

*Leave of Absence*

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

**SENATE**

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, leave of absence from sittings of the Senate has been granted to Sen. Christopher Thomas for the period February 7—19, 2001 and to Sen. Lindsay Gillette for the period February 11—16, 2001.

**SENATORS' APPOINTMENT**

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

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson

President.

TO: MRS. LAILA SULTAN-KHAN VALERE

WHEREAS Senator Christopher Thomas 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, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, LAILA SULTAN-KHAN VALERE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with immediate effect and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Christopher Thomas.

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 12th day  
of February, 2001.”

*Senators' Appointment*

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

\s\ Arthur N. R. Robinson  
President.

TO: MR. VINCENT CABRERA

WHEREAS Senator Lindsay Gillette 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, VINCENT CABRERA, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2001 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Lindsay Gillette.

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 12th day of February, 2001.”

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Sen. Laila Sultan-Khan Valere and Sen. Vincent Cabrera took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**PLANT PROTECTION (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Plant Protection (Amdt.) Act, 1975, brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister of Food Production and Marine Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Motion made, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate.*  
[*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Port of Spain Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1980. [*The Minister of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Gerald Yetming)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Port of Spain Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1981. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
3. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Port of Spain Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1982. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
4. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the National Housing Authority for the year ended December 31, 1986. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
5. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the National Housing Authority for the year ended December 31, 1987. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
6. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Government Employees' Provident Fund for the financial year ended September 30, 1999. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
7. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Institute of Marine Affairs for the nin-month period ended September 30, 1999. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
8. Annual audited financial statements of Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 1999. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
9. Annual audited financial statements of Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited for year ended December 31, 1999. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]

10. Annual audited financial statements of Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 1999. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]
11. The Education (Local School Board) Regulations, 2000. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming*]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Environmental Management Act  
(Rules)**

**1. Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny** asked the hon. Minister of the Environment:

- (a) Could the hon. Minister inform the Senate whether rules made under the Environmental Management Act, in particular Environmentally Sensitive Areas Rules, 2000, Environmentally Sensitive Species Rules, 2000, Noise Pollution Control Rules, 2000 and the Certificate of Environmental Clearance Rules, 2000 laid in the Sixth Session of the Fifth Parliament are in force and being implemented?
- (b) If the answer is in the negative, could the hon. Minister state when these rules will be implemented?

**The Minister of the Environment (Dr. The Hon. Adesh Nanan):** Mr. President, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Rules, 2000, Environmentally Sensitive Species Rules, 2000, Noise Pollution Control Rules, 2000 and the Certificate of Environmental Clearance Rules, 2000 are not in force and, therefore, are not being implemented.

Section 26 of the Environmental Management Act, 2000 provides that the making of such rules by the Minister is subject to the negative resolution of Parliament. This requires the rules to lay in the Senate and the House of Representatives for a period of 40 days. The rules were laid in the House of Representatives on October 30, 2000 and in the Senate on October 31, 2000. Parliament was, however, dissolved on November 3, 2000 four days after the rules were laid in the House of Representatives and three days after they were laid in the Senate. In the circumstances, it is necessary to have the rules re-laid in the Parliament for negative resolution to enable them to be enforced.

Section 27(1)(c) of the Environmental Management Act, 2000 requires that the rules be published in the *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette* prior to being laid in Parliament. In this regard, Cabinet has approved that the rules be re-tabled in Parliament for negative resolution. The rules are in the process of being forwarded to the Government Printery for publishing in the *Gazette*, thereafter to be laid in Parliament. Thus, after the rules have been laid in Parliament for the mandatory 40 days, they will be published in the *Gazette* and can thereafter be implemented.

**Sen. Prof. Kenny:** Mr. President, just a supplemental. May we expect these at the next sitting of the Senate?

**Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan:** Mr. President, is it in terms of the laying? I would not like to commit myself here, but I will be doing everything possible to have it done as fast as possible. It is already in the process, Mr. President.

### **Environmental Management Act**

#### **(Certificate of Environmental Clearance)**

2. **Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny** asked the hon. Minister of the Environment:

- (a) Could the hon. Minister inform the Senate whether the designated list of activities requiring a Certificate of Environmental Clearance under section 35(1) of the Environmental Management Act, 2000 has been prepared?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, could the hon. Minister state when the list of activities will be laid in Parliament?
- (c) If the answer is in the negative, could the hon. Minister state when the list will be laid in Parliament?

**The Minister of the Environment (Dr. The Hon. Adesh Nanan):** Mr. President, section 35(1) of the Environmental Management Act, 2000 provides for the determination of the environmental impact which might arise out of any new or significantly modified construction, process, works or other activity. The Minister may, by order, subject to the negative resolution of Parliament, designate a list of activities requiring a certificate of environmental clearance.

The order designating the list of activities was recently approved by Cabinet for laying in Parliament. Thus, the Certificate of Environmental Clearance Designated Activities Order, 2001 will shortly be laid in Parliament together with the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Rules, 2001, the Environmentally Sensitive

Species Rules, 2001, the Noise Pollution Control Rules, 2001 and the Certificate of Environmental Clearance Rules, 2001. This order will also be published in the *Gazette* prior to being laid in Parliament.

**Sen. Prof. Kenny:** A supplemental question. I wonder whether the hon. Minister can tell us when those rules were actually drafted and approved by Cabinet?

**Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan:** Mr. President, I do not have that information at this time, but I can surely provide the hon. Senator with it at another sitting.

### **Environmental Management Authority Board**

#### **(Names and Qualifications)**

**3. Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny** asked the hon. Minister of the Environment:

Could the hon. Minister list the names and qualifications of the nine Members of the Board of the Environmental Management Authority appointed under section (6)(2)(b) of the Environmental Management Act and the categories of that section under which they were appointed?

**The Minister of the Environment (Dr. The Hon. Adesh Nanan):** Mr. President, section 6(2)(b) of the Environmental Management Act, 2000 provides that in addition to the Chairman, the Board of Directors of the Environmental Management Authority shall comprise nine other members drawn from the following 11 disciplines or groups: environmental management, ecology, environmental health, engineering, labour, community-based organizations, business, economics, public administration, law and non-profit environmental non-governmental organizations.

In accordance with section 6(2)(b) and (4), nine members of the Board of the Environmental Management Authority were appointed with effect from August 28, 2000 for a term of three years.

**1.45 p.m.**

The members of the Board of Directors, their qualifications and their respective disciplines and groups are as follows:

MEMBER	QUALIFICATION	DISCIPLINE OR GROUP
MR. RANDOLPH KONG	Attorney-at-law; Retired Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance	Law and Public Administration

MEMBER	QUALIFICATION	DISCIPLINE OR GROUP
DR. ASAD MOHAMMED	PhD City and Regional Planning; Masters of Regional Planning; Bachelor of Environmental Studies; Chairman, Interim National Physical Planning Commission	Environmental Management and Public Administration
MR. KELVINRAMNATH	BSc Mechanical Engineering; Petroleum Engineer; Petroleum Profession/Degree; Diploma, Occupational Health and Safety; Safety and Environmental Specialist	Engineering and Environmental Health and Safety
MR. NARINE GUPTIE LUTCHMEDIAL	Industrial Labour Relations, Cipriani Labour College; Technical Level Scaffolding and Framework, Burton Newton Construction School (London); President, Manatee Conservation Trust; Member of several other Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations including the Zoological Society	Non-profit Environmental Non-governmental Organizations and Community-based Organizations

MEMBER	QUALIFICATION	DISCIPLINE OR GROUP
DR. AHAMAD KHAN	PhD Environmental and Ocean Sciences with specific training in environmental chemistry and chemical oceanography	Environmental Management and Business
DR. ROHIT DOON	MBBS; Diploma, Public Health; Diploma, Industrial Health; Principal Medical Officer, Environmental Health	Environmental Health
MRS. BEBE AJODHA	BSc (Hon.) Botany and Zoology; Lecturer, Science and Environmental Studies	Environmental Management and Ecology
DR. JESMA MC FARLANE	PhD, Ecology and Life Sciences; BS, Zoology; MBA	Ecology and Representative of the Tobago House of Assembly
MR. SELWYN JOHN	President General, National Union of Government and Federated Workers	Labour

**Sen. Prof. Kenny:** Mr. President, a supplemental question: it would seem that people are being appointed—I hope the Minister will correct me—in more than one category, that is, they are experts in environmental management, ecology and so forth. I got the impression that the law specified. Secondly, does the hon. Minister propose that the law says that the board has to have a representative of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA)? It does not mention it in the law.

Thirdly, would the hon. Minister propose or state that a person who has a BSc in botany and zoology can claim to be an expert in either environmental management or ecology?

**Dr. The Hon. A. Nanan:** Mr. President, the hon. Senator has raised concerns with respect to the selection of individuals on the board; I gave the answer in terms of what exists now. I want to give the hon. Senator the assurance that as the Minister of the Environment I will take another look at the structure of the board,



and if I find that there is any conflict with the Act, I will make the necessary change, if necessary.

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Equal Opportunity Act, 2000 [*The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate. [Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming]

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL**

Bill for the regulation of telecommunications in Trinidad and Tobago [*The Minister of Communications and Information Technology*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate. [Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming]

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF LAND BILL**

Bill relating to the planning and development of land [*The Minister of Integrated Planning and Development*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the Senate. [Sen. The Hon. G. Yetming]

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**The Minister of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Gerald Yetming)** Mr. President, I seek leave of the Senate to deal with "Private Business" instead of "Government Business".

*Agreed to.*

#### **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (Government's Policy)**

**Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny:** Mr. President, I beg to move,

*Whereas* the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has adopted as national policy the general objective of sustainable growth;

*And Whereas* sustainable growth aims at meeting current and future needs of citizens while minimizing the impacts of negative effects of development;

*And Whereas* economic growth and development worldwide has been accompanied with various negative effects, both nationally and internationally;

*Be It Resolved* that Government make a full statement to this House on its plans to meet the objectives of sustainable growth with particular regard to involving citizens in planning the development of the country, minimizing negative effects of physical development, enforcement of planning decisions and meeting its obligations to international treaties for protection of the environment.

Mr. President, first of all may I say how appreciative I am of the opportunity to start a debate so early in the life of this Senate. Some of us were becoming a bit nervous about events elsewhere preventing us from doing the work of the Senate. While a lot of the work of the Senate is about passing legislation, a lot of the work is also through Private Members' motions in which important issues that affect us can be raised and debated without any confrontation. There is no opposition so, collectively, we—and by extension the citizens of this country—may get a feel for perceptions of problems which we all face, whether one is in the administration, in the Opposition, on the Independent Bench, or out on the street.

My Motion really hopes that we will concentrate on particular aspects of development, particularly involving citizens in planning the development of this country. Later on I am going to suggest that top-down planning may not really be in the best interest of any administration in a democracy. I think also that one of the very, very important aspects of development is devising the means of mitigating the damage which may be done to the environment which supports us, by planning the development properly. Again, I will refer to a couple of examples.

I think the other emphasis will be on the enforcement of planning decisions. As Sen. Dr. McKenzie often reminds us, we pass laws and we have them assented to; occasionally they are proclaimed and frequently forgotten. These are the four areas I will like to concentrate on in my presentation.

I have, in fact, written a 3,000-word essay, which I am prepared to make available to anyone who cares to read my humble offerings. I will, obviously, not read it, but I will concentrate on some of the problems that we face. First of all, the conceptual problems, because we use the terminology, and then secondly, the specific issues that I want to raise.

I would also like to say that it is an immense pleasure for me to see that two key Ministers of the Government have attended this debate and are in the Front Bench, clearly, taking the opportunity to listen to what some of us have to say. I again congratulate them. The Minister of the Environment could very easily have got up, bowed and left. He would be within his right; he has a very important job to do in his ministry. I am sure that the Minister of Integrated Planning and Development is also equally busy, and, again, I really must warmly congratulate him and the Government for taking a serious view of what is being presented in this Motion. I hope that Members on that side will join in the debate, so that at the end of our discussions we will all have a clearer picture of where we might be going.

Mr. President, we have a problem with terminology. Some of our laws refer to “sustainable development”. One of the Government's objectives, the national objective, is sustainable growth. Sen. The Hon. Gillette is not here, but when he was speaking on the last occasion he mentioned another objective which is a faster rate of growth.

I think, perhaps, therefore, we ought to look at the term “sustainable development”. I am pleased and very, very happy that Sen. Mary King is here, because she looks at development from a slightly different perspective, that is, of the economist. I look at it from a slightly different perspective, of a biologist and an aged biologist. I am not one of those people who feel that we should not cut down any tree, build any road or reclaim any bit of shore. Quite frankly, it is a fact of life that the development of human society rests on taking the natural environment and converting it to human sustenance. This is our agriculture, forestry.

Depending on one's base discipline and one's experience, one has different possible interpretations of sustainable development.

### **2.00 p.m.**

The term “sustainable development” was born about 15 years ago from a United Nations' international commission which was generally referred to as the Brundtland Commission named after the chairperson of the commission who was a Prime Minister of Norway. The United Nations published this book called *Our Common Future* and the terms are defined in there and the main concern is that over the past years we have had horrendous problems developing overuse of resources, depletion, and we have had excessive flooding. These are problems that we find worldwide: starvation—poverty, famine—and the Brundtland Report

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

came up with the idea. There is something called “sustainable development” and in a few words which I quote from the Brundtland Report: “to ensure the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This is what “sustainable development” is in the Brundtland Report and this in fact is in the preamble to the Environment Management Act, the words may be changed slightly, but the Minister is familiar with the term.

The problem, Mr. President, is that we are very fond of defining terms and concepts and so on and sometimes it is very difficult to take them and modify or use them as a form of social engineering. The Brundtland Report goes on and I will just summarize, I will not quote the whole thing. It goes on to summarize the principal mechanisms, but they are not really mechanisms. The first one is the elimination of poverty in the Third World through faster economic growth. I have always asked the question: If you have faster economic growth might you not have accelerated consumption?

The second mechanism is the reduction of consumption levels particularly of fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources in the developed world; and the third one is to bring the world’s population levels into harmony with ecological carrying capacity of the planet. These are all very straightforward objectives; I do not think they are really mechanisms. So the general idea is philosophically sound, but I ask the question: the United States of America represents 5 per cent of the world’s population and produces 25 per cent of the greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels. If we are talking “sustainable development”, can we find a means of getting the United States system to cut down on the use of fossil fuels? I do not know how it is done. This is why I was hoping that Sen. King would join the debate fairly soon to clarify what is meant by “elimination of poverty”, “accelerated economic growth in the developing world” and “the reduction of consumption”, especially of fossil fuels.

The related question is the population problem which, sometimes, economists do not accept but there is such a thing as population problem. Biologists are convinced that there is a population problem and the question is: can we, or must we, wait until higher living standards bring down the population, or do we have to do something about it as a form of social engineering, such as was attempted in India and such as is practised in China? These are some of the issues, but the final part of the report on the definition of “sustainable development” concludes—and I think it is very important to hear what the report concludes because there is a message for all of us. The Brundtland Report concludes:

“We do not pretend that the process is easy or straightforward. Painful choices have to be made. Thus, in the final analysis, sustainable development must rest on political will.”

This is the heart and soul of the Brundtland Report’s view of sustainable development.

Mr. President, I turn, not to give you a long catalogue, for it is very depressing when people who speak about the environment catalogue all the ills, but internationally, there are certain issues that have crossed borders and the one everyone is familiar with is the question of global climate change—sea level rise, sea level warming and so forth.

Mr. President, we are signatory to a number of international treaties and in some cases we appear to be able to meet the requirements of the treaty. I think it is because there is a big stick held over us. For example, the Montreal Protocol on the use of ozone depleting substances which we have signed and we are complying with it. The Environmental Management Authority (EMA) has a unit and it is working now and we are getting the levels of use of refrigerant gases down. I question, are we doing this because we want to do it, or are we doing this because we may face sanctions? Because there are sanctions in the Montreal Protocol. This is one treaty in which we, clearly, are meeting our responsibility.

There are other treaties where it is hoped that we have voluntary compliance I am thinking in particular of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species (CITES), but this is just one of the international issues. Global warming, climate change, sea level rise and so on. We may not think that these things would adversely affect us. It may be some little atolls in the Indian Ocean or the Pacific but, in fact, already in the Caribbean there is evidence suggesting there may be dieback of some of the coral reefs resulting from slight elevation of temperature.

So I do not think we need to go into all the international horrors except to mention them. Deforestation of primary forests for agriculture, loss of biological diversity, inefficient use of water—we do not recycle water adequately—fisheries depletion. We have also the rise of certain diseases in the developing world in particular: tuberculosis, malaria—in fact, people do not appreciate that malaria kills more than AIDS does currently. In time, of course, AIDS will take over, but these are worldwide problems that touch us from time to time.

Elsewhere in the world, some of these problems have been addressed and here are some classic examples of renewable resources, in particular, fisheries resources. In the North Sea, herring resources have been severely depleted; cod stocks are severely depleted. The European Commission has put into force certain conservation measures so the herring stocks are coming back and the cod stocks are coming back. They are painful things because the fishermen have their livelihood affected by not being able to go out to fish. It is done in other parts of the world and there is no reason why we, as a nation, should not be able to do it.

Looking at it locally or nationally, I do not think I want to spend a great deal of time because we are generally aware of the problem. We see the result of mismanagement. We see flooding especially in Central Trinidad and much of it is exacerbated by what we are doing in the hills and we all know this. We all know that we have to recover our hills, we have to reforest them and it is going to take many, many years.

We have problems of urban overcrowding and crime associated with it. We have aquifer depletion, and I need not go any further with the catalogue. Now, let us get down to the substance or the core of what I wanted to consider.

One of the fundamental issues or ideas in a democracy is that it exists for the people it serves. Therefore, the corollary to this we would reasonably say that in a democracy when we plan, we at least involve people in the planning exercise. I am not sure that historically—I am not blaming the present administration, the previous administration or any other administration. It is something that has happened over the years as has happened in many societies that you have a problem, you have a democracy.

As a citizen at Toco, or Las Cuevas, or East Dry River, or even Woodford Square, or whatever have you, in a democracy, do we just sit, do we not have voices? Do we just sit and wait for a planner or a series of planners or a government ministry to say this is what we are going to do and if we make a mess of it we would pay the political price? My view is that in the ideal democracy at which we all aim, every citizen should be involved as of right in the planning process: that is, citizens' views should be heard and reflected in the planning and when the planning is done it should go out to the citizens, and I think it would be a happier society if we involve citizens to a greater degree rather than the system we are using.

Mr. President, I would just briefly like to refer to one particular incident involving citizens of this country and a planning decision. Again, I will not blame

any particular administration, but we take the case of the Toco Ferry Port. This is not this administration's doing, it goes back to several administrations. There has been an idea that you build some sort of a ferry port to make it easier to get back and forth to Tobago. Whether the people of Tobago were actually consulted in this is another matter, but at one stage in the present administration, a decision was made to consider a particular proposal for establishment of a ferry port at Toco and a preferred developer was appointed.

We need not go into all of it, but when the people of Toco saw what had been planned, there was a violent reaction because the plan called for the acquisition of private property for private developers who would build a port to make money for themselves, and at the end of 18 years give it over to the Government for a dollar, but the people were going to lose their land and there was going to be reclamation of the sea. Here is a sensitive marine environment. Mr. Minister, I have dived in Toco Bay and contrary to what the preferred developers may say, I know what is there, but they were going to recover or reclaim about 15 hectares of sea bottom. The people became alarmed, they formed their citizens' group and, effectively, caused the Government to back down, and I must say the Government was very sensible in the circumstances to back down.

### **2.15 p.m.**

The group at Toco had other ideas for the development of the area, which did not involve a big ferry port for bunkering fuel, nor a big fishing port and so on. Indeed, I was up there. I was one of the outsiders. It was alleged that we were inflaming opinion. I was not doing any such thing; I was just explaining a little marine biology to people. But it was very interesting to see in the Toco community the number of people from Tobago who came across for a meeting in Toco village. At the end of it, the Government withdrew it—they withdrew their land acquisition notice. I assume that the proposal is now dead, although it may remain there.

It is very interesting what the Toco community wishes to see. They wish to see an upgrade of the infrastructure, the roads; they wish to see little training establishments; they wish to see the development of eco-tourism and in fact, they have come up with a plan which I think the Government is familiar with. They are, of course, trying to raise money.

Mr. President, the cost of acquisition of that land—an estimate given to this Senate is \$27 million—was given by the previous Minister of Works and Transport in this Senate in response to a question from me. My point is, and the

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

villagers' point is, if you have \$27 million to acquire private property, might that \$27 million not be better used in developing the community? Let them develop their eco-tourism; let them have soft loans for the development of small bed and-breakfast facilities; small hotels and things like that. Here we have an example of a planning exercise that has gone over 25 years. The idea goes way back, and it was fleshed out; and environmental impact statements made, public meetings held and so on, but in the view of the citizens who live in Toco, it was fundamentally flawed and they saw another route of development.

So how do we find a mechanism for broader and deeper involvement of citizens at the base level, before the plans are actually finalized, selected by tendering process and outline approval given—because outline approval was given for that proposal? I think the date was June 28, 2000. The first point I want to make is: Can the Government or the Opposition or anyone else suggest mechanisms for a deeper involvement of citizens at all levels in the planning, regionally as well as nationally?

Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to point out that sometimes the planning process considers proposals for development that we only hear about. I am prepared to have the hon. Minister of Integrated Planning and Development interrupt me if I am wrong when I state, generally, that there is a proposal before the Town and Country Planning Division for the establishment of a plant to produce toluene di-isocyanate.

The feedstock for producing toluene di-isocyanate includes natural gas, which we have in abundance; toluene, a cyclic hydrocarbon which is also carcinogenic; benzene, a cyclic hydrocarbon which is also carcinogenic; hydrogen which is extremely dangerous to handle; carbon monoxide which is a poison; chlorine which is corrosive; sulphuric acid and formalin. They are all noxious chemicals. I ask the question: Are we in a position to be assessing proposals of this kind? I know that we want foreign investments. The related question is: Why would foreign investors want to come to Trinidad to produce chemicals of this kind? The production figures that have been quoted are 20,000 tonnes per year of toluene di-isocyanate and 50,000 tonnes of nitric acid. These are industrial chemicals. Can we take the risk? This is high in technology. Why are the investors coming here? There is something called the NIMBY Syndrome, you aspiring environmentalists—it is an acronym meaning, “not in my backyard”.

Foreign investors come here because our controls are not effective and we have raw materials. We are not being consulted the people down in the Point Lisas area are not being consulted; the national community is not being consulted.



There may be reasons for this but my view is that at our state of development, we are not in a position to take the risk of this sort of thing in our country.

I do not want to be too alarmist, but a very closely related chemical, methyl isocyanate, was responsible for the Bhopal disaster caused by Union Carbide in which 4,000 citizens of India died. They were gassed to death; and there were tens of thousands who were blinded. At our state of development, India is a highly developed society, whatever people may think. Are we in a position to be even considering this? What does the Minister of the Environment think? I assume that he knows something about this.

My point, again, is that we have proposals coming for development and we are only hearing of them through the grapevine. I suggest that this sort of thing should not really be handled by the Town and Country Planning Division but rather by the Environmental Management Authority under the environmental clearance rules and schedule of designated activities. Then the proposal will have to go to a public hearing and as a citizen I can go to the Environmental Commission and make my plea and be protected by the commission. So here again we have the issue of involvement of the citizens in the work of the state, in the work of planning.

Mr. President, I would like to turn to the enforcement of planning decisions. I have, comparatively recently, found it necessary to go through the procedures of communicating with the Town and Country Planning Division regarding unauthorized development at Blanchisseuse. I do not use that particular beach, but I happen to know it and I followed all the procedures. I saw what I thought to be an unauthorized construction on the beach resort; I saw the use of beach sand in backfilling for a swimming pool; and I saw little reclamation of the beach below high waters.

I wrote to the Director of the Town and Country Planning Division and I must say I have had a very cordial, warm relationship with the division. We speak on the phone. I write letters and they reply to me, unlike other agencies of Government. When I write to them, I am usually ignored, but the Town and Country Planning Division listens to me and we speak and so on. They followed all their procedures and they investigated it. The EMA and the Piarco Regional Authority were there and they recorded it. It was all properly done. When the report went to the hon. Minister who is responsible, he issued an enforcement notice under the Town and Country Planning Act.

**2.25 p.m.**

This is the Minister responsible for planning who issues according to the law. He is acting all within the law and he issues an enforcement notice and the developers totally ignore a lawful notice from a minister of Government. The building accelerated—I think some members of Cabinet are aware of the problem—and was completed. Part of a public right-of-way that has existed since I owned property in Blanchisseuse, which I bought in 1974, is now enclosed in private property—a public right-of-way to that particular beach.

The last communication I had from the acting director of Town and Country Planning, Miss Smart—I would just like to read an extract of a letter; I think it is proper—was dated November 17, 2000; and this is signed by Miss Carol Smart, the acting director. Part of the text of the letter says:

“The Division has noted with very grave concern the failure of the developer in question to comply with a specific legal Enforcement Notice which he was served and the defiant continuation of unauthorized building operations.”

We are not dealing with somebody who is building a little shack, squatting on state lands; we are dealing with somebody who is spending—I do not know; I am a man of modest means, but I would hazard a guess that that house which has apparently five bedrooms or something and five air-conditioned units, is probably a better part of \$1 million. Now, how can we have this sort of thing happening when the Minister is doing what the law requires of him, and nothing happens?

It is a very important issue because—I am sure that Sen. Lucky will agree with me; she knows the Constitution—if I won the lottery and I decided to build something without planning approval and the hon. Minister, after all his technical people show him that I have been at fault, I will say, “I am continuing and if you try to prosecute me, constitutional motion; equality of treatment”. You cannot have one person defying a minister. Everybody will defy a minister and everyone will have constitutional grounds for so doing. This is a point that I must emphasize, the question of enforcement, and I sincerely hope that it is not the end of the issue.

I would like to turn to the general issue of our international treaties. As a citizen of this country—and I am sorry that Sen. Thomas is not here because he is far more experienced in this sort of thing, having spent his professional life in the service of the nation abroad in varying capacities—I have a sort of modest experience within a certain limited area of our international treaties, in particular, I mentioned the Montreal protocol which we had signed and with which we are complying.

We have signed the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species. We signed it in 1984. This treaty requires us to pass domestic legislation, specific to societies. There is even model legislation from many of the countries in the world, and yet, in 16 or 17 years we have signed a treaty and we have not even attempted to bring something to Parliament. It is not this administration or the previous one; it is part of our culture. We sign these treaties and we ignore them.

I have had occasions several years ago when I represented the Government at oceanographic conferences and so on, at UNESCO and various other places, and I have found myself in the very embarrassing situation of having to speak at an international conference on matters of treaty to which we are a party and I had to be very careful. I frankly feel dreadfully ashamed to belong to Trinidad and Tobago when we sign treaties and the image created outside is that: “Third World, they sign treaties; they have no intention of fulfilling the terms of the treaty.”

Had Sen. Gillette been here as the Leader of Government Business, I would have been prepared to give him, without fee, a general guide as to a parliamentary agenda regarding environmental legislation. The Minister might accept it from me as well. But we have to have a balance, obviously, in our legislative programme, between the different areas of activity and the different interests of the country. I must confess that in the last Senate—I am not criticizing; this is what the agenda emerged to be—we seemed to spend an awful lot of time with criminal law.

**Sen. Daly:** Why was that?

**Sen. Prof. J. Kenny:** I will not answer the question, Senator. But there has to be a balance. We are a young Parliament and there has to be a balance. Can we have some planning law? Can we have some environmental law? Can we have some criminal law? Can we have some civil business? But my point is that we do have these treaties to which we are bound.

I refer particularly to another treaty and this is the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. A previous administration went to Rio in 1992 and signed this treaty and the previous administration established the Environmental Management Authority and it has now become operative under the existing administration, and there are plans concerning our biological diversity. I have read the treaty over and over and clause 8 of the treaty requires us to establish special protected areas. Here we have plans made to establish a ferry port in what really ought to be a protected area because there are coral reef communities there;

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

here we have the continued march of development up the hills; we see it around Port of Spain and we see it spreading into the East. The only protected areas in Trinidad and Tobago are protected under the Chaguaramas Developmental Authority which has a national park, the Marine Areas Enhancement and Protection Act, which protects Buccoo Reef, and then the Forests Act offers a degree of protection to some of the natural areas where logging is prohibited. It does not mean that logging does not happen. But we have had this gradual creeping denudation of the hills and we have passed modified forestry legislation. I pointed out at the time that the legislation was foolish; it could not be enforced. I think Sen. Daly reminded people that I had offered an alternative. Under the Town and Country Planning Act the Minister can declare any area a protected area; issue an order. He cannot do this right now.

My point is that we have these treaties; we have signed this treaty which is worldwide—everybody is committed to it—saving the biological diversity of the planet, for various reasons; we need not go into them. But here we are, as signatories in 1992; we have had a Parks and Protected Areas Act that has come before the Senate for three sessions. I sat and worked with it—those were my younger days in the Senate when I took it—well, I take it very seriously, but I took it very, very seriously then—and I went through the Bill and I had actually proposed something like 52 amendments to the draft legislation because it was so badly done. But the legislation has never come to be debated. It starts off high on the Order Paper and then criminal law pushes it down. If you look through our old Order Papers you will see they get down to No. 13 or No. 14 and then they lapse.

**2.35 p.m.**

My point is that we have signed an international treaty with the United Nations, which everybody is taking quite seriously, and we have drafted legislation, hence my question about when the sensitive areas are going to be established. As soon as you have sensitive areas established you will have the power to declare that whole area of the north-east, a sensitive area and can regulate through the planning authorities what may or may not be done there; no logging, no hunting. In other words, we can keep one large area, not for ourselves, but for the generations to come because this is the idea of sustainable development. It is for future generations.

I mention this particular issue because I feel your administration—forgive me, Mr. President—the current administration must somehow sit back and reflect on some of the things that I have said, and possibly on some of the things that may be

said by other Senators or on the ideas you may generate yourself, to come up with a broad plan as to how we are to proceed with the sustainable development of the country.

I would just like to suggest to the Government that, perhaps, if the technical people in the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Ministry of the Environment, and other ministries would go to the Parliament's library—I am not trying to sell my book, it is already sold out, the 1,500—at the end of my book there is a chapter on conservation. I have outlined in that chapter, certain objectives, from my point of view, that might be considered for adoption or modification in policy planning.

One of the objectives is to let us just take a percentage of natural Trinidad and say, “Stop and desist, we will have no further human interference to these areas. We are setting it aside for future generations.” This would be consistent with sustainable development and with our obligation to the treaty. I have suggested a figure of about 10 per cent of the land mass of Trinidad which could take in large parts of north-east and south-east Trinidad. Once you bring this as your objective and you get your law passed for the sensitive areas, then you can set up infrastructure.

The second objective, I would suggest, is that we ought to have an absolute moratorium on alienation of agricultural land. We have very limited resources and agricultural land is being—it has happened for many years—alienated to building other activities.

A third objective, I suggest, is that we dedicate certain road routes in Trinidad as scenic drives. One could very well start with the Lady Young Road because you enter the capital that way—although now it has become very dangerous as they have now made four lanes where there used to be two. In fact, if you are driving down towards Morvant at night and you are not careful you are likely to hit a lamp standard that is in the paved road, and there are several like this.

We ought to have scenic routes and I think the north-east is a particularly nice one, that is from Matura going around to Matelot. Another nice scenic route is the one going down through the Cocal in Mayaro; another one is coming into the capital city and there may be others. These are some ideas that I have generated to which I hope we will get a response.

Mr. President, there is one final point I would like to make which relates to the whole idea of sustainable development as sustainable growth, the question of how we use our non-renewable resources. Renewable resources can be managed by saying, “You can only take so many trees, fishes or crab”, but with non-renewable; they are wasting resources.

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. PROF. KENNY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

We are going through an exercise now of paving all over the country. I am appalled at what is happening, not because of the official manholes—I have a limited route that I travel on and I know these things. I am also a bit worried about the drop-off at the end because our system of paving roads is just stacking layer after layer with each election. [*Interruption*] Minister, this has happened before you were born. It is part of our culture.

My point is that people look at potholes and curbs as issues, but the problem is that we are using aggregate. From where does the aggregate come? It comes from bed parent rock? Where can you expose parent rocks? On the surface of the mountain. So, the quarry business is thriving and we are periodically taking aggregate, adding some bitumen and binder then laying it down with a paving machine.

Mr. President, I am sure Sen. Yetming is a man of great experience in the world and he would have seen a road planer. In Europe and North America, when you resurface a road you do not just add layers. It makes the road far more dangerous and wastes the resource. We are widening up all the quarries and, I think, planning approval has been granted for another 130 acres, somewhere up in the northern range, for the removal of limestone and the greatest source of paving material in this country now lies on overpaved roads.

I would suggest that consideration be given to using modern technology. Here we are talking about building a plant that is going to manufacture 20,000 tonnes a year of toluene di-isocyanate, which is a lethal chemical—we are used to technology like that—and we do not seem to be able to acquire the technology for doing proper road repairs. The real cost is not the potholes or the curb. The real costs are the environmental costs: the removal of the limestone, the silting of rivers, the faster run-off, the depletion of the aquifers and the floods that the Minister of Infrastructure, Development and Local Government would have to address. This then is the conclusion of my contribution.

Mr. President, I beg to move.

*Seconded by Sen. Martin Daly.*

*Question proposed.*

**2.45 p.m.**

**The Minister of Integrated Planning and Development (Hon. John Humphrey):** Mr. President, I think I should start by saying I miss the Senate a great deal. I spent one term in the Senate and really enjoyed the level of debate that we had during that term. I should make an effort to spend more time in this Chamber with hon. Senators.

I do not think any Member of the Senate—and certainly, the visitors from the other place—would disagree with what Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny has said. He is obviously an extremely conscious individual when it comes to the need to protect the delicate nature of the planet on which we live. If we do not do it, we will all perish. That is so obvious. However, it is not an easy task. Little Trinidad and Tobago will do its best. I have long believed that the Almighty has a very special role for our little country and its people.

It is very, very strange how the evolution of Trinidad and Tobago has resulted in a virtual world crucible, a microcosm of the world, in terms of its population, culture and all the difficulties the human species faces and has faced from time immemorial. I have argued that if we can do it in Trinidad and Tobago, then, the rest of the world should be able to do it. Here, we possess unquestionably all the world's problems. We also have a very generous endowment from the Creator in what we enjoy as a place on this planet. There is no question about that either. I agree entirely that the management of all our resources, human and material, must be carefully done.

First of all, I will deal with some of the points that the hon. Senator has made, before I go into the approach that the Government is taking in trying to ensure that our development is indeed sustainable. The Senator raised the issue of the ferry port. Unfortunately, the ferry port went a little off course because what Cabinet had approved was to establish a ferry port at Toco. That promise was made in the election manifesto of 1995, not necessarily to establish it at Toco, but at the most convenient location in north-east Trinidad. Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the experts. However, it was only to establish a ferry port and nothing more. That was the decision taken.

The experts identified an area which would have had to be acquired for that purpose. Somehow, the project ran away from the actual decision taken and became a very major private sector initiative. That is where the Government had to reconsider and then stop it. A ferry port has been promised to make life more convenient to the enjoyment of Tobagonians in Trinidad, Trinidadians in Tobago and also to make it easier for us, as a people, to move from place to place. That is still on the agenda.

The question which was raised on the enforcement of planning decisions is very difficult to achieve. He was quite right that we did seek to do something about the unlawful development that was going on in Blanchisseuse. We are still trying to do something about it. That one requires the wisdom of Solomon in its solution. A facility has been built which, in my view, could be enjoyed by

*Sustainable Growth*  
[HON. J. HUMPHREY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

everyone who visits that area. It should not be enjoyed exclusively by just one person. The law has to determine the course of events. The people who go there to surf would love to go into the pool to cool off and rinse. That is being attended to. Let me tell you that is one in countless developments.

Over the years, only 20 per cent of everything built in this country was done with planning approval. As you drive around the country and look at what has been built, be aware, that 80 per cent of everything has been built without planning approval. As minister, I have inherited that situation. Under the Town and Country Planning Act, I am authorized to demolish unauthorized developments. If you like, give me the power and I will solve the unemployment problem in the country by putting all the unemployed people to demolish the 80 per cent which has been built. Do you see how difficult it is?

What is the reason that 80 percent of everything built was done without planning approval? There is a fundamental reason. There was never a proper plan for guiding the development of this country. We are confronting that problem. I realize that the most urgent requirement was to put in place proper planning for developing the country. How did we go about doing it and where have we reached?

First of all, I pulled all the members of the Joint Consultative Council of the construction industry into the process. The government of the National Alliance for Reconstruction had encouraged that formation in 1997. It is an umbrella organization that represents all the professional associations in the country dealing with physical development. There are the Society of Architects, the Association of Professional Engineers, urban planners, land surveyors, cost accountants and quantity surveyors. In addition, they expanded their wings and embraced all the construction entities and members of the Association of Contractors. We put a strategy in place that involved all our professionals because we have to plan for the entire country. It is working for everyone.

**2.55 p.m.**

We also brought a leading international group into the process. It is an old English firm called Halcrow-Fox that is involved in physical planning in many parts of the world. They employ 3,200 professionals, and have some of the world's leading experts in the areas that I know Sen. Prof. Kenny will have a concern—for example, in coastal erosion and in the effect of tides. They have got,



in fact, a man who was honoured by Her Majesty the Queen for contributions that he made. He has developed a new science of water modelling that can, in fact, guide planners in doing harbour and river works. They have come in.

I encouraged them to form a local company which they have done, and they are working with our local professionals in developing the physical plan for Trinidad and Tobago, and I can assure you that the whole process involves our citizens in the various areas which are affected as far as possible.

We started by pulling all of these people together and decided that we would grapple with a vision for developing Trinidad and Tobago. The very first thing which was done in this exercise was to look at what we needed to preserve and conserve for all generations.

The plan shows the existing patterns of settlements throughout Trinidad and Tobago, but I will deal with Trinidad. It identifies a band of development where our people have already settled. Our people have settled by and large, in a T-pattern from the western peninsula taking up Port of Spain and going along what is now called the East-West Corridor up to Sangre Grande, and then the vertical stroke of the 'T' extends to Chaguanas, Couva and San Fernando. There are other areas that our people have settled into and which have shown a tendency for growth. We identified those areas and took a decision to organize land for settlement purposes around what we call growth-poles. In other words, we were not imposing a planning condition; we were responding to a planning reality. So we have identified the areas adjacent to those settlements that would be needed for improving the quality of life of the people in those areas. We have also identified the need for consolidating and expanding the transportation infrastructural network.

If, for example, the people who live in Mayaro, their future generations are committed to living in Mayaro we have got to make it more convenient for them to reach other parts of the country and, therefore, we have to provide a modern highway network that will make moving from Mayaro to San Fernando, to Port of Spain or to Toco, convenient and safe and that has to be done to strengthen conservation and management of areas of environmental significance.

I will point out the areas that have been defined in division study. It is all the areas of the Northern Range—every bit of it, stretching in the west from Chacachacare and going all the way to Toco in the east. That has been defined as an area that has to be conserved for all future generations. It means, therefore, that the development within that area has got to be extremely careful—the Caroni

*Sustainable Growth*  
[HON. J. HUMPHREY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

Swamp which I prefer to call the Caroni mangrove gardens. For anyone who has visited the bird sanctuary, I think the word “swamp” is not descriptive of what the Caroni Swamp is. Caroni is a magnificent garden of mangrove that supports an eco-system that is highly valuable for the people of this country and for those who would wish to visit us from time to time. That has to be preserved.

The Nariva Swamp is a unique eco-system. It is the only one in the world that is quite that type of system and that must be preserved. There are other wetlands that also must be preserved. The vision includes strengthening the city of Port of Spain as our national capital and as a Caribbean/South American hub. We see Port of Spain becoming an extremely important location for the entire Caribbean, and of course, for us, as citizens as a link between the Americas and Africa in terms of commercial activity, banking, trade, commerce and so forth.

I do not know if Senators are aware that the population of Port of Spain is now between 40,000 and 50,000. In the bad, old colonial days it was 120,000, but certain people thought it prudent to move the people away from Port of Spain to up the East-West Corridor and we now have, in fact, a linear city stretching as far as Arima in the east, and all that is Port of Spain now—because 200,000 people come in the morning and leave in the evening and they do not reside in the city. The city is left with a residential population of about 40,000 people. Those with means, however, were not moved into that political migratory pattern. Those with means left and went west, and they have established a very high quality of life for themselves west of Port of Spain. To make Port of Spain what it deserves to be today, we have got to re-introduce a residential population. But to give the city a dynamic, that population must have means.

The people who have remained mainly in east Port of Spain and places like Woodbrook and St. James—which are suburbs—are people who do not make a great contribution to the economic life of the city. They make a contribution, however, to the political lives of politicians so we have deliberately sought to upgrade the quality of the city by designing a waterfront project, a mega project. In fact, the project has been analyzed by economists and accountants and it has been found to be self-sustaining. It will generate a surplus and will improve the quality of life of the citizens of Port of Spain.

When I was Minister of Housing and Settlements I sought to improve the lives of the people who live in the Picton Hill area, east Port of Spain. A proper plan was done for squatters who were on National Housing Authority (NHA) lands and who had been paid compensation back in the 1970s, and who were allowed to live under certain conditions. We sought to improve those conditions by doing a

whole developmental plan for the area. That plan was resisted and opposed by the political representatives of those people. So they still live in conditions as squatters on NHA lands.

We also hope that one day, the consciousness of the political representatives will rise to a commitment for the improvement of the physical conditions of the people who vote for them.

### **3.05 p.m.**

The plan requires that we again attach the Gulf of Paria to the capital city. How many of you can, today, go down to the waterfront of Port of Spain and enjoy it? First of all, you have to go past a fence that has been erected by the Port Authority. You have to go into an area that is secured and, as a citizen, you have no right to go into that area. You have to get past security guards.

There was a time when the water lapped the north of Independence Square. If you look at the Cazabon reproductions in the lounge of this Parliament, you will see some illustrations that showed you what the waterfront was like back in those bad old colonial days. It was a waterfront that the citizens enjoyed. For example, the water lapped against the southern wall of the cathedral. You will see one of Cazabon's illustrations with a little boat on a beach right next to the cathedral. You will see a harbour that was quite beautiful. You will see beaches along what is now Wrightson Road—a place that was nicknamed “Corbeaux Town”. The people of Woodbrook said not to call it “Corbeaux Town”, call it Coboat'n. I am lucky to be old enough to remember those things. Most Senators would not remember those things.

In the past, the capital city of our country was beautiful and because the Gulf of Paria was on its southern boundary, the Northern Range on its northern boundary; because we had the lungs of the savannah and many parks established by colonial governors—some of them took the names of those governors—there was a beautiful living environment. Over the years we have not maintained it. We have, in fact, put politics first and development second.

Let us go on. Chaguaramas was seen as an extremely valuable resource, as a means of attracting international tourists and high-amenity businesses such as the high-technical businesses that have already gone into Chaguaramas. Areas were identified for maximizing their industrial and business potential at Point Lisas, Couva, at the area presently occupied by British Petroleum in south-east Trinidad. We identified 13 locations that could, with a bit of planning and guided development, improve the quality of life of persons who depended on them,

*Sustainable Growth*  
[HON. J. HUMPHREY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

starting at Wallerfield, the airport and the context area for the airport, Carlsen Field, La Brea, Point Fortin, the Mayaro Coast, Galeota, Sangre Grande, Rio Claro, Princes Town, Siparia and Toco. Those are the areas that are receiving detailed planning attention.

I will put Sen. Prof. Kenny's fears to rest by stating that the plans are in fact going for public consultation before they are brought to Parliament. The plans are brought to Parliament after the public has had an opportunity to voice their concerns and give their ideas.

Mr. President, let me share with this honourable Senate the policy guidelines that inform this exercise:

“To encourage a balanced (regional) development programme to ensure equal access to public services and amenities.”

For too long everybody has had to come to Port of Spain to be serviced, but these things will be decentralized in the plan.

“To manage the exploitation of natural resources in an environmentally sustainable manner. This applies in particular to the oil and gas sector.

“To safeguard and manage areas of environmental significance.”

When the Hon. Minister of the Environment makes his contribution—whether this afternoon or at some future date—he will indicate areas that have been identified and that will be protected as national parks.

“To facilitate adequate and affordable housing for all members of the community by reducing the land demand and supply imbalance.”

When you spoke of dealing with the world problem of creating jobs, the housing programme which enables the citizen to enjoy a piece of his country through tenure and to have a home—that, better than any other programme, will stimulate the kinds of jobs required and, at the same time, meet the needs of the people working in those jobs. There is a need for over 100,000 housing units at the present time. There is enough land and resources to provide it, but we are not doing it.

“To revitalise the agricultural sector through diversification of crops and land management whilst maintaining employment levels.”

Sen. Prof. Kenny, I am sure you are aware of the exercise, conducted by Dr. Ridwan Ali many years ago, on soils capability for the entire country. Are you

aware of that? The data are available to Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, we did tap those data in developing the land use plan for the country.

I will give way now to Sen. Montano.

**Sen. Montano:** I thank the Minister very much for giving way. The Minister is quoting from a document that I have not seen. Is he going to make it available to us? This debate will probably go into at least one other session and we would like to have a look at the document before the debate winds up. Let us know where we can find it, whether he is going to lay it on the table or make it generally available to us.

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** During the last term, I did lay all these documents in the Senate in the form of a CD-ROM. There were two documents: one was the national physical plan and concept, which was informed by the division, from which I am quoting. The other was a more detailed development plan for the Couva area. I know that there has been a change of Senators, so I would be very happy for the new Senators to get additional copies of the entire document.

The agricultural revitalization is being informed by Dr. Ridwan Ali's study, which the planners have. If you see the bibliography of references at the back of this, you will see that they have left nothing for granted. Every single study, every plan, every proposal that was ever done was pulled out from cupboards and shelves and dusted.

### **3.15 p.m.**

If I tell you that a transportation study was done back in the 1960s by Parker Parsons Brinkerhoff, and if you look at it today it is still valid; it is still telling you what the problems are and how to solve them, but it is covered in dust. You have to sweep the dust off the pages to be able to see the print.

“To provide clear direction and optimise the nation's potential for tourism through a range of incentives, including the establishment of Tourism Development Zones.”

Now, a tourism master plan has been completed and that, too, has informed the plan.

“To improve the physical planning process to provide sufficient land for planned urban development in appropriate locations.

To prepare a growth pole strategy to disperse urban development.

To enhance the role of the private sector in the provision of infrastructure.”

So these are the guiding policy considerations.

Now, what do we find as a Government? The Government's job, of course, is to manage the country and hope to achieve sustainable development and, at the same time, to improve the quality of life of all of the people. However, Mr. President, I have served, well, for six years in government—almost a year in the NAR government, five years in the last government and now I am coming into another term; and one would think that the Union Jack is still flying over Trinidad and Tobago. The level of bureaucratic obstacles that a minister of government has to experience could only have been brought into this country by those who wanted to exploit our wealth in their interest and not in ours. I am going to do my best—because I do not want another term in this business. I will serve, if God allows me life, for the next five years—to move the Union Jack and to raise our beautiful national flag so that Trinidad and Tobago can enjoy independence.

Mr. President, let me give you an example. I am sure Members of this Senate are not aware of this. How many of you remember Lock Joint? How many years ago was that? [*Interruption*] It was thirty-something years ago. Lock Joint was a company that was awarded a contract for laying the sewerage mains for the western peninsula and for building a facility in Beetham for processing the human faecal waste that was collected and transmitted through the mains. If I tell you that for 20 years the disposal plant has not functioned and that the massive ponds are sludged up and do not have the capacity so that none of the faecal waste of the whole western peninsula—the whole of the city of Port of Spain, the whole of Diego Martin—is being treated, and that 15 million gallons of raw sewage every single day is being washed across the surface of those ponds into the Caroni River, would you believe me? Sen. Prof. Kenny, would you believe me?

This country could have boasted two superlatives: the biggest roundabout in the whole world, the grand savannah, and the biggest septic tank in the whole world, the Caroni River mouth. For two miles the Caroni River has been a septic tank for the last 20 years. There was flooding just before Christmas. Why did we have flooding in the Caroni River basin? It is because that has not been maintained for perhaps 30 or 40 years. Now, it is true, we were there for five years and we started the process and, Mr. President, I can assure you, the things that we worked on did not flood. We did not have time or resources to go further east, but we are trying to do it now. My life has been shortened in the effort of trying to do it, but I will tell you what I have accomplished because the Prime Minister put me in charge of a committee of ministers to do emergency works.

We happened to be lucky that a Dutch firm, one of the biggest in the world, was here deepening the harbour to 12 metres and they had, for that job, very, very large equipment. They had a gigantic cutter suction dredger that was the main instrument that deepened the harbour and put that material south of the stadium in Invaders Bay and won 18 hectares of additional land. That is a first phase. They have additionally a very large barge designed for desilting rivers with a massive clam-shell and crane.

We mobilized those two pieces of equipment with the Dutch expertise and we cut a channel from the Gulf of Paria paralleling the channel for the harbour and for the NP basin because the engineers very meticulously worked those out. So we paralleled the channel and we have dredged a channel 120 feet wide by 20 feet deep. From the 20-foot depth in the Gulf of Paria, all the way to the mouth of the Caroni River, we have gone about 500 metres up the mouth with that piece of equipment. Then we moved that equipment out and put the smaller one and we have a 100-foot wide channel with four metres of depth going all the way to the Malick River, which is also called the Black River.

Now, in doing that, they straightened the mouth of the river and gave it tremendous capacity, but in straightening the mouth of the river, they went through the meanders and left islands of mangrove along the course. I have asked them to shape those as islands and to put basking areas for the caiman, which abounds in that area, so that people who wish to use that area for recreation will do so and have a great time observing the natural life; and that has been done. That is going to give the Caroni River a capacity low down for the flood waters, but it also gives that area of the river a means of flushing because the tidal fluctuation influences it. In fact, when the tide is rising the river flows up until it reaches the Black River where it meets the fresh water, and when the tide is lowering it flows out into the Gulf of Paria.

Now, it is going to take two years for WASA to provide the recycling plant for the sewage and they are right now trying to find the funding to do it. The experts have, in fact, done the designs and the Government has received a number of proposals. Now, what do we do for the next two years? We have opened up a beautiful recreation area that is going to give our visitors to Caroni two distinct tours. One is the Bird Sanctuary from what we call the Blue River—which is really not a river—and, of course, the Caroni River, to see the caiman and the bird life and so on. So the tour-boat operators will be able to offer those two separate tours, but for the next two years we are going to have a situation where the discharge is going to continue to go into the Caroni River, and that is not a pleasant thing.

*Sustainable Growth*  
[HON. J. HUMPHREY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

I have proposed—and I am hoping that we can accomplish it. I met with the WASA people and I have proposed that the area of bank that was created when we dredged the channel be put all to the northern side and at low tide you can actually see the sandbank. I have proposed that we build a bund around that and we plant mangrove in the bund, that we desludge the ponds and put that material within that bund and also put the discharge into that. It would be about 300 acres of new mangrove. We are fortunate that the mangrove seems to flourish on human waste. So I have proposed that we do that.

Now, if I can achieve that, it means that we will remove the effluent from the Caroni River. The Caroni River will then come back to life and it will be enjoyed by all those who will take the trouble to go and visit it. I have gone many, many times during the project and I want to assure you all, it is magnificent. It is another area where we can focus development.

Now, when we talk about sustainability, I believe now it will be sustainable. We are addressing all of the rivers that come into the Caroni River, those that drain the Northern Range, and we are opening them up. I could tell you, for example, the Arouca River which drains the Trincity housing areas, that was clogged with millions of bottles—plastic bottles—all tied up with bamboo. All of it is what people have done. They cut the bamboo in the river and people throw their bottles out on the road. When you have heavy rains, those bottles are picked up in the drains and taken eventually to the river.

The reason Trincity flooded is because a beaver dam had been created with millions of bottles and bamboo. What we did was, before we unclogged it we put a fishnet lower down across the river—I have photographs that I will show you—and we caught all the bottles. Once the net was up we sent men underneath the bridge to start to break the beaver dam. We have decided that all of our drainage works in future will be designed so that you can anticipate this carelessness of our people and not have those bottles invading what is now a very beautiful recreation area, eventually going into the Gulf of Paria and being blown into Chaguaramas. So the designs are being done for those trash racks. So that is one thing we did.

The professor talked about flooding. Now, the worst flooding we have had in my lifetime is what occurred before Christmas in the Caroni River basin. We have done a study and have determined that it should not happen. The reason it happened is because the Caroni River did not have the capacity for the amount of water that was draining into it. Where the banks were weak they were breached and, since the river swelled up to the top of the banks, where it was breached the



water poured over and flooded areas. If you drive down the Solomon Hochoy Highway and, just before you cross the Caroni bridge, look to your left, a pumping station has just been finished to pump all the water that accumulates in Bamboo No. 3. We are working on one in Bamboo No. 2 and in Bamboo No. 1 because those areas do not have natural drainage capability. They are below the level of the bank of the Caroni River, so we have installed a very, very high-capacity pumping system to ensure that those areas do not flood.

You will see that the St. Joseph River has been dredged and expanded. If you go further east you will see the Arouca River has been done. We are now going to connect to the Oropuna River so the new airport will not flood, because that was flooded in December. We have done the San Juan River. In fact, today you can actually come up the Caroni River and up the San Juan River all the way to the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway bridge. I think the last time you could have done that was 50 years ago. So these works are going on.

In the Chaguanas area, we solved that problem, and if I tell you why you had the problem, you would not believe that such a thing could happen. When the highway was designed, there were two crossings under the highway for the water east of that area. The Mamoral area is where most of the water, in fact, falls. That is the catchment for that area.

### **3.30 p.m.**

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

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** There were two rivers that had to cross the highway. The Caparo River that actually flows through Chaguanas and the Honda River which is further south. The development works that had been done since that highway was designed blocked the Honda River completely and no water was going under that crossing. In fact, that crossing had a greater capacity than the Caparo River. All we did was bifurcated the main river and created a new channel down the Honda and took that water to the sea. That is what we did. Of course, we had to build a couple of bridges for Caroni (1975) Limited to cross the river to take out their cane. That no longer floods.

A design has also been completed for the Mamoral dam which has to be built. We are going to hold the water at source in a dam, collecting the water in the main catchment area that causes the flooding in the first place—that is where the

*Sustainable Growth*  
[HON. J. HUMPHREY]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

water collects and flows down the river and causes the flooding. No longer will the people of that area ever have to worry once that dam is built.

Now we are going to do exactly the same thing for the rest of the country, but it takes a lot of money and it cannot be done overnight. The fact is that we made a start. Flooding is very destructive, as we all know. We saw people lose everything they had in the floods in December, and most of those people were in the constituency of St. Augustine. I should not have won the election in St. Augustine because the people should have condemned me and my Government for not doing something about flood abatement, but we had started it and, in fact, they were satisfied with what we had done. We need to continue it. Of course, that requires funds.

Now with respect to sustainable development, all of the things I have discussed with you and all of the things Sen. Prof. Kenny said are true, but we need the monetary allocations to address the problem. Do you know, Prof. Kenny, that Maracas Bay is polluted with sewage?

**Sen. Prof. Kenny:** Yes.

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** Mr. President, I am sorry I am not addressing the Senate through you, but I will catch myself. Maracas Bay is one of the most popular of our resorts and it is dangerous for us today to go and swim there because there is sewage coming down that main drain from the squatters who have built their little houses and have provided no sanitation whatsoever. So, everything goes into the drains and then down the main drain and into the sea. This is the sort of thing that we have got to deal with.

To me, these are the important things about living in Trinidad and Tobago. Politics should be a means towards achieving a shared objective, but today, I am afraid, what politics has done to our country is stall the development process, virtually. Sen. Prof. Kenny spoke about democracy. Democracy is not an easy system, as we all know, because we are trying to operate within it where 1.3 million people are counting on these meager numbers to represent them in the major decisions that have to be taken in making the laws that will govern the lives of all of the citizens. It is not an easy thing, but we have a Constitution and I believe that anyone who swears to take a seat in this honourable Senate, as we do in the other place, swears to uphold the Constitution and the law.

Mr. President, if we who are the lawmakers do not do it, how can we expect the citizens generally to do it? We have an impasse at the present time, and I sense, as I am sure other Members sense, that it is causing the country to move

slower and slower, and will possibly grind us to a halt if we do not do something about it. What is the reason for that? All of us are committed to the same objectives. The Constitution clearly states what the people of Trinidad and Tobago are committed to. Can we use the excuse of partisanship to totally ignore it?

Mr. President, I could almost cite the preamble to the Constitution verbatim, because I have argued the case for so long. The preamble is the manifesto that is written in the name of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and that is what all of us have sworn to uphold. But is the society reflecting that? I say no. Decidedly, no! While we struggle for power—and, Mr. President, what power? I know you are not supposed to be brought into the debate, but you act as President of the Republic from time to time. Can you share with us what those powers are? Quite frankly I have examined the process and I see no real powers.

If power does not result in something of tangible benefit, then it is really not power, it is the ability to prevent things from happening. It is negative, it is not positive. Power must be positive and it must be used to achieve the objectives that we have very clearly stated in our preamble. I hear some grumbling from the Front Bench. I know it is not one of the ladies because it is a very low octave. *[Laughter]*

Mr. President, the long and the short of it is that we are grappling with what we understand as the problems with development. We have got to link the financial resources with the material resources. We have got to achieve an improvement of the quality and the ability of our people so that they can be contributive to the process and we are doing that. With education, we are seeking, in fact, to improve our people. With human capital there is a very definite improvement.

We are going into the information technology age and we are working very hard to ensure that our citizens understand it and can, in fact, feel comfortable and that the country as a whole adopts high technology in its process.

**Sen. Prof. Kenny:** Mr. President, I must thank the Minister for giving way, but time is running short and I really would like to have some indication as to information which I communicated here that there is a proposal being considered

by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to establish a chemical plant manufacturing toluene di-isocyanate which is an extremely dangerous substance.

**Hon. J. Humphrey:** I am not aware of it. No such proposal has come to me as the Minister of Integrated Planning and Development for consideration. I asked my colleague and he is not aware of it. Perhaps, Sen. Prof. Kenny, you could advise us and follow us so we could see what it is all about. You need to tell us who are the investors and who they are negotiating with, because it is certainly not the Minister of the Environment or the Minister of Integrated Planning and Development. I am not aware of it, but I think we could both give you the assurance that if any such proposal is brought for the consideration of the Government, we will assemble those who are concerned, especially you.

Mr. President, the Government is trying. On the basis of what the United Nations formulated on sustainable development, I wrote it down as Sen. Prof. Kenny was giving it to us, "to ensure the needs of the present without compromising future generations in meeting their own needs". I think we are, in fact, on the right track. The work we are doing to lay developmental infrastructure in the country will serve this generation. Perhaps not me so much, because I am in the departure lounge. I would like to see some of it bear fruit, and I know Sen. John is working very hard to get that at the end of May. I have given her a pledge that I will help if she needs my help. That is a magnificent development project. Very well thought out.

For those of you who may have an interest in San Fernando, there is an exciting planning proposal for San Fernando which is emerging and, in fact, we have two private sector interests that have already come applying for developing the San Fernando waterfront. In the next few weeks I will have the conceptual plans for the San Fernando waterfront and it is being done in the context of a plan for the whole of San Fernando. I could describe it to you.

The idea is to maintain the shoreline as it stands, to complete the ferry port, to build marinas and beaches along the existing shoreline and then some distance away, to reclaim islands. The northernmost island which is close to Pointe-a-Pierre will be a new dock and an industrial site and three other islands would be for housing, for city expanse and it will all be linked with a causeway. So, that is the plan being developed for San Fernando.

It is going to make San Fernando a very beautiful place for those who choose to make it their home. It is going to give the space that will enable the development of what is now overdeveloped—a bit of breathing space.

We are looking at other areas for specific development and from Point Radix all the way down to Galeota is an area that is going to be developed. I have already received applications for 3,000 hotel rooms along that stretch. What does one do to accommodate 5,000 people at a time, who will come in at the airport? How will we get them from the airport to Mayaro? We have got to look at the road network and consider a mass transit system, as I know my colleague Sen. John is doing right now.

These things are happening. There will be another industrial estate in the south-east part of the country because Couva has expanded to a point where it has very little more space to accommodate the gas-based industries, so that will happen, and of course, we are going to very carefully maintain those areas that were described earlier.

I believe that the honourable Senate should be pleased with the initiatives that are being taken by this Government and instead of trying to bring it down, do the opposite. I mean, my lord, we won the election. [*Laughter*] We won with a clear majority, and in our system, the representation of the people comes by virtue of elections and sitting in these hallowed Chambers of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Instead of trying to bring the Government down in defiance of the will of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, try to do the opposite. Do exactly the opposite! Make your contribution in a positive way to the future development of Trinidad and Tobago.

I remember when our Prime Minister sent out an invitation for all who were interested to come and talk to him about a government of national unity. I think I remember that. I was not sleeping and dreaming, was I? I want to suggest to Members in the Front Benches, especially the one who leads them, to get an appointment with the hon. Prime Minister to discuss the possibility of a power sharing arrangement to the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago.

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

**3.45 p.m.**

**Mr. President:** I gave permission to the hon. Senator to read her contribution, this being her maiden contribution.

**Sen. Christine Kangaloo:** Mr. President, this Motion comes at a critical time in the history of this country's economic development. Since the mid-1980s, this country has adopted austerity and structural adjustment measures that are only

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. KANGALOO]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

now beginning to bear fruit, and for which this administration is trying to seek the credit. We know, however, that the position in which we find ourselves today is as a result of the commitment of previous administrations to structured and organized economic growth and recovery. [*Desk thumping*]

As a result of that commitment, the country is now poised to capitalize on the positive effects of structural adjustment. Thanks to the hard and difficult work of the past administrations the country is entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with an optimism not seen or felt since the days of the oil boom. The difference now is that the foundations for a more diversified and, consequently, more stable economy have been carefully laid by previous administrations. [*Desk thumping*]

It is, therefore, very timely that this Motion should come before this honourable Chamber at this stage of our country's development. It invites us to examine how, if at all, this Government plans to capitalize and follow through on the difficult work that has been done before, and to bring to realization the potential for sustained economic growth that now exists. What the people of Trinidad and Tobago require now is a government both capable of and committed to maintaining the direction of the past administrations, staying on course and ensuring that all of society reaps the benefits of our many years of sacrifice. The people of Trinidad and Tobago deserve nothing less. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, this Government in October of 1999, through its then Minister of Finance, delivered a budget statement entitled a *Blueprint for Human Development and Sustainable Growth*. That presentation was followed one year later by the publication by the Ministry of Finance in August 2000 of this Government's *Medium Term Policy Framework 2001—2003*.

Last Thursday at a reception for the diplomatic corps at Knowsley Building, Queen's Park West, both the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Enterprise Development, Foreign Affairs and Tourism repeated the policies and strategies outlined in these two publications. Mr. President, these publications, together with the public proclamation of these hon. Ministers, give us a guide, as it were, to this Government's plan with respect to ensuring sustainable growth in Trinidad and Tobago.

In both publications and in the course of the recent proclamation at Knowsley Building were littered references to diversification of the country's economic base: encouraging foreign investment; increasing employment; reducing inflation; building up foreign reserves; stabilizing the exchange rate; dealing with crime; improving the public health system; providing a more reliable supply of electricity and water; improving education to produce a workforce capable of

contributing to the economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; building more houses; reducing poverty and the cost of living.

Mr. President, we on this side speak of littered references to these stated policies. That is so because these policies lack any kind of identifiable or meaningful cohesion in relation to sustainable growth. [*Desk thumping*] These are policy catchwords that can be found scattered through any economic textbook published in the last 10 years with a chapter on government economic policy. They are as common and as repetitive as there are Third World governments and ministers to espouse them. It is as if this Government has chosen to collect from varied sources the latest buzzwords in economy planning, chosen “sustainable growth” as its theme and thrown together these policies to prop up this theme.

As the World Bank reports in its World Development Report 1999—2000, any credible, sustainable development agenda must be concerned with ensuring that future generations have the same capabilities to develop as the present generation. A development path is sustainable only if it ensures that the stock of overall capital asset in a country remains constant or increases over time. These assets include manufactured capital, such as machines and roads; human capital, such as knowledge and skills; social capital, such as relationships and institutions; and environmental capital, such as forests and coral reefs.

The environment is critical to any plan for sustainable growth, not just because of its effect on aesthetic or non-economic welfare, but also because of its impact on production over the long term. Environmental sustainability is, therefore, a critical component of sustainable development, because while the wealthy in our nation consume more resources overall, the poor tend to rely more heavily on the direct exploitation of national resources to eke out a living. If the poor have no access to non-environmental resources such as knowledge and skills, and so have limited capacity to adapt to the changing economy, they will have no choice but to continue to engage in unsustainable uses of our environmental resources. This will ultimately damage the environment and compromise our ability to realize sustainable growth over the long term.

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

Mr. Vice-President, the scattered references to the policies found in the so-called *Blueprint for Human Development and Sustainable Growth* of 1999 and the 2001—2003 *Medium Term Policy Framework* do little to demonstrate this administration’s understanding of the concept of sustainable development.

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. KANGALOO]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

Nowhere in any of these publications or in any of the recent ministerial proclamations is there any meaningful discussion as to how these individual policies have been linked and drawn together in a holistic effort to serve the stated central objective of sustainable growth.

This administration has taken aged and unconnected development concepts and thrown them together under the banner of sustainable growth. In so doing, all that they have accomplished is to have “poured old wine into new bottle”. [*Desk thumping*] None of the concepts that are being currently bandied about by this administration has been married in any systematic way to the clear objective of sustainable growth and the growth of the country’s overall capital stock.

For example, diversification of the economy without more does not ensure that the poor will have access to new and varied economic activities. An influx of foreign investment alone without the necessary safeguards of transparency and accountability, which have not exactly been this administration’s strong points— [*Desk thumping*—will not guarantee that mechanical capital is built up locally. Rather, it is likely to guarantee an outflow of funds and capital into the pockets of foreigners.

Mr. Vice-President, 60,000 new jobs, or whatever unsubstantiated number is pulled out of a hat prior to an election campaign, does not mean that environmental capital is being protected and built up. If these jobs are, as we on this side understand them to be, concentrated in environmentally vulnerable occupations such as tourism and tourism-related activities and petrochemical industries, it will, in fact, mean the opposite.

Reducing inflation, per se, does little or nothing to improve the social capital of a country if relationships between our major races are not improved, and institutions such as the Judiciary perceive themselves as being under constant attack from the Executive. [*Desk thumping*] Erecting a confusing structure of model or forced secondary education schools will do nothing to improve the nation’s human capital if the knowledge and skills being imparted to students are not made relevant to their specific needs and abilities. [*Desk thumping*]

The same can be said of this administration’s announced pursuits of higher foreign reserves, a more stable exchange rate and all the other policies mouthed in these two publications as well as elsewhere recently. Unless and until these policies are demonstrably pinned to the objective of maintaining or increasing the overall stock of the country’s capital assets, they are of little use to the national



policy of sustainable growth. Worse, Mr. Vice-President, they are potentially inimical to any such policy. As long as they stand independent of, and in most cases, internally opposed to each other, they are little more than buzzwords, and we must be careful to ensure that these so-called policies are not merely guises to cover an assault on our nation's hard-earned capital stocks with the aim only of lining a few pockets and leaving the national patrimony ravaged and exposed. [*Desk thumping*]

The administration has, therefore, yet to demonstrate that they truly understand what sustainable development is all about. In typical style they have floated a concept for the sake of political expediency, without taking the time to understand its requirements or the modalities of its implementation. They have not linked or integrated the policies to achieve an identifiably clear objective or, at least, any objective that is consistent with sustainable growth over the long term.

Apart from not having understood the conceptual building blocks of sustainable growth in the first place, this administration is further confusing the nation by saying that it is committed to sustainable growth on the one hand, yet acting in a manner calculated to undermine the growth on the other hand. Little wonder, therefore, that this Motion calls upon the Government to make a full statement to this Senate and to clarify its position in relation to its so-called objective of sustainable growth.

Mr. Vice-President, this country's policy on education is just one example of one thing being said in relation to sustainable growth and the opposite thing being done. On the one hand, this Government trumpets its commitment to sustainable growth through education, and claims to appreciate the importance of educating the population so as to make them more relevant to the market demands of a modern technological economy. As part of this policy, they have committed themselves to the so-called abolition of the Common Entrance Examination and also to the introduction of computer education in the nation's schools. They say that by doing these things they are creating an intelligent nation and are opening meaningful and relevant education to all. They say that they are thereby contributing to sustainable growth. Nothing could be further from reality.

The so-called abolition of the Common Entrance Examination has brought with it the introduction of so-called model or forced secondary education schools aimed at taking in students who would otherwise not have scored high enough in the Common Entrance Examination to pass for secondary schools. This administration studiously failed to involve the citizens of this country in planning

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. KANGALOO]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

the shift in national education policy. The teachers were never trained beforehand to cater to the special needs of these children, so in every one of our nation's model or forced secondary education schools we have the alarming spectacle of the standard secondary school syllabus being applied to students who we all know are not ready for that kind of education—[*Desk thumping*]*—and in some cases, who cannot even write their own names. That standard syllabus is being taught by teachers ill equipped and wholly untrained to cope with these challenges.*

This administration, by failing to involve the teaching fraternity in its shift in education policy, far from contributing to sustainable growth through education, has recklessly placed our nation's children on a path of frustration and antisocial behaviour over the long term. [*Desk thumping*] By placing children into secondary schools where there is no relevant curriculum, this administration has flown in the face of its very objective of sustainable growth through education and educating intellectually mobile population.

For the sake of political expediency and a few more years in office, they have satisfied the political needs of today, while criminally endangering the country's sustainable growth of the future. [*Desk thumping*]

**4.00 p.m.**

Mr. Vice-President, one of this country's founding fathers once said that the future of our country is found in the schoolbags of our nation's children. Already we are seeing from the reports daily in the press that that future is one of guns, knives and cutlasses, and lately of threats to the lives of teachers. With this Government's policy on sustainable growth through education, things would only get worse. [*Desk thumping*] For the result of a frustrated and miseducated school population will be early and more widespread school dropouts, an increasing burden and a whittling away of the efficacy of our social services to cope with these dispossessed children, and long-term social and economic fallout as these children grow into frustrated adults incapable of fitting meaningfully into an increasingly competitive society. So that is what this administration has done in its sphere of secondary school education. It has not done anything to advance sustainable growth, but really to roll back the advances that we, on this side, have made in quality education over the years. [*Desk thumping*]

The question of the introduction of computer education into schools is another example of this administration's inability to come to terms realistically with the requirements of sustainable growth through education. This administration has boasted quite recently about its commitment to an intelligent nation. Recently,

they have been introducing computers into schools ostensibly in an attempt to achieve just this, but again because of their failure to consult adequately and properly with the people on the ground, we now have a situation where these computers are gathering dust because they have neglected to put in place the necessary mechanisms for training of computer teachers, so our intelligent nation is on hold while the administration talks technology and sustainable growth.

Mr. Vice-President, thinking on development has shifted markedly in the past 40 years. There is now clearer evidence from both developing and industrialized countries that openness and competition are necessary ingredients in any sustainable development schematic. The proper role of Government is larger than merely standing in for markets if they fail to work well as was done last week in the case of Caroni (1975) Limited. It is in the defining and protecting of property rights, in the providing of effective legal, judicial and regulatory systems, the improving of the civil service and the protecting of the environment that the State forms the very core of sustainable development. [*Desk thumping*] As the World Bank stated in its *World Development Report, 1991*, political and civil liberties are not—contrary to a once popular view—inconsistent with economic growth.

Mr. Vice-President, in this context one notes with growing concern the sensitivities being expressed throughout the country with respect to the preservation of our political and civil liberties. The Judiciary, which is universally regarded as the cornerstone of democracy and as the protector of our political and civil liberties, has been expressing concern about what it perceives as attempts by this administration to exercise control over its functions in a manner which no previous administration has attempted before. [*Desk thumping*]

There has also been concern expressed from various quarters as to the integrity of our democratic system and the purity of our electoral list, concerns which are particularly acute during the tenure of this administration. During the tenure of this administration, the country, our neighbours and the whole world have witnessed an unseemly struggle between the Executive and the Head of State which cannot be doing any good to our hard-earned prospects for sustainable growth. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, we on this side call upon this administration to make a full statement as to how it plans to resolve these difficult problems in which it has found itself embroiled and which, thereafter, affect the prospects of sustainable growth. It will not be enough, if this administration is serious about sustainable growth, merely to defend its position, whether by way of legal opinions from England or elsewhere, so that positions harden and the crises thereafter persist and fester. They must, if they are truly committed to sustainable growth, see to it that

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. KANGALOO]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

these concerns are expeditiously resolved and that this dark cloud that is hanging over the nation is lifted. If they are truly serious about sustainable growth, they must rise above themselves and take us out of this sorry path. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, before we leave this field, allow us on this side to deprecate what we see as the very antithesis of sustainable growth, and that is the continued reliance on the intervention of outsiders to assist us in resolving our domestic difficulties. [*Desk thumping*] The time has long past when this country lacked the legal talent needed to advise itself on difficult and challenging matters of law. [*Desk thumping*] If this administration is serious about developing the country's human capital in a sustainable manner, then this shameless recourse to English constitutional experts must cease. We must demonstrate that we have confidence in ourselves because if we do not believe that, how can we expect to attract foreign investors and ask them to have confidence in us? Let us enjoy independence, Mr. Vice-President.

Mr. Vice-President, at Knowsley House last Thursday, this administration spoke of its commitment to ensuring the universal availability of the best quality health care to all Trinidadians and Tobagonians. In its *Medium Term Policy Framework 2001—2003*, this administration speaks of systematically implementing the National Health Service Plan.

In developing countries such as ours, infections and parasitic diseases account for almost one-half of all deaths. Any sustainable growth programme must be directed towards preventing death and illnesses over the medium and long term, but the focus of this Government's National Health Service Plan is on improving the systems and structures in our public health system which deal primarily with the curative as opposed to the preventative dimensions of health care. [*Desk thumping*]

This administration's focus in relation to health care is therefore unlocking the stable door after the horse has bolted. This cannot conduce to sustainable growth. Protection and preservation of our nation's human capital is the foundation of sustainable growth. In the case of human capital, sustainable growth can only be achieved if measures are taken beforehand to protect the wasting away of this precious resource.

Mr. Vice-President, the scourge of AIDS is a prime example of this. AIDS is a fatal disease which now affects over 30,000,000 adults worldwide according to the latest information from the World Health Organization. It is a human and economic disaster of staggering proportions. Infections strike adults in the prime

of life, plus up to one-third of all children are born to infected mothers. The per capita incidence of AIDS in Trinidad and Tobago is alarmingly high when compared to the figures for other developing and even industrialized countries. The epidemic is therefore likely to have a detectable and possibly substantial effect on per capita income for years to come. AIDS patients, fortunate enough to receive hospital care will occupy places thereby denied to others, many with conditions that would otherwise have been curable. They will require long hospital stays, expensive drugs and the time of skilled staff.

AIDS is clearly a problem that therefore requires urgent Government intervention at the preventative stage. It is of little use in the context of sustainable growth for this administration to commit itself to a national health policy that aims primarily at strengthening the capacity of our health institutions to treat AIDS and other terminal diseases after the fact. The focus must be on preventing them in the first place. Mr. Vice-President, in the context of sustainable growth, this administration's overall health policy has therefore missed the boat entirely.

It is universally acknowledged that a critical component of any plan towards sustainable growth is the focus on the protection and sustaining of human capital. This involves not only the physical aspect, but the mental and emotional aspect as well. Strategies for combating crime which ignore the aspect of domestic violence therefore amount to the betrayal of the people. Strategies regarding health which make no mention of the rising suicide rate among our young people are equally a betrayal of the population. [*Desk thumping*] You see it is one thing to build, at ten times the economic cost, an airport that is still not functional and tell the population that as a people and as a nation you believe they can fly, but for there to be sustainable growth, there must be a real commitment to a far more critical project, namely that of human, mental, emotional health and development. [*Desk thumping*]

A badly paved road can always be dug up and repaired afterwards—we all know this after December 11—but a rejected or badly hurt human being cannot be so easily repaired. At a time when the adverse psychological effects of urbanization are well researched and documented, any programme of sustainable growth must take into account the loneliness, despair and suicide which are side effects of technological and industrial expansion. This administration's silence on these aspects of our people's well-being, and their failure to address them in any meaningful way in any of their publications or proclamations is unforgivable.

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. KANGALOO]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

There needs to be established as an urgent imperative of any plan for sustainable growth, an adequate social safety net to address the emotional, psychological and spiritual wounding that is a side effect of economic expansion and urbanization. This administration has fixedly failed to address this and unless and until it does that—all of its talk about sustainable growth and all its so-called development policies—we will be no better off than the farmer who tried in vain to collect water with a sieve.

Mr. Vice-President, as we stated earlier, the environment is critical in any plan for sustainable growth. In 1995, we on this side brought into law the Environmental Management Act which was of course reenacted by the last Parliament. In its preamble, that Act referred to the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to developing a national strategy for sustainable development being the balance of economic growth with environmentally sound practices in order to enhance the quality of life and meet the needs of present and future generations.

The true record of this present administration's dedication to that policy can be seen in how deficient it has been in ensuring that critical aspects of that legislation have been followed. Up to today, the information that we have is that the crucial mechanism of the Environmental Impact Assessment, which is the cornerstone of the Environmental Management Authority's (EMA) preventative approach to environmental preservation is not in operation because of the failure of the previous Parliament to designate prohibited activities as required under the Act. The Act therefore remains an elaborate testimony to this administration's unfulfilled responsibilities towards sustainable growth. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Vice-President, this administration has equally been neglectful of its international responsibilities to the environment. To date, Trinidad and Tobago has not sought to designate any plants or animals requiring protection under Appendix 3 of the CITES Convention. In fact, the national environmental policy which was laid in the previous Parliament made absolutely no provision for the regulation of trade in flora and fauna.

Mr. Vice-President, in relation to the Convention on Wetlands, of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat, the Ramsar Convention, our understanding is that in the report of the Ramsar team following its visit to Trinidad and Tobago at the request of our administration in 1994, the recommendation was made that the EMA should act as the institution overseeing the management of wetlands in Trinidad and Tobago. The EMA, to our understanding has thus far taken no steps in this regard.

**4.15 p.m.**

In fact, it is significant to note that the EMA is not even represented on the wetlands committee. Again, the national environmental policy laid in the previous Parliament shows no linkage or cross-reference to wetlands policy.

In relation to our marine resources, there are over 4,000 fishermen registered in this country who are involved in artisan fishery, industrial and semi-industrial trawl fishery and recreational fishery. Some of the management issues that have been recognized in the conservation of our marine resources include overfishing, coastal pollution and habitat destruction.

At present the primary legislation which regulates fisheries in the territorial seas and rivers in Trinidad and Tobago is the Fisheries Act No. 39 of 1916 which falls under the authority of the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Resources. The authorized officers for the enforcement of the provisions of the Act are the Fisheries Officers. These officers are, however, neither equipped nor sufficient in number to be able to successfully enforce the provisions of this Act. Moreover, and what is especially shocking, in the context of this Government's stated commitment to sustainable growth, is that in all the wash of legislation with which Parliament has been flooded in the past five years, there has been no attempt to amend the Fisheries Act, now over 84 years old, and now clearly incapable of efficiently addressing the management concerns of the marine environment today.

This legislation could conceivably still be utilized, were it enhanced by timely and appropriate subsidiary legislation such as this administration has shown itself quite capable of, even in the wee hours of the morning. Their failure to do so, apart from the making of minor regulations under section 4 of that Act relating to trawling, therefore, suggests something less than a serious commitment to sustainable growth. Indeed, under this administration Trinidad and Tobago was for the first time, in May 1999, decertified by the USA, as a shrimp exporting country, for its failure to comply with the use of turtle-excluded devices on industrial and semi-industrial shrimp trawlers.

Clearly, this Government has not been "walking its talk" in relation to the preservation of the marine environment or, for that matter, in relation to anything else insofar as sustainable growth is concerned. There is, therefore, every need for this Government to make a full statement to this House on its plans to meet its

*Sustainable Growth*  
[SEN. KANGALOO]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

obligations, not only under international treaties and conventions for the protection of the environment, but in relation to its domestic arrangements as well.

Insofar as enforcement is concerned, a serious impediment to the implementation of relevant laws and conventions in this area is the lack of adequate human resources to enforce the laws. The Coast Guard is often approached to assist in this regard but they are also understaffed and lack adequate equipment for this purpose. Any Government that was truly serious about sustainable development would have addressed that situation by now.

We on this side, call upon the Government to treat seriously this issue of sustainable growth. Mouthings pious platitudes is not enough. There must be a real and demonstrable commitment to growth that is self-generating and self-sustaining. Citizens must be involved in planning the development of the country; radical changes in policy affecting our stocks of mechanical, environmental, social and human capital cannot be imposed from above, without the necessary consultation on the ground. If they are, they will suffer the same fate as so many of the policies that have been aimlessly pursued by this administration. The Government must take a serious position on the enforcement of planning decisions and on having this country meet its obligations to international treaties for protection of the environment. Smoke and mirror tactics might suffice insofar as present-day political expediency is concerned, but it is the future generations that will suffer unless the Government gets serious and allows its consciousness to rise and make good on its stated commitment to sustainable growth.

We call on Government to re-state fully its plans to sustain the economic growth for which past administrations have prepared the country. We remind them that if they refuse to state meaningful plans in that regard, or if, having stated them, they fail meaningfully to pursue them, and instead fritter away our hard-earned advances for short-term political ends, history will not absolve them. Mr. Vice-President, I thank you.

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I think this is a good time to consider an early tea break. We shall resume at 4.50 p.m.

**4.20 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**4.52 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**Sen. Mary King:** Mr. President, the sustainable growth involving the citizenry: A sustainable economy in, for example, a country like Trinidad and Tobago, even though we depend on the depletion of a non-renewable resource to



meet our current needs, can yet be considered sustainable. If part of the proceeds from this depletion of resources is used to invest in the development of another productive asset, then this criterion can be met.

In Trinidad and Tobago, an obvious asset is our human resource, our human capital, which can, for example, exploit the knowledge-based industries if handled efficiently and effectively. Basically, our present economic model has changed very little from the one in which foreign direct investment exploited the natural resources of this country, with the local business class providing only support and trading services for these industries and the necessities of life for sustenance of the population.

One change has been that the exploitation of the land and sunshine in tropical agriculture required very large amounts of cheap labour. Today, however, the plants in the energy sector are all capital-intensive and do not provide much employment in this country. Our system has suffered from the ups and downs of oil and commodity prices and one continues to hope for—even our national budget depends upon it—good oil price. However, with the advent of globalization and financial liberalization the local private sector has come under the direct onslaught of international competition—and I mean here on the local market shelves—and in the virtual marketplace offered by Internet access to global suppliers. Even the retail supply of food and other products is now becoming the domain of the international conglomerates such as PriceSmart, Wal Mart, et cetera.

Banking and insurance are no longer businesses which are protected by our national borders, yet our economy is sustainable even at this inefficient level; a level, one in which the highly competitive international suppliers will compete in the local marketplace for any foreign exchange which is earned from our royalties, taxes and low level service of labour to the energy sector. The economy will be sustained, we presume, by the usual 3 to 4 per cent growth rate in our GDP per annum; we will continue to have high internal debt, high poverty levels and double-digit real unemployment. This economic model will never drive us into the class of the developed nations since this will require a growth rate of at least 20 per cent per annum, if we want to look like a Singapore in the next 15 years.

Our economy in this present state is devoid of the innovation and the high productivity industries that are the hallmark of developed countries. Our economy

*Adjournment*  
[SEN. KING]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

is truncated and does not include the top end that provides for product and service development and research. But all our recent governments have recognized, and better still have spoken, about the need to diversify our economy into one that depends on knowledge, on a well-trained and educated human resource pool.

The provision of such a resource depends on a triad of things. These are centres of excellence to provide the competent human resource, the venture capital to incubate the small and medium-sized enterprises, known as the SMEs, and a local market to field-test our new products and services.

The current planned improvement of our primary and secondary school system, although necessary, will have a political impact, but no immediate effect upon the development of the required expertise. The present tertiary level institutions are not really about the generation of this innovative expertise; they are all about certification in support of the status quo. We have to produce our centres of excellence that will spawn these small and medium enterprises upon which our full development depends. But these enterprises need investment capital which is not forthcoming in spite of the now six-year-old Venture Capital Investment Programme, known locally as VCIP.

It is worth noting that the loan guarantee scheme provided by the small business investment corporation is not the kind of access to capital required by an SME or the small new developing enterprises.

**5.00 p.m.**

In a word, SMEs are high-risk ventures and our investor class is risk averse, so much so that tax incentives to them mean absolutely nothing. As I have said over and over, the building of the Point Lisas complex of plants was, indeed, such a high-risk venture, yet, we as a people, via the then Government, provided that high-risk capital. We also provided the planning and infrastructure via the Industrial Development Corporation, the National Energy Corporation and the National Gas Company that encouraged the upstream capital by foreign direct investment to produce the gas for our downstream plants.

These plants, as expected, lost money in their initial stages and were eventually sold—may I say here, untimely—by the time the production centre, Point Lisas, was established as a world player. In other words, they were sold just a bit too early. Perhaps, we should not have sold them at all and, unfortunately, the proceeds from these sales were not reinvested into new productive enterprises.

Our debt burden and the IMF World Bank conditionalities at that time did not allow it.

Mr. President, we have an opportunity today. Today's National Enterprises Limited (NEL) can be another manifestation of the venture capital idea brought to fruition if the proceeds from the Initial Public Offering (IPO) are made available as venture capital to support the high-risk SMEs under discussion.

Government, as a collector of our surpluses via taxes, as a borrower based on our economic performance, is the proven entity that can take, and has in the past taken, the financial risk in establishing such industries. It can be no less for the proposed new SMEs that we need if we are serious about development. Thus, our Government's role has to be larger than that of facilitator which the World Bank and the IMF recommended. It has to include the provision of this risk capital needed to reengineer our economy.

Lastly, Mr. President, the local market has to be encouraged via subsidies, legislation or whatever is needed to see that the SMEs are the preferred suppliers to both government and big businesses. The Government as a major purchaser of goods and services has to put a procurement system in place that also recognizes these SMEs as the preferred suppliers to government, that is, to ourselves. Until we understand that the problem may be common to many countries, the solution is actually in our own hands, and the economy would be sustained only at survival level, at best, if we do not do anything. Further, we have the past example of Point Lisas.

I would just like to refer to Sen. Prof. Kenny's question: Might not a faster economic growth lead to increased consumption of our resources? Well, yes, but this can only happen if we stay inside the box and refuse to develop our resources other than those of land, sun, sea and gas. It is time to focus on the human capital, on our brain rather than our brawn.

I thank you.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Gerald Yetming):** Mr. President, before moving the adjournment, I wish to inform Senators that at the next sitting of the Senate we would deal with the Plant Protection (Amdt.) Bill, 2001; the Equal Opportunity (Amdt.) Bill, 2001 and the Telecommunications Bill, 2001.

*Adjournment*  
[SEN. KING]

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, February 20, 2001 at 1.30 p.m.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.05 p.m.*