

Leave of Absence

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATE

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

The Senate met at 1.32 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. President: Mr. President, hon. Senators leave of absence has been granted to Sen. the Hon. Brian Kuei Tung for the period March 24, 2000 to April 4, 2000.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

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

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson
President.

TO: MR. DAVE COWIE

WHEREAS Senator Brian Kuei Tung 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, DAVE COWIE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 28th March, 2000 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Brian Kuei Tung.

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
March, 2000.”

Oath of Allegiance

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sen. Dave Cowie took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

PAPERS LAID

1. The Census Order, 2000. [*The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. W. Mark)*]
2. The Regional Health Authorities (Amendment of the First Schedule) Order, 2000. (*Sen. The Hon. W. Mark*)]

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, today, as you know, is Private Members' Day and with agreement among the parties we have decided to allow two matters pertaining to public business to proceed immediately before we go to Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt's Private Motion. On conclusion of that debate we would go on to the Private Member's Motion in the name of Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny. If we have time we can start Sen. Prof. Ken Ramchand's Motion this afternoon.

We would like to deal with some minor amendments coming from the other House on the Tourism Development (No. 2) Bill and thereafter proceed with the Census Order 2000 in the name of the Minister of Finance.

Agreed to.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (NO. 2) BILL

House of Representatives Amendments

The Minister of Trade & Industry and Consumer Affairs and Acting Minister of Tourism (Hon. Mervyn Assam): Mr. President, I beg to move,

That the House of Representatives amendments to the Tourism Development (No. 2) Bill listed in the appendix be now considered.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

The Preamble.

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

“Delete the words ‘the following National Tourism Objectives’ and substitute the words ‘national tourism objectives’”.

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 3(2)

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

“Delete the words ‘National Tourism Objectives’ and substitute the words ‘national tourism objectives’.”

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 11(1)

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

“Delete the words ‘which the project is contemplated’ occurring in line five.”

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Schedule (1)

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

A. Delete the words ‘the National Tourism Objectives of this Bill’ occurring in line one and substitute the words ‘national tourism objectives’.”

B. In paragraph (a) substitute for the word ‘Bedroom’ the word ‘Room’.

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Schedule 4

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

“Delete the word ‘bedrooms’ occurring in line six and substitute the word ‘rooms’.”

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Schedule 5

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

- A. Delete the whole of item (ii) and substitute the words ‘(ii) Hotel’;
- B. Delete the whole of item (iii) and substitute the words ‘(iii) Camp site, Dive and Eco-lodge’;
- C. Delete the whole of item (iv) and substitute the words ‘(iv) Guest house’.”

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Schedule 7

House of Representatives amendment read as follows:

- A. In the column headed ‘Taxi Co-operatives’ delete the words ‘Licensing Department as’ occurring in the Second paragraph of the fourth item;
- B. In the column headed ‘Other Taxis’:
 - (a) insert the word ‘be’ after the word ‘should’ in the second paragraph of the fourth item;
 - (b) delete the words ‘by the’ in the second place where they occur in the second paragraph of the fourth item.

- C. In the column headed 'Boats':
- (a) insert the word 'a' after the word 'be' in the second paragraph of the third item; and
 - (b) insert the word 'have' after the word 'must' in the first paragraph of the fourth item;
- D. In the column headed 'Helicopters' insert the word 'a' after the word 'be' in the second paragraph of the third item."

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

1.45 p.m.

Mr. President: Before I propose the amendment, I think, while I am not supposed to participate in the debate, I draw your attention to the fact that the words "Licensing Department" appear twice and I believe it ought to stay. So the amendment might be to delete the words "Licensing Department" as occurring in the second place where they occur, otherwise we would be removing the words "Licensing Department" from the whole paragraph.

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move,

That the House amendments to the Tourism Development (No.2) Bill be further amended.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Schedule 7 A. In the column headed "Taxi Co-operatives" delete the words "Licensing Department" as occurring in the second place where they occur in the second paragraph of the fourth item."

Mr. Assam: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate doth agree with the House of Representatives in the said amendment.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

CENSUS ORDER, 2000

The Minister of Tobago Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development (Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job): Mr. President I beg to move the following motion standing in my name:

WHEREAS it is provided by section 5 of the Statistics Act, Chap. 19:02, that the Minister may make an Order directing that a census be taken in Trinidad and Tobago or any part thereof, of any class of inhabitants thereof:

And Whereas the Minister has made an Order that a census be taken of the inhabitants thereof with respect to both population and housing in Trinidad and Tobago between the 2nd day of May, 2000 and the 9th day of June, 2000:

And Whereas it is also provided by section 5 that an Order so made shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament:

And Whereas the Minister has on this 24th day of March, 2000 made the Census Order, 2000:

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

Be it resolved that the Census Order, 2000 be affirmed.

Mr. President, the Census Order Bill is a necessary aspect of the management of the state of Trinidad and Tobago and if I may give you a little background in order that the public may be properly and sufficiently informed, Cabinet by Minute No. 2682 of October 29, 1998 accepted proposals for the conduct of the 2000 Population and Housing Census of Trinidad and Tobago.

The census will be conducted during May 2 to June 9, 2000. The Population and Housing Census is carried out every 10 years by the Central Statistical Office in keeping with the national practice. It is an important instrument for gathering detailed information at the national, regional and local levels on socio-economic indicators and demographic conditions and patterns.

In accordance with section 5 of the Statistics Act, Chap. 19:02, it is necessary to obtain the approval of the House of Parliament to undertake this census. We want to ensure the authority of the Director of Statistics to take any census in Trinidad and Tobago. Accordingly, decennial population and housing censuses have been carried out in the past on a regular basis since the year 1844.

The census is indeed a major exercise involving a complete count of all households in Trinidad and Tobago and the principal objective is to provide

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

benchmark, socio-demographic and economic data at the smallest spacial unit of enumeration.

The expected output from this project would provide data on:

- the size and structure of the population by age, sex, ethnicity, religion, education and training as well as information on the economic activity of the household population 15 years and over;
- internal and international migration;
- quantification of the population by type of disability, chronic illness and utilization of medical facilities;
- the type of transport utilized by the economically active population and persons registered and/or attending educational institutions;
- marital and union status of the female population 14 years and over;
- gross income of the population 15 years and over;
- time spent on unpaid household and other activities for persons 15 years and over;
- crimes committed against the household population by type of crime and action initiated;
- the quantity, quality, age, tenancy and utility of the housing stock including water supply, toilet facilities, lighting, fuel and household facilities available.

Data on the information from the census will provide sampling frames for the conduct of agricultural and industrial censuses as well as the formulation of appropriate sampling designs for the collection of socio-economic and demographic data during the inter-censal years.

Institutional and technical arrangements—to ensure the efficient planning and execution of the census, two committees and a temporary census planning unit have been established and they are a National Advisory Committee which has responsibility to ensure that the enquiries of key interest groups in the society are adequately represented in the planning of the census questionnaire and to promote public awareness and participation in the exercise, thus providing advice to the census officers on regulations that may need to be developed to facilitate the execution of the census as well as on all other pertinent, non-technical areas.

Census Order, 2000
[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

There is also a Technical Advisory Committee with responsibility to assist the Director of Statistics on all technical matters relating to the planning and implementation of the census and to ensure that the census questionnaire is designed to meet Government's needs for bench-mark statistics, for various planning purposes and also to assist with the design and development of the census questionnaire and all other related activities, and to ensure that the execution of the census is carried out at the highest possible level of competence. There is also a temporary census planning unit which has been established to detail the day-to-day activities associated with the census.

Mr. President, as part of the preparatory process for conducting the census, the following activities have been undertaken:

1. The development and review of the census questionnaire and related census documents to be used in the execution of the census.
2. Preparation of a publicity plan which was developed by the Census Planning Unit and the Central Statistical Office Internal Census Steering Committee.
3. Execution of a pilot survey.
4. Development of a post enumerative strategy and census evaluating proposal.

Strategy for enumeration: For purposes of enumerating the population during the 2000 round of the Population and Housing Census, Trinidad and Tobago is to be divided into five enumeration zones incorporating the administrative, regional corporations and municipalities which are further sub-divided into communities and enumeration districts.

The enumeration zones are as follows:

1. North/North West Enumeration Zone: This includes the city of Port of Spain, Diego Martin Regional Corporation, San Juan/Laventille Corporation.
2. The North/East St. George, North Eastern, St. Andrew, St. David and South/East Nariva/Mayaro: This includes the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation, the Borough of Arima, Sangre Grande Regional Corporation, Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation.
3. The Central Enumeration Zone: This includes the Borough of Chaguanas and Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation.

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

4. South/West Enumeration Zone. This includes Point Fortin Borough Corporation, City of San Fernando, Princes Town Regional Corporation, Siparia Regional Corporation, Penal/Debe Regional Corporation.
5. The Tobago Enumeration Zone.

The organization of Trinidad and Tobago into enumeration zones will facilitate the orderly conduct and management of the census enumeration in the undertaking of the following activities:

1. Training census staff.
2. Recruitment of field supervisors, field editors and enumerators.
3. The conduct of field exercise.
4. The editing of questionnaires and data processing.
5. Dissemination of census results.

Each zone is constituted on the basis of existing administrative regional and municipal corporations and their constituent communities and enumeration districts. These zones follow regional corporation demarcation. Regions are grouped together based on the fact that they are contiguous and hence allow for the most efficient allocation of resources for supervisory control and co-ordination of census activities.

For each enumeration district comprising a sub area within an enumeration zone, the following types of information are to be considered in order to facilitate the efficient allocation of enumeration personnel for census enumeration.

1. The number of buildings, dwelling units and households.
2. The number of institutions.
3. The population size and density.
4. The topography and other geographical and social features which are likely to affect and/or promote the conduct of field work.
5. Any other relevant features or characteristics of the area, such as recent residential, industrial, commercial developments, changes in land use, things such as squatting.

By Minute No. 2682 of October 28, 1998, Cabinet agreed that 2,630 enumerators, 450 field supervisors and 250 field editors are to be recruited for one month to collect the census information. The enumerators will be recruited with

Census Order, 2000
[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

the assistance of the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives using a special registration exercise at different venues throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

2.00 p.m.

The field supervisors will be recruited from Government ministries and departments. These will include retired public servants and teachers. These persons have years of experience in the public service environment and a good record in supervision and management. This would minimize the cost of training and ensure a high level of efficiency. In addition, personnel in this category utilize statistics in carrying out their functions and some would have census experience. The field editors would be recruited from the public sector and the list of trained enumerators, personnel in this category, would be expected to have a thorough knowledge of the census questionnaire, and would be trained to evaluate and report on the status of completed questionnaires submitted by the enumerators.

Mr. President, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed: Mr. President, the fact that the Motion that is before us this afternoon is subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament suggests that it gives parliamentarians the opportunity to comment on the particular Motion, in this case, the desire to carry out a census between the period May 02, 2000 and June 09, 2000 in Trinidad and Tobago. So that we have some very brief comments to make on this Motion.

Mr. President, we recognize the importance of carrying out a census from time to time, as we have heard about the information that is gathered. The hon. Minister made mention of the fact that this kind of exercise has been going on, I believe, since 1844 which he mentioned in his contribution. The fact that over the years, these exercises are carried out is important because it assists Government in formulating its national policies. So that in carrying out an exercise of this magnitude, one would expect that every effort would be made to ensure that the data that is being collected would be as accurate as possible.

I was very glad to hear the hon. Minister make mention of the process when he said that, in terms of the recruitment of personnel—I think he gave some figures—the number is over 2000 enumerators who would be recruited, and about 450 supervisors who are retired from the public service and teachers and what have you, and that the Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives would be involved in the exercise.

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

We would just like to be assured that in this recruitment exercise, every effort is made to ensure that you really get competent people to perform this kind of exercise, both in the field and at the supervisory level. I make this remark because with this particular administration, in terms of their *modus operandi*, we are hoping and praying that this exercise will not be an opportunity for more political patronage, especially in terms of the enumerators, and how you are going to recruit these people and so forth; and that you get a cadre of personnel who would be well trained. Moreso, the supervisors, because the monitoring of the work is critical, and therefore you would want to ensure that you have very dedicated and committed people to do the exercise; people with experience and, certainly, some measure of competence.

At the end of the day when this exercise is completed, another concern that we have is in terms of the reporting of the information that is collected from the field. What is going to happen thereafter? This exercise is going to be carried out for a period of one month. It is going to be a nationwide exercise. How long thereafter would we have access to the results? What really would happen to the information thereafter? I hope the United National Congress is not going to use this for the general elections. Instead, it would be used for purposes of formulating Government policies. Our major concern is to ensure that when the exercise is carried out it is done in a very thorough way and as accurately as possible.

Sometime last year—it is regrettable that I have to raise this as an issue in this debate—I think it was around budget time when the debate was taking place that a concern had been expressed in terms of the accuracy of information coming out of the Central Statistical Office. This concern was expressed based on an actual IMF Report that was circulated in July of last year. It is not something that we would want to politic about, but if serious concerns have been expressed by an international agency as the IMF, concerning what is happening there, then it is a matter of concern—especially now where you are going to have such a huge project on stream. For an exercise that is to be carried out by the Central Statistical Office, we would want to ensure that there are checks and balances and to ensure that the whole process is very transparent and is being done in as accurate a manner as possible.

I say this without casting aspersions on the very hardworking and dedicated people who have been working for years in that Central Statistical Office, because we know what is happening in the country. Our public servants want to do their work with a very high level of dedication and commitment, but when they are being intimidated by those who are running the Government today, then serious

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. MOHAMMED]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

problems are bound to arise in the country. And the aspersions I am casting are on the UNC Government that is in power today in Trinidad and Tobago, not on our hardworking and dedicated civil servants.

We are asking you to please ensure that this exercise is done free from political interference because the Government interferes at all levels. And forgive me for raising it in this kind of debate, which appears to be pretty straightforward, but I have to do it because at every stage of the game this is what the Government is doing: interfering and tampering. The evidence can be found in the IMF Report of July 1999, hon. Minister, where concerns were expressed.

Maybe we may need to bring them in to assist with the project. So it is a question that is there in the records. [*Interruption*] It is certainly in the records. It is there for all to see and it has already been raised at a national level.

2.10 p.m.

With these few concerns, Mr. President, I commend all those persons who have been involved. We heard about the various committees that have been working. Since 1998, I think, the proposals were put forward for this census to be carried out. In the Central Statistical Office there are trained people and they know what is involved in terms of the logistics of such an exercise. We can only hope and pray that they will be able to carry out this exercise in as efficient a manner as possible to get the most accurate information possible. More importantly, when the information is made available we want to ensure that this Government does not tamper with the information and paint a picture to suit itself.

I say this because [*Desk thumping*] I went through the *Hansard* debate on a similar motion in 1990 and I was taken aback to read in the contribution of the present Minister of Agriculture, the hon. Trevor Sudama, references to ethnic imbalances and all of these things. This is why our country is so divided, Mr. President. For years this is the kind of propaganda [*Desk thumping*] they have been entrenching in the minds of our population, causing our society to be polarized by blowing up situations and casting aspersions. [*Interruption*] The hon. Leader of Government Business is doing it again here today and we have to get out of this scene and get on with building a nation by bringing everybody together.

An exercise of this type will require the co-operation of every single householder and citizen in the country. [*Desk thumping*]. One of the ingredients for such an exercise, as the hon. Minister pointed out, is the need for a public awareness campaign. We expect that over the next few weeks the whole country

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

is going to be sensitized about this exercise, so we want to ensure that everybody will co-operate with those persons who have to go house to house and get the information. In order to do so, you know, one must have that feeling inside that this exercise will, in fact, be a very transparent, non-partisan and non-political exercise, free from political interference.

We hope that at the end of the day the information will, in fact, be very reliable data. Any government in power in our country should be able to use the information in a manner that will enable us to formulate national policy in whatever aspect, whether it will be to formulate policies relating to youths or unemployment or what have you. At the end of the day, for the sake of our national development, we should get good reliable data that would help us to formulate the best policies possible to take our country forward. Thank you very much, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt: Mr. President, I just have two questions to ask the hon. Minister. When he was giving his detailed description saying what this census was about—and please correct me if I am wrong—I thought I heard him say that, amongst the things that were going to be counted was the marital or partnership status of the female population of 15 years and over. I would like to know why this is only for the female population of 15 years and over? If this relates to child bearing and the number of children being born, we do not have very many virgin mothers in Trinidad. [*Laughter*] I would like to know why we are not talking about the marital status of males 15 years and over, or is it just that culturally we do not recognize that males also produce children?

Number two, in 1996—I think it was 1996. There are two people here who can correct me—this Parliament passed the Counting Unremunerated Work Act. It was supported by the PNM when the PNM was in power, it was supported by the UNC and finally put through when the UNC came to power. That was an Act, not a Motion, and it stated that certain questions would be asked in the next national census which had to do with the extent of unremunerated work in the country which was performed both by men and by women.

I did not hear the Minister mention that in his detailed description of what was going into this census. I know that one of the committees had drafted eight questions that were to go in. This had later been shortened to four questions, then it had been shortened to two questions each of four parts. If what the Minister has said covers everything that is going to be covered in this census, it has obviously been wiped out despite there being an Act of Parliament saying that it should be in. I would like to get some details on this. Thank you, Mr. President.

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny: Mr. President, I too have a few questions about the census. Before asking the questions, I would just remind Parliament that taking a population census has a long, long history that started out simply as enumeration. Now, as countries and governments have grown, they have piggybacked on a simple census a whole series of questions that they argue they need in order to plan the development. I go along. I support a census but I think it would have been far better had the hon. Minister shown us a copy of a census form. [*Desk thumping*] This would have enabled me to make a major contribution to the debate as a scientist at a time when we are discussing scientific policy.

I mention this because the trend has been to do away with this exercise of trying to count every head with a large army of people, many of whom are lacking skills. The trend in many societies is, when doing the census, to do a head count but at the same time to do the detailed census that the hon. Minister is talking about by a sample. In other words, you know that we have a population of approximately 1.3 or 1.4, whatever it is, million, that if you did a detailed sample and then concentrated your resources on getting a really accurate sampling, the sample might give you a better result than the actual census.

Mr. President, I have a few concerns about—I have actually received this form which tells me that I am going to be part of a census exercise. It is something that is put in the mail. If anyone asks my religion I will tell him or her that they are fast. It is no business of anybody's, including the Government, [*Desk thumping*] similarly, my ethnic origin. Now, this, to me, is a rather silly, stupid sort of question because census takers are confusing ethnicity and race. If anyone asks me, I say again, "You are fast." But, you see, the census forms, when they enumerate you, say "Black", "Indian", "Mixed", or "Other".

The suggestion that there is a category, "Mixed", suggests miscegenation, and you know the connotation of this term. So a large part of the population is going to clearly say, "Listen, I am one or the other", and then the "Mixed" and the "Other" are minor elements. Now, I find this offensive. Is it necessary? How do you use this information? Information on one's religion, ethnic origin or race, what does it all mean? How does a government use this? Why is it important? I question this. As to asking marital status, I think this is also offensive. What business is one's marital status to a government when the government itself recognizes a bewildering variety and continuum of human relationships, which are recognized now in the law?

I would think that there are some very pertinent questions that might be asked, especially in a society in which the aged population, the component of the older

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

people, is growing as people survive to longer periods, such as, “What did it cost you last year for your medical expenses?” This is to me very important. This should be medical expenses including drugs, because even a minor thing, if you cannot get it done in the public hospitals, may cost \$15,000 or \$20,000 dollars. [Interruption] Yes. My minor cleaning up this shoulder cost a mere \$16,000. So my point is that the hon. Minister would have helped us in debating this matter by treating us as intelligent, adult, concerned citizens by letting us see the census form so that we could contribute to the debate. Thank you, Mr. President. [Desk thumping]

Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams: [Desk thumping] Mr. President, I would just like to make an observation. I want to agree with Prof. Kenny and, therefore, relate to what Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt had said. I am aware that there is a document out, which is public, containing sample questionnaires and many more things, which will go along with the whole census. I wonder whether it is a courtesy, or how it happened, whether we could not have been given a copy here in the Senate as we go about trying to approve this whole business of the census, because it would have helped us. Some of the questions which are being asked of the hon. Minister, we ourselves would have looked at them. I am aware of that document and I know it is public.

It reminds me very much of when we had the local government debate and we were asked to validate a document coming from the Elections and Boundaries Commission. It came five or six months after the time it should have come here. The Bill was brought here for validation and the document was not there. The Senate sat and went through it, allowed it to pass and it is only when it went to the Lower House that they asked, “Where is the document?” They could not work on it without having seen the document and it was then that a document was given to them. When they looked at the document it contained certain boundary changes and certain things which were important to the election at that time. At one time it was felt, well, there was some reason for the delay.

I will not say it is the same with the Census Board at all because I think they have worked quite well on that. I wonder whether the Senate could not have been privileged to that document, which has been made public, as we went along looking at the amendments here. I think that if we could have seen that, we would have seen the information there to answer some of the questions asked by Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt. There are notes there.

I know there are probably hundreds of people out there. The census is going to be conducted in a short while. I know everything is prepared but I still wonder

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

why the Senate has not been presented with a copy of it. I do not know the legal requirements of how it gets to the Senate but I think it would have been more than a courtesy to let us have one as we go about discussing the census. Some of the questions that we have asked here we are only thinking about them and the only time we will know is when they arrive at one's home.

We ask ourselves, therefore, what is the purpose of this session as we look through it? I suppose the hon. Minister will tell us, probably, he might not have been aware of it until this afternoon. Well, I happen to be aware of it. I have seen the document myself and I think it would have been useful information for Members of the Senate to have in their possession. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. President, I support both Sen. Prof. Kenny and Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt with respect to the comments they have made. The Bill that Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt referred to also had another provision and that is that there should be a household survey conducted. This relates to questions that Sen. Prof. Kenny has suggested should be asked having to do with health and expenditure and all the rest of it. The first question I ask the Minister is, are those two provisions of that Act going to be included in the census? Secondly, if they are not, is it too late to change the questionnaire so that they are included? Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Danny Montano: Mr. President, I have only two short questions for the Minister. The first is whether the census is going to be done on an actual physical count of every person or whether there is going to be a method of statistical sampling used. I think it is important that we understand exactly what will be taking place.

Secondly, Mr. President, I would refer to a comment that my colleague made earlier about the reliability of data coming out of the Central Statistical Office. She mentioned the June Country Report of the International Monetary Fund that was published last year, where they had indicated that they had some reservations as to the reliability of some of the data that was coming out of the Central Statistical Office.

2.25 p.m.

Mr. President, in that regard, there is a serious question in my mind, because based on the data that the Central Statistical Office is publishing presently, what they do is that having done the census back in 1990, they estimate the population on an annual basis; they estimate the number of live births and deaths, and the number of emigrations and immigrations, so that every year you get the

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

information as to basically what their estimate is as to the structural size of the population.

From my memory, that number was approximately 1.3 million persons, but I also know that the Elections and Boundaries Commission reported recently that they had about 920,000—930,000 registered voters. That would mean that more than 75 per cent of the population is registered to vote so they must be over 18. That does not even say that everybody over 18 is registered to vote. It seems to me to be an extraordinary number and, in fact, it conflicts with the data of the Central Statistical Office that by no means indicated that 75 per cent of the population is over 18. Therefore, we have some serious problems.

It is not a problem that arose this year, or last year. It has been a problem that has been there for some time but it is, at this point, a huge problem and I think it warrants some kind of investigation and some kind of explanation as to how we have these huge differences. Because, Mr. President, I have received firsthand reports of Guyanese who have been moved into places like Toco and so forth, who have been put on the EBC rolls and that kind of thing. I do not know for certain that is true, but the information I have seemed to be accurate and be reliable.

Hon. Senator: Call the names.

Sen. D. Montano: I would if I had the specific addresses, but I do not. But it is an issue that warrants serious enquiry as to the reconciliation of the numbers on both counts, and I would ask the Minister to address his people to that issue.

Thank you very much.

Sen. Mark: Mr. President, in terms of a clarification to Sen. Montano. Both Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed and himself made reference to the International Monetary Fund. I have been informed that the IMF when they came and were doing their work in Trinidad and Tobago, accused the Central Statistical Office of not including value added tax (VAT) in the computation of the country's gross domestic product and the Central Statistical Office did, in fact, include VAT and did point out that to the IMF. But, we have no control over the IMF. They were told and they were shown that it was incorporated in the country's gross domestic product. Up to now as we speak, the IMF has refused to correct their error and we keep making accusations against the CSO and also politicians.

I think it is important to point out to this Parliament that the question that was raised by the IMF was cleared up by the Central Statistical Office. They pointed

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. MARK]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

out to the International Monetary Fund what they did and up to this time, the IMF has not corrected that position. I just wanted to put that on the record so that both Sen. Nafeesa Mohammed and Sen. Danny Montano would be aware.

Sen. D. Montano: I would just like to respond. The fact of the matter is that is what the International Monetary Fund has reported. We do not have the privilege of inspecting the records of the Central Statistical Office, but the IMF is a reputable international organization and they have stated very clearly that the reliability of some of the data is questionable. That is a statement that I think we have to pay attention to, Mr. President. We would be silly and we would be negligent in our duty to simply disregard it on the basis of what the Minister is saying.

Mr. President, I thank you very much.

Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh: Mr. President, I support in principle the idea of the census. We do not have a choice. But I think there are certain questions, in addition to those already raised, that need attention. I wonder, Sir, could a census of all the inhabitants throughout Trinidad and Tobago—this is the question I ask—be completed between May 2 and June 9, 2000? I have a problem. I have serious misgivings about this limited time-frame.

I was rather surprised. This is the first time I am seeing this pamphlet referred to by Sen. Prof. Kenny. Yet, the hon. Minister said in his presentation that since October 1998, Government was planning to have this census. He made mention of a publicity plan that was developed. It is the first time I am seeing that. He said in his presentation there was a publicity plan. We are asking for the form and we are asking for this little handout. What about the rank and file? He had about two years to do it. What is the publicity plan? I mean, we have Channel 4, the Government station. I have seen nothing. Maybe it might be there. You have the media. Use it. You had two years to do this.

I have a problem in that I really believe that this may not be possible in a month, the timing of this. This is a mammoth task, and if a census of all the inhabitants throughout Trinidad and Tobago, is to be conducted properly, we need more than a month.

Therefore, I suggest that you consider extending the time given to the enumerators; maybe make it two months. I leave it up to you. I do not believe this could be done in a month because we have not really done the publicity to encourage our people to get involved in this which is a national project. The extension of time beyond the month would give the enumerators, the officers, a

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

little more time to meet those difficult members of the public. We know our population and we know our people. You have to make a first visit, a second visit, a third visit and possibly more. I believe we have to cater for the careless and the indifferent. Look what happens with elections.

How do we make a census compulsory for the population? I remember in the time of Jesus, you had to go. Mary and Joseph had to go. All the world had to be taxed and all the world had to respond to that. It was compulsory. How do you make this thing compulsory? You cannot leave people out. The question I ask is: How do you do that? Have we taught the population? Have we educated the population about what will happen to those who refuse to co-operate and those who deliberately absent themselves when the officers are coming?

I also ask this question. It is a very delicate issue. I have wrestled with it, since a few days ago I was told about this concern about having a census: The effect on population growth in a place like Trinidad and Tobago of such measures as the Caricom Freedom of Movement Bill. This is not merely about skill; we are not dealing with skilled workers only and the professionals that we really focussed on in that Freedom of Movement legislation. But, what about the presence of non-nationals, those who have been living in this country within the last 10 years? That is very important.

Will the visitors, the enumerators, be able to know exactly how many of these persons are from Caricom and maybe elsewhere, who are here as visitors, over a long period of time? They expect the nurses to take care of them and we have hospital facilities and water and so forth, because census is about, not only knowing who you have, but how do we cater for them and provide social services for them.

A question I want to ask—I do not know. I was reading the other day about a set of squatters on the Aripo savannahs. I wonder if they are a part of the population and I wonder if we have enough enumerators and other officers going up in the hills and all over in these unauthorized squatters' areas where we have our population. They are also there and when they are sick, they come into our hospitals and we have to provide schools for them, therefore, you must know how many we have. They fall within the ambit of the census.

A very important concern about getting the census right and not omitting anyone, is that matter the Prime Minister raised recently about Trinidad and Tobago nationals with criminal records in the United States of America who have been deported and who are back here in our society after an absence of many

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. REV. TEELUCKSINGH]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

years. They are now a part of the society. Mr. President, how are we going to list them and trace them? All these who have been a part of our community within the last ten years.

Mr. President, as part of the Motion before us, one of the recitals says:

“And whereas it is expedient that...”

we do this. Expedient. What? Because the 10-year cycle has reached for another census? Or there is the need, as I was saying, for the Government to look at its development plan for the total population. Or, is it expedient because general elections are close by?

“Whereas it is expedient...”

Expedient because of the 10-year cycle? Expedient because of our long range plan for our population? Or, expedient because elections are close by?

This, Mr. President, brings into the picture, not merely the Central Statistical Office but later, the Elections and Boundaries Commission, and we cannot get away from that.

Already, there are suspicions and rumblings with regard to the alignment of certain electoral boundaries because of population growth and no sooner than that was observed about population and census, there was the fear expressed loudly about gerrymandering, and we heard an echo of that today from the Opposition Benches—tampering with the census and so forth; census information.

Mr. President, my own feeling is, I know the census is necessary now; we know that there has been a population growth but I really do not believe that politicians should spoil this exercise. On both sides of the Senate, politicians must not spoil this exercise. If there is population growth and electoral boundaries are to be considered, they go hand in hand, and if they are to be considered, then I strongly believe that such an exercise must be free from suspicion at all times and all of us must have absolute confidence in the Elections and Boundaries Commission and also in the staff of the Central Statistical Office and, certainly—I think this is very important—that members of the Commission, themselves, must transcend their own personal political preferences in this which I consider to be a national issue, both for the Government and the Commission and all political parties.

If the result of the 2000 Census indicates the need to realign electoral boundaries, then that exercise must be de-politicized and must transcend the

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

narrow partisan concerns of party, with the ever-present obsession to rule and govern—and I am talking about both sides now. Everybody feels these days, that, “We could run the country better.” We need to have the census exercise free from that kind of tribalism that is inherent in our traditional politics.

I am very happy that previous speakers spoke about the question of ethnicity and race. I am very troubled. Recently, all of us have been hearing those political speeches that come in preparation for the by-election in Rio Claro. Why is it, if I am in the crowd at a political meeting, that political leaders and people of both parties concerned, or all contenders, must stand there and point out who is an Afro-Trinidadian, Indo-Trinidadian and Syrio-Trinidadian in the crowd?

2.40 p.m.

I find that is ridiculous! This is always done. I wish that the two parties who govern this country—17:17, it started off like that—would stop this nonsense and give us a break for once. They are responsible for dividing this population and keeping us divided. A small election like that in Rio Claro that has no consequence at all, you have to bring race into it and make me aware that I am in the Indo faction of the crowd attending the political meeting. That is rubbish! Absolute rubbish! This is the season for it.

This census is going to be made a political issue. This is why I am so concerned about it. We need to give the commission a chance—whether it is the Elections and Boundaries Commission or the Central Statistical Office—give them a chance to work out this and do not get involved, both sides. This is what I mean when I speak about the whole exercise being depoliticized. We need to step aside and keep our suspicions to ourselves.

The other evening I was reading about the days when we had the voting machines and the uneasiness and suspicion of a sizeable proportion of this society. This continues on. The machines are not here but we always find something else to haunt us so that the ethnic, racial bogey is always resurrected. It becomes a monster. I firmly believe—in my limited interpretation of reading the politics of Trinidad within the last few decades, that the two major parties that have been responsible for governing this country have been responsible for keeping us polarized. This little exercise is a basic and fundamental one: the census, dealing with people and population. We are not to divide our population, as we have been doing, for the sole purpose of gaining power. The power play, the lust for power and the desire to control, rule and govern is responsible for this.

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. REV. TEELUCKSINGH]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

I support the idea of the census. We must do it. If we do not do it this year, we have to do it sometime, very early. We must do it, particularly for developmental purposes. We need to know how many people are out there, not because of seats and who will govern, but how many hospitals and schools we must provide for them and the water supply for all these communities. That is very important.

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

Sen. Martin Daly: Mr. President, I have a very different objection to the resolution that is before us today. We have a line in our National Anthem that says: “Here every creed and race find an equal place.” I am strongly coming around to the view, Mr. President, that we need to retool the Anthem and include a line in it: “Here every institution has its appropriate place.” I will explain what I mean.

I propose today, deliberately, to vote against this resolution for this reason. I was astounded when Sen. Prof. J. Kenny produced this pamphlet that referred to a census on April 17 and May 15. I do not know if this is a different census or an alternative census. If this is the census that we are dealing with today, then I have no choice but to vote against this resolution, because there is nothing and nobody who can authorize the holding of this census by sending out a pamphlet in advance of the affirmative resolution of Parliament. [*Desk thumping*] One cannot do this. This is a violation, absolute violation, of the role of Parliament in this country. Of course one can prepare the census papers and one can prepare ones brochures and one can do all these different things, but how dare you!

This reminds me of the time when we were debating the amendments to the British West Indian Airways (BWIA) Act that were necessary if they were to hand over—as the People’s National Movement (PNM) did—BWIA to Acker. Lo and behold it was published in the press in the United States, at the instigation of the then government, that we had already passed the legislation. This was for the benefit of anybody that Acker could bramble into investing into BWIA. It was published in the press in the United States that we had passed the legislation before we had passed it. Now this is the logical conclusion. But this is a lot more serious because, until we pass an affirmative resolution, this census cannot be held. It gives the impression, therefore, that Parliament is just a rubber stamp—“Look we holding a census, come and pass this thing and we go hold it.” I am sick to death of this. I propose—if it is one man, I will make a one-man protest. No one dare do that. If we allow the Government to get away with that, then we are conceding to the notion that the Parliament is a rubber stamp. I am going to develop why I feel strongly about this.

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

I want to emphasize that this kind of disrespect for Parliament did not begin with this Government. I just gave the example of the privatization of BWIA, and I could give other examples from other administrations. We have got into a situation now, where there is a war going on about what is the appropriate institutional relationship with the office of the President to the institutional relationship with the office of the Prime Minister. That is the subject of a war. We have a war going on about what is the appropriate institutional relationship with the office of Chief Justice to the several offices held by the Executive. We have the age-old tension between the Government of the day and the media. We had Chambers in Arima causing journalists to feel fear, and that tradition has not stopped. But that is the subject of another matter.

I will not accept a situation where the relationship between the institution of Parliament and the institution of the offices that make up the Executive is not simply threatened, but the whole world is told that this is a rubber stamp relationship. I emphasize that this is not a theoretical argument, because I think it is important that any government—whether it is this one or its predecessors—understand there is no gray area about what is the relationship with the Executive to Parliament. There is no gray area. There is no room for debate about whether our role is to warn and advise and whether our role is to ask people for the release of funds. There is no room for debate about this. We have to pass the laws. Therefore, the country cannot be told and nothing can be done to suggest to the country, especially in this dangerous period where we are having war about every other institutional relationship—

We had a war, under the PNM, with the office of Speaker. We had a war in order to determine—in fact we had a state of emergency—whether someone who is elected by a majority of the House could or could not be removed by a majority of the House. We actually had to go to a state of emergency to determine that. This is not a new problem: warfare between the relationships of one institution to another. This is not an academic issue, Mr. President, because several of my colleagues have said that they would like to see the census form. They want to see that census form for a variety of good reasons. In the case of one colleague, it is to make sure that another law, which we passed, is being observed.

One does not have a choice, having passed the Act relating to unremunerated work. I do not believe the Government has a choice about whether they want to include it, or whether it is not convenient to include it, or whether the deadline they have set for the completion of the census does not accommodate it. We

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. DALY]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

passed that law, as far as I remember, with bipartisan support. But whether we passed it with bipartisan support it is a law.

If the answer to Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt's question is that the questions related to unremunerated work are not in the census, then the census cannot be held because you would have simply ignored a law—a directive—[*Interruption*]

2.50 p.m.

Dr. Job: Mr. President, I have heard several speakers refer to this Act with respect to unremunerated work. I had planned to deal with it in my winding up, but since I know how this thing runs and I do not want it to go on television that Sen. Daly is agreeing with all his other support on that side, I want to make it quite clear that in section 11 of the census form, the questionnaire, there is a set of questions: "Time spent on unpaid household and other activities for persons 15 years old and over".

Sen. M. Daly: Well, I am glad that I have provoked an intervention from the Minister. Is this a card game? Is it a Jack that you are hiding? From the time Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt raised it, the responsible thing to do was to produce the form, not wait until speaker after speaker protested. That raises the very issue of why we have to see the form, because there are other concerns. That form cannot be hidden from us; you cannot "pint" it like a Jack in All Fours.

Do you know what "pinting" is? You cannot "pint" it as though it is some kind of card game. That is precisely why I intend to make this one-man protest, because as far as I am concerned the form, as a courtesy, should be circulated to Members. [*Desk thumping*] So that before—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, I would just like to ask Sen. Daly if he is aware that the points made by the Minister do not, in fact, cover in their entirety the concerns set out by Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt or myself?

Sen. M. Daly: Well, I do not know what he is "pinting", Sen. Spence. I have not seen the whole card; it might be a counterfeit or marked card; I ain't see it; he "pint" it. His whole body language is to "pint" it and not release it to us and that is exactly why, as a courtesy, Members have to see the form.

I do not know what is his reference to television. What is this obsession? We are having a parliamentary debate and if some people have a grouse and what they say is not worthy of coverage take it up with the media. What has this got to do with television? We are having a parliamentary debate in which I am protesting

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

the fact that the Parliament is being taken for granted and I intend to protest it within the rules of the Standing Orders.

I was going to say that there cannot be any question that the form exists, because they have announced it to the world already, and as a courtesy the form should be circulated to Senators so that if we are to affirm the resolution permitting the taking of the census, we have to see the form. Suppose there is some completely obnoxious question in there? Let us just suppose that there is some completely obnoxious question in there and it is taken up by the press, that you seem to have this problem with, and it is taken up by the population? They may say, "But who authorized this?" Then the first buck-pass that will take place is that the Executive will say, "It is not us, you know, they passed it in the Parliament." Like when they said, "It is not us, is the service commission," or "Is not us is Carlos." [*Laughter*]

The first thing you are going to say is, "Parliament authorized this, you know, it is not us," that is how they are going to pass the buck. But you are not going to pass the buck to me; you are not going to pass a pail full of rubbish for me to hold—no way, not knowing me! So we have to see the form in order to find out and satisfy the queries that have been raised by all the various Members. People have concerns about other questions on religion and ethnicity; I find these very difficult.

The one that strikes me—I always try to take the Government at face value. For example, there are some diseases that affect only persons of certain racial origin and so forth, so maybe there is an argument for continuing to ask race or ethnicity, whatever is the right question in the form. Maybe there is a justification for it. Maybe you need to know about the religion, because the Government may have to take account of the sizes and so forth in relation to the denominational schools; I do not know enough about it. Maybe there is a justification.

Certainly, if we are going to continue with this categorization of "Black, Indian, Mixed or other". We are going to have to do something to inform people who find themselves in a dilemma. Do you mean mixed as a mix between Black and Indian? Do you mean mixed as of a mixture of Black, Indian and other or is it a permutation? Which permutation do you have in mind? So you have to explain to people, and knowing this Minister's propensity, I certainly hope that we are not going to have any of his usual epithets about which we have disagreed privately as well as publicly.

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. DALY]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

The point about it is you have to tell people what is the objective or who are you trying to capture within these categories. I suggest that “other” is a term that is offensive to 50 per cent of the population. It is not offensive to me; you could call me anything you like and it does not bother me. The Prime Minister does it all the time. It does not really bother me, but I suggest that 50 per cent of the population find the term “other” offensive. It suggests that you are being put in some kind of class that does not really matter. So maybe it should be “None of the others” or “None of the above”, but I have a problem with “other”. I think people find it offensive to being told that they are “other”. In other words, they do not count—they are “other”.

All of these are things that we might legitimately raise with the census takers before we affirm this resolution, but in order to do so we have to see the form, so that nobody will pint at the form and say, “Oh no, well, we really have taken care of this, you know.” We have to see the form. It is no good coming and telling me now that the Government is pressed for time, they have to take this census by X or Y day, because they brought us here at 10.30 a.m. two weeks ago and did not have enough work for us to do; everything was finished by 1.30 p.m.

First of all, they disrupted everybody’s timetable and other life, and we do have other lives. They disrupted everybody’s life by bringing us all here at 10.30 a.m. two weeks ago and we did not have enough work to do. We could have dealt with this then. It is this continued madness of having a parliamentary programme that is so zigzag. The first I heard that this census thing was coming up, was when one of the very excellent and courteous people who work in the Parliament office—they know I am troublesome about this—rang and told my secretary. By the way, I am sure that they did it on Sen. Mark’s instructions, I am quite sure of that, but sometimes he does not know what we are doing next. [*Laughter*]

They rang very kindly and said, “Well, you know, we are doing the Census Motion on Tuesday,” so I busied myself to try to find out what was this about. But we had lots of time to do this before; the many days we came here and left at 4.30 p.m. or we came here at 10.30 a.m. and did not have enough work to do. If only we would comply with the Standing Orders and have the Senate regularly on a Tuesday from 1.30 to 6.30 p.m. with an extension, if necessary, we would not have all this zigzag business of bringing us here at all different odd hours and for all different reasons.

Since, apparently, Sen. Gillette is paying particular interest in my contribution, may I say to him that regardless of what he negotiates with Cable and Wireless it has to come here—[*Desk thumping*—so take note, Sir, and allow

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

enough time. But I know you as a very courteous gentleman who, presumably, would be categorized by your Government as “other”, like me. [*Laughter*] Politically, that might be quite an accurate categorization of the hon. Minister, but in terms of a census I am not so sure. Anyway, while we are on the subject, take note and do not do the same as your colleagues in the People's National Movement. I use the word “colleagues” advisedly, meaning, of course, ministerial colleagues, nothing else. Take note of the mistakes made by your colleagues in the People's National Movement when we were privatizing the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission and British West Indian Airways.

Mr. President, I am afraid that I have had it with this disrespect of Parliament. I do not need any constitutional expert to advise me of what Parliament's rights are in relation to this resolution. It is up to the Government; it does not bother me one way or the other, but unless I get some satisfaction on this question, I am afraid that I will have to treat with this resolution in a certain way.

Thank you.

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie: Thank you. Mr. President, I will be pretty brief. I have had reason to abstain on a vote before, in this Senate for the very reason that action was taken and then permission was sought. It seems as though we have a repetition of that today.

Mr. President, I support the fact that we should have a census taken. I can tell you that on 92.1 FM, our radio station in Tobago, for the past few weeks the Tobago public has been informed about a census. Advertisements were put out asking people within a certain age range to apply to become enumerators and the deadline date was given, because 92.1 FM sought the information and made it public. That is why I am always fussing over our Minister of Information. I am saying that enough public education is not done. I have also said that the Ministry of Information should not confine itself to its own work, that is, things that matter around the Ministry of Information only, because here we need public information relating to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development, and the Ministry of Information has not done its homework.

Mr. President, 92.1 FM continued with the training procedure, saying that the people would be trained from what and what time. They have actually gone public and asked people in Tobago to cooperate with these people when they come around. So 92.1 FM has done a certain amount of public education. We in Tobago had been asking, “What are they coming to find out? That brings me to the point that we do not have the contents of the form at hand. I will tell you why it is important.

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

People are very cautious and wary of people—who they presume to represent government—coming to them and asking questions. We are very skeptical; we do not know for what they are going to use the information. So if you have public education saying that these questions which would be asked of you will not be questions that the enumerator “rhymes” up or comes up with, but they are legitimate questions on the form coming from the document, people would understand that everybody would be asked the same questions and this enumerator who comes to me would not be asking me these private questions because he or she knows me, and it is not a question that is asked of everyone. So the need for public information is very, very real.

People feel that these little people who come out to ask these questions — because they are mostly young people; they have their O’levels and A’levels; they are not employed and they come out to you—they know you, because in Tobago we know everybody else. Your parents know me, I know your parents. “Yuh fast to ask me them questions there!” “Wha yuh want to know about wha religion?” “Wha yuh want to know if ah marrid for?” “Wha yuh want to know how much money ah wukking for?” They are very skeptical; they want to know why. But if you have somebody saying that these are questions we have on the form, we want to know when we ask you how many people in your household are working or what religion you belong to, we would know how it impacts on certain issues and policies that the Government has to take.

3.05 p.m.

Mr. President, another problem is that people would be aware that information given would be confidential, that the enumerator would not go about telling everybody your business: I just went next door and they say you have this and that and how you could say you do not have this, and that one is not your uncle and that one is not your “ti-ti”. The people want to know that the questions are legitimate ones that have been authorized, and they also want to know that what they tell you remains with you. It is not spread and not discussed: there should be confidentiality and trust.

In training these people, we have to make them aware of the socio-cultural behaviour of our people. There are the people who will not want you to disturb them at certain times, so when they are disturbed, they tell you anything they feel to tell you, and you cannot rely on the information. The faster they get rid of you, the better for them. This is something that we need to take on board and do very serious planning and education.

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

Mr. President, we also have the people who are hostile. There are hostile house owners who, from the time they see you, they say, “It is government people coming to ask questions. ‘Dey’ want to ‘take way’ ‘meh’ pension, ‘dey’ want to cut ‘meh’ social security, ‘dey’ want to tax ‘meh’ more, ‘dey’ want to know if ah paying taxes.” We have to take people into our confidence and the more they know, the less resistant they will be, and once we keep and play our cards close to our chest, we would not be doing a fair job of what we have to do.

Finally, I see where the census will take a month whether it is from May to June, or June to July. I suggest that we do the right thing of approving, and seeing the form. [*Desk thumping*] We have the agreement and we have enough time. This is not the end of March, there are still a few days left. We do our agreement, get the authority, and do a plan of public education on radio, television, the newspapers and then begin the exercise. That exercise must begin with us, where we can get the forms and say to Government—for example, in certain cultural districts—this is an offensive question. You see that, if you phrase it differently, people will listen to you and give you the information. Because sometimes it is in the phraseology of the questions, sometimes it is the interpretation of the questions, and so I think we still have time, because as far as I understand from the document, we should not start until May, and if we have the groundwork settled, let us defer any agreement on this. Give us the forms, let us study them, let us do our work.

Some of us have a bit of expertise in questionnaire drafting and interpretation of questions how you may view—for example, some people view the thing of “Other” very seriously. Even in the question of the religions as they appear; you see Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist. You do not see Baptist, Bahai and so forth. Probably the best thing to do is leave the part with religion blank and let them say what they are. Sometimes the phraseology upsets some people and I am saying if we have a chance to look at it, we would put our heads together and say to them: You see this, if you ask this question in this part of Tobago, the people are going to tell you come out of their place and set their dog on you. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, we are in agreement with having a census taken. We also know that on October 16, 1996, the Unremunerated Work Act was assented to and we have people who want to know that enough items are included on the questionnaire to cover the questions that we have been asking.

We want to work, we do not want to skylark. We want to help the Government to put things right. I am saying let us go back to the drawing board, bring the document, let us study it. We are not going to be hostile to it, we are

Census Order, 2000
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

going to try to assist and make it the best ever produced census form this country has ever seen. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, I am sure that we, in fact, will help to publicize it. We will go on radio and tell people this is a good thing for the country, this is a good thing for us in Tobago. Let 92.1 FM put us on the airwaves and let us explain it. I am sure Sen. Alfred would agree and Sen. John would agree. They will be glad to have us, and when they hear people saying: "I also have to answer the questions." They will feel happy to support it.

Thank you.

Sen. Muhammad Shabazz: Mr. President, we would like to say on this side again, and probably we are just mirroring what has been said before—both on this side and the Independent Benches—that we have no objections to a census being taken. As a matter of fact, we feel that it is absolutely necessary.

We have had a situation where, when they brought the local government situation for us to revalidate and we revalidated it, when it went to the other place, it was objected to and was stopped. They changed a number of things that were to come and brought something completely different here, so we on this side cannot take the chance of not seeing what we are voting for, or vote for it blindly, not with this Government.

About two weeks ago, there was a situation with the Education Bill and there were no Regulations. They did what we thought was a good thing. It was honourable for them to take it away and then give us the Regulations to study so we could return to the Parliament and deal with it. We think this is a similar situation.

We cannot pass a document that we have not seen and we know not what it is all about, we do not know what the questions are, and as has been said, when we look at the document, the questions may be completely different from what we expect them to be. So do the honourable thing again, send the document back, send the Minister back with it, let us get the proper document, let us read it, study it, and then make a decision on it.

As Sen. Daly has said, when it is passed it would be said it is the Parliament that passed it and not the Government. We cannot take that chance with the Government. We are asking to see the forms before we do anything like that. Sen. Daly also said, maybe there are things that must be put in, for example, the question of race, and Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh made the point also. I am saying

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

that in a cosmopolitan country, just as you need to know about different religions—because a cosmopolitan country is made up of different people and different religions—so we need to look at the question of race.

In a cosmopolitan country, I want to be one of the first to say we must not be afraid to talk about race and push it under the carpet, because talking about it would bring out certain things and bring us to understand each other and build that nation we want to build. So let us not talk about it negatively, because we are on a political platform. I belong to a party that I am certain will not be a part of that process that divides our country and I speak for everybody on this side. [*Desk thumping*]

We are not going to divide the country; Sen. Mohammed, Sen. Montano, Sen. Jagmohan, Sen. Alfred, Sen. Yuille-Williams and Sen. Shabazz are not going to do anything to divide this country and when we speak about race and about ethnicity, it is to make us understand each other to build that nation that we had intended to build since 1956 and are in the process of building, even though we have been slowed down over the last four years. [*Desk thumping*] We are not about that, and I want to make it clear and I say this for me and for all, that when people speak about race, some say yes, it is to build them together and make them stronger; when we do, it seems as though we are looking to divide. It is not about that. I cannot speak race in that way, but I would not belong to a cosmopolitan country and do not understand that race is an important issue for building a nation. Positive race.

I close by saying, let the Minister go back with his documents, give us the form, let us study it properly. It seems that all systems are in place to have this project running. They seem to have employed people, and built offices, but there is need to advertize it properly, and talk to the community. It should not just be a document hidden somewhere and when it is passed, given out. Thank God that the document was seen before. We need to go out and tell the people what we are doing, get the right people to do it, put mikes in the road, tell people there is going to be a census, go in the hills, and all over in the valleys and let them know it is happening so people will know it is real. Do not just do your own thing and send it through, and as it is said here this is going to be a rubber stamp thing. Why are you bringing it now? Maybe you have to, but you could still wait, there is still time. Send the forms to us, treat us with dignity and with respect. Treat the Parliament as such, treat yourself as such and when you do that, we will be able to pass this Order, because all of us want to support it.

God be with you, and thanks very much.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon Wade Mark): Mr. President, in light of the responses coming from both Benches, I would like to propose as a way out, in terms of arriving at consensus as far as is practically possible, that we defer debate on this matter at this time pending the circulation of a document, which is the form, and allow us—with your support Sir—to get an extra half an hour or hour during the tea break so Senators can look at the document which I have before me which I will circulate. After that we would be able to return and have further discussions. If Senators are still not satisfied, then we would agree to return tomorrow at 1.30 p.m. to deal with the matter.

Mr. President, I am proposing that we defer discussion on this matter, proceed to Private Members' Business and allow the Clerk to circulate the document to all Senators to look at it carefully, and I ask you, Mr. President, with the support of the Senate, that instead of—

Sen. Daly: Mr. President, on a point of clarification, why tomorrow? What is wrong with next week the same time, same place? Why does it have to be tomorrow? To disrupt everybody's schedule again?

3.20 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. W. Mark: Mr. President, as I said, it is a proposal but we can leave here very late tonight, if you wish, in order to conclude this. There is a legal question involving this matter, and this is why I am saying for instance, if we cannot conclude today, I am proposing that we come tomorrow.

Mr. President, what I would like to propose at this time is that we defer debate on this matter at this time, we proceed to Private Members' Business at this time and we circulate this document. Let the Members of Parliament, the hon. Senators look at it, and if we can allow an extra half an hour during tea we can facilitate that.

Sen. Prof. Kenny: Mr. President, I just want to get some clarification. We have been working in the dark. The only information the Senator has seen is the little thing which was put in my mailbox, and my question is, if we suspend the debate pending receipt of the Census document will we all be able to contribute to the debate again, having already spoken?

Sen. Mohammed: Mr. President, another point of clarification. The hon. Minister of Public Administration said something about a legal question and why it is that he wants to come back tomorrow to complete this. What is the legal

problem? Why can we not deal with it next week by which time we would get the opportunity to look at the document and perhaps make further contributions if need be? The dates are already mixed up with the census.

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, I would just like to propose when we come back that we waive the Standing Orders to allow us to comment again on the form, even those of us who have spoken already.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Mr. President, I would like to ask a question.

Mr. President: On the same issue?

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: On the question that the Minister just asked.

Mr. President: That is the last question.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Mr. President, I wonder if the Minister realizes that his arbitrary decision or threat [*Desk thumping*] that we should stay tonight or come back tomorrow, is a continuation of the violation of the Senate that was first done in coming to try to debate this Motion without showing us the form.

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, the question is, that further consideration of this Motion be deferred until a later stage of the proceedings.

**FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS
(MATERNITY BENEFITS)**

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [Tuesday, March 14, 2000]:

Be It Resolved that Parliament direct that the Salaries Review Commission re-examine the terms and conditions of Members of Parliament with a view to including provisions dealing with maternity.

Question again proposed.

Mr. President: Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt had already made her contribution and the question was proposed for debate.

Sen. Danny Montano: Mr. President, I only have a very few brief comments to make on this Motion. It seems to me that the Motion really is one in order to ensure that there is absolutely no doubt about the situation. It seems to me that if a female member of the Senate—not necessarily a Member of the other House—in

fact, even in the other place—asks for leave for six weeks or so, I am sure that she would be entitled to leave for the duration of the six weeks of her confinement. And I am sure she would continue to get her stipend but I leave that to the legal experts. Therefore, it seems to me that this is just for the avoidance of all doubt.

There are two other matters that occurred to me and they were these. In the case of the Senate, I know that it is the usual practice that if a Member takes leave of the Senate and is still resident in the country and does not have a medical certificate or a medical reason why he or she cannot appear here—I am not quite sure what the rule is, whether it is a rule or it is a convention—I know the practice is that a temporary Senator is not appointed. I think it would be going against the spirit of what we are talking about if that rule were to be enforced in a situation like this. After all, the Government has five lady Senators and I think it would be most unfortunate if any Government found itself in a position where it really could not form a majority for a period of six weeks, simply because of some convention. Therefore, I would ask the Minister of Public Administration—I know that he is busy doing something else—

Sen. Mohammed: As usual.

Sen. D. Montano: —to address that matter when he makes his contribution.

The other matter that I wanted to raise—again, I am sorry that the Minister of Public Administration is not here but perhaps somebody would mention this to him when he is on his legs—that under the National Insurance Regulations, a woman who goes into the six-week period of confinement, of course, is entitled to the maternity benefits under the National Insurance Regulations and, of course, we had passed the Maternity Benefits Bill some time ago, which ensures that she would effectively get her full salary while she is on maternity leave. But, in addition, under the National Insurance Scheme, a woman going for maternity leave would also be entitled to a maternity grant of \$1,000. I suppose it is to assist in the cost of medical expenses and so forth.

Therefore, I would like to suggest that if, in fact, this Motion is passed, the attention of the Salaries Review Commission, be specifically brought to the issue of effectively matching the benefits under the National Insurance Scheme, because we, as Senators, are not fully employed by the Parliament as such and we do not have National Insurance deductions or the benefits of the scheme *per se*, and I think that it would be most appropriate if that issue would be considered, as well. So, at least, the benefits, under the NIS Scheme ought to be matched for Members of Parliament.

I thank you, Sir.

Sen. Cynthia Alfred: Mr. President, I would just like to make a brief contribution on the Motion to agree, that, indeed, the Motion is timely, and it takes me back to Shakespeare when Julius Caesar was asked to read a document that pertained to himself, which, if he had read, the whole course of history might have been different, but he used the expression, “What touches us ourselves shall be last served.”

3.30 p.m.

So perhaps, Mr. President, it is not surprising that the Parliament which passes Acts for other persons, all different categories of workers, *et cetera*, persons in the community, should be passing this Bill that touches it in a particular way, so to speak, last. Be it last or not, it is indeed timely, Mr. President. When we think about it, pregnant women are in a sort of special category. They need quite a lot of care. They need time before delivery to muster their strength and then they need time after delivery to regain their strength to be able to look after their babies, *et cetera*.

I know that in England, for instance, the facility is extended to women where, after they have had their babies, not only are they allowed, as in this country, perhaps three months’ leave overall, but they are given the option to stay home for perhaps two or three years until their child reaches school age. Of course, I am not saying that we should adopt this policy at this time, but, Mr. President, it is noteworthy that so much accent is placed on the care of a mother and her baby. This is because not only does the baby need care but the mother as well and so that privilege is extended to mothers.

The proposal, therefore, I think, is a very good one. Since the committee of the House of Representatives did indeed meet as far back as 1998 and came up with certain proposals that would be of benefit to pregnant mothers in the Parliament, we believe that the Salaries Review Commission should indeed be approached to re-examine the terms and conditions so that women in the Parliament who find themselves in the position of pregnancy should not suffer in any way, whether because of the benefits, meaning financial benefits, or even on the question of leave that those women require. This motion, therefore, has our wholehearted support. I thank you, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie: Mr. President, I want to look at this issue from a different angle. I ask myself, if one of our Senators—and let me, for illustration, use one of our male Senators—is ill, what would happen? I am just trying to draw an illustration and, as Sen. Daly is on his feet, let us say Sen. Daly is ill for a

Female Parliamentarians (Maternity Benefits)
[SEN. DR. MC KENZIE]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

number of months. What happens to his pay? Does he get sick leave pay? Does he get paid as, you know, being ill? What happens? I say that as long as a Member of Parliament, be it in the Senate or in the Lower House, has to be off duty for whatever reason, be it maternity leave or for whatever reason, and they qualify as if they had been working elsewhere, then the benefits should be there.

The difference that it makes in Parliament is the fact that, whereas employers set the conditions of service and salaries for their employees, in the case of a parliamentarian these conditions are set by the Salaries Review Commission. I think there is where there is a little hurdle, because I am not sure that we have that authority or power to say that the Salaries Review Commission should set the conditions for maternity leave. I fully support the fact that all Members of Parliament, whatever benefits are enjoyed in other fields and places of employment, should enjoy benefits as parliamentarians as long as they are in service and they qualify for those benefits, just as if they were working in a supermarket, a school, a hospital or wherever. So, I support Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt.

I am not sure that it is the Salaries Review Commission, but wherever the authority lies or whoever should give the instruction, I feel that it should be given so that no Member of Parliament, because of the fact that it is Parliament, should suffer because of where they are working. I support Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt very much. I think it draws to the attention of the public the fact that these laws do not discriminate against young people, young women, offering themselves to serve in both Houses of Parliament. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, I want to make a limited contribution on this particular Motion. First of all, I would say that we on this side of the Senate are in sympathy with the content, sentiments and the intent of this particular Motion in the name of Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt. What we are dealing with here, essentially, is a suggestion to have the terms and conditions of parliamentarians, including maternity benefits, looked at, re-examined and reconsidered.

I recall, as is outlined in one of the recitals in this Motion, that the House Committee of the Parliament, in fact the House of Representatives as stated here, way back in May of 1998, proposed a group medical plan, virtually for the entire Parliament, which would have included maternity leave or maternity benefits. As we know, however, there is a body which I will deal with as we proceed under the Constitution, and specifically under section 140 of the Constitution, that deals with the whole issue of salaries and other terms and conditions of employment for

parliamentarians and other office-holders who fall under the purview of the Salaries Review Commission.

Mr. President, as I said, I recall that we had proposed a number of matters at that time, including the possibility of the SRC looking at some kind of pension or gratuity for Members of Parliament in the Senate who would have served consistently for 10 and/or more years. The 52nd Report of the Salaries Review Commission, on page 66, dealt with the whole question of Members of the Senate, including ministers and parliamentary secretaries. I recall as well that we had made proposals—and I think a number of us were very strong on this one—as they relate to research assistants, resources and staff for parliamentarians so that they can better prepare themselves to participate and contribute to debates in the Parliament.

I refer to the Salaries Review Commission's 52nd Report published in October of 1998 and tabled in this honourable Senate. Paragraph 99 of the report stated:

“Among the submissions made to us was a proposal that research assistance in preparing for debates be provided. In our view, it would be more appropriate for steps to be taken at the earliest opportunity to adequately strengthen the existing research staff attached to the Parliament library and to make the services of that staff available to all Members of Parliament, including Senators.”

That was on the issue of research. No mention in this report, however, was made of the aspect of the group medical benefits for parliamentarians, including maternity benefits. So maybe at the time in the opinion of the Salaries Review Commission, it was found to be inappropriate or not timely, or I cannot say exactly what was the basis, but it was not incorporated.

As Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt pointed out in her presentation, under the Maternity Protection Act, whilst it does make provision for maternity benefits for workers employed in both the public and private sectors, we as parliamentarians are not described as employees or workers and therefore we are office-holders and we fall under the purview of the SRC, which is the Salaries Review Commission. As I said, that is outlined in terms of its role and function in section 140 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Whilst Sen. Mahabir-Wyatt did draw to the Senate's attention the policy of gender equity, and she was making reference to the South African elections as a point of reference, I must say that the question of the inability at this time to have

Female Parliamentarians (Maternity Benefits)
[SEN. MARK]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

available to us, that is, parliamentarians, that medical package, is partly responsible for this Motion that is before the Parliament today. I would say that we on this side have no issue with the intent, the spirit or the sentiment of the Motion but there are some matters that I think we need to clarify.

What the motion seeks to do—and I have spoken to the mover of this Motion already as I have an amendment to make—is call on the Parliament to direct that the Salaries Review Commission re-examine terms and conditions of Members of Parliament with a view to including provisions dealing with maternity benefits. However, Mr. President, under the Constitution, and I want to quote the relevant section again, the SRC under section 140, Chapter II has a mandate to review the terms and conditions of parliamentarians, but this has to be done with the approval of the President of the Republic. So there is a procedural approach to this particular matter.

If you look at this section very carefully, Mr. President, you would see, and I quote here, Chapter II under “The Salaries Review Commission”:

- “(1) There shall be a Salaries Review Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and four other members all of whom shall be appointed by the President after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.
- (2) The members of the Salaries Review Commission shall hold office in accordance with section 126.”

3.45 p.m.

Section 141 says:

“(1) The Salaries Review Commission shall from time to time...”

—and this is the important part—

“...with the approval of the President...”

The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

“...review the salaries and other conditions of service of the President, the holders of offices referred to in section 136(12) to (15), members of Parliament, including Ministers of Government and Parliamentary Secretaries, and the holders of such other offices as may be prescribed.

- (2) The report of the Salaries Review Commission concerning any review of salaries or other conditions of service, or both, shall be submitted to the President...”

of the Republic—

“...who shall forward a copy thereof to the Prime Minister for presentation to the Cabinet and for laying, as soon as possible thereafter, on the table of each House.”

—of Parliament.

I went through this part to at least indicate to Senators that the Parliament does not have the authority to direct the Salaries Review Commission to review terms and conditions. The President is the person who triggers that particular review and, as I said, when the President triggers that via the Cabinet, a report is then prepared by the SRC and that report would then be submitted to the President. The President would then submit to the Prime Minister a copy; the Prime Minister would bring it to the Cabinet and we could then lay it in the Parliament as we have done with the 52nd Report. We have said, as you would recall, Mr. President, that we were looking for consensus on this particular issue. That is why the 52nd Report is still in Parliament without the kind of consensus that the Government is seeking to have with the Opposition and, of course, the Independent Senators.

So, Mr. President, it is in this particular context that we felt there is need to revisit the actual Motion that has been advanced. As I said, we have no problem with the sentiment or with the intent of the Motion, because I could well understand. I do not know if there is a precedent. I have been trying to determine if there is precedent in this Parliament and, particularly, in the Senate, where you have, for instance, a Senator or Senators who would need to go on maternity leave and how that is treated essentially. I know in another place that we have a parliamentarian who is more out than in and, from my information, he is in receipt of his salary on a regular basis.

So, I believe, Mr. President, it is something that we may need to look at very carefully in the context of looking at this matter. This is a matter for the Members of Parliament here and the staff along with the President to look at very carefully because, as I said, I have been searching for precedent and I cannot find precedent for it. But, I am saying that with goodwill, there is a possibility that things can work out. But, the key point here is, we would like, at least, with an amendment to the Motion, to propose that we:

In the resolution delete all the words after the word “Parliament” in line one.

That is in the resolution itself—

and substitute the following:

Female Parliamentarians (Maternity Benefits)
[SEN. MARK]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

“accept the need to have the terms and conditions of Parliamentarians re-examined with a view to including provisions dealing with maternity benefits within a reasonable time.”

Not “frame”; time. Take out “frame”. Within a reasonable time. We are saying the wording that we have here is:

“accept the need to have the terms and conditions of Parliamentarians re-examined with a view to including provisions dealing with maternity benefits within a reasonable time.”

I have consulted with Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt on this particular amendment and we are in agreement on this one, because it will then mean that once we pass this particular Motion, we can then take it to another level and it can then reach the relevant quarters. As I said, we have put particularly the words “a reasonable time”, so that there will be some degree of sensitivity to the issue at hand as well as other issues.

As I said, this one is a very sensitive one and it is one that we have little difficulty in supporting, but we just wanted to amend so it could properly reflect procedurally and constitutionally, so that it would be executed in a proper way. We feel that if this is accepted by all, this matter would reach the relevant quarters as quickly as possible and we would hope that action would be taken.

But I just indicate that just as how we submitted our proposals to the SRC, the SRC is an independent institution under the Constitution and while for instance, we may propose, they have the authority to dispose. So, it is not to say that even though we pass this, they are going to accept it. I am not saying so. We have to be very careful. We are making a proposal and we would hope that, for instance, they would give it due consideration and we would hope that something would be submitted that is reasonable and in the context of what we would like, but if we look at what has happened in the past in the context of the group medical plan, the question of retirement for some pension or gratuity for Senators who have served for ten or more years, we have not seen anything positive emerging so far in the report. So maybe the next round, we may have something.

As I said, we would like to propose this amendment and we support the sentiment of the Motion. I propose this amendment and I wish to thank you for this intervention, Mr. President.

Mr. President: The proposed amendment needs to be seconded.

The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig. The Hon. Joseph Theodore): Mr. President, I rise to second the amendment proposed by the hon. Minister.

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Senators may speak on the original resolution, inclusive of the proposed amendment, but that would only relate to Senators who have not yet spoken. Those who have already spoken may speak again, but only on the proposed amendment.

[*Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt stands*]

Mr. President: Are you on the proposed amendment?

Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt: Yes, I am on the proposed amendment.

As the hon. Minister pointed out, we did discuss this and I realize the Constitution says we cannot give directions to the Salaries Review Commission, but I think that the whole procedure is ridiculous. It has to go back and forth, up and down, round and round, then come back.

However, I realize that I cannot do anything better at this point. By the time that is done, it would have taken three years and the baby would be going to kindergarten. [*Laughter*] There is no provision for the immediacy of this particular issue, but, be that as it may, I accept the amendment that Sen. Mark has put.

Mr. President: If nobody is speaking again on the proposed amendment or on the original Motion, I call on Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt to respond.

Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt: Mr. President, I would like to thank those Members of the Senate who have spoken on this Motion and thank everybody for their support. It is an anomalous situation and I realize that it is one of those *lacunae* that has not been addressed in the past for obvious reasons.

Since everybody has supported it, there is really nothing that I need to add. But I would urge Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark, that although he did not say so for *Hansard*, he did assure me when we were talking about the amendment that he made an undertaking to pursue this with the utmost dispatch. I am making that statement now for the *Hansard* since Sen. Mark did not do it, and if he is not going to address it with dispatch, I hope he will now say so. However, since he has promised that he would, I would also ask him, in making the appropriate recommendations to the appropriate bodies in its long ladder of what has to be done, that we make the provisions dealing with maternity benefits retroactive to the time that the Motion was passed.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Hon, Senators, I will put the question on the proposed amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Whereas the terms and conditions under which Members of Parliament serve do not include any provision for conditions of maternity for female Members;

And Whereas there are several female Members in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago who are of child-bearing age;

And Whereas the House Committee of the House of Representatives as far back as May, 1998 proposed group medical benefits (including maternity) for all Members of Parliament;

Resolved:

That Parliament accept the need to have the terms and conditions of Parliamentarians re-examined with a view to including provisions dealing with maternity benefits within a reasonable time.

4.00 p.m.

**SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
(POLICY GUIDELINES)**

[FOURTH DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [November 23, 1999]:

Be It Resolved that Government states and elaborates its policies and priorities for the general direction of scientific research and technological development in the country and measures which it might take to ensure more efficient use of resources in the pursuit of these policies. [*Sen. Prof. J. Kenny*]

Question again proposed.

Mr. Chairman: If there are no further contributions—

Sen. Prof. John Spence: Mr. President, I view this Motion, a very important one, as being complementary to a Motion that I had moved earlier in this Parliament and indeed moved in a previous Parliament, on the creation of a technical university of Trinidad and Tobago. This one has more emphasis on the research side. Mine has more emphasis on the teaching side.

Sen. Prof. Kenny, in presenting his Motion, discussed the issue of what drives scientific endeavour. He suggested that curiosity was a major factor in creating

competent scientists. There were some interesting discussions on this. I would like, just for a minute or two, to touch on the contributions that were made and then to give my own view on this matter.

Basically, Sen. Prof. Kenny was suggesting that the important aspect of scientific research would be that the motivation be—not so much that it be directed to a particular objective but—the curiosity of the individual. This view seems to be supported by Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job. On the other hand, we got contrary views from Minister Gangar and Sen. Alfred. What, to me, was interesting about that particular discussion is that it cuts across, if you like, party lines, which indicated that indeed, to some extent, we are able to have a free debate, at least on certain aspects of this Motion, which I think is the important objective that we wanted to attain.

Minister Gangar disagreed with Sen. Prof. Kenny on the point of view of what motivation there should be for scientific research and, indeed, he pointed out that the Government, who has to fund research, must have some justification for it. It is more difficult to justify on the basis that it be completely open.

Sen. Alfred quoted some principles of research which indicated that it should be, in fact, directed to social objectives and Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job took, I think, sharp issues suggesting with this that that might even be a fascist position if one were directing the research in that way. It was interesting to me to see the different points of view put forward by Minister Gangar and Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job.

My own view on this point is that we, perhaps, should look for a slightly different set of definitions for research which, I think, have always helped me to address this particular issue. I like to define research as being either basic, applied or fundamental. I would classify fundamental research as that which is in fact not objective oriented. That is research in which one is doing it for the sake of the research and for the curiosity that one might have as a scientist. Whereas, applied research would be research that starts off with a particular objective. It might be to increase the productivity of an agricultural crop or to solve a medical problem like Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and so forth. I believe that in the course of doing applied research it may be necessary, and frequently is, that one does basic research, that is, one has to address or get a greater insight into the scientific principles behind the particular object that one is studying, as opposed to just purely applied research. I think that gets over the difficulty.

My own view is that in a developing country—I am sorry if this sounds like a fascist view to Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job—one needs to have applied research that may lead one into basic, but that the amount of fundamental research that one can do would have to be extremely limited.

I think this leads us on to a part of one's science and technology policy or research policy and one's educational policy because I think it is possible to address that particular issue, depending on how one has his or her institutional structures arranged. This is why I feel so strongly, and it is the view supported by both Sens. Prof. Ramchand and Kenny, that we should have, not only the University of the West Indies but, a Technical University of Trinidad and Tobago. Because one of the problems that the University of the West Indies suffers from is that it has to perform both functions: that of being an academic institution and, therefore, having to perform some fundamental research in order to win its spurs, so to speak, as an academic institution internationally. But it is also under great pressure to solve local problems and, therefore, to do applied research. If we had that division of labour that we have a second tertiary level institution in Trinidad and Tobago, but at the university level, not a non-university tertiary education institution, as the Government is proposing to create, we would be able to have the technical university putting its major focus on applied research, remembering that this may lead it into the study of fundamental problems in order to solve an applied problem.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. President, I think that this, perhaps, is one of the major policy issues that needs to be addressed by the Government: how it is going to arrange its institutions with respect to teaching and research. Is it going to have still the one institution to do everything, namely, the University of the West Indies, or is it going to be able to have the concept of a second institution?

In that regard, it was interesting to listen to Minister Gangar's contribution in which he informed us that the Government is in the process of creating an institute of technology. He also stated that that institute of technology would, in fact, offer three-year degree programmes. It seems to me, really, that what was done there is to create a university but, unfortunately, a university with a rather limited scope in the sense that the way he sets it out it seems to be oriented basically or principally to the energy sector. I would again ask the question: how is that institute of technology going to be related to the other institutions in Trinidad and Tobago which the Government is sponsoring, such as COSTATT or whatever the acronym is for the community college.

It seems to me that that issue has not been addressed effectively, at least, if it has been we have not been told about it, because the policy statement made by Minister Gangar did not go very far outside the sphere of the energy sector, nor did Minister Gillette's contribution make any reference to the institute of technology to which Minister Gangar referred.

Before going any further into that, I would like just to draw attention to the fact that Sen. Prof. Kenny posed some major questions, which I do not think have really been answered in the contributions that have been made by the Government Senators, so as to address this policy. I suppose that if one looks at Sen. Kenny's contribution, two major issues he has raised, one, accountability and two, duplication of effort, have not been addressed by the contributions that we have had by any of the Members on the Government side.

Indeed, the issue of accountability which really includes accounting for the finances—and he pointed out that a rather large expenditure was required in Trinidad and Tobago on science and technology, perhaps, not as large as it should be but it certainly is substantial. No one on the Government side has addressed the issue of how these funds were accounted for. No one has answered the points made by Sen. Prof. Kenny that the reports coming out of these research institutions are, in some cases, rather limited in scope. In some cases they indicate that they are not, in fact, carrying out their mandate, that is, they are research institutions but they are not doing research.

Certainly, none of them as far as I am aware—the Minister may correct me in his summing up, if I am wrong—attempt to assess the results that are obtained in relation to the expenditure on the particular institutions. None of the contributions on the Government side have referred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources' effort, and yet that is probably the largest single expenditure in Trinidad and Tobago on research.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources some years ago was adjudged to expend some \$40 million annually. I did an assessment, a few years ago, and the figure that I got at that time, because by then the expenditure had reduced because of the shortage of funds, in the boom years it was about \$40 million, it had gotten down, I suppose, to about \$25 million. It surprises me that in view of the comments made by Sen. Prof. Kenny in the presentation of his Motion on the issue of accountability and expenditures, that no one on the Government side attempted to assess the expenditure on science and technology.

As difficult as it is, the Ministry of Finance would be in a much better position to comment on that expenditure than would either be Sen. Prof. Kenny or myself,

in view of the fact that we have not gotten the inside information that you would need to interpret the data that is in the estimates. But even looking at the estimates, one can judge that there is a substantial expenditure. It seems to me a very great pity that nowhere have we gotten that issue answered in contributions from the Government side. Certainly, in the contributions being made, there does not seem to be any policy on the part of the Government to assess the expenditures being made and also to monitor whether the expenditure is justified or not.

For example, if, as we have gathered from the contributions, the information technology and the energy sector are extremely important, why are we spending \$20 million a year on a dying industry, namely, the agricultural industry? As important as I think agriculture should be, if the Government's policy is that energy and information technology are important, why do we not put that \$20 million a year into information technology? Would we not have a much larger pay back from that sort of expenditure which we might then use to develop the agricultural sector?

It seems to me that, really, we have not been given, to my mind, any sensible and thought out policy on behalf of the Government, with respect to science, technology and research. The closest that we have got to it, I think, was Minister Gangar's contribution in which he referred to the Green Paper, which is soon to become a White Paper, and he did refer to some aspects of that Green Paper with respect to the energy sector only. These were: funding from industry, which was one of the policies; scholarships, many which have been obtained from the investors in the energy sector; the National Energy Skills Centre—and one would like to know what the policy is with respect to the National Energy Skills Centre—and the other institutions such as the community college or the technical university or, indeed, the research centre that is being created at the university, the University of the West Indies Centre. He also referred to a research fund. The impression one got was that the research fund was for energy activities, rather than for general research.

On the other hand, there was reference, I think by Minister Gillette, to a science and technology policy that is being created by the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology. There was also reference to a science and technology policy by Minister Mark. It is not clear to me from reading the contributions—and I read them all this morning—whether the science and technology policy referred to by Minister Gillette is the same science and technology policy which is being referred to by Minister Mark. It is not clear

whether the Government has accepted the NIHERST policy that was proposed in 1995. If it was accepted, what are the main aspects of this policy? This is what we were hoping to get by initiating this debate. This is what, unfortunately, we failed to get, except in the rather limited sphere of energy and, to some extent, in information technology.

Clearly, we need as a nation to decide what our priorities are going to be and we have to have some mechanism for deciding on these priorities. It is not good enough for us to say at a discussion like this, yes, energy is important or information technology is important, while we continue to spend larger sums of money on other activities which are clearly no longer important. It just does not make sense. We really need to know whether these various policies that have been referred to are adopted by the Government or not.

Dr. Job placed a lot of importance on basic education and developing a scientific culture; I think that he is absolutely right on this. I have often stated that many of our problems to do with the functioning of our scientific institutions in Trinidad and Tobago are because we do not have a scientific culture. It does, indeed, go back to the sort of education that one has had at school.

When I was at school in Queen's Royal College we had a Master Benjamin J. Bidel, who was excellent at inculcating in you, scientific principles. I do not think that it is just an accident that most of the professors at the University of the West Indies in my age group went through Benjamin J. Bidel. There are one or two exceptions like Prof. Kenny, of course, and Prof. Ken Julien, but apart from them, most of them are QRC old boys, so there must have been something in Bidel. But seriously, in my school certificate year we were already, I think, aware of scientific principles because that was the way we were being taught at school. So Minister Job is correct, it is extremely important what you do at school.

I am not certain, in spite of all that Dr. Job has said, that that is the policy we are adopting in our schools, because we have just, in fact, reduced the primary school syllabus in order to accommodate the new exam to get rid of the 11-plus exam. We have just shed from that exam, all of the science that had been previously introduced, so it is very curious that at the same time we are saying that these things should be emphasized at the primary school level, we are setting up a new system of examination which would completely ignore those subjects.

It is clear to anybody who is creative with the way that students are taught at the primary level that if a subject is not going to be examined, it is not going to be taught. It is going to be given very short shifts and that time is going to be used

cramming the three subjects that are now to be the major subjects—what is the new exam called, I forgot the name of the exam that is supposed to replace the Common Entrance Examination. If I may just digress for a moment, Mr. President, since it is topical to today, the day of the Common Entrance Examination, it never ceases to infuriate me that we continue with the pretence that we have abolished the Common Entrance Examination. We have not; we have replaced one Common Entrance Examination by another Common Entrance Examination. [*Desk thumping*]

The only way that we could have abolished the Common Entrance Examination is if we went to a different system of assessing, at the end of primary school, how children would be streamed to other schools. There was an attempt at that in the Continuous Assessment Programme, but that, apparently, is being shelved and now we have a new exam, a common entrance examination but not the Common Entrance Examination.

It was very interesting that on the television last night a 10-year old child was asked what she thought about this new exam and she said what is absolutely correct: that it is going to be a more difficult exam; it is not going to be an easier exam. It is much easier to tick off boxes in a multiple-choice system, than to sit and write an essay, which is what is expected. It may be better educationally, I am not saying that it would not be, but from the point of view of an exam, it is more difficult. All the trauma which is associated with the present Common Entrance Examination is going to be transferred in a year or two to the new one; mark my words.

Certainly, if we are going to emphasize scientific education at that level, then it is not appropriate for us to be dropping that part of the syllabus, which has been dealing with scientific subjects, from the examination, if we are still to have an examination. If we have gone to a different system, the Continuous Assessment Programme where we are assessing all the subjects by a different method, by essays that they write during the year and exams at the end of each term for five or seven years, whatever the primary education is, then that is different. But as long as we are having one exam and we are only going to examine English, Arithmetic and what have you, then I think we have really taken a backward step in that regard.

As I said, Minister Mark did refer to the fact that there had been a drafted science and technology policy, but he does not, in fact, say anything further about whether the policy has been adopted and, in fact, how it is going to work. If I

could just read very briefly from his presentation—this is Minister Mark’s presentation on this debate:

“Mr. President, Government recognized that lack of policy coordination, and its first step was to draft a national policy on science and technology for Trinidad and Tobago.”

Where is this policy? That is what we were hoping would be given in this debate. I would just read what he said about this policy, because he does say a few things about it.

“This policy envisions Trinidad and Tobago using science, research and development technology and innovation as the fundamental ingredients to advance itself into the grouping of industrialized countries.

The instruments to achieve this goal are:

(a) An industry-driven focus for research and development;”

That coincides with Minister Gangar’s point about industry.

“(b) Education and training;”

Just that and nothing more.

“(c) A coordinated results-driven science and technology infrastructure;”

Whatever that means.

“(d) The establishment of a competitive pool of funds;”

Has the fund been established? We have one for energy.

“(e) Partnerships and alliances among key stakeholders; and

(f) Fiscal incentives to industry for promoting research and development in Trinidad and Tobago.”

I would be interested to find out whether there have been any fiscal incentives set up for science, technology and research among the private sector. Certainly, nothing that I have heard in any of the budget debates that I have listened to have suggested that is the case. So here is a science and technology policy and some aspects of it which have been given by Minister Mark, but no indication as to which of these have been implemented or accepted. So, again, we have this problem, it seems to me, of a complete lack of science and technology policy in spite of very substantial expenditure in this area.

As I said, Minister Gillette also referred to a draft policy on science and technology.

4.25 p.m.

This is what he said:

“Mr. President, over the medium term, Government will develop and implement a national science and technology plan...”

Which means it does not now exist because they will develop.

“...and will seek to develop greater coherence in the national system of science and technology using a partnership approach involving both state and industry.”

It sounds like Minister Mark and Minister Gillette were reading from the same document, but clearly neither of them have thought about the matter and expressed just what this is supposed to mean. What does it mean about a partnership approach?

He goes on:

“In order for that to occur, we must have fair competition and we must establish a regulatory framework to ensure that there is fair competition. To date, intellectual property legislation—a requirement under the Uruguay Round—has been passed by Parliament and will be enacted shortly.”

Then he goes on to talk about information technology. He does give us something about a national policy on information technology, but again it is one that is to come, it seems to me.

“The objectives of the NITP...”

—which is the National Information Technology Plan—

“...would be three-fold:

- (i) enhance the infrastructure for increased competitiveness by focussing on areas such as telecommunications, research and development;
- (ii) encourage strategic alliances between local and foreign firms involved in information technology; and
- (iii) generate capabilities in individuals through skills in training and management development.”

It is a pity really that we could not have had more about this plan. Indeed, I would ask what is so secretive about these references to a policy and a plan? Why can we not have as parliamentarians the National Information Technology Plan available to us if there is one? Surely, at the earliest stage it should be given to us so at least we could have a comment on it. Why is the policy to which Sen. Mark, and again Sen. Gillette referred not available? Why the secrecy?

I was very interested in the comments made by Sen. Dr. Mc Kenzie because she indicated how one could approach the teaching even at the primary level, and Minister Job supported this in developing a culture of science and technology, a way of thinking which is what one is really after, but using the things about us and the things in which we might be interested. Surely, it is more interesting for a child to be able to learn a science through something that is in itself of interest to the child rather than having to learn some obscure principle from a book. So I agree entirely that is the right way to do it and certainly I would hope that is the approach that would be taken in our primary schools.

For many years I have opposed the teaching of agricultural science in schools. We think it is a great thing that we are developing our agriculture by teaching it in schools. Nothing could be further from the truth. Medicine is much too complicated a subject to be taught in schools, and we do not think of teaching it; and agriculture is equally complicated, perhaps even more so, because in the agricultural field one is adding the social sciences which one very often ignores in medicine. So clearly, one should not be teaching, but what one should be doing is when one is teaching physics, chemistry or biology, one should be using examples that are close to us mainly from the agriculture or the petroleum sector, so by using those examples, one is introducing the idea of agricultural and petroleum engineering and so forth without actually teaching it as a subject at that level because it is not appropriate to teach it at that level. I agree entirely that the way one should introduce the scientific principles is by teaching things with which the kids will be familiar and which would be more interesting to them than if one is just teaching the principles themselves.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand also supported the idea of the Technical University and the University of the West Indies but he suggested a third component, a third leg to the stool and I think this is extremely important and certainly, if we were to move in this direction, perhaps we would be having some of the drive towards a science and technology policy.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand suggested that it be a Science and Technology Office appropriately housed, no doubt, in the Prime Minister's Office. This, I think

Scientific Research (Policy Guidelines)
[SEN. PROF. SPENCE]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

would be the most appropriate place for it rather than in a line ministry so that one would have a Science and Technology Office which, of course, would be developing science policy and responsible for monitoring the expenditures that were incurred in the various institutions that are funded by government. One would have the University of Technology that could emphasize applied research, leading back to basics and one could have the University of the West Indies with a more academic orientation and as I think he puts it: "A slimmer, leaner, more effective institution than is possible at present where the University of the West Indies has to be all things to all men."

We have struggled with this problem for years in the faculty of agriculture so in three years, you were expected to turn out a graduate who has an academic background, but also can immediately go into the field and do things. Yet, we do not expect that of lawyers because lawyers have three years at university and two years at law school. We do not expect that of doctors who have five years at university and two years internship and so forth, but we seem to think it can be done in the agricultural field. Clearly, it is not possible. We need to understand that we need both in our educational system and our research system to have different streams, and certainly, our university should be concentrating both on a more regional aspect than it does and is able to do. It is very much a Trinidad institution now.

It seems to me that one of the important things we have to do is create a balance in our policy between the expenditure that we would put on research to develop indigenous technology, and the expenditure that we should put into acquiring technology. There is no doubt that the major part of the technology that we would use in Trinidad and Tobago would be acquired from abroad and not developed ourselves. There may be one or two areas which one would hope that we would be in the lead in this regard. For example, my brother sent me recently from Canada a publication *The American Scientist* on the steel pan. This is an academic study in the material science laboratory about the characteristics of the steel in the pan. Interestingly, in this publication, it has a full-page photograph of Ellie Mannette at the University of West Virginia and this study is being done at the University of Texas, El Paso.

I made some enquiries this morning because I was wondering what the University of the West Indies was doing in this regard and I discovered, a little to my surprise actually, that there has been a fair amount of work at the University of the West Indies both in the Physics and Engineering Departments on the academic side on the steel pan, but because the university is so remiss in its public

relations, one is not aware generally in Trinidad and Tobago that in fact this research might be as good as the research on the steel pan that is being done by other centres abroad.

Mr. President: I am getting a lot of feedback on my system on several conversations taking place. Will the Senator be allowed to be heard without all these interruptions please?

Sen. Prof. J. Spence: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I also was aware of that, but I tried my best nevertheless. It seems to me again, a pity that perhaps the subject is not generating as much interest. It may be that the problems we have had earlier on have taken our minds to other things and we are not really concentrating on this particular area.

I think what we need to do is develop in our policy a balance between the expenditure that we would put on research to develop our own technology, and the expenditure we would put on acquisition of technology and the regulations and controls we would put into effect on the acquisition of technology.

One of the problems with acquiring technology is that frequently in the past, we have acquired the wrong technology and this could be very costly and so I always make the point that if you do not have the scientific brains locally, it is no good saying that you would buy the technology abroad because you may buy the wrong technology. So you have to have some local in the different fields of endeavour in order to be sure that you acquire the technology that is most appropriate to your needs and also at the best cost, and that is why you have to have some research. Because if you are going to train people as good scientists, the persons who are doing the training must themselves be involved in research and that means that they must be creating some new knowledge which would be applicable to the local environment. So at least in your university, and certainly in your academic institution, the University of the West Indies, you have to maintain a level of scientific endeavour and scientific research in order that the people who are teaching the persons who themselves would not go into research are of the best quality and, therefore, can create the best scientists necessary, otherwise, we will run into the problem that because we have second-rate scientists, we will acquire second-rate technology, or the wrong technology and this, indeed would be very costly.

We must have a policy both on research and technology development and on acquisition of technology. In the boom years, we tried to monitor our technology importation by a government-to-government arrangement. This turned out to be

rather disastrous and I think it cost us some very substantial expenditures which perhaps were not justified, but we have been aware of the problem of how to acquire technology, but we have not always been able to solve it. So clearly, this would be an important part of the policy that we set up.

As I have said, I believe that research should be objective oriented. I do not think as a small country we can afford to spend large sums of money on fundamental research, but this does not mean that we would not do good science or basic research, because in trying to solve a particular problem, we certainly have very often to go into the more basic, scientific principles.

What about the co-ordination that has been mentioned both by Minister Mark and Minister Gillette? What is the policy and how has the implementation of policy importation gone so far? I suppose one could say that the setting up of the Community College is an attempt to co-ordinate at least the teaching level, but unfortunately, this has omitted the research institutions. The original concept with NIHERST in 1977 when it was first created—or the early 1980s, but 1977 was when the plan was first developed. The idea was that there should be a tertiary level institution at degree level status which would encompass not only the John Donaldson, San Fernando Technical and the other teaching institutions that have been mentioned, both by Minister Mark and Minister Gillette, but would also encompass the research institutions like CARIRI, the Institute of Marine Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture (Research Division) and so forth because those institutions act entirely independently of each other and there is no co-ordination between them.

Even the funding of the institution is done bilaterally between the Ministry of Finance and the particular institution with no thought or no input from any science and technology policy which would say: Should that money be really going to the Institute of Marine Affairs, or should it be going to the Fisheries Division in the ministry, or should it be going to CARDI, or should it be going to the university, or to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources? Absolutely nothing of that sort is done. So, as far as I am concerned, there is no co-ordination between the research institutions. They each have their own libraries, their own analytical facilities and they operate independently.

Recently, I went into CARIRI to visit the Director only to see outside his window some pots growing hot peppers. I enquired about this. Now, we have a Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources on which we are spending \$20 million, CARIRI is processing the hot peppers but they are also growing them which just does not make sense to me, but that is the lack of co-ordination we

have in this country. The University is just next door, even if they had ignored the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, surely they could have gone—as I suggested to them—to the department of life sciences, or the faculty of agriculture and get the scientist there to help them with the production part of the hot peppers they were going to process.

CARDI does the same thing. Of course, CARDI is not so much a research institution, it is a development institution, but again, Trinidad has no agriculture to develop so why are we putting \$5 million a year into CARDI when we have no agriculture to develop. We talk about industry-driven, and about not sitting in one spot and deciding what to do but—market-driven, I think that is the terminology used. But certainly none of our research is market-driven, certainly none of the expenditures we spend, because market-driven does not just mean for a particular sector, it means overall as well. So between sectors it should be market-driven and if the market demands that it goes here, you do not put it there.

Clearly, one cannot sack all the scientists in agriculture and create scientists in technology overnight, but surely you must have a vision and a target so that one is phased down and the other is phased up. Of course, scientists can be retrained just as we are saying today that workers must be constantly retrained. They must not think of a job for life, similarly with scientists. I did not start off as a university teacher, I started off as a paleaontologist in the Ministry of Agriculture and then I went to do research paleaontology at the University of the West Indies, then I went into teaching. Not all involved retraining, perhaps not formal retraining, but certainly I had to retrain myself. I had to develop a facility to teach.

4.40 p.m.

If we have a mathematician who is a biometrician at Centeno, I see no reason why he could not be a person in information technology, as well. So that some of these shifts can be made even with existing personnel and certainly with retraining, if that is our policy. But what is our policy? What is our policy with respect to research, science and technology? What are the areas that we are going to emphasize? Is it, as Minister Gangar and Minister Gillette have said, information technology and energy?

I, personally, think that agriculture is important too, but I, too, recognize that it does not make sense nationally, if you have decided, as a nation, that a certain industry is dead, to go on putting money into the research in that industry, and not to monitor whether the research you are doing is having an effect on breathing new life into the industry or if it is still moribund and dead.

Really, I was unable, before we started this debate to glean what the science, technology and research policy was. While there have been certain sectors that have shown a bit of light with regard to certain aspects of the policy, there certainly has been no overall policy enunciated, and there has been no level of coordination shown by the discussion, nor has there been any attempt at demonstrating our accountability, that would be monitored in the future, which is one of the main points Sen. Kenny introduced his Motion with.

With respect to accountability, I believe there are three or four issues that one needs to address. I think there should be a research fund. I think the move to establishing a research fund in energy is a good one, and the suggestion of NIHERST is also a good one, but why have we not implemented it? There should be a research fund, and one way that you monitor the scientist is that they do not just get the money as of right, they have to win their research grants. That is how all developed countries operate. The scientists have to bid for research grants from central funds—whether it be Government funds or private sector funds. They put up a research proposal, it is reviewed by their peers and other scientists in the field and then, yes, this one gets a research grant. We have had to do this in the Faculty of Agriculture for years.

At least, from the early 70's we were getting research grants from Rockefeller Foundation, Forde's Foundation, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and so forth, and each time that meant preparing a research proposal, submitting it to the agency, having their scientists go over it, then they give you the money, and the money is strictly controlled. Indeed, they reserved the right, in many cases, to go into your accounts section and ask to see the individual voucher card. That is how closely they monitor it.

Does anybody from the Ministry of Finance ever go into the University of the West Indies to look at any expenditure? That is how closely it is done internationally. So if there is a research fund and you set up a body of people to control that fund, this is how you would monitor and make the institutions accountable. Because the next quarter's release is not going to be given until you have reported it in the last quarter's activities. Let alone report it at the end of the year. These are scientists.

In the good old days, the first time I came up against this as I visited an institution in the United Kingdom many years ago, I was absolutely amazed, because this was not the research position in the United Kingdom at all. You are put in a laboratory, and given your money and you got on with it. Not at all. Each individual scientist had to account for how much time he spent on project "X",

how much time he spent on project “Y”; each week he had to say what proportion—so that the institutional management could apportion an amount of money that went to each of these individual projects to that particular scientist. That is how institutions are running these days, if we really want to monitor and make the institutions accountable.

A research fund is extremely important, and you do not just give the scientist his money like that; you may give him a basic amount of money and can do some of his own research out of that, but in addition to that, he is funded through research projects from a central fund, and there must be frequent reporting. Much as a scientist may not like it, I certainly did not like having to do this, but I had to do it.

Annual reports are critical. Sen. Kenny has referred to his attempts to get annual reports from many institutions. I think I mentioned in the previous debate that the last printed annual report from Centeno, was in 1954. It is not just today. I keep on making this point—one has to keep on making it because one is frequently misunderstood that all the comments that I have made today, apply equally to previous Governments as they may apply to the present Government. We have been struggling with this problem of science and technology policy—preparing policy—but we have good ideas, we set them down on paper but that is the end of it. It never translates from that into action.

I think, myself, in addition to having the research fund, to demanding periodic reports for project funding, we should also have a science and technology council. How is Government to develop this?

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. Mahabir-Wyatt*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. President: The hon. Senator may continue after which we will suspend for tea.

Sen. Prof. J. Spence: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, how is this policy to be developed by the Government? Well, I gather that what happened in the past is that NIHERST was given the job to do this. I do not think NIHERST is set up to do this. We had, until a few years ago, not only NIHERST on the one hand, but we also had a science council. And I think that ran for about five years and then it closed down. Most countries have a scientific council to try to help the

Government develop scientific policy. The science council consists of not only Government scientists, but scientists from the private sector, from the university, from industry and so on. I think that is one mechanism that we should re-introduce because we had it and we dropped it.

Unfortunately, it was never set up by Act of Parliament, perhaps that is why it was so easy by administrative decision just to drop it. But I certainly think that most countries have an Act of Parliament which governs a scientific council. Sometimes the funds are managed by the scientific council. Again, NIHERST has been managing a very small research fund. When I was at the university I was able to elicit some small funding for tissue culture research from NIHERST. That was largely through the efforts of Frank Rampersad, quite frankly. It was not any policy of the board, it was Frank who realized the importance of that and managed to squeeze some funds out, with no deliberate Government policy or anything like that. But I do not think NIHERST is the appropriate body, especially now if it is really becoming the umbrella organization for the community college. It is still not clear to me that that is what is happening. We heard these seven institutions were being integrated and there are some suggestions being integrated under NIHERST. I think it was said in one of these presentations that the NIHERST Act would have to be changed in order to accommodate this new structure, but we have not been told anymore about it, so one has to guess what is in fact happening.

I think we should also do what Jamaica has done and that is to set up a university council, because we have to find some mechanism of monitoring the University of the West Indies. I think the University of the West Indies is still a very good institution. I think it still has a very valuable reputation worldwide, in many of its faculties/departments. Sometimes it slips—as it has slipped in the case of the Dental Faculty. It is my intention to ask the Minister of Health some questions very shortly. When we passed that Bill to enact the Dental Council Act, he promised, in that Act, to have an investigation into that department within two or three years, and that has not been done as far as I am aware. I certainly intend to ask some questions about that. There must be some mechanism in monitoring the various university departments, and the way to do it is what Jamaica University has done, to establish the University Council. *[Interruption]* They do not do reports. The reports are no longer detailed scientific reports but they are glossy public relations brochures which are put out by the principal. The details of the departmental reports are no longer published.

4.50 p.m.

However, we need a university council especially if we are now saying we are going to have an institute of technology. Who is to monitor the institute of technology? We should have an independent body that monitors both the University of the West Indies and any other tertiary-level institutions we may set up.

I cannot, for the life of me, understand why we are going the route of the community college. When one listens to Minister Gillette and Minister Gangar, one gets the feeling—and even Minister Sudama said it when he was replying to my motion—that perhaps in the future that is what we are aiming at. Why are we so reluctant to move forward? Why do we want to go through these torturous stages of setting up a community college and then in 10 years' time we will say, "But, you know, really, we have not produced enough scientists for the information technology industry"?

The impression I got from Minister Mark's contribution is that the Government was to be a facilitator, so that means a bit of drawing back. But he also quoted what happened in Singapore. They did not facilitate in Singapore, they decided that they needed so many hundred science and technology graduates and they set about training them. So we must have a policy. The Government in this stage with these new technologies must be proactive. They cannot be reactive. They have to decide what policy they want and set about getting it and not just leaving it to chance.

What has happened in our tertiary-level institutions, of course, is that we are leaving it to chance because the number of degrees that are being created—look at what is happening now. We are afraid to take our polytechnic-type institutions and make them universities. However, the United Kingdom, five years ago, has just created some 60 universities out of polytechnics. Those same polytechnics are offering degrees in Trinidad and Trinidadians are rushing to do the degrees from the polytechnics in the UK, but we cannot create our own university here out of our polytechnics. That is what John Donaldson and San Fernando Technical and so on are, polytechnics like the ones in the UK were.

When are we going to wake up and at least have the self-confidence to do what we need to do? That does not mean that when these institutions become university-level institutions, they are going to drop everything else they are doing. Because technology universities these days indeed do the whole series of training right through from diploma level to university level, and when they get

established well enough they start doing post-graduate work as well. In Jamaica in architecture one can do post-graduate work at the University of Technology because that is an area in which they were strong and that is the area they decided to go for in the first instance. One does not necessarily have to go into all the different areas of post-graduate level to start with, but one would look at one's strengths and see where it is useful to venture into a greater depth in certain areas.

There is one little point that I want to perhaps have some disagreement with, and that is the emphasis I think that was placed, by Minister Job, on distance learning. While I agree that there are new technologies that will allow us to utilize this aspect of distance learning for those persons who cannot go to an institution and that we should do that, I do not believe that this can ever replace attending an institution for one's training. Attending an institution is wider than just one's particular discipline.

You know, I often feel that one of the problems we have with the dentists and medics is that sometimes the dental schools and the medical schools are removed from the rest of the universities. They do not, therefore, get the benefit of brushing against their colleagues in the humanities and in the other sciences and so on. They, therefore, get this very narrow training in medicine or dentistry and what have you. I would not call names that would show what sort of narrow person this can sometimes produce, although I deliberately included dentistry in my comments. [*Laughter*] So, clearly, distance learning, I think, has to be a last resort or a resort that is used to extend beyond what is possible to do at particular institutions because I think the interaction with other persons at the university or tertiary-level institutions is extremely important.

I listened to a television programme, "The Knowledge Programme", on television the other day in which they were advertising these distance learning programmes, "Degrees by Distance Learning". What struck me is that one of the persons who was saying how they had benefited from this degree programme was putting all the emphasis on the knowledge that had been gained and not the educational process. She had not learned to think. She had not been educated but she had been given knowledge. That is a bit of the problem with this access to information through the new technologies, that all the emphasis is on acquiring the knowledge and less on the learning to think properly and using the knowledge in the best way.

Finally, Mr. President, another way that we should be monitoring our institutions of tertiary education is by parliamentary committees. Now, there was a big fanfare some months ago when we were told that parliamentary committees

were to be introduced and, of course, I welcomed this because many years ago I was involved in supporting a move to have joint parliamentary committees in the Senate. The Senate changed its Standing Orders in order to have joint parliamentary committees that could have looked at things like the university and its performance and the science and technology institutions and so on.

If one reads the reports from parliamentary committees in the United Kingdom Parliament on science and technology, some of these documents are extremely important. These are documents, done by Parliament, which have led to changes in science and technology policy in the United Kingdom. The particular one that I recall was done by the House of Lords, because there are a number of scientists in the House of Lords as well. So when are we going to get these parliamentary committees? Because if Government cannot set up any other machinery, at least let us, as parliamentarians, decide that we must monitor some of these expenditures that we vote year after year after year.

We are all responsible for voting \$20 million each year for the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, (Research Division). I can tell you that we do not get ha' penny's worth for it but I can demonstrate it to you if we had a parliamentary committee that could call the scientists and ask for the reports and call the farmers and ask them what benefits they are getting and so on. We could demonstrate it in that way as a parliamentary committee because we would have the power to do that. So what has happened to these parliamentary committees?

So, Mr. President, if we really want to improve science and technology in this country, if science and technology is really the driving force of our economy, if new technologies are important, sure having a framework for increasing competitiveness is important and that would help to send it forward, sure Government as a facilitator would help to send it forward, but it could go forward much faster if we utilize some of the resources that are now badly used and channel them into those activities which we say are important.

I certainly would suggest:

- 1) that we set up our parliamentary committees;
- 2) that we set up a science council;
- 3) that we set up a university council;
- 4) that we should set up a research fund; and,

Scientific Research (Policy Guidelines)
[SEN. PROF. SPENCE]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

- 5) that we should co-ordinate all these various institutions by the creation of the University of Trinidad and Tobago that would include the teaching institutions and the research institutions as one of the three arms of the activities of science and technology as Prof. Ramchand has pointed out—the office of science and technology which would provide the secretariat with the science council, the University of Trinidad and Tobago and the University of the West Indies.

Thank you, Sir. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Hon. Members, we would suspend at this stage. The sitting is now suspended until 5.30 p.m.

4.58 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.35 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, by consensus, at this time, we have agreed to suspend or defer further consideration of debate on the Private Member's Motion until next Tuesday, when we will try to allocate some time to a continuation of this very important debate of the Private Member's Motion in the name of Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny.

We have agreed that we should continue our debate on the Motion on the Census Order, 2000.

Agreed to.

CENSUS ORDER, 2000

Mr. President: We are on the Census Motion. Are there any further contributions?

The Minister of Tobago Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job): Mr. President, unfortunately, when I moved the Motion this afternoon, I left much confusion in the minds of hon. Senators, which, because they were not cleared up, allowed us to be still on this Motion at this time.

I assure Senators opposite that there was no intention on my part and, indeed, I may say so for the Government, to mislead, or in any way to humiliate, or to treat with contempt, the honourable Senate.

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

The Statistics Act, which causes this Motion to be here, sets out quite clearly the procedures for public comment, for involvement of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and a period of 28 days is allowed for members of the public, wherever their station is located, to review the documents—all the documents—and to make comments to the Minister of Finance and, in our case, it is Finance, Planning and Development. We intend to facilitate this process.

There is also the question that we had put off this thing before, at great cost to all of us, and we need to be looking at the time in terms of when the census takes place. We do not want it to happen in the middle of the rainy season so we will lose time, and the quality of the data would not be as good as it ought to be. For these reasons, I thought I should have made all these things clear in my initial presentation, and for that, I am indeed apologetic.

I still think that I should make a few comments on the comments that were made. I agree with most of the issues that were discussed but there are a few things that were said that I think, in the public interest, even though the press is not here, we should still put on the record.

There were many people who were concerned that this census had something to do with elections, and that is not true. There is a recurrent 10-year cycle when you take a population census and this has been going on, as I said, since 1844. It went on all through the period of the PNM and the NAR. The cycle was maintained and it so happens that there is a UNC Government now. This is not something that this Government has predicated or deliberately designed. To say that the census is being done to facilitate some kind of UNC manipulation of election or information, I do not know that there is any basis for that.

In addition, I need to advise honourable Senators that the professional cadre of people who are organizing this questionnaire are not only Government bureaucrats, there are people from the United Nations; from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); from the Institute of Scientific and Economic Research (ISER), Dr. Godfrey St. Bernard; the Tobago House of Assembly has Dr. Nichol, who I understand is an econometrician.

Many of the people in the statistical division and in the Ministry of Finance who took part in this, are people who have at least one post-graduate degree in economics or statistics; some of them may even be econometricians. Most of them would have done a considerable amount of professional work in the area. Indeed, I would like the honourable Senate to appreciate that these census documents—the questionnaire we have—did not just come out of the air. There

Census Order, 2000
[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

were censuses done previously and they would have used those to try to update, in terms of modern requirements and modern needs.

I say, though, that I did allay the fears of Sen. Diana Mahabir-Wyatt concerning that Act and the fact that the law prescribed that certain kinds of data must be collected in the census and, in fact, that the questionnaire deals with that, so that matter is taken care of.

The comments of Sen. Daly and Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh and other people, including the Leader of Opposition Business, concerning ethnicity and race, and what is the purpose of asking people whether they are Indian, or African, or Mixed, or as Sen. Daly said, "Other". As I said, these things were done before and, honestly, I do not believe in this question of race. But, I want to disagree with Sen. Shabazz on that point, that you must talk about race positively.

Mr. President, I offer my opinion to this honourable Senate that the way we use "race" in discourse in societies like Trinidad and Tobago, in Europe and in Africa, it is very difficult to use it positively, because the way the terminologies, meanings and semantics have come down to us for the last two centuries, is to use "race" in deciding who is superior and who is inferior; who is better than whom. That is what gave us fascism.

In the time of Blumenbach in the 18th Century, there was Comte de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain and all these prominent people in literature who developed this idea of superior race. My good friends, Sen. Prof. Spence and Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny, who were biologists of some kind would remember Linnaeus. Linnaeus was the one who started off this classification of all plants giving them Latin names and Linnaeus had a classification of people, *Homo sapiens*, that had no prejudicial intention in it.

But, Blumenbach, another German gentleman came after him and modified it to give some high status and some low down, and in the context of Trinidad and Tobago, when Vidya Naipaul said that Trinidadians have an excellent eye for different shades of blackness, it is a very profound and insightful comment. People do not usually try to "big up" their race, or promote their race in terms of any neutral criteria. It is always, "we against them" and "I am better than them", so it is very difficult to talk race positively.

In addition to that, there is absolutely no scientific basis for the idea of race. I have said in this Parliament on sundry occasions and in a Commonwealth conference that we had here, that we should really be looking at ways to expunge the word "race" in legal context from our language and our jargon, the National

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

Anthem included. I mean that. It does not make sense to tell people here, “Every creed and race has an equal place.” What do you mean by race? What does it mean? It does not define anything. Tell people to see God in every face. That is what I tell them to do. Look at Sen. Prof. Kenny and see God; at Sen. Dr. St. Cyr and see God; at Sen. Danny Montano and see God; at this one next to me. That is what we ought to be doing and forgetting this thing about race.

Hon. Senator: Did you call Daly? [*Laughter*] [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Sen. Daly I missed but I should see “Other”, but I see God in him.

I also say, Mr. President, that we ought to understand that this is a census and not a sample survey. Indeed, there are very sound professional reasons why we might be wasting a lot of money doing a census. I was telling Sen. Dr. St. Cyr that I have a book that I ordered *Mathematics in the Western Culture* and I remember one of the essays in it started off with a quotation which was written at the turn of the century—1910 or somewhere around there—and the gentleman was saying we are talking about making society literate—and they were talking about England, I think it was, or Germany, I cannot remember—meaning that people can read and they can write. He said, “No. No. We need to expand literacy to include knowledge of statistics.” People must be statistically literate; they must be mathematically literate.

I think that is a very truthful statement because if you had explained the benefits and cost of doing a national census, rather than doing a very good sample survey where you try to minimize response errors, sampling errors and all that, there are very few people in this country who could engage in that debate and understand what you are talking about. Therein lies a very important tale in terms of our education system and what we need to do.

So that the debate we had here this afternoon was very positive and substantial in the contributions made. The question of the International Monetary Fund and the statistics of the IMF. I am surprised that the people opposite who raised that issue of the 1999 comments of the IMF, forgot to mention this gentleman called Davidson Boodhoo. I remember when the NAR was in power, there was a gentleman called Davidson Boodhoo who was working with the IMF at the time and Boodhoo made this big exposé—IMF distorts Trinidad’s statistics to rope them into the IMF and the Prime Minister at the time asked Kari Levitt and Compton Bourne to look at this matter to see whether there was any credibility in it and what should the government do. There were two reports that I have that

Census Order, 2000
[DR. THE HON. M. JOB]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

came out of that. One of them has the joint statement of the Kari Levitt and Compton Bourne action and another one had to do with the monetary policy that came out of the survey that Boodhoo was talking about.

What eventually, I think, substantially, came out of those two analyses was that we, locally, in the Central Statistical Office, need to be careful about our professional competence and our review procedures, as Sen. Prof. Spence was saying a while ago, that you need to manage your information and data collection; always have capable people and always have a review procedure, so that you know whether you are getting quality information or not.

What that tells me, also, and what I should share with the honourable Senate, is that there is a need for people to understand that when you collect things in a statistic, you do not live in a world of certainty. Statistics is about standard deviation and standard error, and confidence intervals and t-tests and chi-square tests, and all these kinds of things.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Mr. President, I am getting a bit lost. I began to form the impression that the hon. Minister was offering an apology and an explanation to this Senate for the discussions that took place a little while ago and saying that the proper place for commenting on the census would be 28 days after the Order had been passed. It was therefore suggested to us during tea time, that maybe it would not be necessary for us to enter into any kind of debate, but the Minister having begun to give that apology and explanation, is entering into debate.

I feel very sorry that I have lost my opportunity to debate on the understanding that we will get a simple, brief explanation, an acceptance to some of the points and a promise that the public would have a chance to comment on this during the 28 days.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Mr. President, I just thought that for the record, these things were said and I should make some clarification. We are doing a census; we are not doing a sample survey and that in any event, the information is not—

Mr. President: Sen. Prof. Ramchand again.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Mr. President, I just have to register my dissatisfaction that I have lost my chance to make my contribution, too.

Mr. President: Go ahead, Minister.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: I think I have cleared up the reason why I took these notes and I am not in the mode of debating. You would notice, Mr. President, that

Census Order, 2000

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

I have not said anything that was political or against anybody over there. I am just trying to clarify statistically, these mathematical concepts in terms of what the census is, as distinct from a survey and the fact that nobody is expecting to get a set of information that is foolproof or failsafe. That is the nature of the exercise.

You always have to have a way to interpret or to draw implications from your census data, or your sample data, with the knowledge that there is a certain amount of error in it and there are certain ways that you treat with that.

5.50 p.m.

I thought that I should say these things, not in the way of debate but, in the way of clarification, because people in the media would have heard the things said here and I just thought I had to clarify it.

Having said those words, Mr. President—*[Interruption]*

Sen. Prof. Spence: Mr. President, I wonder if there is going to be some apology given to the population, for having received a notice which gives a date which turns out to be incorrect. Perhaps I cancelled a trip to Barbados in order to be here for the census, now I find it is a different set of dates. Will there be an apology to the population? Secondly, who is going to pay the cost of all those circulars that have to be withdrawn and new ones sent out?

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Mr. President, I do not have any problems with apologizing to the population for having thrown some people's plans out of wack. Indeed, I do not know if the question of the change of the date and the cost in terms of the pamphlets that would have been sent out, is something we can just laugh away, but you know life is like that. What more can I say? The apology to the population, that is not something we should take lightly.

Mr. President, having said these few words, I do beg to move. *[Desk thumping]*

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Census Order 2000 be affirmed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration (Sen. The Hon. Wade Mark): Mr. President, before moving to adjourn this honourable Senate, may I inform hon. Senators that, at the next sitting of the Senate we shall continue our debate on

Adjournment
[HON. W. MARK]

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

Bills 1, 2 and 3 on the Order Paper which are being dealt with conjointly. We shall be able, once we are able to deal with those early, to proceed to Bill No.4 on the Order Paper.

We have also indicated to the Senators that, having regard to time that we had to spend on these two very important matters: the Tourism Development (No. 2) (Amdt.) Bill as well as the Census Order 2000, we would, in fact, be making accommodation sometime at the next sitting to, at least, conclude Sen. J. Kenny's Private Member's Motion at the next sitting of the Senate.

In those circumstances, we will have to meet very early. I am sorry to upset anybody's business plans, but we want to complete Government's Business and we also want to facilitate the completion of Sen. Prof. J. Kenny's Private Member's Motion.

In this regard, Mr. President, I now beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, April 04, 2000 at 10.30 a.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.55 p.m.