. The question has been asked: What becomes of a policeman or policewoman who becomes involved in a shoot-out and perhaps kills somebody—one of the persons who may have been shooting at him or her? What happens to such a police officer if he sees his fellow officer killed? This is what this department will be doing. They will seek to find out from this police officer how the event affected him and get the necessary counselling and exposure for him from professionals to make him able to cope. It will also be extended to the immediate family.

12.10 p.m.

Again, one of the problems I have heard that occurs is that when a policeman has a traumatic experience, all he is told is to submit a report within 24 hours. We are going beyond that. The report will be necessary, but there is also a responsibility to ensure that the officer is in a mentally stable condition to carry on with the job. We have found that simply sending him on holidays or on leave without the counselling and professional treatment may not be sufficient.

So all in all, what we see coming here is the nucleus of what is referred to as an Employee Assistance Programme. It may end up having another name, but we have been looking at what is required and we are hoping to put as many of the activities associated with an employee assistance programme into this programme. As is known, the Minister of Public Administration is carrying out a study of employee assistance programmes. I think there were two of them carried out at ministries. They are being looked at and we await a report from the Minister as to what form the assistance should take. But, in the light of what the police service does, we are going ahead to develop such a structure.

Now, another question deals with the strategy to develop with respect to crime. I do not have a whole booklet to lay out the strategy, but what I would attempt to do today is to show what actions have been taken and are being taken by the police service to impact on the crime situation. I will say this at the end, but what I want to mention right now is that while the community police are being trained and seem to be in the frontline in dealing with crime and domestic violence, it is not the police alone who will deal with crime in this country. The matter of the police is that they are involved in most cases after the fact. What we need to do in this country is take action to not only prevent, but also to ensure that less crime is committed and that the people's disposal towards crime is reduced.

Appropriation Bill
[HON. J. THEODORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Now, the police service, in its activities through the community policing unit, is trying to ensure that the training received by these police officers is such that they will be able to give us a limited amount of counselling in cases where the signs are there that a crime may be committed. There is also the matter of the police becoming the police on the beat once more, albeit I have heard it said that since they have got their new cars they simply drive pass and they do not really stop and talk. But the community police at the various stations are committed to interact with the community and create this partnership that we are hoping to foster where everybody becomes involved in the prevention of crime. To that end, a number of officers underwent training, both at home and abroad. This training enabled officers to successfully lecture to schoolchildren, counsel errant students and provide advice against social ills in the various communities.

In keeping with the thrust of the community policing programme, officers continue to network with both governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the Family Services Division of the Ministry of Social and Community Development, the Rape Crisis Centre and others, and are actively involved in communities throughout the country. They conduct patrols in and around high-risk schools and video arcades where schoolchildren go during school hours. I have read and I have had reports of police actually putting children on taxis and telling them to go home. So far, no parent has reacted negatively, but judging from what we see happening at the schools, I would not be surprised if I got a report from some irate parent that some policemen was out of place to tell his child to get off the street or come out of the arcade during school hours and either go back to school or go home. So I am really expecting assistance from the other NGOs that everybody would regard this sort of behaviour as being in keeping with the role of the police.

The ultimate goal of the police service is that all police officers would be community police officers. To borrow some words from the organization's mission statement, they would be expected to provide and I quote"

"Prompt, courteous and professional service in partnership with the communities."

I would just like to read some of the instructions divisional commanders have been given to ensure that the community policing programme develops. It goes like this:

1. manage and co-ordinate all activities associated with the Community Police within his/her Division/Branch/Station;

2. promote among all ranks the concept of community policing as an integral part of their role and responsibility;
3. ensure that all policies, programmes and initiatives associated with community policing are implemented in accordance with departmental directives;
4. arrange and preside over all meetings of the Community Policing Regional Councils (CPRC) that were established to plan strategies to prevent crime in the communities;

Mr. President, a community council is made up of citizens from the community who have volunteered to come forward and be part of the meetings that are held to keep the community police informed and to keep themselves abreast of what action the community police are taking.

5. to promote within the community the concept of partnership as being a critical and indispensable element in the success of the Community policing initiative.

What the Commissioner of Police has done over the last few months, in order to emphasize this relationship we are trying to build with the community, is that he has started to have town meetings. Of course, like everything else in Trinidad and Tobago, most of the people I spoke to thought it was a big joke and that he was wasting his time. However, over time, the Commissioner of Police has been able to have people attend these meetings and express their concerns. These are concerns that affect them in their community. The idea is to try to find out from the people, to get some feedback: How is the community police working? Are you satisfied with what they are doing? Now, you do not get that if you do not talk to the people. This is another aspect of the community policing that is taking place today.

Mr. President, the police youth club programme now falls under community policing. Like I said earlier, it provides the avenue for young people to spend their leisure time in constructive activities rather than becoming engaged in drug-related activities, gang and other criminal and delinquent activities. The idea is to reduce the occasion for crime rather than to allow the crime to happen. These youth clubs serve as a medium for interaction between the police and the youth of the nation. The name "police youth club" may be misleading, but the youth club is for all youths in the community, not the children of policemen and policewomen, but everybody. The police service has within these youth clubs responsible citizens who assist with training and providing coaching for various sports. Right

Appropriation Bill
[HON. J. THEODORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

now computer literacy courses are being conducted for members of several youth clubs. During the 1998/1999 fiscal year, 14 new clubs were established. There are now 73 such clubs in Trinidad and Tobago.

A further step taken by this Government in the early part of this year had to do with the Crime Stoppers Programme. Now, this programme came about simply because members of the public did not know who to call. They did not know whether they could trust the person to whom they made a report. The popular belief was that if you report a crime to the police officer, chances are that the information would go back to the perpetrator and put you at risk. I would like to think that this is one of the myths that is receiving a lot of support simply because as it goes around and gains speed, people tend to believe it more. But what the Crime Stoppers Programme seeks to do is ensure that when reports are made it allows citizens with information on crime to interact in an anonymous manner with the police. You call, and there is an office set up with a police officer in charge. This Crime Stoppers Programme is run by a board made up of civilians, not policemen. It is a civilian board made up of people from the private sector. One of the reasons is that we are depending on the board to get the funds to pay the reward, because it is not a state-funded matter.

Now, just as a matter of information, during the period May to September, 1999, the programme has achieved the following results:

No. of calls received	240
No. of code numbers assigned	108

No name is given. No identity is required. You are given a number which, when you call again, will be used to identify the caller and relate it to the particular report.

No. of suspects arrested	12
No. of offences investigated	23
Stolen property recovered	\$20,000
Narcotics seized	\$112,700
Convictions	1
No. of rewards paid	1

The Crime Stoppers Programme has got off to a fairly slow start, but I am encouraged that the public is now beginning to show that faith and confidence in

the police service that they can report matters that affect their community. Sometimes these matters are things that are being witnessed by people in the community. There was always the problem of who to call. We hope we have been able to deal with that by giving this number. I have spoken with the former minister—Dr. Griffith—I am asking that more publicity be given, that the public be made more aware of how secure the Crime Stoppers Programme is.

While dealing with the matter of crime, I would like to touch on initiative taken in Tobago. The period we are looking at is from October, 1998 to September, 1999. We had some problems in Tobago with the number of robberies against tourists and a divisional task force was established to complement the divisional CID and launch a major offensive against the spate of serious and minor crimes. This, we find, has worked, because there has been an increase in both foot and mobile patrols throughout the island. That strategy is what is being used to address crime in Tobago. Joint army/police mobile patrols were introduced to operate mainly in the Roxborough Police Station district in the area of the Argyle Waterfall and the rainforests at Bloody Bay, which were two of the popular areas frequented by these people. These have been extended to include Castara, Englishman's Bay, Parlatuvier, and other areas frequently visited by tourists. This initiative has been quite successful in reducing the number of crimes against tourists.

Coupled with this, the introduction of the E-999 Rapid Response Unit to Tobago has resulted in police being able to respond more quickly to reports of crime. The E-999 patrols now service the Crown Point, Old Grange, Moriah and Scarborough Police Station districts. Efforts are being made to extend the service. These initiatives are particularly important in light of the development plans for Tobago.

During the period October, 1996 to September 1998, there were 22 reported cases of robbery against other tourists in the Argyle Waterfall and Bloody Bay rainforest areas, with investigations resulting in two detentions. However, with the introduction of this task force, in October 1998, the total number of reported cases of robbery against tourists was reduced to six.

12.25 p.m.

The other area with which we have been dealing is the prevention of drugs entering our country. The unit charged with this responsibility is the Coast Guard. During the year, we have completed the refurbishment facilities of the accommodation at Staubles Bay; provided equipment for their communication at

Appropriation Bill
[HON. J. THEODORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Morne St. Catherine; the Coast Guard has acquired two aircraft which were given as gifts from the United States government; and improvement works was done to the Coast Guard buildings and refurbishment of the vessels.

The acquisition of the aircraft means that we have inherited a degree of expense, in that these aircraft came without the surveillance gear that is required to do patrols and identify targets in the water. So we are now sending out invitations to submit proposals for the supply of this equipment and it is expected that once the tenders procedure is completed, both aircraft would be prepared, but we would put the equipment in just one aircraft. When one of the aircraft is down—being serviced or for any maintenance, the equipment can simply be taken out and put into the other working aircraft. So we would be saving about US \$1 million by doing that. But we will have the equipment which each serviceable aircraft can utilize.

This equipment would be working in conjunction with the Coast Guard, their maritime units and the other nations in the Caribbean. Of the six launches that were refurbished, three have been handed over to the Coast Guard and are currently operating out of the various bases around the Coast Guard in Tobago, and the other three are undergoing sea trials. They are functioning except that we will not take receipt of the vessels until we are satisfied that everything is working 100 per cent.

By the way, we also received two 82 ft. cutters which were also donated by the Government of the United States. These operate out of Staubles Bay and carry out patrols daily. We have the two fast patrol boats which are both at the hangar in Chaguaramas; one of them, the CG-6 is finished—in fact the engineers are here from Sweden and it has to do with the fitting of the shaft and the alignment. It is a very technical job because everything has to be in order before the boat goes on trial. We expect that the boat would be operating in the water shortly.

The matter of the CG-5 which is also there, is being addressed now by the Tenders Committee to see if we could keep the scope of work down to manageable proportions because if we attempt to simply say, “fix the boat” we could be incurring a lot of extraordinary expenditure which we would rather not have. The important thing is to make the boat sea worthy and safe and to be able to give us a few more years’ service that we expect to get from the vessels.

Mr. President: Hon. Senator, the speaking time of the hon. Minister has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Brig. The Hon. J. Theodore: Mr. President, I would just like to touch on the fire service. During the fiscal year 1998/1999, we were able to complete the construction of the Santa Cruz Fire Station and purchase vehicles and equipment, mainly, ambulances, refurbishment of vehicles at the Paradise Pasture Fire Station. This is the fire station I mentioned earlier which is known as the Norwegian Seamen's Building that is being refurbished at a cost of \$300,000 to accommodate the firefighters who are presently at Harris Promenade. It is expected that this work would be completed by the end of November to allow them to be relocated. I understand that the San Fernando Corporation has use for the building, once we move, to complete their upgrade of the whole Promenade in San Fernando.

With respect to the purchase of vehicles and equipment, there were three ambulances and a water tender. Continuing that programme into this fiscal year another five ambulances will be purchased. It is really the intention of the fire service to have at least one ambulance placed at every one of the 23 fire stations throughout the country. Again, it is a situation that we are trying to cope with, but there were only three ambulances working three years ago. But we are working towards making sure that the fire service gets its full complement.

Fifty-seven paramedics have undergone training at the National Institute of Higher Education (Research, Science and Technology), (NIHERST). The other plans coming out of this year's budget is the construction of a fire station at Couva. There is a fire station at Couva, but there has been a demand from the industrial estate, that the fire station is too far removed, and where this new station is going, I think, on Rivulet Road, virtually opposite the entrance to Point Lisas, that same organization—the Petition I brought today about Trinidad and Tobago Mutual Aid Scheme (TTMAS) deals with that very organization that is handling the matter of safety and security in that region.

So the Couva Fire Station should be started once we do all the plans in this fiscal year. There is also the San Fernando Fire Sub-Station. Having put these people from Harris Promenade at the temporary station, we are negotiating to get a piece of land at Lady Hailes Avenue, San Fernando to build a larger and more permanent structure. So the fire service in the south would be well served.

Then there is the Sangre Grande Fire Station where the site has already been acquired and we are completing the design contract documents and bills of quantity when tenders would be invited to start that station. Money has been allocated for the training of the firemen, and we in the Ministry, are trying—since courses abroad are so costly—to negotiate with both the United States and the

Appropriation Bill
[HON. J. THEODORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

British governments to have small teams of trainers come down here and pass on their knowledge, and maybe train the trainers themselves at a much cheaper rate where more people would be involved.

I mentioned the matter of domestic violence, and I did that deliberately because it is one of the areas of serious crime that has a very strong impact on the community. Maybe, it is because of the violence or how it takes place, but in 1998, of the 69 murders reported—23 were as a result of domestic violence situations. For this year, to date, of the 68 murders reported—10 or 15 per cent were domestic violence related. As the community police section expands to encompass the entire police service what we are really looking for—and this is the strategy—is the partnership with the NGOs, the other groups, and the department of the Ministry of Social Development, and the people.

12.35 p.m.

The matter of domestic violence requires assistance from every quarter: the schools, churches, NGOs and families. All I am concerned about with the effort being made by the police, and the position they are taking at the head of this in responding to domestic violence, is that it may be felt that the police would deal with domestic violence; but this cannot be so. I am really appealing to the country to help the police, work with them, and ensure as a team we reduce the incidents of domestic violence and serious crimes.

Sen. Shabazz has a concern about the Special Reserve Police (SRP). It is a matter he has brought to my attention on more than one occasion in his inimitable style. He has not really varied it much so I am quite familiar with his concern. The problem with these SRPs, I must confess, started sometime ago because when I came into office, I enquired about all these SRPs who were working something called whole time/part time. To me, that is a contradiction in itself, but somehow this happened.

A man or a woman who was on a part-time contract found themselves working eight hours a day, five days a week. The problem with that is that while they were working, there was no problem but they felt since they were there regularly along with their full-time counterparts, they should enjoy the benefits that their full-time counterparts enjoyed, that is sick leave, holiday leave and pension. It is only recently when some of them reached the pensionable age and asked for their pension, they were faced with the regulations which suggested to them that their terms and conditions did not carry a pension because they were part-timers.

One of the things my ministry has been trying to do over the last two years was to put the SRPs back as part-time workers which is how the Act sees them. The mistake which has been made and has been going on for several years is that there are some SRPs I have come across who have been doing full-time work for 15 years. When these persons retire, there is every expectation that they are entitled to a pension. My ministry is looking at the SRPs as a part-time organization and trying as far as possible to have the majority of them revert to working what is called rostered duty for four hours at a time.

If you recall how they came into being, it was as a supplement to the regular police, not to be a replacement for regular police on a full-time basis. What the last administration and, perhaps, administrations before did, was utilize the services of these people on a full-time basis, which was in total contravention of the law and their terms and conditions.

What my ministry is trying to do is to look at the SRPs who now fall into two categories, those who should work only part-time—and there are regulations which decide when part-time becomes full time—and look at those who work full time. Right in this Parliament there are SRPs who work full time and their situation has to be addressed and the attorneys are looking at it and it is now back and forth between the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Legal Affairs to work out. Not only the SRPs, but how does one deal with this category of SRPs, who by nature of their employment, work full time? That is what we are looking at right now. We have to draw the line and make sure that those who may have already served several years continue to their retirement and the bottom line is the compensation for them.

I am afraid that the term regularization was misread. Regularization to most of the SRPs was that they would be made regular police. That caused a problem because they saw no reason why they could not be regular police because they had been serving alongside the regular police. The problem with the regularization which was brought up in a meeting with the Prime Minister, was that regularization can occur. Deregularization is what I am talking about. Regularize their status within the context of being an SRP, that is regularization to me. But we must understand that SRPs who have the academic qualification, who pass whatever test or interview they need to pass, can be absorbed into the police service. This is taking place. In fact, there are over 40 of them who have been absorbed. What it would mean is that their level of training would be much less than one coming from outside. So we looked at all the SRPs who qualified by age, their academic qualifications and the interview, and they have been allowed to

Appropriation Bill
[HON. J. THEODORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

become members of the police service. They are probably at the barracks as recruits right now.

Our main job now is to deal with those SRPs who, because of their jobs—I do not know what the final answer may be—it may be that police officers who work at the Hall of Justice and here should be full-time police officers. I do not know. Right now they are SRPs and we cannot allow this to continue where they are being taken along over the years without addressing their situation. I would assure this honourable Senate that the matter is being taken care of, the regulations are in draft and we are looking for the best arrangements which would allow these people who have served over the years to get benefits in keeping with what they have put into policing for Trinidad and Tobago.

In closing, I would simply reiterate that the police cannot be allowed to go it alone in the matter of crime, domestic violence or whatever, but we have been putting measures in place which, with the co-operation of the non-governmental organizations and other bodies will, I am sure, be able to impact on the tendency of some of the young people who, when unemployed and unoccupied may turn to crime. I feel that with everybody pulling together, we will be able to impact on the crime situation—and you will notice we have not gone into numbers. There is a marginal decrease but, what I find good is we seem to have hit a plateau now. I think what we need to do is start getting the figures down.

The police are trying, and to use a term which was used when we were debating another bill, I think they ought to be given a little trust and support to allow them to get their work done. But all in all, the Ministry of National Security is determined to address the crime situation both from outside and as it affects our citizens inside.

Thank you.

Mr. President: We will suspend for lunch at this stage, and return at 1.50 p.m.

12.45 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

1.50 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. Martin Daly: Mr. President, may I at the outset, join the congratulations that have been offered to Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj. I believe that it has been described as elevation. I do not think it is a word anyone associated with the Government would like right now, given the elevation of some of the persons with whom there appears to be a dispute. So, I would prefer to say promotion. I

very warmly congratulate her. She is—and I hope this will not be held against her politically—a frequent and most welcome visitor, among the Independent Senators, informally. She charms us sometimes before the start of a difficult sitting and, infrequently, she joins us for tea. So we have a very special interest in welcoming her. She is almost one of us. *[Laughter] [Desk thumping]*

I would also like to welcome Sen. Gillette on his appointment. Gillette is it? I have been practising it all day but I did not get it right. I have a rather lengthy and enhanced welcome for him, to which I will come later on in my few remarks. I formally welcome him and will extend a more—enhanced is the word I like, because until the recent reshuffle, where the appointment of a Minister to the Ministry of the Environment was referred to in the context of enhancement, clearly, the word was misused in that context. I would like Sen. Gillette to know that enhanced welcome does not necessarily mean all pleasant things.

Mr. President, taking my cue from the Prime Minister to describe the appointment was to put it at its lowest, a typographical error. Indeed, as has been pointed out by previous speakers, if he could not get control of the savannah when he had legal and statutory responsibility for it, and since he never at anytime protested against it, one can only assume that the savannah is in further jeopardy.

Mr. President, after my welcoming remarks, I want to deal next with a few minor matters, then I will go on to say what in my opinion the budget lacks. First of all, I would like to—it seems all the objects of my affection are missing at the moment—congratulate the Minister of Finance, for extending kind remarks to the media. It is quite unusual among any Government—and I should return to my constant theme, that all our governments are the same khaki pants—to extend congratulations to the media and, indeed, to go so far as to say:

“They cannot be faulted for the extent of their coverage and the intensity of their scrutiny”

I dare say, that I hope the new “Minister of Implementation” would feel the same way about the media, after his not inconsiderable appearances in the columns and photographs in the media over the weekend. I suggest to him as a new Minister, that he adopts the Kuei Tung approach to the media rather than some of the other approaches that sometimes emanate from the Cabinet. But I think it is important—it is not a big economic matter—to see a senior Minister of the Government expressing gratitude to the media.

Mr. President, likewise, I would like to say something briefly, about Employee Share Ownership Plans and what I want to say is simply in two lines. I

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Monday, October 25, 1999

am tired of hearing it is coming like Christmas and, I really hope that before this business-oriented Minister of Finance goes—well I cannot say goes out of office, because I do not know what he and his leaders' plans are—I should say during this term, that he really gets serious and let us have some Employee Share Ownership Plans legislation. At the moment, we just have some basic profit sharing with a 60:40 split between cash and shares under the Finance Act. I think it is really very, very important.

Mr. President, before I make a few remarks on my own, directly or indirectly related to the bigger issues of the budget, may I say that a budget debate is always very stimulating. On this occasion, really, one could get almost as much pleasure from being a rapporteur, as being a speaker in ones own right. It really has been mentioned in the commentary in the media, some very radical, thought provoking reminders uttered in the course of this debate. I would just like to select three because they fit so nicely into the few remarks, which I would like to make.

Mr. President, I am going to criticize this budget severely for omitting any serious mention or accounting for what I would describe as “off balance sheet transactions” of which the desalination plant is the latest one. [*Desk thumping*] Now, before we get into too much desk thumping, I am going to show that this bad habit of off balance sheet transactions is not new to this Government. Regrettably, they appear to be accelerating it and even less sensitive than some of their predecessors to the legitimate concerns of the public about these off balance sheet transactions.

Mr. President, acting first as a rapporteur, look how simply my colleague, Sen. Prof. Kenny was able to throw into complete confusion, a major assumption underlying the cost of the desalination plant, by showing that if anyone has assumed in the cost, that they would be taking large quantities of salt, to break it down as I understand it, out of our waters—that major price assumption is completely wrong. That is something to which I will return when I deal with off balance sheet transactions.

2.00 p.m.

Then, Mr. President, at long last at least one columnist has appreciated that my good friend, Sen. Dr. St. Cyr, is a man who believes, and I quote a passage which he gave me, “that a soft answer turns away wrath”. At least, however, one commentator has finally recognized the depth of my colleague's contributions by describing him as a soft talker wielding a big stick. It is long overdue and he raised the important question, in the context of education, whether it is the policy

of this Government, as part of its education policy, to raise the quality of an individual's life.

Now, I select that again as a precursor to the second thing for which I will criticize this budget, Mr. President, and that is a complete lack of any call to the nobler or more civilized life. So that the first thing this budget lacks is any accounting for the off balance sheet transactions by the Government. The second thing which it lacks is any call to the better or more civilized life. Sen. Theodore came close this morning to rectifying one major error or one major default with respect to not calling for the more civilized life when he recognized explicitly certain things about domestic violence to which I will return.

Then, although at the time he was scoffed at, I would like to have the privilege of repeating Sen. Montano's caution, that before we get too congratulatory about the computer in every school we should worry about having a teacher in every classroom. I am deliberately repeating that because there seems to be some confusion in the Government's thinking, and I see that again, Sen. Theodore touched very briefly this morning on the role that educators and others will have to play in the schools if we are to remove all forms of violence, not domestic violence alone, from the society. This budget is completely visually challenged about the question of a more civilized life. I have no doubt that is why Sen. Dr. St. Cyr pointed out that all in life is not hardware.

Against that background, Mr. President, let me develop my thoughts on what the budget lacks. I am not going to engage, I am not qualified to, in a debate on whether this budget should have columns of figures. I try to take a balanced view of these things and I am satisfied that the Minister of Finance is right that the budget does not have to be a time of terror and rushing to the gas station or rushing to buy a carton of cigarettes. A budget can truly be a non-event in the sense that it is not necessary to make changes every time that you have a budget. I go that far along the road with the Minister of Finance.

I would have thought that nevertheless, first and foremost, a budget should be the country's balance sheet, however rudimentary and I leave it to the experts. Sen. Dr. St. Cyr has spoken about it and Sen. Marshall will participate in this debate but I do not believe that a foreign investor or Mr. Trump, if he is still interested in Trinidad and Tobago, if they read either of the presentations would get a clear picture of the balance sheet of the country. I think that the Minister of Finance, first and foremost, is in charge of the country's balance sheet and

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Monday, October 25, 1999

perhaps, for whatever purpose, that responsibility has not been fully discharged. I put it no higher than that. I leave it to the experts.

Of one thing I am certain, Mr. President, and that is that this budget makes no accounting for the off balance sheet transactions. The fact that all these mega projects and mega sums of money are being spent off the Government's balance sheet, at least partially so, is making the budget more and more irrelevant. It is also diluting accountability because we never have a proper debate about these projects. It is only if some speaker stings the Government hard enough that they will get up and take us into their confidence and give us information about which we can debate.

While Sen. Prof. Kenny does not need any assistance from me, I myself would regard it as a huge hole in this budget debate if some speaker on the Government side does not explain—because we are debating it by accident—the price assumptions of the desalination plant in relation to the assumptions which Sen. Prof. Kenny has challenged. I do not know if they are going to send the Minister of The Environment. We would prefer not. There is the Minister of Public Utilities—too new in his office of course, in case it is thought that I am saying anything personal, but that is an example of how we find out, or ideas begin to be exchanged by accident in the course of a budget debate.

Now, Mr. President, as long as I have been—actually, the first political thought that I can remember having is wondering sometime in the 1950s why the older people in the street and elsewhere were talking about the Caura Dam. Mr. President, I am sure that you would be able to verify, and perhaps Prof. Kenny, but that is certainly one of the first, controversial off balance sheet projects that took place in this country. At the time the money was big, there was a certain amount of secrecy about the award and people were very unhappy and certain names were called in not such nice contexts.

Now, let us examine that—big money, some secrecy about the process, and names being called in a not very nice context. I ask rhetorically, Mr. President, has anything changed? We can fast-forward to Lock Joint, we can fast-forward to the privatization of BWIA, the privatization of TTEC, the long bouts that the government, a previous government, had in the Anthurium Suite and the privatization of Iscott. Notice I am very indiscriminating. I started with a period before even internal self-government so I am very indiscriminating in my remarks. You can tie these off balance sheet transactions for as long as I can remember to the government of the day, even colonial, and they all had these three characteristics to which I am referring.

The fourth characteristic, Mr. President, I have already mentioned, the fact that there is no debate in the Parliament about it. Now, I do not necessarily accept that we need to have planning inquiries. I do not know enough about it. I know that planning inquiries in England are very long and expensive but certainly we should be debating these projects at least, and I am on public record dealing with this, immediately after their conclusion. I have never suggested that the Government, who is the Executive, must get the permission of the Parliament to negotiate a deal. I have never suggested that and any reference to my speeches in this Chamber would show that I have never said that.

What I have insisted upon, and I continue to insist upon, and ultimately I think it is in the politician's interest, is that immediately after the conclusion of these transactions an executive summary of the deal—because that is what it is, a deal—must be laid in Parliament and much of the supporting documents that can also be provided must be provided—I appreciate that there are certain things that may be sensitive—and thereafter we should have a debate, if a reasonable number of people request it, on whether the Government has consummated a good deal or a bad deal.

Long before we get to using the C word for corruption, we have to use the C word for competence. Was the deal competently negotiated or is it business as usual where the smarter foreigner has picked our pockets? And not picked our pockets because we are stupid, but picked our pockets because we negotiate with the millstones of globalization and the fact that small countries must do this, must do that, must do the other. In other words, have we negotiated with one hand tied behind our backs by the hypnosis of the globalization methods? That is my point. Indeed, so too is the excessive use of the foreign consultants who make a pile when these deals are negotiated.

What a simple, homely example from Sen. Prof. Kenny. A foreign consultant would look in the ocean and say, well whatever he would say in North America would be the equivalent of, "Well, the ocean have salt in it". He would not know about Columbus' sweet water because he is a foreign consultant and, in any case, when they are lavishly entertained by the Government they tend not to go to such common places as Cedros or Mayaro to have a bath so they do not get to taste the water.

Now, I think this is very important, Mr. President, and I want to make it plain that this budget has continued a characteristic lack of information about off balance sheet transactions and I think that one of the biggest causes of, if you like, a misalignment—that is the word I choose to use—of the public's feelings for

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Monday, October 25, 1999

their leaders is the fact that they constantly see the Government spending large sums of money without any accountability. It is rather farcical that we should be having a debate about accountability if a few judicial officers travel.

I mean the price of, let us take the furthest point, a first-class ticket to Australia, does not even pay the first six hours of a consultant's time on one of these projects. So it is really farcical. I would not use any stronger language, for the Government to be concerned about the price of air tickets for judicial officers in the context of accountability when there is a much larger issue to be discussed and we get no proper accounting for these projects.

Then what happens? The Government gets into collision with the media because, as we now know, at least one Cabinet Minister says that they cannot be faulted for the intensity of their scrutiny, the media starts to dig and then when they dig and they say, "But look here, what about this, what about that?" The Government gets vexed and says that the media is against them. They are simply, however, presenting the information that the Government has failed to present and starting a debate about the assumptions of the deal that has not been conducted in its proper place, namely in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

So it is just mind-boggling that people who conceal information should get so upset when that information is released and should get so upset if people become suspicious about the figures and so forth that are then bandied about in the media. Then what do they do? They conduct public relations exercises to soothe us. I do not want to be soothed by a public relations exercise. I would like to know that the Government has done its job competently. This is the second task which I, of course very informally through you, Mr. President, am assigning to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Planning and Development. I am just wiping away an unkind thought about his predecessor in Planning which I meant to utter in the context of the Savannah. Perhaps I will come back to it later.

The other task I would like to set this Minister—the first one is employee share ownership plans legislation—is to start accounting in the budget, if they do not want to do an executive summary when the deal is closed, for these transactions. I know nothing about the international financial organizations other than they send up the price of salt fish by their machinations every so often but I am told, Mr. President, they have a rather Marie Antoinette attitude to common people—let them eat cake. That is all I know about international financial institutions.

However, I am told that even the international financial institutions, in the wake of all that has happened in Indonesia and all other countries, are becoming

rather restive. The countries' lenders and the countries' creditors and potential foreign investors are becoming rather restive about the fact that these transactions are not under public scrutiny and that there are all these rumours swirling around them which I believe are unnecessary.

2.15 p.m.

But after what has happened in countries like Mexico, where it has been fairly carefully shown that the long hand of people who do not mean the country any good has reached as far as the executive president of the country; when you see what has happened in Indonesia; when you see that Japan cannot as yet reform its banks; when you see that Korea cannot reform its conglomerates, all because of these links and all because you do not know who has invested in what; it becomes clearer and clearer that if we like to say that we are "world class"—and what is their corresponding thing?

Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh: Total quality.

Sen. M. Daly: Total quality. Oh! I have not talked about that for a long time. Thanks for reminding me. Then, we should take the lead in budget accounting and let us show the world that we can do what Indonesia, Mexico and all these other countries failed to do and that is, properly account for capital projects with which the Government is associated. I try not to overstate the point.

But, you see, that is the point at which I would like to enhance my welcome to Sen. "Gillette" although he is not here—

Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh: Gillette.

Sen. M. Daly: Gillette, is it? Gillette. All right, I will have to remember he is not a razor blade; he is a torpedo. That is where I would like to enhance my welcome to the new Senator and to say that here, again—and this time I will use a stronger word because it is not a criticism of the Government and they get so upset when I use stronger words—it is extremely hypocritical to suggest that this is the first time we are having an overt marriage between smart business and Government. I want to restate that proposition. It is hypocritical to suggest that this is the first time that we are having an overt marriage between smart business and Government. You will note, Mr. President, I use the term "smart business" and not "big business".

In fact, you see in political developments in the United States—and this has to do with off balance sheet transactions and my criticism of the budget for not accounting for them—you see the logical developments in the United States

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Monday, October 25, 1999

where, unless your campaign is driven by business money, you have no chance. So, metaphorically speaking, if you transfer Gandhi—let us take a figure on which we can all agree—to North America for elections, he would not even come out the boxes, because he would not have business money. So, these are issues that we really have to look at because we must look at what is taking place in other countries.

Now, politics in Trinidad and Tobago has always been driven by money from smart business. It has always been driven by that and it has been driven by other things as well, so let us not be hypocritical. While Sen. Gillette may have, in his appointment, a little more to answer for, let us not be hypocritical about it.

You see, Mr. President, it is linked to off balance sheet transactions in this way. We had a time, under administrations of a different stripe, where we had manufacturing tycoons, or importing tycoons, sitting as Government Senators. Granted, they were not sitting as Ministers and I will deal with that separately. But let us not be naïve, if you are important enough to a political party to get a pick among the 15—it is really 16, but one becomes president—and you are a businessman; if you are going to—I am not suggesting anyone has—peddle influence, whether you sit on the Front Bench, the Back Bench, or you only come to Parliament three times a year, you have the ability to do it, so let us not be naïve.

The thing about it is that we had manufacturing tycoons sitting as Government Senators at a time when we had the negative list, when the Government was giving out monopolies. That did not start with this Government. At a time when we had negative lists and the Government was giving out monopolies, we had businessmen of high repute sitting as Government Senators. What is wrong with that? The question is whether they are going to abuse it. We have no evidence that any of them ever did.

Now, what that tells me, Mr. President, is as usual, as is the tendency in small societies, we have lost the issue in the personality. The issue is this: in the same way that the Government has to be accountable for off balance sheet transactions, the Government has to be accountable for the *bona fides* of its appointees.

Now, it is no good in a small community suggesting that someone who is in business or in a trade union cannot join the Government Benches. Obviously, from time to time, there will be potential conflicts of interest and what people should be doing is making sure that they satisfy the country at the time of their appointments that they have put some safeguards between their links and the work

they will be doing, either for the Government or in the Parliament. It applies to all of us, so this is not a new problem. But, you see, what was up for grabs in the negative list days, the licences for—well, I would not call the products because I really do not want this to be a person thing; it is an issue thing. What is up for grabs nowadays, Mr. President, is much juicier.

We do not have to worry about a licence to import—I cannot call any product because I really want to stick to the issue—aqualungs. That is always my hypothetical example. What you would have got for having an exclusive licence to make aqualungs, while aqualungs made in every other part of the world, whether better quality or cheaper, was peanuts to what you get now if you are a partner in a joint venture.

If you are riding—and, again, I do not want to call names, so let me make some up—with a Mars this, or a Saturn that, or a Jupiter company, which is traded on the stock exchanges of the world, if you are the riding partner of that company and you have a political link with the Government, that underscores the reason why a joint venture transaction should be properly accounted for, and I am suggesting that, at least, in the budget, because it does have an effect on the financial and economic picture that is painted by the budget.

So that I hope that in the course of time, as the latest of the persons who have received a qualified welcome to politics, that my good friend Sen. Gillette will set a new standard by identifying for us what steps he has taken to remove what I am certain is the quite unjustified criticism of him personally. I want to make it plain that it is not about anybody's person. But, the thing is, we are in an environment—and it is worth repeating this, Mr. President—where the contracts are juicier; the contracts are fewer and far between and whatever this Government says—and I am coming to challenge that major assumption—there is definitely a widening gap between the Mercedes class and the rest of us. There is no doubt about it and no reference to figures produced by the Central Statistical Office or anybody else can gainsay that.

So, Mr. President, I move now to the deficiency in the budget where there is no call to the nobler life, or what I would consider the more civilized life. There is no call for that and you see it through and through the budget.

First of all, the only thing that is said in the budget—may I emphasize that Sen. Theodore corrected it today; although, of course, he did not tell us precisely how they were going to do it. The only comment in the budget—and I certainly do not want to trespass on Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt's turf—about domestic

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Monday, October 25, 1999

violence is that it is a concern; it is regarded with seriousness; we have “moved to tackle this scourge on all fronts”. What fronts?

“...to assist victims of Domestic Violence and other kinds of domestic abuse, we propose to establish a number of centres in close proximity to Police Stations.”

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

Now, that is an assumption that we are going to continue to be uncivilized and that 15 per cent of the murders every year are going to be committed in a domestic violence context. That is clearly a complacent assumption and I do not think that takes us very far on the much wider issue of crime and alienation of people generally, young people in particular, from society. That is why Sen. Dr. St. Cyr spent so long explaining to us why a hardware budget is not sufficient.

Now, when you look at the most astonishing ambition on the part of the Government, at page 17 of the statement made in the other place, the Minister said:

“Mr. Speaker, our objective is clear. It is to bring the social and structural aspects of our development in line with our growing economy.”

Well, if this Minister can accomplish that, or this Government—well, let me stick to the Minister—then I do not mind if, as well as Planning and Development, they give him the environment, agriculture and national security and, most importantly of all, they have to give him education and, what is it? What is Minister Ramsaran's post?

Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh: Community Development.

Sen. M. Daly: Social and Community Development. They have to give him all that, because I am saying that in order “to bring the social and structural aspects of our development in line with our growing economy”, that requires—I do not know what is the right adjective, so I will stick to a non-materialistic approach. That is to say, simply buying things, giving out pensions and building domestic violence shelters, is not going to do this, anymore than not accounting for off balance sheet transactions. Because I am suggesting—this is a very difficult subject—that in order “to bring the social and structural aspects of development in line with our growing economy”, you have to take a number of what I would call, materialistic—because I want to stay off words like “sociology” and so forth—you not only have to develop materialistic measures, that is measures that are measured in material things; there are a huge number of non-materialistic steps any government has to take.

First of all, they have to understand the problem and they have to understand that the problem has to be worked out by using these non-materialistic means and my colleagues, Sen. Dr. St. Cyr and Sen. Prof. Kenny, have already explained in part what that means.

So that, I do not care how many times you reshuffle the Education Ministry, unless—and I am going to use a broad term because I am sure Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt is going to take this up—you have counsellors in the schools and you have counsellors in whatever you call the Ministry that provides government support for families who cannot entirely help themselves; unless you have those things, you will never, never civilize people and, therefore, bring the social and structural aspects of our development in line.

You will continue to have a country where we have twin towers, energy plants, whatever you care to boast about and you will continue to have 63 murders, five murders a month, 15 per cent of which are committed in domestic violence circumstances.

So, I want the Government to be very clear that to do this, it must stop thinking, to use Sen. Dr. St. Cyr's words, about hardware. We have, as I said—I said it prophetically in relation to the savannah—to rediscover common objectives. As a country, do we agree that “tiefing” is wrong? Because I do not believe we have that as a common objective. I do not believe somebody who works in the hospital, who steals food from the hospital, understands that that act of theft makes a complete circle and when his or her relative goes in there and cannot be properly fed, it is because they are part of the “tiefing” circle, to take a simple example. I do not think people understand that.

And this budget, when I say makes no call to the more civilized or nobler life, I am not talking about noble in terms of moral values and knights in shining armour; I am talking about basic leadership from the Government.

2.30 p.m.

If we broke the law when we paved the savannah, we must admit it; we must stand up and admit it! [*Desk thumping*] If we then have some political, cultural or economic justification, let us hear it, but do not hide like weak-kneed men and women and say nothing. That is the problem. If a decision has been taken that they are turning over that part of the Savannah to the promotion of cultural and entertainment events for everybody's enjoyment and to fill the pockets of the promoters, come and say so! Say that, “We have nowhere else to put it and we think it is a good thing to put it there. Do not mind that we broke the law”. If

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Monday, October 25, 1999

necessary, pass a law retrospectively which, of course, we can then debate, to rectify the wrong that was done, but the absolute opposite of leadership is pusillanimous silence in the face of justified criticism. That is the absolute opposite of leadership!

Mr. President, I feel very strongly that the Government does not fully understand what is meant by bringing social and structural aspects into line. They cannot have people who are contented in a society if they are convinced that the Mercedes class is earning their money by insider trading or inside political tracks. Have we all become such fat cats that we cannot remember? The Minister of Finance, it turns out—I did not know it at the time—grew up in the same area of Port of Spain, as myself. He has not forgotten it and I have not forgotten it, but have we become such fat cats that we have forgotten the resentments we felt as children and the resentments that all children feel, which is expressed—and I always like to refer to it—as the Nike psychology?

If you cannot have a Nike, you dead! You are dead as a person. Your social and structural aspects of your development are not in line. The Government could provide any amount of money passing through the economy like a dose of salts where certain children, maybe many of them, if it is in a boom time, can buy Nikes to go to school, but there will always be others who cannot. That is the task the Government is undertaking here.

Leadership means that as hard as it is, you have to explain that Nike is not for us. We have "washekong". It is the only thing that I understand Lloyd Best to be saying, and I suppose that because I understand it, I can agree with it. Sen. Prof. Spence says the same thing every time. We must convince people—it is not about buying local—that we are our own psychological masters, and if they tell us globalization means they must give away the gas cheap, tell them no!

This brings me to my good friend, Senator Gangar, with whom I have more lively debates out of the Parliament rather than in. I was happy to hear his remarks about current negotiations. If somebody is telling the Government, "You have to make up your mind by the end of October or else," tell them else! I do not have a problem with that! Let us get out of the psychological terror that if they tell them else, they are going to be blacklisted in all investing countries in the world. Of course not! The old expression is, "One door close, another one open". Tell them else, Mr. Minister. The time has come to tell them else. We have enough flagships in here and we have established ourselves as a sufficient model of foreign investment climate that we can now demand a higher price. I am saying that so they could carry that in their negotiations. So, tell them else! [*Desk thumping*]

While Minister Gangar is somewhat over-optimistic about the Government's energy programme, I am satisfied that if he puts his mind to it, he can break us out of the Nike psychology and negotiate better deals for this country where we do not give away our sweetness and then pay to get it back. I refer again to Sen. Prof. Kenny's sweet water. Think about it. We are giving away our good water and we have to pay to get it back.

I forgot to mention something. Why is a debate about desalination simply desalination or surface water? If Sen. Prof. Kenny is right and the desalination plant has a finite life—let us assume that things are so critical, I believe the Government is right, that we have to have a quick fix now—during the period that the quick fix lasts, where is the plan to return to the collection of surface water? [*Desk thumping*] We give in to the quick fix. We will not criticize desalination again. We would not even mind the fact that they are paying too much to take out salt that is not there, but come and give us a plan that will show that when the 10—15-year life of the plant is up, we would have, by then, put in the infrastructure to collect the surface water. That is leadership; that is proper thinking, and that is proper budgetary accounting.

Of course, it is the Minister who chose to come out of his crease and deal with all these matters, so naturally, we are entitled to say our two cents worth on that. When he spoke to us in the Senate, in his presentation, he said on page 4 that they have several strategies to which they are paying particular attention. One was developing our population into well-educated, healthy and highly motivated individuals. Do they think that a computer in every school is going to do that? Of course not! Does the Government understand that if they accomplish this, they are halfway along the road to bringing the social and structural aspects of their development in line with our growing economy? I am not sure they made the link.

If the Government has big thinkers, they certainly do not come here to debate anything with us. We have very competent performances about the day-to-day management of their ministries, but where are the big thinkers and where is the long-term vision? I know that they have a particularly good public relations machine, so they get carried away by their own rhetoric and they believe they are really doing these things. That is why my good friend, Sen. Dr. Daphne Phillips, is always so distraught. Every time one mentions domestic violence, she winces, because somebody in her Ministry is writing a speech for her which is loaded with jargon words, but the murder continues. At some stage, she has to protest and say, "This is not working. Give me something else".

Mr. Vice-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. M. Daly: Mr. Vice-President, I am almost done, as it happens. What I am saying is this: If the Government has taken what I consider the political risk of de-emphasizing the balance sheet aspects of the budget that should properly be there, if they put these public relations—and I do not use public relations in the sense of my colleagues in front, so perhaps I should find a different adjective. If they choose to put these statements of ambition in these budget documents, they have to come and tell us how they are going to accomplish it.

What is the plan? In 12 or 15 years' time when the desalination plant is finished, are we going to build another one and have 12 or 15 years of floods? Does it matter that we understand our constitutional duty? One of the reasons this Bench gave so much trouble during the privatization of BWIA and the partial privatization of T&TEC was that we were not satisfied about certain nuts and bolts issues. One of them was: What was going to become of the equipment at the end of the contract that had been struck with the foreign investor? They would have made money and we would be right back where we started! That is the point.

Do not pretend that this budget represents any kind of statement to the country about how a better or more civilized life is going to be accomplished in Trinidad and Tobago. It does not. So, Senator Gangar was kind enough in response to Sen. Dr. St. Cyr to say what his plans were for the energy sector. Likewise, we have to have some serious statements, not only about the appalling state of the environment. We have to have some serious statements, for want of a better word, from the persons responsible in the Government for the state of our society—the social affairs people. They must come and join this debate, because I do not care how many domestic violence shelters they build, I am not satisfied with the 15 per cent rate as part of an overall murder statistic.

To jump up and down and say we provided this and that is not dealing with the problem, and for each generation that we allow these social problems to go undoubted and untaught about, we could be as rich as Croesus and die a stupid death with a handgun in the road. That is what it will come to. One is already dying a stupid death by a motor vehicle accident or one could get killed in the most stupid way—jumping the median is now one of the most common forms of death. So, some decent person is driving up the road and somebody jumps the

median and the Minister gets up and talks about the white line and cat eyes in the road, and Commissioner Guy will give a press conference and say he is sitting on top the police. He is not sitting on top the coffin of the dead person!

Do not look shocked when I say that one can be as rich as Crosses and die a stupid death. I have preached against the senseless killing in this society repeatedly. I am not saying anything new, but the budget is not saying anything new on these issues, so I would like to remind the Government of its obligations. What is it going to do to prevent the cars jumping the median? Do not just build a higher wall. Explain to people that they have a weapon of death in their hands. If things are nice and we have a fairly settled economic position, now is the time to set about giving leadership on these issues and making the country a more civilized place to live. That is my point. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. Vice-President, just that I am not misunderstood, I understand from the experts that I trust that the economic management of the country over the last 15 years has been good and prudent regardless of who has been in charge. We have been lucky in our Finance Ministers, and it probably has to do with the fact—and this is casting no aspersion on the present Prime Minister—that we broke another stupid political tradition that the Prime Minister had to be the Minister of Finance. Maybe we have been so fortunate over the last 15 years in having good Ministers of Finance because they have been able to concentrate on the job at hand.

If it is that we have a basically sound economy, most of the decisions and things that affect our economy happen abroad, then we have loads of time in the Cabinet of 24. Let the Minister of Finance make sure that everything is going all right in the economy and let Senator Gangar stand up in the negotiations, and the rest of them could get together and not waste time in Cabinet meetings discussing who to give a licence. They could get down to the business of dealing with these social issues. They have the climate and the time to do it now, and the opportunity should not be lost.

I will not be satisfied with simply being told that the country is in good material shape because I do not want to die stupid! I really do not want to die stupid. I know I am going to die and I might die from all kinds of things. *[Laughter]* In fact, Sen. Gillette advanced one step towards political death over the weekend, to show how one could die stupid, because he got more coverage in the press than the Prime Minister. *[Laughter]* He took a step towards political death. That is dying stupid.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DALY]

Monday, October 25, 1999

I might die stupid—not at the hands of any Prime Minister—but I would like to cut down the really cruel and senseless things that I am talking about. The only way we can do it is to sit and decide. I know social “engineering” is a terrible word with terrible connotations, but it is good enough for me. How are we going to reengineer the society into one that is not so chaotic, senseless and gratuitous about how people live? That is my point.

When all is said and done about desalination, no matter how much water they produce with the desalination plant, I know when I drive from Port of Spain to Mayaro on school days I will still see children toting water on their heads. Then they say a computer in every school! That is the worst act of discrimination that is perpetrated by all our governments. One child gets up at 6.30 a.m., has breakfast, bathes and goes to school in an air-conditioned car that double parks in the middle of the road. My hand is not pointing there by accident. *[Laughter]* Another child has to get up in the morning, walk a half-mile to the standpipe, tote the water back and then gets ready for school. The desalination plant is not going to solve that! So what do they mean by “water for all”? More public relations! More slogans designed to “bramble” people! Sure, they will have water for all in the sense that at least—and I am not minimizing it—they have made an improvement so there would be water in the village, but come and show me how that is going to stop the child—in fact, they might be more tired because they would have to tote water every day instead of every three days.

2.45 p.m.

What kind of country are we building on these kinds of—I do not want to call them platitudes, Mr. Vice-President? They are noble statements. They are noble objectives, but what kind of country are we building? Since the Minister of Finance has chosen to raise these issues, he has placed a very heavy burden on his colleagues: some of whom have been reshuffled before we can debate these issues. I do not mind when they reshuffle them.

I guess we still have a partial Minister of Education because he is going to Japan on an education trip. *[Laughter]* The partial Minister of Education or the titular Minister of Education must come and tell us how they are meeting Sen. Montano’s criticism about not having a teacher in every class. I am sorry to be so practical. Indeed, really, perhaps the partial Minister of Education should have come here and engage us in debate instead of going to Japan where, I assume, he cannot speak the language. Although it might be said unkindly of the enhanced Ministers that they might as well have performed their duties in Japanese having

regard to how effective they are—or any foreign language. We have a partial Minister of Education; he is still taking a trip.

Do you think the country likes that? You demote the man, whatever you say, but he keeps the trip. I can only assume that when he is in Japan he would look for tourist opportunities. [*Laughter*] You have to laugh. Is it only now that you realize that I am funny?

Mr. Vice-President, I have now accomplished something after 8½ years in the Senate, I have got a very, in the best sense, aggressive Member of the Cabinet to actually laugh at something I have said. That is the kind of change I am looking for. Instead of “pounding” Mr. Gillette as a human being, let us get together and discuss what are going to be the safeguards to eradicate potential conflicts of interest. I see Sen. Gangar doing like Dhanraj to hold down his neck because he agrees with that too. He is doing like Dhanraj, through you, Mr. Vice-President, his neck wants to jump like Stalin makes it jump, but he cannot laugh with me and agree with me all at the same time.

Mr. Vice-President, as accounting to the country, I am not on the finance and economics. I see Sen. Marshall is here so I can take my seat on that issue. On accounting to the country, which this budget has pretended to do, about our social development, it is a miserable failure.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

Sen. Cynthia Alfred: Mr. Vice-President, I would like to preface my remarks, like other speakers, by congratulating Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj on her promotion as a junior minister in the Ministry of Health—we wish her the very best—and Sen. Gillette on his appointment. We also wish him the very best.

Sen. Jagmohan: What about Mr. Kuei Tung?

Sen. C. Alfred: Now, Mr. Vice-President, budget 1999/2000. I would like to start my contribution by quoting from the actual budget statement made by the Minister of Finance where on page 1—he is talking about the media and he says:

“I say this, Mr. Speaker, because their coverage...”

meaning the media

“...has renewed the interest of the population in the Budget Presentation.”

Perfectly true.

“That interest, from all reports, is greater this year than ever before.”

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. ALFRED]

Monday, October 25, 1999

That also is true.

“I would like to think that this is so because the last four Budgets have impacted on the lives of people of Trinidad and Tobago in a positive and meaningful way.”

That may not be so true.

“Our Budget Statements have been directed to the man in the street, and to the grandmother in her home.”

Indeed, everybody was looking forward to the budget presentation.

The budget presentation is considered the financial statement of the year. But what did the people get: the grandmothers and the ordinary man in the street? What they got was a somewhat truncated version of what we believe a budget presentation should be. As a matter of fact, it was a statement that lacked vision, cohesiveness and credibility. In short, it was an anti-climax. It could have been rivalled by any play in the theatre of the absurd, because that is what it amounted to.

If the Minister of Finance had spent half of the time that he spent going around and talking to interest groups and so forth and to the general population—if he had spent half of that time on the budget presentation itself, then I believe that would have vindicated him somewhat. He spent a considerable amount of time being on the media, going to interest groups and pro-explaining the budget when I believe that the explanations should have been in the budget presentation itself.

The Minister of Finance said figures, to him, were not very important. Maybe if figures were not important to him, words might have been important. I read from page 2 of the budget statement which states:

“In the time that we have been in office, and with the limited financial resources available to our Administration, we have succeeded in meeting the needs of the population. We have done so to an extent to which no previous administration has ever come close, in a similar period, and with similar resources.”

Words, Mr. Vice-President, words. As I said, perhaps, the Minister prefers words to figures. The Minister continues on page 3. He said:

“Mr. Speaker, we have done a good job doing the people’s work.”

He then mentions: strengthening the economy, achieving continued growth, increasing the country’s foreign reserves, reducing the foreign debt and reducing inflation.

Mr. Vice-President, having said all this in the absence of figures which the Minister does not like; the political leader of the People's National Movement and Leader of the Opposition believes in figures. He was able to present figures. These figures were not falsified. He was able to present figures that substantiated what he Minister said and made nonsense of what the Minister said in respect of all the good things that this administration has done over the past year.

On page 5, I just want to make mention of this; the Minister of Finance is referring to the schools curriculum. He said:

“Teacher morale was low.”

I think if he changes the tense he would be closer to it.

2.55 p.m.

“The curriculum was not even relevant to the requirements of the current and future needs of the country.”

Yet, after all the talk about abolishing the Common Entrance Examination, we now have another examination. So whereas we are being told that the curriculum was not even relevant, and more than that, that the education system would be better able to serve all of the children of Trinidad and Tobago, we still have, Mr. Vice-President, a system where the children will have to do examinations. What happens? If you are going to have all children going to secondary schools, there is no need, because once you do an examination, it means that you are going to choose some children and the same thing will happen, some of them will stay back.

Not only that. At a later date, I am going to show this Government how all children can get into secondary schools without having to do an examination, any examination. I shall do it, and I have already spoken to persons in the education field and they agree that there is a way. What needs to happen is that more schools will have to be built to accommodate all the children of this country. There is no point in discriminating because that is what it boils down to, it is really discriminating against some children when they have to take an examination and only some are selected. All children can go into secondary schools.

What has to happen is a revision of the secondary school curriculum, a revision of the system, so that all the children will be able, at the end of five years, to take an examination which they will pass because the examination will be in the area in which they are interested and, in that way, we will have greater

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. ALFRED]

Monday, October 25, 1999

efficiency and we will not have so many drop-outs and so many young people frustrated in this country.

I want to turn my attention for a little while to tourism and, in talking about tourism, I want to talk about water and other areas. Let me deal with the water first. It has been bandied about that the whole country shall have water by the year 2000. Mr. Vice-President, all I can say is that if the present operations of WASA are anything to go by, then we will not, we cannot hold our breaths. Because this scandalous situation, and I am making reference here to this question about buying water at an exorbitant rate, selling it back, apparently at a loss, and what is the benefit to the country. So, if that is the way WASA is going to operate, then, we are indeed in serious trouble. So to indicate that there will be water by the year 2000, I do not know who is going to get the water.

I do know that right now, for instance, in Tobago there are certain areas, Lambeau is one—that is where Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie lives—and all of a sudden, Lambeau is now getting water sometimes once a week, sometimes once every 10 days and the water situation in Tobago is supposed to be improving. But what has happened? The Richmond Water Works that was supposed to be put in place since 1997, this programme is supposed to deal with the increased number of hotel rooms, and I make special reference to the Hilton Hotel, but I will come to that later on. This waterworks is supposed to give additional water, adequate water supply to Tobago. But what has happened? A budget of \$150 million has been requested and what has happened? Not one cent! I do not know if the Government has its own programme where the Government, *per se*, will fund the \$150 million or whether the Assembly will be given the \$150 million or what. But there is not one cent in the allocations to the Tobago House of Assembly for moneys to put this waterworks in place. Nothing for waterworks, nothing for drainage and yet, there is talk about increased water supply, adequate water supply by the year 2000. Tobago is not going to get adequate water supply. Right now, some of the hotels in Tobago cannot get enough water to supply their needs. So I do not know how and when this new problem is going to be solved.

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

Mr. President, I want to talk about the ferry. I have spoken about the ferry on more than one occasion. I see in the presentation by the hon. Minister of Finance that the Port Authority will be given the necessary mandate to go ahead and do whatever is necessary to get a new ferry. The statement was vague and I believe it was deliberately vague because no actual record has been placed in the budget

speech with respect to acquiring a ferry. So, where the money is going to come from, I do not know.

Incidentally, a boat was sent to Tobago a few days ago to take lumber to Tobago. You know what happened? Fortunately, it reached, but it could not leave, certainly not the time it was supposed to, because it stalled, it could not move. I do not know from whence the boat came, but I do know that if we are going to do something about the boat situation—I have talked about it so many times, that I am not going to belabour the point now.

Everyone would recognize the importance, not only of a good ferry service between Tobago and Trinidad for the tourists, but especially for the people of Tobago, especially for the people of Tobago who come down to Trinidad every day to get things and so forth. And, of course, when persons from Trinidad want to go to Tobago for holidays there is always a problem. We have been getting promises, promises and more promises, but in actuality we are not getting the implementation.

Continuing with the issue of tourism, the former Minister of Tourism, I heard him on television when he was making his budget contribution. He went on and on about in the year 2000 there will be so many jobs in Tobago that we will have to import persons into Tobago. It reminded me of an expression I learnt when I was in Form 4 at Bishop's High School. It was the English teacher who told us this: "an otiose superabundance of parasyllabic vocables", meaning "plenty words and saying absolutely nothing". Then, after that contribution, when I heard about the reshuffle and that that particular Ministry was removed from that Minister, all I could say to myself was "poetic justice". [*Desk thumping*] All that I can say is that tourism, especially in Tobago, needs a strong minister, tourism needs someone who understands the whole problem of tourism, the benefits that can accrue to the country, *et cetera*, and I hope that this particular Minister will be able to deliver a lot more than the previous minister.

Still on tourism, Mr. President. Just recently, the PNM has been having some public meetings in Tobago. One of the areas that was touched by the minority leader, Assemblyman Mc Kenzie, was the whole question of the Three Chains Act. I do not know how many persons know about the Three Chains Act—some people say Ten Chains Act, but it is actually Three Chains Act. This Act is saying in essence that all the beaches in Tobago belong to the people of Tobago, and for that matter, Trinidad, all the beaches belong to the state and, therefore, the people. What we are having now is an encroachment on the beaches by hotels and by private persons. What is being done about it? And I do not mean talk! We want to

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. ALFRED]

Monday, October 25, 1999

see action, because more and more persons are building their businesses, their hotels and so forth, too close to the beach; they are not recognizing the Three Chains Act. What I want to know is: How come the Town and Country Planning Division could pass those buildings when they know that there exists such an Act and their building on the beaches is in violation of that Act?

If this continues, very shortly—as a matter of fact, right now if one wants to walk around Tobago on the beaches, one cannot, one is restricted in movement because these people have encroached. I would like to see the Tobago House of Assembly, as well as the Ministry of Tourism, take this matter in hand to ensure that no future building or future construction will violate this law. As a matter of fact, with regard to the existing hotels, *et cetera*, I think it is not too late to get them to understand and let them do what they were supposed to do in the first place and rectify that situation; otherwise, Tobago is going to become like some parts in Jamaica where the locals do not have access to their beaches. This is a serious situation. I do not think it should be allowed to continue.

I heard a rumour, but I can only infer that it is indeed a rumour, about the ferry from Toco and so forth. I may be wrong, I think the Minister of Finance said that there is no such intention. I hope, in fact, that there is not. Because, if the situation is bad now, can you imagine landing in Toco, say four o'clock in the morning, and then having to find transportation to come into Port of Spain, hustle from Port of Spain to get back to Toco and then to Tobago? So I hope, that this is just that, a rumour.

Now, I want to turn my attention fully to the question of Tobago. Mr. President, budget after budget, time after time, we have spoken about Tobago. Tobago is a reality. Tobago will not, cannot and shall not disappear. Therefore, Tobago's position has to be regularized. I say this because right now, I do not think I am overemphasizing this fact, Tobago is in crisis, largely because of mismanagement on the part of certain members of the Assembly. I will elaborate, but I want to ask a question: Have the financial regulations regarding Tobago been put in place? I do not think those regulations have been put in place as yet. If the regulations are not put in place—and the Chief Secretary keeps saying, or infers, that he, meaning the Assembly, does not have to account to anyone. I blame the central government, because what is happening is that the Tobago people are suffering.

3.10 p.m.

Do you know, Mr. President, Louis XIV reigned for a long time from 1643 to 1715, so he said *L'état c'est moi*—I am the state. But I want to point out that the

Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly is not Tobago. When the Chief Secretary makes his statements, he is not necessarily reflecting the views of Tobagonians. I want something to be done to look at the finances especially as they exist now in the Tobago House of Assembly.

In the month of October, the Assembly received its 1/12 from the central government, as is done everywhere else, which had to be taken to pay salaries for the month of September. What we are seeing is that in the ensuing months, things are going to get much worse because in the recurrent expenditure—from my understanding the Assembly received its quota. Apparently, there was an agreement about the Assembly collecting so much funds and then the central government would give the difference. Where the funds are going, only the good Lord knows, Mr. President. What I do know is that many persons are still not being paid, and the banks are in a terrible position. I think, if not all, certainly three of the banks, from my understanding, are millions of dollars in the red!

So, Mr. President, what is happening to the finances of Tobago? Unless and until this situation could be corrected—I know that the Prime Minister met with some Members when they were then Independents and they articulated certain things. If, indeed, as the Minister of Finance says, this Government really cares about Tobago, I would have thought—and I still think that perhaps the Prime Minister should meet with the entire Assembly—not a fraction of the Assembly this is not politics now—not perhaps to push a political head, but rather to look at the economic and financial situation of Tobago, because somebody has to intervene to see what is going on and how the situation can be regularized.

Mr. President, I am sure everybody must have heard about this whole question of ADDA, that is, where certain Members of the Assembly, not the entire Assembly, invested US \$2 million in a particular fund. Where has the money gone? Mr. President, the issue is that the Chief Secretary says that according to the regulations of the Assembly Act, this could be done. Even if that were true, one would have thought that if an investment like this was going to be made, the entire Assembly should have been party to it! Even if the rest of the Assembly was to say, no, and the Chief Secretary still went ahead, at least, he could have said that in his best judgment he felt that was the way to go. But to have the Assembly not involved and to say that, given the opportunity, he would do the same thing again—to me, that is being unrepentant and that is getting down into moneys that rightly belong to the people of Tobago. So when the Assembly is screaming or the Chief Secretary, that he needs the funds to carry out the work, he himself must take some blame.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. ALFRED]

Monday, October 25, 1999

I want to touch on two other matters with respect to the Assembly. The Assembly is an institution according to law, and all of us are interested in the proper running of the Tobago House of Assembly. The Tobago House of Assembly is not something that is on paper; it involves people, it involves the economy, it involves the way they eat, sleep and so forth, and we cannot have persons mismanaging the funds and then blaming other persons.

I want to mention two other areas. One of them has to do with the housing situation in Tobago. We know for a fact that there are housing lots to be given out in certain places in Tobago and here I refer, specifically, to the Signal Hill area.

The National Housing Authority made an agreement with certain persons to acquire lands at Signal Hill and that they should pay a certain amount of money in the sum of \$20,000 to \$25,000, and at the end of time they would perhaps partake in a lottery system or whatever—because for 200 lots we understood that there are about 600 persons. That is normal. What is not normal is the fact that the Assembly has not yet received authorization from the National Housing Authority. I took time-out to ask—because when I was told that the Assembly called everybody and informed them that they have to pay an increased amount between \$31,000 and \$75,000, the question was: Who gave such authorization? But that is not all.

The persons were told, do not pay it to the bank anymore, go to a certain building in Bacolet Street and pay the moneys there. Some persons complied and some did not, but we realized that there was an irregular situation, so what did we do? A meeting was called and persons were able to air their views, but in the meantime I asked the Parliamentary Secretary of Housing a question, and it turned out that the Assembly had not got any authorization but they had reached the point where they called in 200 persons and said, “Look at this paper and choose your lot” and when the persons had chosen their lot, they said, “Now you would have to pay about \$40,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000 more, as the case may be.” Those 200 persons were only too glad to comply—they are only human. But what happens to the whole system as laid down by the National Housing Authority?

When the time comes, what is the National Housing Authority going to say to those 400 other persons who have paid their money in good faith—some are still paying—about the Assembly giving out the 200 acres? I know that if that happens then the National Housing Authority would be liable and could be taken to court.

So, Mr. President, I want the National Housing Authority to know that right now there is a collision course, as I see it, between the Assembly and the National

Housing Authority. The Assembly cannot go about doing things and saying that it is in the Act; yes, Mr. President, there are many things in the Act—we want the Assembly to work and I am going to come to that part, but we cannot have mismanagement of funds and then these people are purporting to love Tobago. You do not hurt the people you love, Mr. President, and I do not see how the Chief Secretary could go around doing all these things, because I must say that he appears to be the leader in all these discrepancies that are taking place. He is also the Secretary for Finance, so Mr. President, this has to be looked at.

I want to mention two other areas, one is the question of roads: I know funds have been allocated for roads and the Chief Secretary boasted that they can build roads without an engineer. Where in the world are there people building roads without an engineer? Just yesterday, I was coming back to Trinidad—somewhere between Dallas and Miami airports—we were shown a bridge 24 miles long. It is built across a lake so there is expanse of water on the left, expanse of water on the right and this bridge joining two areas wherever they may be, and when I looked at it—24 miles of bridge—it is like from Crown Point Airport to Speyside—almost the length of Tobago. And I am sure that bridge was not built without engineers.

So all we are having is funds being mismanaged, wasted on some of the roads because there are no engineerial inputs. Mr. President, these are things that have to be looked at. But if the financial regulations are not put in place then who is accountable? I would not talk about contracted officers because that is a scandal; and I am not talking about the older persons who were there before, but with respect to the new recruitment of contracted officers and so forth, that is where some of the moneys is going and if something is not done, there will be trouble.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. President, on the other side of the coin is, notwithstanding the fact that there is gross mismanagement in the Tobago House of Assembly that should not take away from the fact that Tobago is here to stay. It is here and it will not go away.

When the financial regulations are put in place, then there will be somebody accountable, and once that is done, the Tobago House of Assembly will be able to be run on a better course. The thing is, if the politicians in the Tobago House of Assembly will allow the public servants to do their work as they should, instead of in some cases, manipulating, threatening, coercing, whatever, then the Tobago House of Assembly will be properly run. We want to see the Tobago House of Assembly work.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. ALFRED]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Somebody brought up the idea that they should scrap the Tobago House of Assembly. We, the PNM in Tobago, have worked too hard to get an upgraded institution from a county council put in Tobago for it to be scrapped now. I get the impression that the central government is not aware, or perhaps does not care enough about what is happening in Tobago and when central government catches itself, Tobago might be in a position where the situation would be so bad and then what action would be taken by central government.

Mr. President, notwithstanding the fact that there is gross mismanagement, that particular regime that is in office now is not going to be there all the time and the business of the Tobago House of Assembly will have to go on. It disturbs me when I see that in the allocations to Tobago, notwithstanding what is going on, the Minister of Finance said he was satisfied with the way Tobago was going. Therefore, if he was satisfied, or is satisfied, why then do we have such a small allocation to Tobago? When I say small, I mean small, stingy.

I looked at a document, *Tobago House of Assembly—Analysis of Recurrent Estimates 1999/2000*, October 1999. The Tobago House of Assembly prints this every year. The public servants make an analysis of the figures which are true and correct. Whereas under recurrent, the Tobago House of Assembly got just over \$10 million more, when we look at what is requested and what was given, and the shortfall—I would highlight a few areas. Tourism, Information, Environment and Settlement requested \$19,634,500, they got \$3,361,000.

Mr. President, the overriding factor here is that the Tobago House of Assembly *per se* has been given other areas that it did not previously get, but the allocation has not gone up. For instance, Tobago Council for Handicapped Children, the School for the Deaf has now been handed to Tobago House of Assembly without an increase in allocation.

Everybody is saying that Tobago is tourism and so forth and I do want to correct one piece of misinformation. One gets the impression when certain persons talk about tourism—especially the former Minister of Tourism—that all Tobagonians can do is work in the hotels, but there is more. If more moneys are allocated for different areas, then we should see improvement. So tourism gets 17 per cent of its request. Health and social services—we have talked so much about the hospital I am wondering whether it is fact or fiction; it has become like a myth. So the health services get 76 per cent less—there is a shortfall of 22 per cent. They got 22 per cent of what they requested.

Every year for the past so many years we have been hearing Tobago is going to get this hospital and some brave person put up a sign two years ago: “Fight for

the new Tobago Hospital.” Who told them to do that? That is all there is, the sign. I understand that \$5 million has been allocated for design and some other thing. In other words, the design stage. When is this hospital going to be built? I personally do not believe it is ever going to be built, not under this administration.

Then we come to agriculture. Mr. President, Tobago is a rich country in its soil. It is rich in terms of what it can put out in terms of agriculture. Here it is that the agriculture division asks for \$16,964,400 and it got \$6,334,900. When people talk about tourism they will link certain areas. They link tourism, agriculture, health. All the areas are linked, but especially agriculture, and we have next to nothing under agriculture. All the food that everybody says would be produced by Tobago to feed the hotels; that is just talk. How are people going to produce the food when no allocation or insufficient allocation is given to Tobago? A lot of lip service.

Of the overall request by the Tobago House of Assembly there has been a shortfall of 62 per cent, this is in the recurrent area. I know and everybody here knows that no one ministry, department or institution ever gets what it requests, but to give a mere shadow of the national budget!

I have left recurrent now, and I have gone to capital expenditure. To give \$92 million is a mere drop in the bucket. Out of a national budget of \$1.8 billion, Tobago gets 7.67 per cent, just over 7 1/2 per cent and this is \$92 million. What is not being said is of that \$92 million, by the time provisions are made for expenses that were incurred in the previous year, if they end up with \$30 million, they end with plenty.

We have this question of small amounts, and insufficient amounts given to Tobago and it begs the question: How is it that Tobago, which is governed by Act No. 40 of 1996, Tobago which is an island and, therefore, has to be treated differently, gets a smaller allocation than Caroni (1975) Limited? If this does not smack of—I am looking for the right word—provocation. How can one give Caroni (1975) Limited—and I have nothing against them, I am not that way inclined. When one gives one institution so much more money than Tobago which is governed by an Act, does that not show contempt for the Tobago House of Assembly? Does it not show contempt for the people of Tobago? There is something basically wrong.

I would like the Prime Minister of this country to really show that this Government cares because a lot of words are being said in the presentation. You are talking about Tobago and the statements are so bland as to be most

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. ALFRED]

Monday, October 25, 1999

ineffectual. I would like to see the Prime Minister go to Tobago and have meaningful discussions with the Tobago House of Assembly.

Mr. President, we want the Tobago House of Assembly to work and as I mentioned the people there would not necessarily be there all the time. I know they will not, but the Tobago House of Assembly has to work, but for it to work, each player must play his part. The present administration is not playing its part properly in Tobago. The central government is in default because it has not yet put the financial regulations in place, so the Tobago House of Assembly is doing what it wants and the bottom line is that the people of Tobago are suffering.

It took four weeks for people to receive their pay for September. One guy, a daily-paid showed me two cheques. He went to the bank and was told they could not accommodate him today. They had been telling him that for the longest while and he was not the only one. There were teachers, public servants, people working with contractors, and nobody could get paid.

If we want Tobago to work, all the players must play their part. The Chief Secretary must know that when he has business of the Assembly, it is the 16 persons in the Tobago House of Assembly who should be involved in the discussions and not just the executive council. The executive council might be parallel to the Cabinet of the Government, but I am sure when Cabinet meets it is a few people, but when Cabinet comes to certain decisions, I am sure those decisions are passed on to the rest of the Ministers. But here you have the executive council of the Tobago House of Assembly taking decisions without any input from the rest of the Assembly. How do they expect to progress? It is only when there is a crisis situation that the Chief Secretary will invite other members of the Tobago House of Assembly and other parliamentarians. That is not good enough. It must be administration of the people, for the people and by the people, and "by the people" includes the other persons in the Tobago House of Assembly. I think it is time that the Chief Secretary and his team should stop this tomfoolery that is going on and get down to the serious business of administering Tobago properly because if they do not, I do not know what is going to become of us.

Finally, I hope that I have given, especially in respect of tourism, where, if the central government is not satisfied that the tourism division in Tobago is handling its business properly, the central government, or perhaps the Minister of Tourism must meet with the tourism division and say: "We do not like so and so, perhaps you should do so and so." But you cannot just say we are not giving any money for this, and we are not giving any money for that. When one looks at key areas, no funds are allocated.

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. N. Mohammed*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. C. Alfred: Mr. President, I am winding down. Let there be dialogue. I believe that the pen is stronger any day than the sword. Therefore, in this way, dialogue is stronger than confrontation at another level. Let us all meet. Let the Minister for Tourism and TIDCO meet with the Tobago House of Assembly, and put their ideas together. After all, it is one country. If something is good for Tobago, it is good for Trinidad. If something is good for Trinidad, it is good for Tobago. We are all one people.

3.35 p.m.

Mr. President, therefore, the same thing should apply in every single sector, whether it is agriculture or some other department. The Secretary for Agriculture is doing nonsense in Tobago and he is, to a great extent; I have to say it, I really have to say it; it is time that somebody tells him so, someone whom he will believe. So, therefore, let the Minister—is there a new Minister of Agriculture?

Hon. Senators: Yes.

Sen. C. Alfred: Let the Minister of Agriculture have some dialogue with the Secretary for Agriculture in Tobago. No man is an island and nobody knows everything. If the Minister of Agriculture were to meet with the Secretary for Agriculture, perhaps, something better could be worked out for agriculture in Tobago. But when they do not give any money to agriculture—in the services section, agriculture, as far as I could see, got practically no money, perhaps, none! So all the things they wanted to put in place—nothing.

Mr. President, so let there be dialogue and, most of all, let the Chief Secretary recognize that Tobago is not his and it belongs to all of us, and I mean all the people in Trinidad and Tobago. It is time the Chief Secretary comes down to earth, and acknowledges the fact that Tobago is important to all of us and, therefore, the Chief Secretary must not have it as his private home or private institution saying, “I am going to do so and so for Tobago and I love Tobago.” If the Chief Secretary loves Tobago, let him demonstrate it in action and do not love people by taking away from them and discriminating against others; by giving out lands to some and not others. I hope the National Housing Authority is going to do something very quickly about that situation. I can tell you that presently, the situation is an explosive one.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. ALFRED]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. President, let me end my discourse by saying that Tobago comprises people who are willing to see Tobago improve, and I am talking about the ordinary citizens in Tobago. All of us are willing to work together, but we must be given the opportunity to work with the Assembly to make Tobago into the kind of entity that it can be.

Tobago should be the showcase of the world, in respect of tourism because for so many persons, Tobago is their last destination. People come to Tobago and they always visit again. They like the rustic atmosphere and so forth—they do not like the lack of water. So let us all work together. Let Trinidad play its part.

I want to reiterate that the financial regulations must be put in place because without that we might have another year with the Chief Secretary continuing to say, “I do not have to report to anybody”. Everyone is accountable to somebody. When the time has come and all the parties get together in respect of Tobago and have meaningful dialogue, then all of us can say without fear and doubt that Tobago is, indeed, on the road to improvement and, the Tobago House of Assembly will be the kind of institution that all of us would want.

Mr. President, I therefore, thank you. [*Desk thumping*].

The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Settlements (Sen. Carol Cuffy Dowlat): Mr. President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill, more commonly called “the budget” for the fiscal year 1999/2000—A Blueprint for Human Development and Sustainable Growth. Let me begin by congratulating a gentleman, whom I met just about five years ago, and who later became my senatorial colleague but who today, I can say is not only a colleague, but also a friend. He shares many of my own views and vision for development and demonstrates his care and concern for the poor, dispossessed and less fortunate citizens of our country, and I speak of no other, than our honourable Minister of Finance, Sen. Brian Kuei Tung. [*Desk thumping*]

Congratulations Minister of Finance, as you and the Panday team continue to take our beloved country on the road to economic and sustainable growth and development with social conscience and political good sense.

Mr. President, in the role of congratulations, how can I not feel a sense of pride and faith in the future, when a female colleague is elevated to a position of greater influence, and one in which she will bring the administrative skill and expertise she possesses? Congratulations to Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj and may she continue to inspire and motivate our young women, and teach them there is really no glass ceiling to shatter. Success belongs and awaits us all.

Finally, I must congratulate my new senatorial colleague, Sen. Lindsay Gillette. When respected and independently-minded citizens take a conscious decision to come and serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago, under the Panday administration, the country at large must know, and surely accept that we on this side, are on the right pathway, and real progress and true development can only come when we all join hands to right wrongs and mould the future with dignity, strength and discipline. Did you hear that, Sen. Shabazz?

Mr. President, this brings me to my opening comment on the 1999—2000 budget, as it relates to the Ministry of Housing and Settlements, led by the venerable John Humphrey.

Mr. President, it was with a sense of deep sadness and amazement that I sat here and listened to Members of the Opposition Bench criticize the Minister and the Ministry of Housing and Settlements as we attempt to instil discipline in our people.

My colleague, Sen. Rev. Barbara Gray-Burke gave an account of the situation as it exists in Bon Air. Might I add, that the Ministry, through the Land Settlement Agency has, in fact, established a mechanism to deal with the willy-nilly squatting that was taking place under previous administrations.

Sir, I have heard comments from Members that John Humphrey encouraged it or is causing it. With your leave, I want to use an analogy to explain the situation. You see, Sir, if your child is extremely ill and on the verge of death and you approach the only pharmacy for medication, the pharmacist, while admitting that he has boxes of the life-saving medication, tells you that you cannot get any now, nor can he tell you when you will be able to get any, Mr. President, most of us will try to get that medicine to save our child, no matter what the cost. Spontaneous settlements was as a result, of the then pharmacist being unable, unwilling and lacking the political will and direction to provide the much needed medication.

Mr. President, this Government through the State Lands (Regularization of Tenure) Act, 1998, among other solutions, provided the mechanism for persons without a place to live, to now have access to shelter. But this Sir, must be done in an organized or disciplined manner or else chaos would continue to reign. This kind of unruly and unacceptable behaviour which was demonstrated in Bon Air and, which I am reliably informed is being aided and abetted by allegedly responsible people—I am not certain if it is also representative persons—but this must neither be accepted nor encouraged.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. CUFFY DOWLAT]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. President, the Hon. John Humphrey and this Government have always recognized shelter as a fundamental human right. We have devised and are devising strategies to allow home ownership. We have, by Act No. 25 of 1998, provided for a systematic and comprehensive approach to squatter regularization and containment, within the wider framework of sustainable human development.

Mr. President, our intention is not the wholesale re-allocation of “squatterments” to other geographic areas for what, some may see as political gain, but to regularize the tenure of *bona fide* households *in situ*, and on sites which satisfy conventional land-use planning. This would be accompanied by the physical infrastructure upgrade, albeit incrementally, and, with the participation of community councils, non-governmental organizations, the National Commission for Self-Help and local authorities. Mr. President, partnership in progress, this is what is being practised in the Ministry of Housing and Settlements and by this Government.

An issue was raised on the other side, on the situation at Cook Street, more popularly known as the John John Towers. Mr. President, with your leave, I would like to read a status report as at October, 1999, by the Technical and Planning Superintendent of the National Housing Authority.

3.45 p.m.

<u>“ITEM</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
1. PHYSICAL WORKS	Completed. Repainting and cleaning completed. WASA and TTEC connections in place.
2. RATES AND TAXES	All WASA rates and Land and Building taxes paid up.
3. STATUTORY APPROVAL	All statutory approvals obtained, with the exception of City Corporation’s Final completion certificate.
4. LEGAL MATTERS	
- Maintenance company	The company—Eastern Heights Ltd. was registered on 1999, September 08 th .
- Agreement for sale	All completed and down payments received.
- Mortgage deeds	All prepared.

Appropriation Bill

Monday, October 25, 1999

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| - Deeds of Assignment | All prepared. |
| 5. LOTTERY DRAW | Of the 205 applicants..." |

Sen. Shabazz, through you, Mr. President, listen:

"...134 were short-listed and 17 selected by lottery draw on 1999, February 26th.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 6. MORTGAGE FINANCING | TTMF has approved all selected applicants and is awaiting 'Final Completion Certificates' before disbursing funds." |
|-----------------------|---|

As at October 19, the City Engineer was awaiting the final completion certificates from the Port of Spain City Corporation. If there are no occupants in the John John Towers, Cook Street, I ask you why.

Mr. President, my colleague, Sen. Shabazz, attempted to be critical of the Sou-Sou Land approach to development. In law, there is a saying, that ignorance of the law is no excuse, so I would not spend too much time trying to educate Sen. Shabazz on what Sou-Sou Land has done, what it can do and what it is, in fact, doing for the people of this country. Some people will never learn. I want to assure Sen. Alfred, before she leaves this august Chamber, that discussions are taking place between the National Housing Authority and the Tobago House of Assembly and a statement will be forthcoming on the issues that she has raised as they relate to Tobago and the National Housing Authority.

Many of my colleagues on the other side, being either lawyers—bush or otherwise—or economists, have always requested that when Ministers speak during the budget debate they explain to the population at large how much of our previous plans and projects we have completed and our blueprint or plan for the future. Lawyers and economists, who are always in possession of two hands, will tell you that once this information is available they can then advise you, on the one hand, if this was done in a particular way what the result would have been and if it was done in another way, on the other hand, what would have been the result. In truth, I think, Mr. President, what they are saying is that if information is available they can constructively advise. I am about to provide some information on the aims and objectives of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. CUFFY DOWLAT]

Monday, October 25, 1999

This ministry is being established to be a modern organization providing quality services for the development of the national good through the establishment of an appropriate development framework with the creation of well-planned, sustainable settlements. In 1996 the new Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognized that it could not meet the demands of its citizenry by pursuing the then existing policy of providing houses only to a limited segment of the population.

Between 1991 and 1995 the performance of the Ministry was minimal. In those four years 658 houses and 99 rental units were built by all agencies of the Ministry. In 1996, the policy was shifted to one of facilitating the private sector in the development of viable, holistic settlements with acceptable and affordable shelter for all citizens. Prior to June, 1998, the Ministry of Housing and Settlements was responsible for the implementation of Government's settlements programme which included land development, housing construction, the provision of community facilities and squatter regularization. However, from June, 1998, the Ministry was mandated by Government to adopt a more holistic approach to development, focussed on physical planning inclusive of facilitating the shelter needs of the ministry.

Given this new role, the portfolio of the ministry was expanded significantly to include agencies which were mandated to devise and implement strategies for physical planning and development in the country. These agencies included the Interim National Physical Planning Commission, the Town and Country Planning Division, the Lands and Surveys Division and the Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago. The ministry's shelter programme is being undertaken by four executing agencies, namely, the Project Execution Unit, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee, the National Housing Authority and the Land Settlement Agency. The period 1996 to September, 1999 has been, therefore, one of stabilization, consolidation, resource reallocation and acceleration of existing programmes and projects consistent with the new vision.

Mr. President, in previous years we have spoken of the aims and strategy of the growth pole exercise as being undertaken by the ministry to achieve its aims and objectives. This exercise we summarize as being two-fold, to reduce socio-economic imbalances which exist between rural and urban areas and to concentrate growth in a few selected areas in order to derive savings and efficiency. This exercise is geared towards a redistribution of activities from the

business capital in an attempt to engender new economic activity in underdeveloped rural areas. Scoping and planning assessment surveys and land use and development plans are being prepared for these 13 centres.

In 1997/1998 the Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago was commissioned to conduct scoping exercises of six areas. To date, Port of Spain waterfront, San Fernando, Sangre Grande, Couva, Point Fortin and Mayaro have been completed. Based on the scoping exercises, a local area plan was commissioned in late 1998 for San Fernando and in early 1999 for the Port of Spain waterfront and a draft national conceptual plan and final reports were completed for some areas.

Included in these areas, would be Scarborough/Canaan/Roxborough which is done and being done in collaboration and consultation with the Tobago House of Assembly. This exercise is extremely important to reduce the socio-economic imbalances and to reduce the rural/urban drift that is so predominant in developing countries and which, ultimately, results in slums and all its attendant ills. This exercise will derive savings and efficiencies which can only redound to the benefit of all people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, in order to accelerate the ministry's programme in the sphere of physical planning for the country, the Planning and Development of Land Bill, 1998 was laid in Parliament and sent before a Select Committee and later a Joint Select Committee.

At this point, can I congratulate Sen. Prof. John Spence, Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny and other members of the Select Committee of the Senate and later the Joint Select Committee of both Houses for the generosity of their time, their constructive criticisms, their interest and their concerns for national development.

As Chairman of the Select committee of the Senate which discussed this Bill, I know Members were called upon to work later nights and all day Saturdays and have done so with the commitment I have come to expect from certain persons. Professors, I want to apologize for any unfounded and ill-informed comments that you might have heard from persons who would not have had the benefit of your tremendous experience and expertise and whose unfortunate comments might have caused you some pain.

This honourable Senate is well acquainted with and appreciates the importance of the Planning and Development of Land Bill to enable sustainable

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. CUFFY DOWLAT]

Monday, October 25, 1999

development, thus it is not necessary for me to repeat the necessity for that Bill. What we know, Mr. President, is our experiences over the years have demonstrated that it is indeed a cumbersome process to obtain planning approval and even more difficult is the ability of the average citizen to access the review process. In light of this, in March 1999, a Development Control Committee was established to review the process of decision making with respect to application for planning permission. In July 1999, the committee submitted its report outlining appropriate procedures for increasing efficiency and reducing bottlenecks in the approval process. This has resulted in much needed relief for citizens.

Additionally, Mr. President, work is being undertaken in the area of development of planning and building standards, drawing on work done by the Town and Country Planning Division and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. A draft document on the administrative procedures and regulations relating to the subdivision of land is being prepared for public discussion. However, it is also quite alarming and in fact a matter of national importance that thousands of buildings and illegal developments, both residential and commercial, have been constructed and are being occupied without the relevant Town and Country Planning approval.

I am reliably informed, Sir, that nearly 80 per cent of all buildings in this country have been constructed and are being occupied without planning permission. Sir, these buildings cannot now be demolished. Therefore, a mechanism has to be established and a formula devised for the regularization of these unauthorized and non-conforming development of land for which planning approval under the Town and Country Planning Act, Chap. 35:01 was not obtained. To address this issue, the hon. Minister of Housing and Settlements has established and mandated a committee to find appropriate solutions to this problem.

Sir, in keeping with the Town and Country Planning Division's two main functions, that is, development planning and development control, much has been achieved over the last year with the fullest co-operation and active involvement of the division working with the private sector. As a matter of record, of the 5,416 applications submitted for planning approval during the period 1998/1999, 65.9 per cent or 3,569 applications were determined within the statutory eight-week period.

Of the 187 requests for review of planning decisions, 123 reports were prepared by the division. The division continues to prepare terms of reference for environmental impact assessment and evaluate environmental impact statements for projects that are likely to have environmental impact. These projects and programmes will continue into the fiscal year 1999/2000 with additional effort

being made to inform and sensitize the public about the necessity for the approval process and the attendant environmental concerns.

Mr. President, the Minister and the Ministry of Housing and Settlements also has direct responsibility for the Lands and Surveys Division. In the 1998/1999 fiscal year a number of projects were successfully undertaken by this division. It is no secret that there seems to have been a total neglect and lack of political will to address the problems of collection, maintenance, restoration and storage of data in land administration. Sir, if we do not know our land base, if we do not know our assets, if we do not know what our country owns, how can we really plan for human development and sustainable growth in a holistic manner?

During 1998/1999 a database of all state lands in Trinidad and Tobago was completed. Using the geographic information systems and title searches, 30 per cent of the said lands have been completed. The computerization of the records of the division has commenced together with cadastral surveys, planned maintenance, restoration and storage projects. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure the preservation and integrity of existing records. It is expected that 50 per cent of the restoration work will be completed in the fiscal year 1999/2000.

I now turn to the issue of Settlements. As indicated earlier, the Ministry of Housing and Settlements has four executing agencies to undertake its shelter programme, namely the Project Execution Unit, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee, the National Housing Authority and the Land Settlements Agency. In the area of sites and services the National Housing Authority undertook the following projects, Tarouba North, Couva North Phase IV, during which infrastructural works have been completed and, in the case of Couva North, 250 housing lots will be provided. Twenty-five houses have been completed, another 25 are 70 per cent completed and during the coming year, the remaining houses are expected to be constructed in a joint venture with the private sector.

4.00 p.m.

Demerara Road, Wallerfield—and I see a smile on Sen. Prof. Kenny's face. Construction has commenced on 140 houses to facilitate the relocation of residents who were victims of lead poisoning. To date, 61 houses have been completed and construction is continuing.

Malabar Phase v—100 fully serviced lots—*[Interruption]* We are working with the Ministry of Health to ensure that the issue of the lead poisoning is also addressed—are to be provided and in River Estate, infrastructure works are expected to be completed in the year 2000 to facilitate the construction of 58 units.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. CUFFY DOWLAT]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Under the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee, Bien Venue—21 additional serviced lots are to be provided. Land development work is being undertaken in collaboration with the National Commission for Self-Help, the Lagoon Development Company and the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee.

Brothers Garth Housing Development—this project has been outstanding for some time. When completed, it is expected to provide 141 serviced lots. Negotiations are taking place with WASA to ensure adequate service mains and supply, before approval is granted for the project.

Orange Field Housing Development is expected to yield a further 32 fully serviced lots. Additionally, there are proposals to upgrade the existing sewer treatment plant.

As with the tradition of self-sufficiency, independence and willingness to contribute to human development and sustainable growth, the upgrading and maintenance of all projects of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee will continue, in collaboration with community groups, self-help initiatives and contributions from individual and local corporations.

We have been hearing talk that this Government has not constructed houses—misinformation, as is usual, coming from the other side. During the period October 1998 to September 1999, the Inter-American Development Bank assisted National Settlements Programme, assisted and delivered 510 houses in various housing settlements.

Sen. Shabazz: When was that started?

Sen. C. Cuffy Dowlat: Be informed. Bon Air West, Arouca—80 houses completed; Harmony Hall, Gasparillo—85; Malabar Phase IV, Arima—82; Union Hall, San Fernando—90; Couva North Phase II—70; Debe Phase II—30; Calder Hall in Tobago—50; Blenheim in Tobago—3; La Paille in Caroni—20; a total of 510 houses. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, Shelter Construction Report for period commencing December 1995 and ending August 31, 1999—A total of 1,429 houses have been delivered; 2,250 are under various stages of completion and will soon be delivered.

Plans provided by the Ministry and the Division—3,076 have been provided to individuals. Deeds registered—2,261. Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance loans—a total of 670 loans under the project; 151 loans were sourced privately, a total of 821 loans. Under completed houses, 1,162 were granted by Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited; 267 by private individuals; a total of 1,429 houses—loans provided for and houses completed and are being

occupied. This is the work of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements under the Panday-led team.

Mr. President, it is anticipated that construction of 445 houses will take place during 1999/2000 in one project and of this number, 280 units are expected to be constructed at a cost of approximately TT \$60,000 or US \$10,000. This is the “New Perspective Programme” of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements.

If I may summarize briefly the activities of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements during the period 1998/1999. The Ministry provided infrastructure services in nine housing estates yielding 3,803 lots; built two all-purpose community centres; laid over 800 metres of water main; 2,900 metres of road and 2,000 metres of drains in housing sites; constructed a total of 2,817 houses and 346 apartments, mostly through joint venture arrangements with the private sector.

Mr. President, I now come to the National Housing Authority. In true Trini style, even before the Minister of Finance had completed his budget presentation, some Trinis heard what they wanted to hear, understood what they wanted to understand, and the “ole talk”, “gallerying” and “mamaguying” started.

Let me attempt to paint a picture of what has happened in the National Housing Authority in the past. The average citizen, who in previous years approached the National Housing Authority for an apartment, will tell you and can tell you of the horrors he would have had to endure and the long wait before he received an apartment, if he got one at all. Today, we see persons with applications made 10 or 15 years ago, still not having had their housing needs addressed but for whom, today, shelter is being provided and shelter solutions and options are being presented to these same individuals.

But, Mr. President, that is not the only sad part, you know, the fact that long ago to get a house you had to be somebody's friend or family, what is really sad and what really hurts is the lack of discipline, integrity and commitment to country displayed by some beneficiaries of government's National Housing units, that is, I understand, some friends and supporters who were fortunate enough to receive government housing.

Rentals of \$12, \$25, \$50 or \$100 a month have not been paid by some occupants for years and thousands of taxpayers' dollars are still being used and are being asked to be used to maintain and upkeep the premises of persons who do not have the common decency to pay the small rent for the unit they occupy. I am reliably informed that over TT \$73 million is owing to the state by these tenants in arrears. Frightening, Mr. President.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. CUFFY DOWLAT]

Monday, October 25, 1999

You know what else, Mr. President, occupiers, some of these so-called friends and supporters of previous regimes, sublet their units for hundreds of dollars and yet refuse to pay their monthly rentals to the National Housing Authority.

Another group uses the apartments as their holiday resort. Sometimes for 11½ months of the year, they are living abroad; they keep the apartments locked up; they refuse to pay rents; but for two weeks of the year, usually around Christmas or Carnival, they visit Trinidad, occupy the apartments and vulgarly display their pride in ostentatious living and conspicuous consumption, but yet would not pay their measly monthly allowance/monthly rental of \$25, \$50 or \$100 to the National Housing Authority. These are some of the people who have occupied housing under previous regimes and this, I understand, my friend and colleague Sen. Shabazz, is asking us to continue. Shameless!

Sen. Tota-Maharaj: Really shameless.

Sen. C. Cuffy Dowlat: Mr. President, these are some of the people who live in government housing units subsidized by the hard-working, honest and decent citizens of this country. The hard-earned tax dollars of our less fortunate brothers and sisters in this society are being used to pay, *inter alia*, cleaners to sweep corridors and steps of apartments occupied by National Housing Authority tenants—clean the steps and the corridor.

Mr. President, I am certain that you are aware that at any time a washer in a tap can go bad in your home and all you need to replace it is a little piece of rubber at a cost of about \$1.00 or else that tap would continue to leak, drip-drip, and sometimes annoyingly so.

Would you believe that if a washer goes bad in a National Housing Authority apartment, the National Housing Authority may have to buy the washer, send a plumber and a driver to take the plumber to the apartment? I am being reliably informed that a supervisor may need to accompany the plumber and the driver, or else the plumber may not be able to complete the exercise of changing the washer? This is the situation that exists and which culture we are now changing.

Sen. Tota-Maharaj: That is what you all encouraged.

Sen. C. Cuffy Dowlat: This is but one scenario in the on-going saga of the National Housing Authority.

Taxpayers' dollars at an average of \$300 per month is being spent on the maintenance of these units; Government in turn collects on an average, \$27.50 per month. Those who criticize the most are usually the ones with the least accurate

information, but we must all admit that constructive criticism if intelligently conveyed, can be responsibly addressed.

The lack of discipline, inefficiency and mismanagement of our state resources must not be condoned, encouraged by anyone or go unabated. We must continue to inculcate in all our peoples the habit of caring, sharing, independence, self-sufficiency and respect for property.

The Government is finding the mechanisms to make our people property owners and to give them a share of the national patrimony and we are being criticized by the minority of those who sit on the Opposition Bench, where they will continue to sit for many more years to come. [*Desk thumping*] It is in this light that this Government has decided to encourage home ownership and respect for property and to further encourage our citizens to become partners in progress.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will sell all new apartments constructed by the National Housing Authority and disposal of existing rental units will commence following the working out of a maze of logistic legal, social and financial issues. I can assure you, Mr. President, and this honourable Senate that representatives of the National Union of Government and Federated Workers and the Public Services Association branches at the National Housing Authority have always been privy to the discussions as they relate to the disposal of existing rental units held by the National Housing Authority on trust for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The unions have always been party to all the discussions that are taking place.

Mr. President, to enable these acquisitions, the Government is ensuring through the issue of tax-free bonds by the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited, that moneys will be available in the domestic financial market for lending at a subsidized interest rate over a prolonged period to low income persons.

Might I indicate, Sir, that during the fiscal year 1998/1999, the Ministry of Housing and Settlements disbursed TT \$39,594,653 in loans for home ownership, and beneficiaries were able to access mortgages at an interest rate of 8 per cent from the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited. During the fiscal year 1999/2000, TT \$38 million is expected to be disbursed and this will be done through the Inter-American Development Bank assisted programme and the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited.

Mr. President, in 1998/1999, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee granted loans in the sum of \$4.2 million to facilitate construction and repairs to

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. CUFFY DOWLAT]

Monday, October 25, 1999

houses, and in the fiscal year 1999/2000, the committee is expected to disburse TT \$10.4 million. The Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited, in some instances, can allow persons up to 50 years to complete payment on their mortgages.

Sir, home ownership is of significant value as it increases your asset base, gives you a stake in the future development of your country, provides collateral, *inter alia*, for you and your children's education and well-being and, most importantly, it gives you a sense of pride and increases your self-esteem. But, my real concern now is: Why are there elements in this society that do not want to facilitate our less fortunate brothers and sisters to own a home and a real share in the national pie?

4.15 p.m.

Why do some of us want to keep our people, whom we claim to care for, in a permanent state of mental slavery, when these same people are crying out for help and asking to be relieved of economic subservience and mental bondage? Mr. President, the Panday administration continues to develop and deliver to our citizens.

We in the Ministry of Housing and Settlements and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago are not saying that there will be no difficulty in buying a unit or constructing a house. What we are saying is let us come together, identify what problems we might be having, find a solution and implement the action. Let us all play our part in achieving a home-owning democracy in which all our citizens participate.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Housing and Settlements continues to participate and make its mark on the regional and international level and continues to forge links and share and learn from the experiences and expertise of other nations as we together address the issue of human development and land management in an effort to attain viable, holistic and sustainable settlements.

Government in partnership with its people. No more must there be willy-nilly squatting; no more must we see an increase of what used to be squatter settlements and spontaneous settlements. The mechanism is now in place for us to deal with the problem at hand. Let us encourage our people to become and to continue to be disciplined. We now have a solution to the problem. Come to us. Do not be encouraged to continue to commit wrong. When you do not have an avenue to correct a wrong, maybe we can understand your reason to do something that you would not normally do, but if an avenue is provided and a solution is

present, use it. I encourage all my colleagues to encourage their friends, their representatives and their electorates to use the process that is now available.

Mr. President, in closing, let me once again congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance, his team of officers in the Ministry of Finance, his Cabinet colleagues and all those who have in one way or another contributed to the "Blueprint for Human Development and Sustainable Growth" as we enter the new millennium.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to wish you and your family, Members of this Senate and the wider community, Subh Divali as the Hindu community especially, and the country generally prepare to celebrate the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya and the triumph of light over darkness. Mr. President, I am certain there is a lesson contained therein for all of us.

I thank you.

Sen. Philip Marshall: Mr. President, I rise to make this contribution in support of the Bill to provide for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ending September 30, 2000. I apologize for my inability to join the debate on Friday, October 22 and my inability to do so tomorrow, Tuesday 26, because I will be out of the country to lead some predetermined seminars that involve over 100 people on each occasion, and they just simply could not be rescheduled.

I would also like to offer my congratulations to the new Senator, Lindsay Gillette, who is absent today, but I am sure he has already set about his task of implementation.

Sen. Daly: Where is he? He is not here.

Sen. Mark: Just on a point of clarification. Mr. President, I just wanted to indicate to the honourable Senate that both Senator Vimala Tota-Maharaj, who is now a Minister, as well as Senator Lindsay Gillette, were sworn in at the President's House this afternoon. So, he is on his way to the Parliament. He is not absent. He was sworn in today. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. P. Marshall: Thank you. I stand corrected. I just meant temporarily not with us; not absent from the sitting. Congratulations Minister. I also acknowledge the continued weight that has been placed on the shoulders of our hon. Minister of Finance, especially at a time when physical capital: tangible capital, things that we could touch and feel in today's knowledge era becomes more of a liability, and intangible capital: intellectual capital and social well-being which we cannot actually measure or see becomes more of an asset.

Mr. President, this budget debate really did not start when the Minister of Finance made his budget presentation. It really started, in my mind, when our hon. Sen. Dr. St. Cyr raised his Private Member's Motion concerning the debate on economic policy and philosophy of the Government. [*Desk thumping*] I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of his hardworking staff in the Ministry of Finance who helped to produce these voluminous documents with very short deadlines. I am sure the Minister of Finance did this. So, please extend to your people, hon. Minister, the appreciation for their work.

I have always felt that the budget debate and the budget, really, just simply represent the financial funding of Government's policy. Therefore, if there were any criticisms to be levelled against the Minister of Finance in his presentation, it was not necessarily that we did not deal with fiscal measures or we did not raise new taxes—we should be grateful for that—but possibly, he may have taken the opportunity to restate in his presentation the outline of Government's economic and development policy.

I would like to start, Mr. President, with a brief overview of the budget allocation in terms of numbers and percentages, and what I want to do in my contribution today is not really deal so much with the economic matters, because the review of the various visitations have said, quite clearly, that Trinidad and Tobago is on the path and has obtained the various benchmarks in terms of a developing country; good marks in terms of fiscal discipline, in terms of potential for growth. Therefore, I think it would be more productive if we acknowledge the achievement of the Minister of Finance in this regard and move forward. Now that we have the economic platform, are we allocating our potential resources in the manner that would take the country forward in terms of its farthest and its quickest path.

May I also make the point. I said it last year in the budget debate. The fundamental issues that need to be addressed in Trinidad and Tobago have nothing to do with the Government of the day. What I mean by that is, I would like to see that successive governments do not address fundamental issues as political to change the direction that is needed for the well-being of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Let me give an example of this. In 1986, the Minister of Finance, Selby Wilson, began the path of the economic transformation. Hard decisions were made, public sector salaries were cut for the first time in Trinidad and Tobago. Even though we had to make hard changes and although the medicine is good for you in the long-run, the government of the day was rewarded by not being

returned to office. But then, Minister Mottley followed and he continued on the same path. Then Minister Kuei Tung followed and he continued on the same path. *[Laughter]*

What we have today, really, is that the fundamental issues that needed to be changed in the economic sector were consistently followed by successive governments, and every single credit should be given to each of those three Ministers of Finance because the essential fundamental issues, the essential journey should not have veered off in a change in direction in any way. This is why today, because of that philosophy implemented by successive governments, we now have the basis of the underpinning to move forward.

In the rest of my contribution, I would like to propose that the fundamental issues that will face us with respect to education, health and social infrastructure and development need to be followed not just for the term of one government, but several governments to come, because the most important, the most far-reaching initiatives, as I have said before, after the money is spent, the results may take 10, 15 or 20 years.

So, a government of the day is faced with this dilemma. Does it make hard decisions in which it may invest in social infrastructure in education where it may not tangibly be able to provide the evidence to the citizens that it has done this and that? When we talk about providing better health care, better care for the elderly, preschooling, better teacher education, better health services, they cannot physically be seen and the benefit is to be realized long after the specific decisions were made by the leaders in government during that specific point in time. How do we assure and become assured that the real underlying transformation effort that we have to go through is going to take 5 to 15 years to show results between cause and effect?

Mr. President, let me now summarize basically what the hon. Minister has to deal with in terms of his priority. The total budget, both recurring expenditure and capital development expenditure, is approximately \$14,676 million. Of that, charges on account of the public debt is 27 per cent; nearly \$4 billion. So, 27 cents on the dollar has already gone.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health which, in terms of volume of expenditure, both recurring and development, take third and fourth place respectively. The Ministry of Education is \$1.4 billion and the Ministry of Health is \$969 million, representing respectively, 9.5 per cent and 6.6 per cent. So, we really have something like 17 per cent of our total expenditure going to

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MARSHALL]

Monday, October 25, 1999

those two items of social infrastructure, which does not include the Ministry of Social and Community Development—which is another 5 per cent—representing \$783 million, and the Ministry of Housing and Settlements, which is \$223 million—another 1.5 per cent. Therefore, we roughly have 24 per cent in total being spent on social infrastructure after we have had to spend about 27 per cent on the public debt.

So, Mr. President, based on that overview, one would see that in terms of the potential allocation of resources, this Government of the day appears to be heading in the right direction in terms of the totality of expenditure towards social infrastructure. One of my concerns, which I will develop in this contribution, is: Are we spending that money effectively?

4.30 p.m.

Mr. President, one of the things that has always challenged Ministers of Finance is that if because of the estimates of revenue, if for some reason oil prices and external shocks were to hit our country, traditionally we have not been able to carry out the planned development expenditure. The development expenditure has always been a wish list subject to forces beyond our control. I made the point last year.

What are the alternatives? The first alternative is, I feel we have to have a different mindset on expenditure that we call our recurring or revenue estimates of expenditure. Somehow we seem to feel that recurring expenditure should possibly not deliver significant improvements to the benefits of the citizens but is really an expenditure to keep the clock ticking over, to keep the level of service ticking over, but real improvements would always come from development expenditure. I believe we have to change that mindset. We really have to change that mindset.

How do we know that? By the results of unsuccessful attempts by succeeding governments to date. How do we tie expected outcomes in terms of service delivery to the inputs in terms of financial votes on expenditure provided to the various ministries? There is no easy way. It is very difficult, I can assure you, because this requires a new approach to management and activity-based costing. I know it is on the drawing board, but I am saying that it is becoming more and more crucial. We need to be able to say not that this ministry has been voted \$250 million and it has spent \$249 million, so here is the \$1 million back of the unspent vote. We need to say that if that ministry is going to provide so many housing units, so many squatter regularization settlements; how do we tie the allowed budget and the reporting on the performance in terms of the physical delivery of what was promised? Mr. President, this is an important issue.

Take the regional health authorities. There are budgets for the Central Regional Health Authority, there are budgets for the Northern Authority. Do we change those budgets according to the number of patient nights or the number of throughput of patients served, or the operations? I am sure we have a situation that because people have to pay for the services at Mount Hope they probably go to the Port of Spain General Hospital. Does the Port of Spain General Hospital report greater allocated efficiency or additional allocation because of the higher volume of throughput or output?

I cannot believe, Mr. President, that we have a situation that when we have voted this type of expenditure to the Ministry of Health, we have the very embarrassing situation where a television news crew, or somebody with torchlight *et cetera* has to save the life or, at least, increase the chances of survival of somebody in the Intensive Care Unit. What is happening to Mr. Kuei Tung's hard-earned money? What is happening to it? Here we have all these figures, but yet when the rubber hits the road, when the Government of the day has to deliver the service to the citizens, basic issues are not being dealt with.

Let me reveal, possibly, some of the challenges; that is the one of maintenance. My understanding is that those lifts in the hospital are 27 years old. How old are the generators? Because we know we have gone through hard times, and traditionally therefore, we do not have adequate maintenance budgets in our day-to-day operations. What you find is that promises and expectations are given to the citizenry. We talk about significant developments being able to meet their needs, but because of a backlog of maintenance over decades, the Government of the day is not able to deliver its promises.

The Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA)—“Water for All”. We have 4,000 kilometres of underground pipe, I believe, if we had to replace all those rusted mains—I am not saying they all have to be replaced—I think the expenditure could be somewhere in the vicinity of \$4 billion. With unaccounted water of 45 per cent, we have a situation, once again, because of inadequate maintenance or funding, we have not been able to deliver basic services that go to the very core of what we suggest is our most important resource: our people.

Mr. President, is it not time that from a financial perspective we have to think totally differently? I said just now that in the new world of knowledge, in the new world of challenges, physical assets become more of a liability and intellectual knowledge becomes more of the asset. Do governments of the day have to own things? Should we really begin to say: Let us have the build, operate, transfer and lease, let other agencies outside—private sector, semi-quasi government—

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MARSHALL]

Monday, October 25, 1999

undertake the capital expenditure for these basic issues so that the moneys we need to spend on human infrastructure would be there. The point I am making is that although we are spending 25 per cent on social infrastructure, I believe that the extent of the remedial work to be done to the social infrastructure of Trinidad and Tobago is so great that we have to double that. We have to double that!

We talk about the global economy, Mr. President. In the global economy everybody is connected to everybody else. We have in our universities and our energy sector, people of the very best. The global economy is fine for those of us who have the skills, for those of us whose professional qualifications or other skills—whether it is football—the Dwight Yorkes—where because of that connectivity and transportability our skills will be rewarded in any marketplace in the world. How many people in Trinidad and Tobago—because of the fact of their educational achievements, because of the fact that in the days gone by we did not talk about human development with the same focus that we now do—will never be part of the global economy? They will never be part of the global economy because the global economy is talking about knowledge.

Mr. President, we have a labour participation rate of 59 per cent. When we talk about 11 per cent unemployment, we are talking about 11 per cent unemployment on our formal labour force. We do know that of the 858,000 potential people of labour force age: over the age of 15, under the age of 60, not in educational support institutions, many of them represent people who, according to Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt, provide social services by unremunerated work; people who may help in the caring and so the—are not part of the formal sector and their output is not recorded in our formal GDP.

It will also include many people in the informal sector. I am not saying that those 350,000-odd people are unemployed. I am saying we have a large number of people in our informal sector. It is very difficult to take people from the informal sector to deal with the challenges, the competitiveness and the ever-increasing weight being put on private sector organizations to manage to the bone their investment in people or their head count. People who are not equipped today, unfortunately, with the wherewithal to have and own their own factors of production—which is what intellectual capital represents—are, in fact, at the mercy of the harsh global competitive environment. That is a significant aspect of the change. In the old days a person would be an employee working for an employer because the factors of production were land and capital, *et cetera*. But in today's age, those of us who have had the exposure to university and have been fortunate, own our main factor of production, which is intellectual capital, so we

have some measure of being in control of our destiny. But most of the citizens of our country are not in that fortunate position.

4.40 p.m.

We have significant remedial work to do. We have a literacy rate of 98 per cent. We have an adult functional illiteracy rate, I believe, of 20 per cent. This is not a criticism of Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, in the *Human Development Report*, you would be surprised at the functional illiteracy rate in the United Kingdom. This is the *Human Development Report 1999*. The percentage of people who are classed as functionally illiterate in the United Kingdom is 21.8 per cent; United States, 20.7 per cent; Ireland, 22.6 per cent. You would see, Mr. President, that the whole issue of knowledge and being able to apply learning in the new environment is not relevant only to a developing country like Trinidad and Tobago, it is relevant to even developed countries. The difference is, because of their market size, because of their financial foundation, they can offer a social safety net to the unemployed in their midst, whereas we do not have that luxury in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, we have said, and this Government has said, and the Minister of Finance has alluded in his presentation, and I draw from a quote from the *Human Development Report*, that the real wealth of a nation is its people and the purpose of development is “to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives”.

To support the point that I was just making, in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, let me provide you with some statistics. These countries house, or resident in them is, 19 per cent of the global population—19 per cent of the global population reside in OECD countries—yet they possess 71 per cent of the global trade in goods and services, 58 per cent of foreign direct investment and 91 per cent of all Internet users. So what is this telling us? Success to the successful. Developing countries are going to face a tremendous challenge, and its people are being marginalized in the new challenges that lie ahead.

This is why I am suggesting, could it be possible that the Minister of Finance, somehow we could approach lending organizations—I am not suggesting that one should have deficit financing—but could it be a case that for a short period of two or three years we have a massive development expenditure in education and health to catch up, to provide the much needed opportunities for people who reside in the informal sector?

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MARSHALL]

Monday, October 25, 1999

This is why I cannot understand—although we have talked about it for years—tourism. Where is the development of our hospitality sector? Why are we not pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into preparing the way, or to even identifying for potential investors, doing environmental impact assessments, almost doing a land bank for them of where their projects may be associated? They come in, they invest, you recover that expenditure from them, but you have readied the ground for them so that the elapse time between when they raise capital abroad to come to invest, we do not let them get away because of the long decision-making process about what is the environmental impact assessment here, there, *et cetera*. We need those jobs, Mr. President. Shall I continue?

Mr. President: What I plan to do, is allow him his first 45 minutes, we will go to tea, and if he is not finished then, he resumes after tea.

Sen. P. Marshall: Thank you, Mr. President.

We had in our midst, two weeks ago, the hon. Butch Stewart talking about how even in the midst of the violence and the financial crisis in the Jamaican financial sector, the importance of tourism to protect their foreign exchange, to provide employment mainly on the north coast and to provide the expansion throughout the Caribbean of his specific hotel group. He talked about the change in fortunes of Air Jamaica, we know that may have government support, so it cannot be compared with BWIA. But the point about it is the tourism product can be such an enormous potential in developing our intellectual capital and capability. Serving in that most demanding industry, every position should be regarded as a position of pride and skill. We need to change that vision, possibly to service from servitude, which could be a legacy that somehow is held over.

We need to deal with the hospitality and tourism issues, because where are we going to get the employment? How is this Government going to provide jobs? No government can provide the economic security, the health and the physical security required for so many of us who may be jobless or living in the informal sector. *[Interruption]* And agriculture, the common plaintive cries from the wings, agriculture and tourism. We have to do this.

Mr. President, one of the areas that I would like to see a caring government begin to really formalize to a greater extent, although they have embarked upon this path, they have already begun in terms of community organizations, they have begun to undertake management and leadership training within some 350 community organizations. I would like to see this stakeholder involvement really deepen. More and more, if we really believe that human development is the answer to take us forward, just as you have early childhood care, you have the

whole issue of people-care, people care for all ages of people: preschools, primary school, secondary, adults, elderly. We do not have people-care in our budget, because the market does not reward people who provide people-care and social care, but yet that is proven to be a key determinant of a strong intellectual capital base.

When I talk about care, how many billions of dollars have we wasted in intellectual capital, frustration and lack of care, because of the junction at the Nestlé Churchill Roosevelt Highway/Uriah Butler Intersection? Mr. President, I am not joking about that. Have you seen the lines day after day, decade after decade? When parents have to go through that and take two to three hours to get home, do you think they are in any mental mood to care, monitor, counsel, or develop their children? Absolutely no way! That one bottleneck is causing this country to lose billions of dollars of productivity a year. And can we not have a government to solve that problem? This is amazing. It really is amazing! I thought that one thing this Government would have left us in place was an appropriate intersection. It really is an important issue. I do not know what the problems are.

Maybe there are severe problems that I am not aware of and the people are not aware of, but share it with them. It is much better to share with the public some insurmountable barrier that, for some reason, a government cannot go ahead with what appears to be low hanging fruit to better the life and the caring of its citizens. Share it with them if there is a problem. Do not let them criticize the government of the day as being uncaring and not being sensible in the way that their time is wasted.

Mr. President, let me share with you Trinidad's rankings and ratings in Human Development Rankings and Ratings, this is not rantings and ravings, let me make sure. In the 1999 Human Development Report Index, Trinidad, in fact, was ranked 46th out of the 174 countries surveyed. In fact, we became top of the list of countries ranked medium human development. The group of 174 countries was put into three bands: high human development, the first 45; then medium human development, 46 onwards; and then poor human development. The only countries in the Caribbean that beat us were Barbados, which was ranked 29; and Antigua and Barbuda, which was ranked 38 and The Bahamas.

The Human Development Index really is made up of a combination of measures, life expectancy at birth, access to schools, primary and secondary, adult literacy, *et cetera*. What was interesting and what was very encouraging about Trinidad's performance is this: in terms of GDP per capita, Trinidad and Tobago ranked 57th, but in terms of human development index we ranked 46th. In other

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MARSHALL]

Monday, October 25, 1999

words, there were some countries whose rank on a GDP per capita was very high but whose human development index was much lower. In those cases therefore, in fact, Luxembourg was one of those that was high in terms of GDP per capita, but 17 in human and development index. What that was saying is that there was an even greater disparity between those who had and those who had not.

What our rank is saying is just the reverse. Here we were, 57th in GDP per capita in ranking, but 46th in the human development index. Which goes to show that although we have a lot of improvements to make, the overall filtering down, based on our GDP per capita, although it could be improved, it certainly measured up generally to the dispersion of that benefit towards social infrastructure.

So, Mr. President, although we complain, it really is important that these independent results be shared with people and this is why information is so important. This is why measurement is so important. This is why the Freedom of Information Bill is so important. That when citizens ask about the performance of a Government department or agency, they can get the information, that we could share with our population and citizens the truth and the facts about our relative costs of the provision of various utilities, *et cetera*. People need information. You cannot not give people information and expect them to be empowered. I believe that when we share and empower our citizens with more information, the attention and interest to what goes on in this House and in the other place will be increased.

One good rating, in fact, congratulations to Trinidad and Tobago, is in terms of the human poverty index. In the 92 developing countries, Trinidad and Tobago ranked second. This meant that we were the second country that had the least deprivation in terms of poverty. So number two is a good ranking. Number one, believe it or not, is Barbados.

4.55 p.m.

In fact, the measure here—I would not be able to tell you—is a very complicated one but we had the value of 2.6 for Barbados and 3.5 for Trinidad and Tobago. This index covered the following areas: the percentage of population below the poverty line; it brought, again, the whole issue of adult illiteracy; it talked about the survival rates of people up to the age of 40; it talked about access to safe water, health services, and sanitation; it talked about children being underweight below a certain age and so forth. So it really dealt with basic issues of the human well-being and Trinidad and Tobago placed second in the 92 developing countries. So, again, this is a very important statistic to build upon.

Mr. President, here we have a good economic foundation by the application consisting of good economic policies, as hard as they hurt; good fiscal discipline over the years; an ability to maximize our energy resources, an ability to have in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, the process of building incentives and encouragement that we could bring the top players into this country, and although we might keep talking about needing to diversify the economy, the point is, right now energy is scoring runs and we have to let them keep on scoring runs, and let us begin to use the ability in our social and educational infrastructure to move ahead.

In the rest of my contribution I would like to propose a way for us going forward on that basis which, basically, will suggest major changes in public sector reform. I end at this part of my contribution and what I am saying is that we need to get greater efficiency from our recurring budget. We need that efficiency to realize a better output in education and health, and to do this we need to reform entirely the public service delivery mechanism. *[Interruption]*

Mr. President: Sen. Marshall, you still have four minutes.

Sen. P. Marshall: Okay, Mr. President. The Government has made a bold move by putting on the table, the need for some form of co-ordination and implementation mechanism in terms of the appointment of its new Senator. One of the challenges that our country has always had is in terms of these development projects. We have not had the total capacity of needed project management and project design experience to undertake our public sector investment programmes in terms of the short time-frame and the volume of those programmes to really make sure that the project and programme objectives would pass muster with the lending bodies.

So a key and critical issue is, therefore, the strengthening of our project management capacity. In addition to that, let us be realistic, we know that in terms of pay scales and so forth, that the Government has a very difficult task of attracting top people to the public sector. The Ministries of Government, therefore, represent resources for the intellectual assets and capabilities needed to get these projects underway.

We need, therefore—and I am not seeing it in the Minister's budget—a leap of faith concerning the employment of people in the public sector management that would possibly be so far removed from what exists at present, that there would be many people who would say that it would not work. And I am talking about a massive review of how we shape the public sector; a massive review of

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MARSHALL]

Monday, October 25, 1999

what Ministers of Government should do; a massive review of what permanent secretaries should do; an intensive review of the part to be played by service commissions; an intensive review of the part to be played by the Public Services Association or the National Union of Government Employees.

I am talking about a partnership that is going to be so different from what we now have, that we would almost have the need for a referendum of the people to get them to agree to the changes that would be so significant. Because Government after Government has consistently, over the years, tried to change the service delivery quality and we have not been able to do so. And no rational human being, who has 24 hours in the day will ever be able to change it. The only thing that is possible is that the system needs to be changed from top to bottom. When I say the system needs to be changed, I do not mean that we do not have good people in the public sector, I am saying that we now live in an era where the colonial structures that are embedded in our Constitution, the rules and regulations are totally, totally obsolete and archaic for how we have to deliver services today.

This is not a challenge being faced only by our Government. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair, has personally taken charge of an effort that he thinks is going to take 10 years which is called “modernizing government”, and I would like to share some of those initiatives in that way forward.

Mr. President: The Hon. Senator’s speaking time 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.

Mr. President: The hon. Senator will resume after the tea break. We shall resume at 5.35 p.m.

5.05 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.38 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. P. Marshall: Mr. President, during the break I was reflecting on a point I made very early in my contribution and this was with respect to the consistent policies followed by the three Ministers of Finance in three successive governments. I wanted to point out that this was a very important strength. It was not only important, it was absolutely needed for the basis of the foreign direct investment which we have attracted in Trinidad and Tobago.

One thing succeeding governments must not be accused of doing is changing the rules with respect to the groundwork that was originally established that attracted such vast amounts of foreign investments in the first place. So consistency of policy certainly in terms of the finance and macroeconomic environment was critical to the situation especially in the energy and petrochemical sectors. I want to make sure that I meant to put this over as a significant plus in terms of different governments and executives really seeing the sense of following a policy that could not be diverted.

Mr. President, before the break I said that the changes I would like to suggest are so fundamental that one may even require a referendum, because these changes in terms of implementation would go at the very heart of the culture that exists not only in the private sector, but moreso in the public sector. It really speaks to the relationships that may exist among and between various ministries and public sector agencies.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Government and the public sector play a very important part in our economic sphere in terms of running state enterprises, or in providing collective goods and services that form the basis like utilities of the competitive thrust of these private sector enterprises. Although this budget has reflected on the whole issue of social infrastructure, we must reflect and say that any private business and any public agency is part of our economy and Trinidad and Tobago is part of the global economy. If we are part of the global economy, and a specific organization is part of our local economy, the same rules that apply in terms of competitiveness and quality and service delivery must apply to any organization or entity in our domestic market-place. This is a long way of saying that our public sector agencies must be as efficient and effective as if they were competing in a private environment. I am speaking here, not about the provision of collective social services where the outcomes may be difficult to specify. I am saying that we have many public sector agencies that provide goods and services that can be specified in great detail and where, in fact, other people in the private sector may be willing to compete for the provision of such goods and services.

In fact, such a framework, such a matrix has been developed by the World Bank in looking at the issue of the new public sector management and they break that framework into the four dimensions about which I am talking: high specificity, and high contestability meaning that if goods and services can be specified in detail and if there are a number of organizations willing to provide those goods and services, the competition and contestability for the provision is high. So that a government of the day should look and see whether there are other

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MARSHALL]

Monday, October 25, 1999

organizations that can provide the same goods or service that is being provided in the public sector in a more cost-effective and cost-efficient manner without in any way impinging or dissipating the quality.

If that is the case, the first reaction may be we are hurting people in the public sector. I want to put it another way. The stakeholders are our citizenry, if a good or service can be provided more effectively and at lower cost in one dimension, you are just simply hurting the citizens especially those in the band of the lowest disposable income if you provide them with a service that costs more, or does not deliver the service at all. This is one aspect of the culture of change we are going to have to embrace. If you do not pay for it now you pay for it later to the extent that our various public sector agencies or ministries, and internal organization in terms of people, processes, learning are not mirrored to the core strategy and mission of that entity. It means that we have wasted resources in the provision of that mission of goods and services or even worse. We will probably find a disconnect between what—in the perception of our population—a ministry must produce, but is not able to do so because it just simply does not have the availability to the required resources.

What is one of the major impediments to having the availability of those resources? We have a situation where we may have over-arching pay grades, applying to everybody in the public sector regardless of skill or performance. How can a Minister acquire the relevant skills set if he is not allowed to pay the market rate to attract that person? Maybe he just needs him for an assignment that is lasting one, two or three years. Maybe this may not be a permanent appointment. This need not necessarily be somebody expecting that senior position to lose out forever.

Maybe just at this point in time that intellectual capacity is needed now and not only in one person, but in several persons who have the required know-how to implement the projects to establish and set forward the country on the very important initiatives that have been laid down in the public sector development programme. This is why we need a revolution in our thinking; that we keep saying we cannot overcome this insurmountable barrier because it does not fit in to our archaic and obsolete structures that determine how our public sector organizations are managed. This is the problem and no government of the day will ever deliver its promises to the people of Trinidad and Tobago if there is total, incompatible, permanent, misalignment between resources, environment and the mission of the organization.

We have to change, and this change is going to require significant pain. We need the Government of the day sponsored by the Prime Minister to go out to the people and say if we are to deliver to you the total range of services, whether they be economic or social, if we are to deliver that to you in a cost-effective and holistic manner this is the pain through which we must go. What about the targets of that change? What about the people who will be affected, and possibly the loss of jobs and this is why I am saying in terms of the Minister's budget, in terms of the changes required, we cannot expect people to suffer the insecurity of not having a job.

One of the things we are going to have to budget for is that where people may need to be changed because they are not ready in terms of their background or training, we are going to have to give those people a soft landing. We are going to have to help those people in terms of retraining them, or finding more suitable employment that matches their skills and capabilities. We keep making the mistake that it is such a terrible social thing to do—which it is—to put a person out of a job that he may have been working in for 15 years and nobody ever told him to reskill himself. We never take the decision to make the change and the cost to the country is ten times that as if we had made the change earlier and funded in social terms the safety net to deal with and help transform those persons who may initially be regarded as the recipients of harsh decisions in economic terms.

5.50 p.m.

Mr. President, people could never accept change if they see that it means the end of their income security. They have families, houses and other commitments. How could anyone in that state ever be willing to accept change, and be a victim of that change of some re-engineering effort, if their income security is going to be impinged by it? The only way we could change is if we make significant provisions in our budgets to help this change process.

This is why I would like to see the Minister of Finance ensure, in terms of our revenue and tax collection, that everyone who should be paying their fair amount of tax is, in fact, doing so. We must assiduously follow up every single corner to be able to maximize our revenue collections, so that we could afford these significant changes in transforming our organizations and society.

Mr. President, one of the most difficult things to do, is what the present British government has embarked upon and that is, modernizing government. In its statement and vision of modernizing government, Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, said that the Government of the United Kingdom must reinforce its

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MARSHALL]

Monday, October 25, 1999

commitment to public servants and the public service. It must recognize those people who perform and pay them. I have said it before, that we cannot have a situation where the reward for failure is the same as the reward for success. We have to make a change that is going to be based on meritocracy, or else there would be no change. There will be no ability to move forward to implement all of these challenges that we have put forward into a Trinidad and Tobago that would become more competitive.

Mr. President, one of the challenges faced by the United Kingdom Government—and I am sure every Minister of the day here in this Senate would understand this challenge—is saying that goods and services that have to be provided to the individual must be provided in a collective and integrated fashion by a number of ministries. In other words, how do we get out of the functional silo of Ministries on an individual basis delivering—from the functional silo of a ministry—the portfolio of services of that Ministry?

Mr. President, what the British Government is saying is this. Let us look at a community and try to develop an analogy. I am going to use Sangre Grande. Maybe what the Government should say is, let us look at the population of Sangre Grande and the need for all the goods and services. Let us also do a health check. What is education there like? What are the conditions of the primary and secondary schools? What is the condition of the transport system? What is the condition of the police service? What is the condition of the hospital and the health sector? In other words, you take a holistic view of everything that needs to be fixed in that physical grid representing Sangre Grande, then you set a budget and a collective integrated team of all the ministries that have to fix it and work together as a team. So when Sangre Grande is finished, everything is working, instead of, now that the hospital is fixed, there is no transport.

Mr. President: You have two minutes.

Sen. P. Marshall: I am now warming up! [*Laughter*]. Let me begin to end therefore, by saying, we have so much potential in this country. This is why I understood where the Attorney General was coming from, when he said that he wanted parliamentary committees. I did not vote for parliamentary committees because I did not think that they would be able to have the resources to make the changes that are necessary.

Mr. President, there are service commissions. I am not talking here about not having the need to protect the integrity of promotions and seniority *et cetera* in the public service—but I almost feel without going into significant depth, maybe,

we have service commissions that are just simply not of the same shape and organization required to be part of the respective public service agencies that need to deliver the services. So there is a total disconnect between the promises made for implementation and what can be delivered.

Mr. President, I end by saying the significance of this change is so great, in terms of culture, that it is going to be a revolution in thinking. It is going to require a referendum of our people and top-level sponsorship because no “Minister of Implementation” —no one, unless we share this holistic vision—will ever deliver for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So I would like to support the Bill entitled the Appropriation for the Service of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Selwyn John: Mr. President, let me begin by indicating my support for the budget for the year 1999—2000. But like my colleagues before me, I would like to extend my congratulations to our new comrade Ministers—I mean comrade as a fraternal Senator—Sen. Gillette and Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj. I must admit that I did not have the opportunity of hearing the name of Sen. Gillette before in the Senate to know of him, but I am sure that we would need to work closely together. As a trade union leader there are many bottlenecks I face dealing with bureaucracy and so forth. This country has a problem and, maybe, if I get the time in my speech later on, I will deal with some of the problems that I face on the question of implementation and matters like that. May I just add my congratulations to Sen. Tota-Maharaj. She is one of those who are a little closer to people like us in the trade union fraternity. She did her spell as a trade unionist.

Mr. President, her grandfather, who was a Leader of the Opposition, in this Parliament at one time—the Hon. Bhadase Sagan Maharaj—was one of our leading trade unionists in his day. He led the sugar workers and we worked very closely—being a labour leader in the public sector—and I got to know him very well. Mr. Bhadase Sagan Maharaj was one of the master organizers of workers in this country and, maybe, as a politician he was also able to organize the opponents of the then government.

Mr. President, I know Sen. Tota-Maharaj’s success would be more in the field of management, where she has already impressed others of her ability to make changes and to achieve success in managing organizations. I would like to wish her well, I know she will do well, and more particularly, in the ministry to which she is gone. That ministry is one of the problem areas in the public service over the years, not only in the services, but dealing with human resources and so forth.

Some of the major problems of the trade union have been there in the Ministry of Health. The problems are not that difficult to overcome once people could deal with the issues and take decisions, manage the service and one could get results.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to make some important comments on this budget. There were those who described the budget as an exercise in deception while others chose to spend their time arguing over the accuracy of figures and otherwise, still some others complained that the budget lacked vision. But I think the Senate, at the end of our discussion and in the context of the motion to give support to the Minister's budget, would be called upon to vote one way or the other and approve the receipts and expenditure that have been put to us. The most important issues that have to be dealt with are not the correctness of the figures as have been quoted but moreso the benefits of the exercise that the Minister dealt with of the budget's achievement.

I would like to begin my discussion by looking at the various ministries and probably giving a view from a labour perspective. I would say, in dealing with the healthcare sector, particularly the Ministry of Health, that we had some upheavals earlier in the year in which there were protests and marches and people calling for an improvement in the health services. Workers in the health sector joined in marches and one of their requests was that the Government provide a budget of a billion dollars to ensure an adequate health ministry and health service. In this budget the Minister's figure is just a little under a billion dollars so that, at least, the request made by these persons seems to have been met.

What do we expect, having provided the funds that some people who are involved in the healthcare services feel were adequate for providing the benefits to the country? One would feel that the Minister's proposal would deal with some of the issues that have been raised by them. As a matter of fact, they were talking about people who are on a waiting list for simple operations that are three years old and things like that. These are some of the proposals that the Minister spoke of in providing the estimated expenditure for the Ministry of Health.

Now, I would be a little involved in looking at how the appropriations are made because of, at this present time, the question of implementation of the integration of the service, the decentralization effort in which the workers employed in the Ministry of Health are now being transferred to the five regional health authorities. That requires quite a lot of attention, particularly by the trade unions that are involved. One union does not seem to have any problem because

the Act provides a successorship arrangement in which not only would the trade union continue to enjoy the recognition it holds prior to the workers being transferred, but this would continue on a successorship basis. The other one—and this is the daily-paid union—has had the difficulty for the last four years in making representations that the Act be amended to provide a similar provision that it made for people in the civil service, the manual workers, the daily-paid workers, who are in the majority, and we are still awaiting some response.

Even though many meetings were held with the Ministry, agreement was reached and, further, counsel for each side, the attorneys of the union and the Ministry, met and agreed on what the amendment ought to be, yet it has not found its way into the Parliament to have a simple amendment made to provide for the daily-paid bargaining unit.

However, one of the difficulties as a trade union leader was that the union agreed readily with the establishment or the decentralization of the services in the Ministry of Health and the establishment of these regional health authorities, yet there is the difficulty in having the simple change made in the Act that would allow the successorship arrangement to be there. So what you may find with the integration is a parallel labour force for daily-paid workers and we are trying to avoid this. However, let me give the assurance that our good Minister of Public Administration has not let the matter just await somebody to fiddle but has taken direct action to have the thing done, requiring the Ministry to move immediately to have the draft legislation brought to Parliament so there will be little or no delay in this matter.

I make this point because, being a Senator on the Government Benches, one would feel that the Government should facilitate the request, that representation very easily coming from the trade unions. As a matter of fact, and dealing with some of the issues Sen. Jagmohan has raised in his contribution, you would not believe that the Ministry of Works headed by Sen. The Hon. Sadiq Baksh and the union have a ding-dong battle in the Industrial Court over issues. That action was taken by them and challenged by the union and we do not think we would lose. But that does not say that I would look for any facility from the Senator or from the Ministry or from the Government, for that matter. Once I feel I am right I will pursue to the end my representation and my fight for workers that I am involved with. [*Desk thumping*]

Continuing, I note in the Minister's provision in the Ministry of Health that the allocation made includes provision for training nurses, nurses' assistants, district nurses and emergency technicians who would be involved in a national

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. JOHN]

Monday, October 25, 1999

emergency ambulance service. Representations are made to the Minister by the trade unions to improve that part of our healthcare. Moneys have also been allocated, as I mentioned before, to take care of these long outstanding operations. They say that they kept people waiting for periods up to three years but, again, the bureaucracy and frustration of the manner in which the operations of the Ministry of Health continue to be carried out have created all these things.

We also have in the budget, and it is important to us here, the expansion of the San Fernando General Hospital with the addition of a 60-bed improvement. You see, one has to also look at whether we could and should have allowed the institutions, such as the hospitals, to deteriorate to the point they have reached where you await an emergency situation before remedial action is taken. When one looks at the major hospitals in this country, Port of Spain and San Fernando, and even with all the facilities of the healthcare centres and so forth that have been put down, the burden of attention for people who are sick is on these two main hospitals.

With the growth in population we should have been, over the years, making preparations to provide for this expansion rather than await crisis proportions. You hear people talking about the Government did not do this and the Government did not do that and the Government did not provide beds and all these things; poor Government, this Government is just here for the last four years and taking a licking for the failure of previous administrations to provide simple amenities in some cases and preparing for major expansion as the population grows. I congratulate the Minister on this particular provision, the provision of the extension of the San Fernando Hospital by providing for 60 additional beds.

Now, the argument that one is hearing, particularly from the Opposition, is that the budget made no economic analysis. I am not an economist, Mr. President, and I do not need to make an economic analysis to tell me that San Fernando needed that additional 60 beds. Nor, for that matter, that I should support the renovation and refurbishment of the healthcare centres at St. Joseph, Cunupia, Tabaquite, Claxton Bay, Laventille and Las Cuevas.

To those hon. Senators who say that the budget lacks vision, I can only ask whether they have the vision to see that it is the ordinary citizens in all these communities who needed the Government to allocate additional funds so that their health centres can provide them with a full range of clinical services, eight hours a day, five days a week. This, to us, is what would change the whole vision of healthcare. The Minister has stated that provision has been made that these health centres will be provided with full-time doctors during their opening hours,

adequate nursing care, adequate pharmaceutical and other provisions. This is what the poor people need.

6.15 p.m.

In this budget also, there is an \$8 million provision for the collaboration of the health care service between public and private health care facilities and this would go a long way in addressing the long waiting list for specialized medical treatment.

What one would expect us to do now—and Sen. Oudit has attributed this as one of the downfalls in the whole service—as would be done in the Ministry of Works and Transport, the various government Ministries and more particularly, the Ministry of Health, must prepare and have in place an adequate, reliable system to deal with the repairs and maintenance of all the equipment.

As I speak today, we have had a difficulty at a more recent facility, most modern in this world, the medical complex at Mount Hope, the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, where the laundry services are so badly run down that it now becomes a health hazard for the workers who have to operate it, with tubes and lines spilling hot water and steam at people. All that is done to get the authorities to take action and have the thing in working condition, as was done in the past in years gone by. They did not seem to know that once you did not perform maintenance functions on equipment that it would one day just stop working.

As I said, this is in the Ministry of Works and Transport. I want to congratulate Minister Baksh; I have not seen him here, but the Minister began a couple years ago and the Ministry of Works and Transport has now dealt with and almost finalized a programme that the Inter-American Development Bank has approved for the on-going maintenance services in that Ministry.

Sometime earlier, you would recall that I dealt in the Senate with an issue that created havoc for my members in the Ministry of Works and Transport, Highways Division. Negotiations with the Inter-American Development Bank for a loan for the upgrade of the highways and bridges in this country and an agreement in which the Government agreed with the bank on a conditionality that they retrench the entire labour force and contract out the services.

Sen. Shabazz: Who did that?

Sen. S. John: Well, that was in 1994. Which was the government in 1994? The government of 1994 concluded those negotiations.

Sen. Gray-Burke: The PNM.

Sen. S. John: No. Could not be, because the Senator is asking about it. The UNC Government honoured the agreement and signed it and it became the task of the trade union which represented those workers to ensure that none of those workers were retrenched. I report to the Senate that we achieved that and we achieved it on the basis that we were able to discuss, negotiate and convince the IADB that the Minister of Works and Transport, Sen. The Hon. Sadiq Baksh, was able to provide an adequate maintenance programme that would not have allowed the roads and bridges to deteriorate as they had been, that what they were really doing was not repairing roads and bridges but, in fact, building almost new roads and new bridges.

As I say, this is what we would expect this Government to continue doing. As you build your institutions, as you put down buildings, as you buy equipment, side by side, you provide for the maintenance of these institutions, the buildings, the roads and the bridges. As Minister Theodore said today, the Ministry of National Security has now provided adequate provision for maintenance facilities.

We could not have continued in that manner. I just referred to the Mount Hope Medical Sciences Complex that people occupied and when rain fell, what happened, the paint was peeling and they left it just there. That would have been allowed to deteriorate to the point that when next you wanted to look at it, you ended up with a Trinidad House that had no maintenance over the years and it reached a point where the occupants had to vacate it because the building was falling on them.

Again, the Ministry of Works and Transport had to deal with that. It is spending funds now to refurbish and bring it back to a state of repair that one or two of us could be proud of, but leaving it like that, the Ministry of Works and Transport has realized that with no maintenance, it would go back to the same condition in which it met it, and the taxpayers of this country could not afford institutions and buildings to go to the point of disrepair where you just have to abandon them.

Let me say that I did not say, and I quote:

“Mr. Manning, however, signally failed to present an alternative vision for the citizen of how the economy might and should be managed, and indeed left open the question of whether he has such a vision.”

That was the *Trinidad Guardian* in an editorial on Tuesday, October 19, 1999. It is not for me to refute the opinion of the editor, but I certainly must question

whether Mr. Manning and others could present an alternative to the implementation of water projects from Arouca to Port of Spain; from Chaguanas to San Fernando; from Point Fortin, Fyzabad, Chatham and along the east coast to Guayaguayare. What does the Opposition have against refurbishing 150 kilometres of pipeline in south and central? I am proud to talk about it because I represent workers who are involved in carrying out those works and they are proud people because all the lambasting over the years, about WASA and its workers not producing, we have shown them that once you put the machinery and the material in place, the workers could perform.

Let me remind our friends in the Opposition that when they were in office they had the opportunity to increase water production by 81 million litres a day and, as in other matters, they failed to perform. It is precisely the work that has now begun in WASA and will continue to the year 2000 that will make water flow in the taps—

Sen. Mohammed: With all the leaks.

Sen. S. John: With all the leaks in the—

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Procedural motion, Mr. President, in accordance with Standing Order 9(8), I beg to move that the Senate continue to sit until 10.00 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (BUDGET)

Sen. S. John: Mr. President, if WASA is refurbishing its mains and installing 150 kilometres of pipeline, one would expect that it is adequately dealing with the leaks that the minority Leader of the Opposition is talking about. If you are putting down new mains to replace leaking mains, one would hope that the new mains would adequately provide a change from the leaks and pump all the water that is put in it because they would no longer be leaking. If they continue to leak, one would have to look at me and my members for not producing quality work that could prevent mains from leaking. As I say, it is only now that you have a government with a vision.

We will deal with the desal plant. Two years ago, the Minister of Public Utilities made a prediction that by the year 2000 he wanted to provide flowing water to each household in this country. It would seem to me that the operation is

well on the way to meet the prediction of the Minister to provide running, potable water in every household in this country by the year 2000.

Sen. Shabazz: You are not sounding like a trade union leader, you know.

Sen. S. John: Mr. President, I am a proud trade union leader. As I say, the leadership of the trade union makes it possible for a politician from any side to look good because we are not here to blow our own trumpet. We are not politicians in the sense that we want to capture office. I have no ambition insofar as that is concerned and, as I told you, I am one of those who had asked the Prime Minister sometime ago to relieve me because I would prefer to carry on my functions as a trade union leader and that alone but, if I am asked to serve the country, as Senator Gillette has been. I am also prepared to come forward and do my part in serving the country. My organization, the National Trade Union Centre (NATUC) had provided the Prime Minister with a nominee, me, to do that.

Mr. President, it was not Houdini. Houdini was a magician who came out early in this century and did a lot of magic and it was not Houdini who was responsible for enhancing the reliability of the water supply along the North Coast and in Tobago, nor was it Houdini who laid 104 kilometres of pipeline to provide 200,000 people with a more reliable service of water. Houdini did not increase the total production in WASA by 30 per cent therefore, for anybody, including the Members and the Leader of the Opposition, to claim that it seems that Houdini is alive and kicking requires, not so much vision, but faulty imaginations. In light of the achievements of this Government, the Opposition clearly lacked vision. It is little wonder some newspapers have deemed them to be a signal failure .

6.30 p.m.

I felt that they could have only done what they were able to do and nothing more and what they did, did not seem to be sufficient for the imagination of some people in the country. I am not blaming them. They did all they could have done and, maybe at another time, maybe in another world, they may have an opportunity, but we do not see it right now or in the near future.

Let me also say that I would like to give credit to workers who did more than help build the security of the economy; the people to whom Senator Marshall and Sen. Dr. St. Cyr have alluded. The sacrifices made by the workers in the public sector must be respected and honoured by people who knew of their input. Even today, the trade unions have not really created any uproar, notwithstanding the fact that trade union negotiations which were due to be settled since before the end of the year are not completed.

As a matter of fact, I want to pay some tribute to the late Frank Rampersad who was one of those persons who did not mind sitting with us and dealing with issues of the economy and telling us how far we could go—if we could go at all—in pressuring the employer to gain certain benefits in the short-term and the effect it could have on the country in the long-term. I would like to say that the country owes Frank Rampersad a debt for his advice and assistance that he has given to people including the trade unions.

I would also like to pay some tribute to the late President of the Industrial Court, who was buried just last week, for his vision also and attempts to reform industrial relations in this country. If there is one thing this country owes him a debt for, it is that as President of the Industrial Court he ensured that the Industrial Court would take up the slack that the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives failed to do. He set up a conciliation department within the Industrial Court where many a dispute which would have taken a long, drawn-and-dragged-out fight before the judges of the court, could have been resolved before reaching that. He was able to find that avenue to bring warring parties together.

As a matter of fact, just before he got sick, my union was charged with an industrial relations offence, and amongst other things, the employer had called for the decertification of the union. He was able to have conciliation done that could have brought about a resolve. Maybe there would not have been an NUGFW today if the employer had continued and the matter reached open court. We were wrong but we stood on a principle that we are humans, we have dignity and we would not accept any employer in this country insulting the integrity or the dignity of workers. We took industrial action and I say thank you to Leo Ramchand for the efforts he made as the President of the court to ensure that we had a buffer in the court by setting up his conciliation machinery that assisted many an employer and trade union in resolving issues.

What has come out of all of this, and the difficulty that the trade unions have found themselves in, is that some 13 years after we decided to tighten the belt and assist in changing the economy of this country, we still have to be fighting for simple issues that we feel employers should not deny workers.

What happened in the meantime, in the very public utilities was that people were saying WASA technicians of senior calibre with all their experience, certification and all sorts of things were receiving less pay than maids in some other public utilities. That is wrong! It cannot continue that they ask us to make sacrifices, yet the anomalies arose when others who did not make sacrifices proceeded and were upgraded and increased.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. JOHN]

Monday, October 25, 1999

As I said, a maid in TSTT receives more money than the highest paid daily-paid technician in WASA. We said that this must be corrected. We said that we could not and ought not to negotiate on the basis of the rise and fall in the cost of living index; that we should base our negotiations on the basis of the increased productivity of workers; that we increase our productivity, we reduce their costs and we are asking that we share in those increases they make by the savings where their costs have been reduced.

This is the vision of the Human Resource Administrator of the Government, Minister Wade Mark, and I am thankful that the workers cannot expect that they would have increases or they would continue to enjoy increases unless there is improvement in productivity. I want to assure Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie that we, in the union I represent, are as concerned as she is about workers not working and looking for benefits or not giving out the adequate working hours but expecting to be fully compensated and also, to claim all the fringes that go with it.

We have a difficulty with that because we try to change the culture of workers so that they understand now that the economy is not based on what we feel is a closed shop, but that we are in competition with people. If we allowed the Ministry of Works and Transport to contract out those jobs, little did we know that the procurement procedures of the IDB or the multilateral lending agency required advertizing for tenders in the international market. What we have seen here within recent times is that all these big jobs have gone to contractors from outside who have come in here, exploited our labour and gone away with the profit, and we did not benefit at all by the exchange of technology or anything like that, but this is the global economy and this is what we have to fight. Hopefully, the trade union movement will continue to meet that kind of challenge.

I want to deal a bit with education, and I want to mention our support for the Minister in the budget for the measures to provide about 7,622 additional school places in the next fiscal year. We also have provision in the budget for security in an additional 124 schools. The trade unions have dug their feet in that these schools must not remain as they used to be without adequate maintenance and that the workers who are supposed to maintain these schools should not be sent on jobs when the materials for carrying out the jobs are not provided. This seems to have been a standard practice over the years.

People are now complaining that the children are unsafe in the schools. In this budget debate, people are talking about the asbestos in these schools, and everybody knows that asbestos is a building material which has been banned for more than 20 years in the world, yet we find in Trinidad and Tobago, schools and

public buildings have been constructed within the last 20 years with asbestos as part of the building material. I agree with the Prime Minister. Where were those people that were put there to take the interest of the state?

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. W. Mark*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. S. John: Thank you, Mr. President. I did not realize that I was talking that long. I am now getting warmed up. [*Laughter*] The point I am making is, where was our protection as a country that people could have included a banned material in the construction of public buildings? We are not a country which has to provide against coldness and therefore has to insulate the building and use these materials.

Within the last two or three weeks, everybody is calling on the Government to resign because they are finding asbestos in these schools. We, as a union, have spoken with the teachers' union, TTUTA, to do a joint exercise of making an inventory of not only the schools that need repairs, but the areas and what is required to do them, because we feel that as trade unions, we ought to work with the Government to correct these things. If there is asbestos, let us correct it. If there are other repairs, let us find a way and do them.

Whenever parents tell the authorities they are not sending the children to school, they are doing more harm to the children than to themselves and, as trade union people, we feel that we should take the lead in ensuring that these things are done. Mind you, you get more employment, more jobs created, so that we have an interest in having these things done.

I would like to refer to the speech of the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Settlements and the NHA. We have a problem. When it was announced that Government would sell the rented units to the occupiers, the workers who are involved in repairs and maintenance of these units are all unionized, and both the Public Services Association and the NUGFW have indicated their concern about the future of these workers.

The Minister in meeting with the NUGFW has assured us that the workers will not be retrenched, however, the NHA has outlined an exercise which it is taking to dispose of the workers. Could one imagine the confusion in the minds of the workers? As trade unions, our duty is to protect and provide for the members we

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. JOHN]

Monday, October 25, 1999

have, and we are telling the Government that the Executive Director of the NHA has informed the trade unions that these workers are to be retrenched, notwithstanding the assurance that the Minister gave us. So, if there is mischief in it or people trying to create problems for the powers that be in the Government by telling workers these kinds of things, it would come to a head.

Time would not permit me, but let me just say that we support the Government in providing increases to Government pensioners and, despite the statement made by the President of the Public Services Association that she could not see how that could help a pensioner, I feel it is a good start.

6.45 p.m.

I feel that the Government has, at least, paid attention and provided some comfort to these pensioners. We want to support it as trade unionists. It is a good move. It helps people. This year we have also had changes in the NIS benefits that created a lot of confusion with some union leaders who said that they did not support it although they met at NATUC and gave agreement to it. At least it is a change. For the first time, since the establishment of the National Insurance Scheme there have been changes in the benefits for pension: both invalidity and old age. I am sure as the actual surveys are done at the National Insurance Board, changes would again come.

There is also a problem in that some of our pensioners are not getting adequate support from some of these pension plans including the National Insurance Scheme. Where old age pension—which is a non-contributory payment made to recipients—is more than benefits to which people have to contribute, then the trade union movement has to continue to advocate, at least, that you provide for these people who had contributed.

Let me also talk about a matter that was raised by Sen. Jagmohan: the pension plan for the daily-paid workers in the Government service. He knows, as I do, that for over 33 years a union has been trying to get an agreement with the employer—which is the Government of Trinidad and Tobago—to provide a pension plan for the only public sector workers that, up till now, have no retirement pension provided for them.

The Senator would know that in 1994 the then government offered a plan to the union. When the union indicated its acceptance of the plan the plan was withdrawn. In his response to the Minister on the budget, the Leader of the Opposition called on the Government to provide pension for daily-paid workers. Let me say that if anyone has to get anxious or worried about the matter, it should

be me: the leader of the union that represents the workers—the bargaining unit of 39,000 of them—who would benefit from such a pension plan.

Let me just tell, through you Mr. President, Sen. Jagmohan that the Minister in the budget for last year did mention that he was providing for this pension plan—which he had done; and that the pension provision would be effective from January 01, 1999. That could not be possible because in the negotiations over the settlement of the plan, the union could not agree with the Government. Hopefully, now, we are seeing a result that could mean a settlement could be signed within a couple of days. This has been my baby. I have told my people once I have settled that pension plan and executed a settlement to it, this could be my last hurrah as a trade union leader. I have worked towards it. Hopefully, we could sign this before the end of November. Hopefully, I am contemplating that my vacation would then proceed and my retirement would follow on my return, once that is in place.

Let me assure you that 39,000 workers have mandated me to ensure that this matter is settled. I can assure you that we have reached an area in which we could settle it and we would settle it and have it implemented on behalf of those thousands of members of the National Union of Government and Federated Workers (NUGFW) who for years, 33 years, in all its negotiations, several governments had failed to provide.

It would be, really, a question of a government's commitment to providing that, because one of the first assurances the Prime Minister, Mr. Panday, gave my union when we met in 1995 was that he would see to it this issue is settled as early as he could. It has taken four years and we hope that this could be the settlement. I want to assure workers that we have at long last reached a point where we could settle the issue.

One of the biggest marches—through you, Mr. President, to comrade Jagmohan—that will be in this country is the celebration of the settlement of that pension plan. It will be bigger than the march of 1994. It would not be 200 workers—I have seen some unions calling on the Government to resign. I am talking about 39,000 plus the other members of the NUGFW who would be celebrating the settlement of this long drawn out issue that would come to a head.

I feel a lot of praise should go to our Minister of Public Administration, personally, together with the Minister of Finance who ensured, since the last budget, that these talks reach to a head. We now see the light at the end of the tunnel because of it.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. JOHN]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. President, I think I have made the point. One last thing is that we appeal to the employers of this country that where people are selected to represent this country in sports, that we anticipate and expect them to give full support to these people. Our experience, now, is that in some cases where employees are selected they do not get paid or receive compensation for the period they go to represent this country in sporting disciplines. Do you know what is hurting me, Mr. President? A person who could get up and condemn this Government for the lack of vision and everything in the budget is one of the persons who—one of his employees represented this country and remained at the Commonwealth Games for two weeks and came back here and did not get paid for it.

Sen. Shabazz: Who is that?

Sen. S. John: Do not make me call the name. I could call the name if you permit me.

Sen. Shabazz: It is not any of my employees.

Sen. S. John: No, I do not know if you have any employees.

Mr. President: Senator, you have two minutes to wrap up.

Sen. S. John: I am appealing to employers of this country, including some who may have political ambitions, that the time would come when we would talk about it on platforms. When you criticize a government like this, make sure we will get back at you because I feel it is the responsibility of an employer where his employee has reached a point that he is selected to represent his country, he should at least be paid so that he would not have loss of earnings for the period he might have to spend. *[Interruption]* Let me withdraw it. I meant nothing personal. I meant that we will go with placards outside his door and tell people he is one and you might also have to go there with us.

Thank you, Mr. President. *[Desk thumping]*

6.55 p.m.

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie: Mr. President, let me begin by warmly and sincerely congratulating Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj on her promotion to the important and challenging Ministry of Health. I want to say to her, go brave, sister.

Let me also congratulate and warmly welcome Sen. Lindsay Gillette on, not only his appointment as a Senator, but also on being sworn in as a Minister. Sir, we look forward to great things from you.

Mr. President, let me continue in that vein and congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and his staff for what must have been very hard work put into the preparation of the budget. I also want to congratulate the hon. Minister for the theme, "human development and sustainable growth". At this stage I would like to ask a question: How will the blueprint be translated into strategies by government agencies? How are you going to convert this blueprint into strategies of action through the government agencies?

I also want to thank the hon. Minister for the status given to the Tobago Council for Handicapped Children; our school, the Happy Haven School in Tobago; and the School for the Deaf are now under the Tobago House of Assembly, and they have been given their full allocations. I want to say thanks to him, because this has been one of my pet subjects over the years in this Senate. So thank you very much on their behalf.

Mr. President, I would also like to thank the hon. Minister for the consideration given to public service pensioners. I hope at some time, as more money comes in and as we feel more and more comfortable, that no pensioner would get less than \$1,500 per month. You know, I really thought that it could have been a better proposal not to give anybody \$75 a month, except those who have been getting less than \$1,000 *et cetera* and bring them up to \$1,500, so people would be given something reasonable. But I understand that we have to start somewhere.

Mr. President, when I turn over the concept of human development and sustainable growth in my mind, I say this is a cradle-to-grave span. We are talking about the heart, the mind, the soul, the body and the social conscience of our people. We need therefore, to focus on a process of development that re-emphasizes the outcomes of learning, in terms of people's lives, their value systems, and their competencies.

In the budget presentation, several areas were specifically highlighted by the hon. Minister of Finance. I would like, very briefly, to go through this statement. I turn to page 17 where he says:

"Our first area of concern has been to address the problem of crime."

I said to myself, the hon. Minister of National Security has a constant supply of criminals. *[Laughter]* Unless we can stop the flow of criminals to your division, to your ministry, to your prisons, to your magistrates' courts *et cetera*, we will be doing nothing, absolutely nothing. We must try. As we try to correct the thing at the top, we must try to stop the flow from down below.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

So, I am saying as the hon. Minister said, to re-emphasize: education, family life, and social services, we must combine the activities in these agencies to assist in solving the criminal situation in the country. I know that you have actually said it, Mr. Minister, proper parenting and school. So we know it.

What must happen is a transfer or a translation of the talk into step by step areas of activity. We must set down a strategy, something that we must follow; otherwise, we will have a lot of good sounding talk and no procedure. We need to have a process. What are we going to do as regards education? What are we going to do as regards family life? What are we going to do in the social services? To stop the flow and to try at the top to deal with the situation. We have to do it both ways.

Mr. President, I go to improving the health care system and I said to myself, this is our first mistake. We are trying to improve the system. I think that we are going in reverse order. I think we should emphasize healthy living. We should start below rather than get to the stage where we are looking at the system.

I remember long ago—and I wish Sen. Vimala Tota-Maharaj would just give an ear to this. I know that in Tobago we had a system where we started to care for these people and their babies long before the babies were born. When people went to the clinic and the nurse could discern, this is a poor woman, this mother is not well fed, is not well nourished, they always had a little tin of milk or some sort of nutrient to give the mother. So they were taking care of the health of the unborn baby. What happens when we do not do that? We have a baby that is born that is not healthy, because of bad feeding habits, poverty, cannot afford anything, and so, it takes much more money to remedy the situation at that stage than it will be to give her a tin of milk when it is needed, to give whatever nutrients that you can give. We have too many problems.

I am saying that this is much cheaper. Not only does it help to nourish the mother, but it encourages the mother to go to the clinic. So many of these people do not worry to go to the clinic, but believe me, if I were poor, and they were going to give me a tin of milk to feed myself, I would go every week. So we have to look at this. We have to look at our prenatal care, the healthy growth and development and try to prevent the need for so much money to be spent on care. Let us try to see whether we could invest in the preventative measures.

Mr. President, our records show that the biggest problem we have with health is our lifestyle. We eat and drink everything; too much—the wrong thing; we do not want to exercise, children flag down a vehicle from here to there, nobody

wants to walk—everything. So, I am saying, let us see what we can do in this area. Are we going to say, let us invest in having a physical education teacher in the primary school? We do not have physical education teachers in the primary schools. We have the physical education teachers in the secondary schools. But if we have our physical education teachers in the primary schools, the children would exercise, they will learn the value of eating well; invest in this! Put another teacher in the primary school. Let the children realize that it is just as important to do math as it is to go outside and exercise and play, and the benefits that one will get.

Another point I would like to make on this need for preventative health. I know that there are clinics in Tobago where you have special days for special categories of illnesses. Today would be hypertensive day. All the people in the village with hypertension would go on that day. They see the doctor and so forth. All those with diabetes would go on that day. Let us make this an educational session, that when they go there we have an educational programme that we can teach them how to take care of themselves, rather than have them going groping in the dark, ignorant of the situation. Then, what happens? They end up very ill, amputation, and all sorts of things where the cost is so much more. All we want is a public health education programme to be run in our health centres and our clinics, right in the districts. They do not have to go to any hospital for this. So, they would be able to help take care of themselves.

I go to education, Mr. President. I was on a short holiday and I like to scan the television for very noteworthy news. I was listening to an address by John Ralston Saul. He is a Canadian author, and he was addressing the graduating class of the University of Western Ontario. I understand my teacher, Dr. St. Cyr, spent some time in that university, so he was very proud when I was telling him all about it. This address was given on June 9, 1999. What did he have to tell these graduates about education in a wide ranging discourse? He said that we are using education to turn you into citizens:

“...citizens capable of participating as responsible individuals, responsible individuals in the formulation of the public good.

...three...things that make us different from animals or machines. These are the tools of initiative, the initiative responsible individuals need in order to participate and to construct their lives...and to construct their careers...”

What is this initiative? One author terms initiative:

“the refusal of resignation.”

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

I thought that was so impressive. I think it was last week, I was looking at the programme for the Entrepreneur of the Year Award. When I looked at and listened to the gentleman who won the overall award, and his experiences in Montserrat, the volcano and the hurricane before that, then he packed up shop and operated elsewhere, I said, is this not an indication of the refusal of resignation? He never gave up. Mr. Saul continues:

“What students need today at schools, and at universities, are the tools of thought, of emotional and intellectual self-confidence. Why? So that they can rethink their lives and their careers each time they’re faced by one of those major changes by which you are going to be struck, again and again and again, over the next decades. It is your ability to intellectually throw yourself in the air and whirl around and come down on the other foot which is going to allow you to avoid the traps of becoming...obsolete.”

So, you see, Mr. President, we can never confine education to buildings and, as the goodly Sen. Dr. St. Cyr said, to hardware. It is much more than that. It is the mind; it is the soul; it is appealing to that inner man that no building—however good and beautiful—could ever substitute for.

7.10 p.m.

Mr. President, when we say education, it is another way of saying democracy. Because if we have—as Sen. Daly said—some of our young children who cannot get to school, and they are deprived of that type of stimulation, they can never compete on equal terms. So we would have some leading the way; some left behind; some who do not even know whether they are lost or where they are. We have to ensure that all our citizens—from pre-school to tertiary level—are exposed to organized learning experiences. A philosophical thread of all-round human development must be foremost in our minds. Mr. President, with respect to education, as Mr. Saul said, it must not be considered a cost, but an investment and an asset.

We have situations in Tobago where our children cannot get to school. There are schools but they cannot get to secondary schools—bright children—because they have no transport. I do not want to knock the idea of a computer in schools, but I am saying that if they cannot get to school, they cannot get to the computer. So I am saying that we have to set our priorities and ensure that our children can get to school. I chatted with the PTSC in Tobago and they said, “Eastlyn, we need three more buses and six drivers.” I said to them, start with one. I am not a greedy person. So if we can get one more bus and probably a driver, or we can assign

some one of the drivers from the division—what we want to do is to get our children to school on time.

We want to reduce poverty. I remember the grandiose plans we had here, trying to reduce poverty. Who are the poor? They are women, mainly, with many children in rural areas. I know that some time ago the hon. Minister of Works and Transport ran an Unemployment Relief Programme for women. They were doing all sorts of things; making flowers; making this, that and the other, and I have not heard of an evaluation of how much sustainable employment we have had from this exercise. I wish the hon. Minister would tell us, because I would still say what we need to do with these women who are bogged down by children, whom they cannot leave to go to be trained in some skill by which they could earn, is to use some of the URP money in a better way. Pay somebody to take care of these children in a community centre or something—train them and let Servol supply you with people. Keep them in a day care while the mothers are right next door learning to do something from which they could earn a living.

When we are finished, we cannot send these mothers back home just like that where they have no place to produce. I remember in Community Development we were doing courses in the villages and when we were finished doing all these courses in baking and so forth, and the women were ready to make their pies and go around and sell, they did not have any stoves at home. They cannot make a pie by the fireside; they could make a pelau for the children by the fireside. So we said, “go and use the stove in the community centre to bake your pies, pack them in your basket and go and sell. Mr. President, somebody came to investigate me and I said “this is a stove; it is not a washing machine. If the people use the stove and put their clothes to wash in it, then they abuse it; they wrongfully use it! But if they use it to bake and cook, then it is put to good use.”

So what I am saying is that we need to put production centres in place so that these people could still come to the centre, prepare their little, whatever they have to sell—go out and sell their stuff or whatever have you. We have to look for marketable things. When one goes to learn floral arrangements that is just for leisure activity, that is not for commercial living, because when they are finished you want to know that they can earn from it. So that is one area where we can reduce the poverty.

Mr. President, I want to come to Tobago. The hon. Minister has specifically dealt with the topic of Tobago, so I am following. I was so hurt by the actions of the central government when teachers and public servants in Tobago did not get paid. I will tell you why. I said this is a government of Trinidad and Tobago and I

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

thought that if anyone of your children suffer, you feel it. Nowhere could I have thought that the Government would have allowed Tobagonian public servants and teachers to go for weeks and up to now, without being paid and without any sort of tangible or loud explanation, or something. I thought we were deserted in our hour of need. I say, I do not care how much Tobago House of Assembly you have; how much Chief Secretary you have, employees of this country are employees of the central government, whether directly or indirectly. If something is wrong somewhere along the line—as Sen. Daly said—come out and let us have an explanation. Let the Minister of Finance come out and say something, because you hear somebody say something one way; you hear somebody say something the next way, and every time you hear one argument here, you hear a counter argument there.

Mr. President, I cannot demand, but I want to beg the hon. Minister in his winding-up to address this situation where we have a problem with the public servants and teachers in Tobago not being paid, and why. I do not know the reason; I do not know what to believe; I do not know what to think; I am not in the Tobago House of Assembly, but I know that there are people in Tobago who are suffering and we need to know why. What is the problem? What is causing it?

When we heard of the reshuffle in Tobago, you should have seen the jubilation in the streets. Tobagonians said, “ah, praise the Lord, now the Minister of Finance will have a heart for Tobago because Dr. Job is in his Ministry—Finance, Planning and Development. Dr. Job would tell the Minister about our problems; our needs and desires.” You hear jubilation? The next day in the newspapers, Dr. Job says, “I have been helping to formulate the budget and working with the Minister for the last three months.” So the people say, “Oh God, Eastlyn, all fall down, because if he worked with the Minister of Finance and the man behaved so stingy, Lord God, it is better they had left him out! *[Laughter]* Do you understand the problem, Mr. President.

When I looked at our allocation—and I am going to quote briefly. I do not know how good this works; the accountants and the economists could help me, but the idea has come up—not only here but in other places—about whether there could not be a guarantee in the budget of a minimum allocation.

For example, Tobago will get a minimum of 5 per cent of the national budget. I do not know how feasible or how sensible it is. I am just throwing it out. So that you could say, okay, we are sure we are going to get such an amount of money therefore, we could plan this, that, that. I do not know, I am going to listen for a reply. I do not know how a minimum percentage for Tobago would work.

7.20 p.m.

Mr. President, then there was the talk of the skills centre and the hon. Minister said they could not complete the Hilton project because they could not find engineers and so forth. We have been producing skilled people for a number of years. We have been producing engineers in abundance. You cannot tell me the engineers will wait for them to open a Hilton project before they get a job. Sen. Moore has a daughter who qualified probably with a 1st class honours degree in engineering. Do you think she could sit and wait for them to open a Hilton project to find a job as an engineer? Do you think our trade school and youth camp graduates over the years will wait in Tobago until you have something like that where they can be employed? No, Mr. President, they have to look for sustainable work. They have to look for employment. Many of them, when they could not be employed, they in police, they in coast guard, security officers, they are all over.

What is amusing after I heard the hon. Minister—I know the project, my mother actually worked on that estate, I know the estate inside out. A high percentage of the workers who are there with their contractors, subcontractors who are working there, plenty of them are Tobagonians who came back home. They work with contractors here and as the contractors move, they move with them: the contractors bring their workers with them. This is why it is so bad when we do not have enough money under the development projects. Where you have employment you try to keep some of the people that we employ at home. Look how many nurses we produce and we are still short of nurses because the conditions of service are not good enough to keep them here, and not everybody is loyal.

Mr. President, we have to rethink this idea. I want to talk about implementation and say to our new Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, this has been my problem always, Sir. Whenever we have an Appropriation Bill, I have always argued about the percentage performance of the Government under the PSIP. I have always argued about that. Last year we had a 61 per cent performance so we got a “c” or a “d”. We seem to respond in the budget to what we want and why we want it. Whenever we send up the estimates, we say we want this and we give all the reasons in the world why we want it. What we should probably begin to ask for, Mr. Minister of Finance is a “how” and a “when”. Have a “how” and a “when” so that somebody must come up with the “how” and the “when”. When you come up with it, then I will consider it.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

What happens is that money is tied up in these areas of allocation. You do not give it, you tie it up and then when the time comes you have to scramble and come here with an Appropriation Bill with somebody who has nine months to do something and after nine months could not do anything. I do not think that is good enough. In fact, all departments should be asked to present a timetable for all projects of the PSIP under this current year. If I were you, I would ask them to come up with a timetable. This project, you have so much money for this project. Give me a target for activities for all these projects and if you cannot come up with it by the end of November, you know what to do.

Mr. President, I have a problem. We in this Parliament have set a bad example, when it comes to implementation of Bills when we pass them. We do not have a high rating. How often have we passed this bill, that bill; Coroners Bill, Community Mediation Bill, Community Services Bill, all sorts of bills we have passed. Bills lapse, no regulations. You have this bill, could we implement it? No, the regulations are not ready to go with them. No implementation.

Sir, before you go to any Ministry and let them embarrass “yuh,” you stay put until we clean up our act in here. You “doh” go out and let anybody embarrass “yuh”. You stay put until the Parliament cleans up its act and the different ministries and divisions, until we have passed all the bills and they can tell you our house is in order, otherwise Sir, people “go boof yuh” and I would hate to know anybody “boof” a big man. It is not a nice thing to “boof” a big man.

Let me take a few minutes and go through, very briefly, the recurrent estimates for the Tobago House of Assembly. When we look at the recurrent allocation, it would seem that we have an increase, but we do not. It is deceiving. It would seem that we have a \$10 million increase. You see, Sir, the Unemployment Relief Programme used to be somewhere else. It is now under the recurrent and that amounts to \$8.6 million. The Happy Haven School about which I spoke used to be under the Ministry of Health, we are now under the Tobago House of Assembly, \$504,000, which is \$0.5 million. The School for the Deaf was nowhere. Thank God! They are now under the Tobago House of Assembly, approximately \$0.3 million. When you add it up, Mr. President, we do not have an increase. This is fooling us. We have to say we do not have enough money to run our recurrent expenditure.

Again, Mr. President, and I want Sen. Mark to listen to this, there are some people who have not been paid their increments. They gave some money in 1998/1999 which was not enough, and we have some more money to pay and we have to understand that we do not have enough money. They had asked for some

money under Goods and Services to do the same thing that you are talking about, a Pension Plan for the Tobago House of Assembly Members and others. We did not get any money. We have a number of community centres that were constructed, fine, but we do not have any money to put any equipment and machinery in them. The same thing with the Signal Hill wing. It is still there, and you talk about the skills centre for Roxborough. We would not have teachers you know, and if you are going to take three years to build the skills centre, start to give people scholarships and train them now, otherwise we are going to be just like Signal Hill. You opened the wing three years ago and you have no furniture, no equipment and no teachers. What is the use? What is the use, Mr. President? They seem to say we have no money for garbage collection, no money for grants to groups and so forth.

Another thing we noticed, and I believe the hon. Minister has an answer for this. We did not see any national programmes for Tobago. I am wondering whether the funds would be disbursed from Trinidad to the Tobago House of Assembly. For example, the agricultural incentive programme and this type of thing. In Trinidad, \$40 million was provided for agricultural incentive programme. Tobago asked for \$1.5 million and got none. National services and so on, none given. Again, Mr. President, I am saying that under the recurrent vote we “buss” already and we “ain’t” start. I would like you to look at that.

Under development, and I want to read from something that was prepared by the technical staff in the Division of Planning in Tobago. It says:

“Total proposed allocation of \$92 million.”

Last year, we were allocated \$63 million, we only got \$33 million. We were \$31 million short. I believe there is a reason for it, probably some project they had anticipated would have begun, did not begin so the money was kept. I do not know. But \$44.5 million out of the \$92 million is to be spent on a tourism action plan, a basic education programme, L’anse Fourmi/Charlotteville Road, health sector reform and we cannot get these *en bloc*, in advance, you know, because these are coming from special funds, IADB and so forth. So you have \$47.5 million left for its priority projects.

Already \$31 million is an inescapable cost by the construction of the Belmont Road which is to be completed in the late 2000. The overall remainder of \$16.5 million is projected to be expended on the Bacolet Stadium, the total cost of which is \$28 million. So there is a negative balance of \$11.5 million to complete the stadium and other priority projects.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. President, no money for youth development, no money for rural electrification, no money to pave village streets, no money for leave relief. And this is something I want to tell Sen. Mark, when the next negotiation comes up with the daily-paid people, cross sick leave bonus off. This takes millions of dollars from the Tobago House of Assembly's pay packet. This was something which was negotiated when workers worked five days per week plus half day on Saturday. Because you were working six days per week and you did not get sick, they gave you a bonus for not staying home. Mr. President, people are working for two hours now because the union says they must do "task", so they work for two hours per day, then go home and they are still claiming sick leave bonus. I ask that after the next negotiation if they have sick leave bonus in here, I would make a recommendation to the Prime Minister about Mr. Mark.

Mr. President, I am almost through. For agro tourism, we need incentives from the ADB to take the agricultural risk. We have no money. We have no funds for REACH; Probation Hostels, no funds; Project Administration Unit, no funds; the gender grant, no funds. Mr. President, some of these community centres, Signal Hill and East Side pan site, we need money to finish them, no funds.

I conclude by asking the hon. Minister of Finance to reconsider his allocation to Tobago. I do not know why we are in this predicament, but I can tell you that I have heard that we are going to be in a serious situation for pay at the end of this month as we were last month. I do not want you to keep silent on the issue. Let us know what the position is. You are the Minister of Finance of the entire country. I want the Minister of Public Administration to be able to say to his employees in Tobago, "I care about you, as much as I care about the workers in Trinidad. You are part of the work force of this country and if you are not paid I am concerned as if you were people in Trinidad". Let us in Tobago not feel that you have abandoned us because we are not working in Trinidad. I do not believe that. To be honest with you, I do not believe that. I believe there must be some real reason, but whatever reason there is, I do not think that the action was right. I do not think your non-action, your passive behaviour was right. I do not know how to forgive you. I probably should, as a good Christian, should I not? You would tell me that when I sit, but I really do not know how to bring my heart to forgive you for that.

Mr. President, I want to tell the hon. Minister that we in Tobago feel for our brothers and sisters who are in a crunch. We feel it that we can see no hope for our young people who are aspiring and looking forward to employment out of the development project.

7.35 p.m.

Mr. President, just this morning somebody called and said that they will have to start to retrench. Let us not reach that stage, Sir. Whatever you can do or allocate further, for the development of this entire country, and Tobago being a part of it, please do so.

So again, I want to congratulate the Minister on the positive steps he took towards answering some of the questions and problems that I have been putting forward over the years. I want to thank him and let him know that all the people would benefit. I want to appeal to him to ensure that the Minister helps us in Tobago to be as comfortable as is humanly possible, because of his intervention, and the way he is going to handle the budget allocation to ensure that Tobago does not come to a standstill.

Mr. President, I thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Nathaniel Moore: Mr. President, thank you. I hope this does not appear as a conspiracy. You just had one Tobago Senator speaking and then you call upon another.

Mr. President, I am indeed grateful for this opportunity to join the debate at this point. As with the other Senators, I must join in congratulating our new Ministers. Firstly, Sen. Gillette on his appointment both as a Senator and Minister of Government and Sen. Tota-Maharaj, who has been with us all the time, for her elevation to the status of Minister. We have noticed that she has been working her way up bit by bit. I do not know if the next step is to be Prime Minister, I am not sure. [*Laughter*] She is moving up gradually and very conspicuously.

Mr. President, I hope that I am not going to be sounding trite but nearly every time I stand to speak, I have to make mention of the Independent Senators. I will be doing an injustice to myself, and this House, if I did not express my satisfaction with the general contributions coming from the Independent Benches. I have been inspired by the Independents many times and, today, this budget debate is no different. I have been terribly impressed and I am wondering again, without the Independents where would we stand. I am pretty sure that the advice given by these Senators will not go unheeded.

Mr. President, many times it was fatherly or in the mood of parents, sometime in the mood of experts and they are all experts in their fields and they have been doing a wonderful job. I congratulate all of them. I believe one of the points is that they do not have a party to defend as such. So they can speak from their hearts.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MOORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. President, some people seem not to have liked the budget, because perhaps of its comprehensive nature. The absence of minute details perhaps, is very comprehensive and some people did not like it. I guess they have compared it with some of the past budgets. I used to hear about three and half-hours budget, when I was a little younger or perhaps when I was young. The Minister has moved away from this and some people do not like it. On some of the call-in programmes I heard people speaking, in a kind of nostalgic tone, about the long surveys they used to conduct on previous budgets in the 1980s and so forth.

I do not think that I have this problem, perhaps, especially as we have a wealth of documents, with so much other information that we can get more from. Many of these figures are really found in them. Perhaps the people lack a supply of the documents that we have received. There are a few areas of the budget that I will want to comment on. I will see how quickly I could go through them.

“(a) The increased benefits to Government pensioners”

I am sure that would-be recipients would be grateful for such a move and I for one, would be a beneficiary. That is not really why I am mentioning it but it is because I think it is a positive measure in the budget.

I remember when I was a little boy and my parents sent me to the shop to buy a loaf of bread—equivalent to something like the hops bread—I paid one cent for it. I remember the baker used to make them also in half-cent sizes. In those days there were farthings—that is to tell you I am around long time. We used to buy sugar and flour for three cents a pound and one could have gone and got salt without buying it. When a little change was left over, and the shopkeeper did not have it, he would measure some salt, or dip some butter and give you for your change and so forth. I know those days. Can anybody tell me what is the price of a hops bread now? I am not sure if I know, because I do not buy bread. Can anybody tell me?

Hon. Senators: It is 50 cents.

Sen. N. Moore: The sizes I am seeing today, I doubt they are larger than the ones I used to pay two cents for. The point I really want to make is that, money over the years is losing value, and that Government pensioners who perhaps thought that \$1,000 was good enough in the days when they received their pensions would find themselves almost starving now. I know that. Perhaps, before I really go on to another point, I could say also that this same principle applies to budgeting in this Senate. Budgets from the 1950s—1990s, the value of the dollar.

The second point I want to note is that there were no new taxes as the Minister emphasized and no further complication of the tax structure. I know that too is positive and many people breathed a sigh of relief, because some people were looking out for increased taxation.

7.45 p.m.

Continued emphasis on education. The budget did increase allocation in certain areas for education. I do not want to go into the details, but I share the view of offerings which have gone, like that by Sen. Dr. St. Cyr, Sen. Daly and Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie—and perhaps there may be others who have mentioned it—that in the matter of education it is not only the physical structure that matters. In fact, in many cases that is not so important. However, I am not here to give the lesson but, really, in education great emphasis must be placed upon value and that is what we are lacking today. I believe that the lack of that is the key to many of the crimes and misplacement and the irreligiousness that we have in the society. So I do not want to say any more on that but I think we have got the lesson already. What I said was only for emphasis.

There was also some emphasis on primary health care in the budget. Again, I do not want to spend any more time on this because Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie and also Sen. Dr. St. Cyr did emphasize this to a great extent. It is better to keep people healthy than to treat them when they become sick. If there are people in your family who have to face medical bills and there are also those who are in good health, then you know the difference between the cost of keeping the family healthy and treating those who fall ill.

There was, again, emphasis, with increased attention, on the crime situation. I do not want to say too much on this because the opponents would say that the Government boasts that we are going to take care of crime as one of the priorities yet there is more crime. I say like somebody else in the past, I cannot remember whom, that crime did not always happen like this. The crime that we experience today might have had its roots years or decades in the past, so I do not think it is always fair to, if you like, credit any present regime in government as being responsible for crime. I am not sure how much the government, as such, at any period, is responsible for crime. They may be responsible to some extent, indirectly, because of some kind of neglect along the lines that we have heard already in this discussion. What we must do about this crime situation is to put all our efforts together in the various ministries and in the various arms of operation in our country, not necessarily government at all.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MOORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

In fact, just today at lunch time fingers had been pointed at the church, some non-governmental organizations and so forth, and it is a pity that some of these good organizations have fallen into the same trap as some others. In fact, we have some people—because religious practice is something that is accepted and the practitioners are trusted—some crooks who are going into religion and other things like that and making a bad name for it, resulting in bad examples in our society. So we must think about these things.

Another point which I have here as (e), the Oil Price Stabilization Fund which as a measure in the budget, is commendable because, again, of the experience we have had with fluctuation of oil price in the not too distant past.

The Agricultural Disaster Relief Fund is another measure in the budget which I am sure farmers in the Aranguez and other areas would like to hear about. I am not sure if those in Tobago would like to hear about this depending on if they will benefit—I hope.

Under (g) is the flood retention basin. I am not sure if this one is in the budget but I picked it up from the medium-term plan. This is a measure that is foreseen to be implemented in this period and continuing. I remember it was mentioned before and I know, for example, in Tobago, we do not have any problem with flooding. However, I notice that in the plantation project a few lakes were created there. I noticed a particular one, from the year it was put down it collected water and it still has water. It never ran absolutely dry.

So I thought that this flood retention plan was a good one in that not only will it catch excess water and keep it away from our homes and streets but perhaps it will also collect water which can be used for irrigation and, possibly, for recreation. I, for one, if I were in Trinidad and you built a fairly large lake I would sail in it. Once I got wind I would sail in that lake, once it was permitted. Then, if one wanted, one could put it to other economic purposes like for fisheries and other things like that. So I think this is a very commendable measure that is projected for this period.

Then there is the NEL, I think it is called here, the National Enterprises Limited. I remember that there was the NEC—was it NEC?

Hon. Senator: The NIC.

Sen. N. Moore:—the National Investment Company, projected under the National Alliance for Reconstruction that the union people did not want. I remember some of them did not want it. I cannot give you details about that but I

lamented that and now we see it is coming again. I hope that this time people will accept it and make it a reality in our lives. Monthly paid people should not be satisfied only with the “security”—let me use that word in quotes—of their monthly salaries and a later pension. They could use some of their surplus earnings to invest in companies that would bear them interest and earnings in the future. So I think this is a very good measure.

Finally, I have under (i)—you could count to see how many of them I have as positive—the pledge to work with the THA, that is the Tobago House of Assembly. I have read in more than one place where the pledge is made that the central government would work with the Tobago House of Assembly to iron out some of the problems. I could mention three areas, page 19 of the *Medium-Term Policy Framework* where the pledge is given to work with agriculture in Tobago. So we expect that we are going to get help in agriculture in spite of the observation made that there was no allocation for agriculture in this present budget.

Page 30 in the same document, under the section “Tobago Affairs”, speaks about working with the Tobago House of Assembly. It means that the Government, through Tobago Affairs, will work with the House of Assembly for a more harmonious relationship between the central government and the Tobago House of Assembly and we need this. Then there is page 83, the same thing, the pledge to work with the Tobago House of Assembly. Mr. President, we are not happy over the constant friction which sometimes grows between the central government and the Tobago House of Assembly, if even it is in the realm of words.

We would like to see something more harmonious. I do not know why, as human beings, we must have this happen. I was reading a few days ago about the story of the insurrectionists, if you like, from Grenada and the last problem they had in slaying their people, including their Prime Minister. The fellow spoke about youthful exuberance and other things like that which caused them to do things that normally they would not do. I think that if we keep a level head, come down sometimes from our heights and meet one another on the level, look each other level in the eye and discuss our problems, we do not need to appear foolish before the rest of the Caribbean and the world. And so, I think we should welcome this undertaking and hope that it becomes a reality, regretting that it had not had greater fruitage in the past but being hopeful for the future.

I must, therefore, continue talking about Tobago. I do not want to repeat what my fellow Tobagonians have said already or what other people said about

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MOORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Tobago. I do not think it is necessary because I will be just repeating. What we now see in Tobago is that Tobago itself, as a topic, is a hot discussion and the Tobago situation is coming more and more under public scrutiny. There are renewed attempts by people to create antagonisms and other things like that, using the situation around this present budget.

There are people—I am speaking mainly now of people outside, but we know about the activities—who try all ways of getting political mileage by playing one part of Tobago against the other. There are some people, perhaps in Tobago itself, who might be willing to submit themselves to be used because of what I see as political ambition. I do not think we need to get into those realms. So that sometimes the impression is given that the people in Tobago do not know what they want. I say, Mr. President, that this is far from the truth when we see the evidence.

The people of Tobago selected their leaders and indicated to them their wishes and their preferences. There have been widespread consultations with the population in the various villages and fora in Tobago and, as a result, a comprehensive plan has been developed for Tobago's future. So I agree with Sen. Alfred who said that no one person could impress his or her selfish will on Tobago or, I think I can put it better if I say, when one person speaks from Tobago that person does not necessarily speak for everybody in Tobago.

However, in the case of the representatives speaking, obviously we take it for granted that they have the backing of the people who put them in position and are supporting them there. So that, a plan for Tobago's development is in place. I mentioned it here last year and, since then, the plan is almost complete. The writing of the plan is complete but there is still need for final refinements. It is on the basis of this plan that budgets are drawn up for Tobago. So, whatever recommendations are made on behalf of Tobago where the budget is concerned, they are not based upon whims or perhaps upon the arrogance of any one man or any small group, they are based on the Tobago Development Plan.

If I understand well the law bringing the Tobago House of Assembly into being, Tobago has the prerogative for making a plan for the development of that part of our island, or country I should say. So that, Mr. President, if there is any frustration of the wishes of the people, the whole of Tobago acts, as is now happening in reaction to this present budget.

8.00 p.m.

People in Tobago do not want to feel that they are used when they are needed and then discarded when they are not needed. They react swiftly to such

treatment, as they did in 1995. I remember sometime in 1995, a group of people came to Trinidad from Tobago, perhaps to pay homage, to seek favours, or to pledge support to a particular leader. The people of Tobago did not like that and the people dealt with them. I do not want to give the details of that, but we know about it.

Now, the first target of the administration in Tobago is to have the residents there catch up with the residents in the rest of the nation, and we have said this more than once. That is to say, not only do we believe, but we know that Tobago has been left a little way back in the nation in terms of general development and, so, our first task is to try to catch up with the rest of the nation.

One, in education. I think that is an open secret. We are complaining all the time about tertiary education in Tobago; we are complaining all the time about inadequacy in school places; we are complaining all the time about the inadequacy of facilities for training our teachers and so forth. In fact, we do not have much of that in Tobago. It is not that we are unreasonable when we complain, but this is a reality and so we are bringing the fact to the notice of the nation and to those who can do anything about it. So, this is one of the areas in which we want to catch up.

We also want to get better facilities so that we will first get better equipped schools, not only the buildings, but the trainers, the teachers for dealing with our primary education. I am one of those who believe, because I had it in my own experience, that the primary education is the education that you carry all through your life.

Personally here, my brother and I work on projects and we keep repeating many of those poems from our primary school years. We repeat them and comment on them and I say, "You know, I remember more of these things than I remember from secondary school and university." I studied economics and Spanish at university and I do not remember much of economics to tell you the truth; and I must be a little rusty in my Spanish now, but I remember so much about those things that we learnt in primary school.

I have a little grandchild at home and it is marvellous to see how the mind works. They do not forget. They catch on to everything. I threw a key in a certain place where I usually put the keys so that we have a common place to find them when we come, and the child said, "Grandpa, look how you throw the key", and I threw it when I thought she could not see me. I did not want her to see it but she saw it and commented on it. She was very sharp.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MOORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

The main point is that these little children whom we feel are dumb, are learning so much at their age and I am sure that most of us here can remember things from our primary school, and if we are not teaching or practising something that we have learnt later on, it is doubtless we remember more from our primary school.

In fact, to speak, where did you learn to speak, primary or secondary school? Not even there, even at home. Some of the basic things in existence, we get it in our first three or four years. We start to learn much of it before we were actually born physically into this world and we keep it with us. That is an important time in our life and so, pre-school as we call it, and primary education, is the time we should pay attention to the training of our children. If we lose that time, children would lose all through their whole life.

I am one who believes that proper facilities must be provided for primary education in our country. Try it out and if we do that, we will be making an investment for life for our students. I have no apology to make about that. Not only do I study that, I see it happening every day.

So that in Tobago, we want to catch up with the rest of the country in education. That is our first goal—in the enjoyment we receive from the utilities.

Sen. Alfred spoke about water. I will tell you what happened with me and water. Long ago, I sensed it—I am not a prophet, but I sensed it—and I spent over \$20,000 to provide facilities in my home for water. For about six months now, I do not know if WASA has water or if it does not have. People complain about the two days cut down to one day, I do not know about that. I use water which I had stored and provided by me.

But I know not everybody else in Tobago, or even in Trinidad, is so lucky and had the foresight and the means to provide it, but now in Tobago there are many people not getting water and complaining about the once a week provision. We want to be able to catch up, but I am wondering if the “Water For All by 2000” would apply to Tobago because the stage at which we are, I cannot see it happening yet, but we are still praying for the miracle.

Not only water, but telephone. If I try to get a cellular phone in Tobago, when I go to Charlotteville, I cannot use it. We still have some things to catch up on where the telephone is concerned.

Electricity—in Tobago, we still want to get an abundant and reliable supply and so, in many ways, we want to catch up. The general infrastructure that is there to facilitate us for better living, we want to get more of that.

Our roads—some people who come from Trinidad to Tobago think we have good roads and they are right in a sense because the roads are far improved now beyond some time in the past, but we still have some of those secondary and rural roads which want attention. The main roads are fairly all right.

Another area is communication. For example, people mentioned the boat, transport by water and air between the two islands. Most of the facilities for the country are situated in Trinidad and if we, in Tobago, want them, we have to come down here for them, so we have to provide the next best of these facilities in Tobago and if we have to provide the next best, it means it may be a little more expensive per unit than in Trinidad. Why do you deprive us of that? If we are outside separated by water and you deprive us because of that, then we do deserve to be by ourselves because you are saying, “Second rate people, let them stay by themselves”. We deserve to stay by ourselves, but we in Tobago did not think it was something to crave to be by ourselves.

In fact, we were bound together, these two islands, against the wishes of both of us, I believe, but we decided that we could make something of it, so we can make something of it. So, do not make us feel second rate because we live in Tobago. We want to feel that we, too, live and can share in all the benefits we can get from the resources of this good country which, some people say, offers citizenship to God.

Industry—I do not want to belabour that too much. What do we have in Tobago? We are now moving up. The tourist industry is, perhaps, the most forward one right now. We are getting problems with that because whenever you say tourism, you have to talk about the environment and so forth. In addition to that, we are thinking about greedy people who want to come to Tobago because they may know everything about tourism more than we in Tobago know. We in Tobago are ignorant about industrial matters because we have not had a history about industrial matters. So that those who know about it and have been practising it, come quickly to cash in on it and then we look back and say, “We are deprived”, because somebody else came in and the opportunities they had, they took advantage of them when we could not.

But the point is that we, too, want to be able to catch up with the rest of the country in industry, tourism and other things. We want to be given a fair break, not only to be servers, bell boys and so forth in the hotels, but we could be managers, too; we could be auditors and workers generally, but if part of it is to serve at the various other levels, then we are satisfied to do that, too. All that is in the development of industry.

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MOORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

Then, we figure we could have additional industry besides the tourist industry. We could share in the energy industry. We could share in manufacturing to a certain extent. We could share in the agricultural industry more than we are doing and in a more meaningful way than we are doing. I do not want to add anymore to this, but the main point I am making is, we, as a first priority, want to catch up with the rest of the country in our basic standard of living. We would feel happy if we have done that.

Then, we will go on later to assist in the rest of the nation. That is to say, when we come on equal terms, if as we are now, we see the opportunity to increase the tourist industry to the extent where it will earn, give us a surplus, and attempt to make us perhaps a little better off than the rest of the country, we will share the surplus with the rest of the country. In law, that is provided. In the Tobago House of Assembly Act, it is provided that if there is any surplus, that at least one-half is allowed to come back to the rest of the country. I guess the keeping of the first half is an incentive to go on.

Sometimes, people like to compare. We do it, too, compare Trinidad and Tobago in terms of so many things, and some people are so critical about financing for Tobago where Tobago will get too many benefits. They do not want to see that, thinking that we are going to secede. But, I do not think it is necessary to do that. In fact, in every country—I believe even in our own country in different parts of it—from a budget, do we spend more in north than in south? Do we spend more in Port of Spain than in San Fernando? Do we spend more of the money we earn in the oil belt up here? How do we do it?

If Tobago is another part of the country, then I do not see any injustice if opportunities are seen there for tourism and other types of development that will bring income to the country. Why do you not spend the money there where the prospects are, earn the money that you may not be able to earn in another part of the country, so that the money could come to the rest of the country?

Not every part of the country is endowed with facilities and resources in the same way and so, if you find resources in a certain part that you can use up, use them up there and let the whole country benefit, because when we are developing Tobago, we are not going to develop it for ourselves; we are not going to develop and leave. If we did not leave already under all the pressure we got, I do not think we would leave again. It is not our plan to leave. Whatever accrues there would accrue also to the national community and we would all benefit from it. So, do not think that when we spend money on Tobago, we are foolishly helping

Tobagonians to improve themselves and then they will look back on us and despise us. I do not think that is the situation. We do not have that in our plans.

I think as wise planners, as in any other country, wherever in the country you have an advantage to earn, put the money there. We have an advantage in tourism now in Tobago, spend the money there, but let us spend it, bearing in mind our environment, we do not want to destroy it; bearing in mind the good of the people who live there, they do not want to feel left out and second class; they do not want to feel that they are being overridden. Let us look at that.

Even now I could say that the development in Tobago benefits the rest of the country, that is to say, the non-Tobago part, perhaps more than it benefits Tobago itself. This is a paradox, but it is true. Those of us who had a little smattering of economics would know that, for example, in Tobago now, if we have to build, like the Hilton, we have a quarrel about the boats because there are not enough to bring the material. From where are the materials coming? Trinidad.

8.15 p.m.

While we are saying that we do not have enough skilled workers, where are they coming from? If they are not in Tobago, it is Trinidad and elsewhere. The food we are buying to feed those people. If agriculture cannot supply those we have in Tobago, where is the food coming from? Trinidad? The point I am trying to make is that the multiplying effect of money spent in Tobago is generated much faster in Trinidad than in Tobago itself, because we do not have the industries and the other facilities in Tobago to generate the kind of additional income over there. It is generated in Trinidad. It is economic sense we are talking about. We are not talking about selfishness and parochialism and so forth. We are talking about economics. So, I am saying, it pays.

I am on record in this Senate as affirming that the past and present trend of financing for Tobago will not achieve the goals of the population there. The Minister of Finance is also on record promising to work with the Tobago House of Assembly to access additional funds for funding the programme there. I am sure about these. I do not want to say much more about this where this is concerned and about Tobago and the need, but I must make note of one or two things said thus far in the debate, particularly relating to Tobago and my colleague, Sen. Alfred. I want to say a few things to bring us up-to-date about some of the points she mentioned.

I am not going to talk about everything, but I am going to touch on a few of them. "Tobago is in crisis because of mismanagement". I do not necessarily

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MOORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

believe that. I think things in Tobago now are so vastly superior to many times in the past that many of us do not appreciate Tobago as we ought to. Perhaps we need to cast our minds back to see in terms of mismanagement.

The next point raised by the Senator was that the Chief Secretary, who is also responsible for finance in the Tobago House of Assembly, said that he does not have to account to anybody. He did not say that. What he said was that there are, in law, and in practice, many other procedures for accounting in these areas like the House of Assembly and even the central government. He said that if these are used, there is no question as to what the people are asking.

I do not know what they want. In fact, in Tobago, the Opposition wants so much. When we sat here working out the law for Tobago, we never had in the plan—the NAR never had it—creating a government and an opposition in Tobago. We did not have that. In fact, the Chairman, who is now the President, said this very clearly and tried to account for his view on not having it.

So, the idea of the Opposition sitting, perhaps, on the Executive Council, which is what I guess they want—I heard the Opposition, both on the independent side and the other, give the impression that they want to know what is going on at a certain level. Do the people in the Opposition here want to go into Cabinet to know what is happening there? Does the Opposition want to participate in the making of decisions? Why must that happen? The point is that the opportunity was given in Tobago that everybody be one without any opposition and government, and it is the Opposition in the House of Assembly that rejected the idea. They rejected the idea! That is the fact, Mr. President.

Like the Jews of old did and asked for a king, they asked for an opposition leader. When God told the Israelites what would happen to them when they got a king, the Opposition in Tobago now, the PNM found out what would happen when they have an Opposition Leader. It is the same kind of situation. They cannot want to be in the Opposition and still be on the other side to plan in the other way what will happen and to effect the policies, and so forth. They cannot have their cake and eat it. The Chief Secretary did not say that he does not have to account to anybody. He did say that there is a mechanism for accounting of which use can be made.

I think the Senator mentioned the idea of an investment that was made in 1998 in the House of Assembly. I do not want to say much about that because I do not have all the facts. It is a matter of investigation in this country and it is a court matter somewhere else, so I do not want to say anything else for people to go and

say that this thing is bandied about publicly. What I think I understand is that people are thinking that the investment was lost and so forth. The facts I have is that the capital is there, but it is the interest that somebody wants to fiddle with that the House of Assembly is trying to get back.

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. W. Mark*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. N. Moore: Thank you, Mr. President. There is the idea also that the Assembly is spending \$12 million and has it some place, and when we need money to pay our public servants and teachers, we cannot get. This is a fallacy, because again, when we did this House of Assembly Act we were told that this investment came from in 1978—if you remember 1998 about the budget story and some money being late. I do not want to go into that because of limited time, but this was money which was earmarked for that purpose; it should go into investment or development; not for the recurrent expenditure. So, it could not be used to pay the people. It was ignorant of people to try to fool the poor population about this thing, but I think this Parliament knows better and the people in Trinidad know better than that. The late payment to teachers had nothing to do with this investment.

Sen. Alfred: I never said so.

Sen. N. Moore: I never said you said that, but this is part of the talk around and I want to dispel it.

Now, we come to the National Housing Authority lands. It was mentioned that the price of the land was upped. I heard what our Senator said here, but the truth and the facts are that the communication about the \$25,000 per lot was not an indication of the price of the lots. No price was set for the lots, but what happened was that some people who wanted to pay down on the lots were trying to access loans and the Assembly gave them a letter showing what would probably be the price of a lot for them to use it in the bank to raise loans to finance the project.

In addition to that, indeed, the official price of some of the lands is really \$7 per square foot, and that came about because of the cost. Other lands to which we may refer for housing, maybe just raw land, for example, the lands at Bell Garden, roads were provided and the lots were marked out—those are going at \$2 per square foot. The lands in Signal Hill are going at \$7 per square foot. Roads are

Appropriation Bill
[SEN. MOORE]

Monday, October 25, 1999

through there, water is through there, there is provision for electricity, sewerage and all the infrastructural facilities are there. Therefore, it has to reflect, to some extent, the cost for provision, and even with the \$7, it is subsidized. We want people to understand the reason. Let us get the facts. In fact, I could tell you that in addition to that, what the House of Assembly said was that the bigger lots went before the smaller ones. People just grabbed the bigger ones and bought them first before they bought the smaller ones.

Again, the idea of roads being built without engineers. This is a rumour without foundation. Every area in the Works Division of the Assembly has an engineer attached to it. At one time, there was not enough. There is still not enough, but we have an engineer in every area, whether it be building or whatever, and the engineers are on the projects and their input is into the projects that are there. Indeed, if somebody says they do not have to have an engineer for everything, it is true. I built most of my house in which I live and I did not train for it, but I used the geometry I learned in school and I built my house. I am not an engineer. As Dr. Mc Kenzie said, the engineer of the family is still young.
[Laughter]

Mr. President, I should not keep this Senate waiting anymore, but what I want to say is that the situation in Tobago is generating a lot of interest which is no different from what we hear in the Senate, that one side is striving to get mileage. It is not correct information, but it sounds good to boost their image. This is what has happened and, so, we expect it. We in Tobago, who are connected with the ruling group, are not much worried by this. We have the confidence that even with the investment, things will work out well and things would go on.

As I said before, we would like to work together. We would hate to know that we have any division in Tobago that would cause any weakening of the situation because people usually exploit that and keep us back. We do not want that. We want to unite in Tobago, and we also want to unite between Trinidad and Tobago as one country and move together so that we will become happier people. We will take care of the crime, the underachievements, malnutrition, poverty and so forth, and if we work positively, we could together shoulder the various problems and burdens and make a success of our living.

I thank you, Mr. President, and I support this budget. *[Desk thumping]*

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, October 26, 1999 at 10.00 a.m.

Adjournment

Monday, October 25, 1999

Mr. President: Hon. Members, before putting the question, I want to mention two small matters. The first is that dinner is provided for all Members in the dining room. Secondly, I received a note from Sen. Alfred indicating that it was only long after she made her contribution, she became aware of the fact that on Friday last this House expressed condolences to her and her family on their recent bereavement. Through the Chair, she wishes to acknowledge and thank Members for the condolences so graciously offered.

Sen. Cynthia Alfred: Thank you very much, Mr. President. As was mentioned, I really found out afterwards that the President said why I went out of the country. I felt so badly because I did not say anything, so I just want at this stage to thank the President for expressing condolences and to all of you in the Senate and other members of staff who expressed their sympathy to me and the rest of the family. I want to say how very grateful and appreciative we are. I did go to the funeral and things were sad, but they went off quite well. Again, I want to say thank you to the President and to all of you for expressing your sympathy to us.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 8.30 p.m.