

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, September 11, 2001***SENATE***Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, Sen. The Hon. Ganace Ramdial is out of the country. His period of absence from Trinidad and Tobago is August 22 to September 12, 2001. I have also granted leave of absence to Sen. Joan Yuille-Williams for the period September 11—18, 2001.

**SENATORS' APPOINTMENT**

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

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

/s/ Arthur N. R Robinson  
President.

TO: DR. GEORGE DHANNY

WHEREAS Senator Ganace Ramdial is incapable of performing his functions as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE I, ARTHUR N.R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, GEORGE DHANNY, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Ganace Ramdial.

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 7<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2001.”

*Senators' Appointment*  
[MR. VICE-PRESIDENT]

*Tuesday, September 11, 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. KELVIN RAMNATH

WHEREAS Senator Gillian Lucky is incapable of performing her functions as a Senator by reason of her absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, KELVIN RAMNATH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Gillian Lucky.

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 7<sup>th</sup> day of September, 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. HOWARD CHIN LEE

WHEREAS Senator Joan Yuille-Williams is incapable of performing her functions as a Senator by reason of her absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARTHUR N.R. ROBINSON, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, 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, HOWARD CHIN LEE, to be

*Senators' Appointment*

*Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Joan Yuille-Williams.

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 7<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2001."

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*The following Senators took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law:*

*George Dhanny, Kelvin Ramnath, Howard Chin Lee*

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

**(Christine Kangaloo)**

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from Sen. Christine Kangaloo, dated August 8, 2001, which reads as follows:

"The Vice-President of the Senate  
Senator Wade Mark,  
Parliament,  
Red House,  
PORT OF SPAIN.

Dear Mr. Vice-President,

*Re: The Public Accounts Committee*

It is with regret that I hereby tender my resignation from the Public Accounts Committee with immediate effect.

Due to the demands of my current professional schedule which have increased in recent times, I shall be unable to devote to the Committee's business, the time and attention which it rightly deserves.

Thanking you for your kind consideration and wishing the Committee members the very best in their efforts.

Yours respectfully,  
/s/ Senator Christine C. Kangaloo"

**1.40 p.m.**

**CARRIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) DOMINICAN  
REPUBLIC FREE TRADE BILL**

A Bill to give effect to the Free Trade Agreement between the Caribbean Community and the Government of the Dominican Republic; brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister of Enterprise Development and Foreign Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Motion made*, That the next stage be taken later in the proceedings. [*Sen. The Hon. L. Gillette*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited Report and financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2001. [*The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Lindsay. Gillette)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1997. [*The Minister of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Gerald. Yetming)*]
3. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts of the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1998. (*Hon. G. Yetming*)
4. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the transactions pertaining to the project for enabling Trinidad and Tobago to prepare its First National Communication in response to its commitments to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change per Agreement TRI/98/G31/A/IG/99 between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 2000. (*Hon. G. Yetming*)
5. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the transactions pertaining to the Project for a National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan and Report to the CBD as per agreement TRI/97/G31/A/IG/99 between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 2000. (*Hon. G. Yetming*)

6. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the accounts and financial statements of the Naparima Bowl Board for the year ended September 30, 1999. (*Hon. G. Yetming*)
7. The Integrity in Public Life (Period for Furnishing of Information) Regulations, 2001. (*Hon. L. Gillette*)
8. The Integrity in Public Life (Prescribed Forms) Regulations, 2001. (*Hon. L. Gillette*)
9. Audited Financial Statements of Trinidad Nitrogen Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 2000. (*Hon. G. Yetming*)
10. Financial statements of Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 2000. (*Hon. G. Yetming*)
11. The Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Rules, 2001. (*Hon. L. Gillette*)

**ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION**

**Maximum Security Prison  
(Commissioning of)**

- 9. Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie** asked the Minister of National Security:

Could the hon. Minister tell this honourable House when the new maximum security prison will be fully commissioned, and when prisoners from the Port of Spain prison are expected to be transferred to the new maximum security prison at Golden Grove?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Lindsay Gillette):** Mr. Vice-President, with respect to Question No. 9, hon. Senators are advised that the maximum security prison, the construction of which began in 1992, but which was finally completed in 1996, remains partially occupied at this time because of a number of problems. The facility was intended to accommodate high risk inmates from all prisons, not only the Port of Spain facility. In 1998, the Ministry of National Security initiated occupation on a phased basis.

Its current population now stands at 800 inmates which is less than half the estimated capacity of 2,100. The most serious problems hampering the formal commissioning and total occupation of the maximum security prison include malfunctioning laundry equipment, a faulty sewerage treatment plant and inadequate staff.

*Oral Answer to Question*  
[SEN. THE HON. L. GILLETTE]

*Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

With regard to the malfunctioning laundry equipment, a contract for the refurbishment of the laundry in the sum of \$99,000 has been awarded and this project is being implemented. The sewerage treatment plant has been plagued by problems almost from the beginning of occupation of the maximum security prison, despite the fact that significant amounts of resources have been allocated to find solutions.

The current situation is that the Ministry of National Security has submitted a proposal for an allocation of \$2.5 million in the draft estimates of expenditure for refurbishment of the sewerage system through sole select tender by WASA.

With respect to the issue of staff shortage at the prison, in 1999, the prison administration estimated that a total of 1,071 officers were needed to adequately man the maximum security prison, when it is fully occupied because of its layout and the fact that it is almost entirely electronically controlled. At present, the Ministry of National Security is finalizing a document for consideration by Cabinet. It outlines plans for the overall staffing of the prison service, in particular, the special staffing needs of the maximum security prison.

The Ministry of National Security is working assiduously to eliminate the problems that have militated against the early commissioning and full occupation of the maximum security prison. In this regard, a task force was established recently within the ministry with a mandate to develop the plan for the full occupation of the facility.

Hon. Members would agree however, that it would be imprudent to consider full occupation of the facility until such time that these major problems are solved. At this time, because of the nature of the problems plaguing the facility, it is not possible to give a specific time frame for the full occupation of the maximum security prison.

#### **JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL**

Bill to prescribe the functions, duties and liabilities of Justices of the Peace and also to prescribe a code of conduct to which Justices of the Peace should adhere, [*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.  
[*Hon. L. Gillette*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**FAMILY COURT BILL**

Bill to vest exclusive jurisdiction for all family matters in a Court to be called a Family court and to make provision for matters connected therewith [*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. [*Hon. L. Gillette*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**LAND ACQUISITION**

**The Minister of Housing and Settlements (Hon Sadiq Baksh):** Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

That this House approve the decision of the President to formally acquire a parcel of land comprising 116.9 square metres situated on the eastern side of Store Bay Local Road near the entrance of Tropikist Hotel and Crown Point in the ward of Tobago and in the Parish of St. Patrick and said to belong or formerly belonged to the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission Credit Union.

The proposed acquisition which is at the request of the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly is for the purpose of road improvement. Proceedings for the acquisition of this said parcel was initiated on June 17, 1992, when a notice of intended acquisition was published under section 3 of the Land Acquisition Act and the authority to commence work under section 4 of the said Act was issued on June 6, 1994.

The then government was committed to the national physical development of Trinidad and Tobago. One aspect included the provision of an appropriate road network. The extension of Store Bay Road was one of the components of the comprehensive road improvement initiative which facilitated greater access to all areas within Tobago. The information on the said parcel of land can be found in survey plan filed in Book 1243, Folio 25 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old Post Office, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.

This matter is one that is a standard procedure and matters such as these have previously been brought to this honourable Senate. I would like to point out that since assuming the responsibility of Minister of Housing and Settlements and, after holding extensive discussions with Members on both sides of the House, especially Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie from Tobago, it became necessary for us to ensure that matters of this nature are handled expeditiously. I am happy to report today, that between the period January 1, 2001 to the present time, the Ministry of Housing and Settlements made payments to the equivalent of \$4.5 million in the

*Land Acquisition*  
[HON. S. BAKSH]

*Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

process of land acquisition. The ministry is committed to ensuring that we deal with the backlog. While we deal with it, we are committed to handling those matters that we handle now, expeditiously. The lands that we acquire today would not become the backlog of the past.

Our position is that we have made provisions after holding discussions with the Lands and Surveys Division, the agency responsible for land acquisition matters. We have estimated that for the year 2001—2002, we would need in the vicinity of \$20 million to deal with current land acquisitions and some of the backlog. It is also noteworthy to understand that many of these matters are held up because of poor title to a number of these lands that were acquired in the past. We are working under Project Home 2006, the new project of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements. We have instituted a process called HELP to help expedite the legal process or what we experience as a lengthy process. We are committed to ensuring that we provide within the ministry a dedicated section to deal with all land acquisition matters.

According to Appendix I, I also beg to move that this honourable Senate approve the decision of the President to formally acquire a parcel of land comprising 0.8450 hectare situated along the Uriah Butler Highway in the vicinity of Mount Hope in the ward of Tacarigua in the county of St. George, and said to be leased to the University of the West Indies.

**1.55p.m.**

The proposed acquisition, which is at the request of the former Minister of Public Utilities, is for the purpose of the construction of an electrical substation. The substation was completed in 1984 and expansion works were conducted in 1997. However, due to the urgency with the substation the notice of intended acquisition under section 3, as well as the authority to commence work under section 4 of the ordinance were bypassed. This took place in 1984. It is now necessary that the final step be taken to formally acquire the subject parcel, so that the substation can be legally considered as an asset of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission. Information on the parcel of land can be found in Survey Plan 1243, filed in Folio 15 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old Post Office, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.

Mr. Vice-President, this procedure again, for the acquisition of lands for public purposes is standard, and as such, matters have previously been brought before this honourable House. On this occasion, we are indeed honoured to continue the process and I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*



**Sen. Danny Montano:** Mr. Vice-President, before I begin, I would crave your indulgence Sir, to express on behalf of Senators on this side and on behalf of the leadership of my party and the members of my party, the deepest sympathy to the Government, and the people of the United States, and to the families and friends of victims in the tragedy that occurred this morning at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania with the four crashes of the aeroplanes.

At a time like this, words are difficult to find, but the words that come to mind are the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, when he said: “This is a day of infamy” and it is. I cannot think of another time in history—other than, perhaps, that day in December when Pearl Harbour was attacked—of a tragedy that is so barbaric, so severe, so unthinkable, so outrageous against innocent civilians. It is not just an act of war as may be claimed by the terrorists groups who initiated it. It is an act of vandalism, terrorism, and murder on a scale I think that the world has never before thought of, and against civilians who had absolutely no anticipation that they were involved even in a war zone.

Mr. Vice-President, it makes it difficult therefore, on a day like this when we as a nation, being close to the United States and having long historical ties with the government and the people of the United States, to come to this Chamber and to be as adversarial as we might otherwise be in the spirit of democracy. And while we will not shirk from our duties we will, with your leave, and with the understanding of all the colleagues in this Senate and the citizens of the country, confine our arguments only to the issues in front of us. We consider it somewhat improper to be as adversarial as we might otherwise be. Therefore, I think that many of the contributions—I have had words on this matter with the Leader of Government Business and he has expressed precisely the same sentiments to me, and it is in this spirit that we would keep our arguments as simple as we can for the afternoon.

That being said, I will move on to the substance of the issue in front of us. We on this side certainly have no difficulty with the acquisition of land. It is, of course, something that must take place in the furtherance of the development of the national economy. Our concern specifically, as always, deals with the payments to the owners of the land.

I am advised that sometime ago earlier this year, the hon. Minister met with members of the Tobago House of Assembly and residents of our sister island to discuss this issue because serious concerns had been expressed that significant parcels of land had been acquired, or notices had been sent out for the acquisition

*Land Acquisition*  
[SEN. MONTANO]

*Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

of land. Nothing had transpired, money had not been paid. The information that I got from the Tobago House of Assembly is that nothing has been done, and while the Minister has said that \$4.5 million had been spent this year, he did not say that was specific to the island of Tobago. I have assumed that is for the entire country and, therefore, what leads me to some concern is if, in fact, the Government has paid \$4.5 million this year in the eight and a half months that have passed, what is the value of land that they have actually acquired? In other words, is the liability increasing or decreasing? He has not given us any indication, and I think there is concern about that.

With particular regard to Tobago, Tobago is ripe for development and I understand also that there are several parcels of land on the north eastern corner of the airport where notices had been sent out some six or seven years ago and, in fact, nothing has transpired. The difficulty there is that the owners of the property can do nothing with the property once the notices have been sent out. It is one thing when it has come through this process and the land has been formally acquired, but at the time when a simple notice has been sent out, it effectively extinguishes the rights of the owners to any ordinary use of the property and the length of time that it takes, of course, is a time value to money which must be recognized.

I can fully appreciate the comments of the hon. Minister in terms of the title and so forth. But I think that one of the things that we must look at very seriously is some form of interim payments that must be made either into a trust account or something of the sort so that at least the moneys can be invested or earn interest. I think that would be fair under the circumstances. As I indicated, the opportunity is ripe at this moment for some “picong” and to talk about the golden arches and so forth, but I would not go down that road today. I consider it out of place at this moment, given the losses, and I would hope that there are no Members of this Senate who would have any friends or family that might have been injured in the tragedy, and I just do not want to go down that road this afternoon.

With those few words, I thank you very much.

**Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny:** Mr. Vice-President, I would also crave your indulgence to at least refer to this tragedy in the United States. The real tragedy is not the United States but the tragedy of humanity and humans not understanding each other.

I sympathize with the families who have lost—and I am sure there is going to be a “Trini” in it, as has happened in the past. I think that we ought to remember

Mailai in Vietnam. There were children there who were shot and killed. We ought to remember the B52s in Hanoi when a disgraced president—he was disgraced later—decided he was going to teach them a lesson and a B52 dropped 15 tons of bombs. Of course, we do not see it on television; we see the trade centre and the tragedy is the humanity and the inability of people to sit down rationally and hear other points of view.

The subject of land acquisition is a very touchy issue, and it is always particularly touchy when an individual loses a little piece of land, which is the only thing that a person has for the greater good. I am reminded by the words of the hon. Minister, when he was in another capacity, when he spoke to the people of Toco and he said the preferred developer for Toco is the people of Toco.

The people of Toco have communicated with me their concerns at announcements made by the Government at the higher sources in Sangre Grande, which stated that the whole issue of the Toco Ferry Port is going to be reopened. It seems to me rather unfortunate that you have a government going to the people and backing down and rescinding an acquisition, and then a few months after, one hears statements being made that the Toco Ferry Port is going to be reopened, which means more land acquisition. I remind the Senate that the original acquisition at Toco and the notice served on June 28, 2000 was for the acquisition of 17 hectares. This was not point-so-many hectares or a few hundred square metres. This is 17 hectares of a community and it was going to be taken, not for a broad public purpose like straightening a road or a power station. This was going to be taken from the citizens of Toco for the purpose of a ferry port which is going to be a private ferry port.

I am just taking this opportunity while we are on the subject of land acquisition—obviously, we support the acquisition for these purposes—to remind the Senate that the lesson that we ought to learn from the tragedy of today in the United States is that we really ought to start listening to what other people are saying. Listen to what the people of Toco are saying because the tragedy of New York is conflicts of two systems that do not seem to be able to understand the other side.

Clearly, I have come to the conclusion that the Government has not understood what the people of Toco have said about their village or their town. I remind the Senate that the people of Toco have, in fact, come up with an alternative development plan, and the hon. Minister is fully aware of this plan. There is a fair amount of merit in the plan and the people are actually being told

through public meetings, that they face the same crisis that they were facing a year ago.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**2.10 p.m.:**

**Sen. Michael Als:** Mr. Vice-President, I want, on our side, to express similar concerns with respect to those events which have taken place in the United States of America this morning. I think there is no relevance whatsoever to the point of the Toco port.

The announcements made by the hon. Prime Minister indicated very categorically that the State had made a fumble; had, in fact, not adequately handled the issue of the development of the proposed port in Toco. On the issue of the port as well as that of development altogether in the eastern region, including the County of St. David, from Matura to Matelot, he indicated that a developmental conference involving all the CDOs and the non-governmental organizations would take place in Toco. They would discuss development as a whole and would look at the proposals that had been submitted for the port, and the people would determine, by their own participation, whether any form of development of that type could, should or would take place in Toco.

So that what the hon. Senator said has no relevance because Cabinet itself rescinded the public declaration for that same acquisition of 17 hectares of land in Toco based on concerns that the people had expressed. There is no intent on the Government's part to reactivate that proposal or that acquisition. There is no relevance whatsoever in respect of that, in addition to which, the Prime Minister also indicated that there would be a significant conference to be held in Sangre Grande in October to deal with the development of the eastern region. He also identified very clearly that the precious concerns of the people on the question of the environment will be one of the principal areas of discussion to see where development itself could be tied in with environmental concerns.

When, therefore, the Senator rises in this honourable Senate to make a link between this particular proposal and Toco, I daresay he is not on any grounds whatsoever.

**Sen. Martin Daly:** Mr. Vice-President, I hope that I will not be trespassing on any non-aggression pact that has been made between the respective leaders. I do not know we can have a debate on which we can always all agree.

I thought it was a bit premature of any of us to identify with the tragic events overseas today. For one thing, we do not know who is responsible. Not so long

ago, there was a terrorist act in which everyone automatically looked in a certain direction only to have to look somewhere else closer to home. I think we need to be a little careful.

Since the matter has come up, I of course, would not, unless I offend the Standing Orders, be denied my two cents worth. I simply say that as horrible as it is, with destruction of significant parts of the city in circumstances of terrorism, on the evidence so far available, whether it is external or internal terrorism, it does not matter for the purposes of the point which I make. The destruction of large parts of the city is simply the logical consequence of political warfare taken too far.

I do not know whether it would be necessary to develop my theme, but certainly if there is one group of people who hold a political view operating from one hotel base speaking to people who hold a different political view operating from some other base, we do in fact have the seeds—if they carry it too far—of some form of destruction. I daresay buildings will not fall—Trinidadians are too sensible for that—but I think as people issue inflammatory statements, they would do well to reflect. It would not happen in Trinidad and Tobago—we are too sensible—but we would do well to reflect on the consequences of political warfare taken too far.

I am sorry that my colleague's remarks about Toco have been adjudged irrelevant by Sen. Als. Of course, as far as I know, we are bending the political rules every day. As far as I know, the sole and exclusive judge of relevance is the Chair, so his opinion that my colleague's remarks were irrelevant is itself not relevant. However, that is life when we have changing political dynamics. It is like when we have the changing political dynamics of a split Government and the Opposition is saying, "Please, we do not want elections."

Anyway, let us not get excited today. It is not a good day to get excited. I think it is important, on the occasion of each land acquisition motion, to remind governments—all of whom are insensitive to the need for prompt compensation and to the trauma that is suffered by the individual land owner—when they exercise their right of eminent public and take away someone's lands, they must treat with it sensitively.

Another point is emerging in the unseemly grabs that are taking place for a variety of things, that there are many acquisitions that are taking place in Trinidad and Tobago today that have even further-reaching consequences for the quality of our life. They do not come to us as compulsory acquisition motions that ought to be treated equally sensitively.

*Land Acquisition*  
[SEN. DALY]

*Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

It was interesting to hear Sen. Als say that some sort of conference on the development of the environment would take place in Sangre Grande. As he would know only too well, Sangre Grande points in two directions—one in the direction of Toco and one in the direction of Mayaro. It may point elsewhere, but I am equally concerned that there has been an acquisition in one of the most beautiful and sensitive areas of Trinidad and Tobago, namely the Manzanilla coastline, in which there have been widely reported and admitted conflicts of interest between the developers where one hat is developers who are also members of the National Planning Commission.

I think it is important on the occasion of this compulsory acquisition, to remind the Government to account for its stewardship in relation to all lands in Trinidad and Tobago. I emphasize that these conflicts of interest between sitting members of the National Planning Commission and the developers in Mayaro have been publicized in the media and have been admitted and swept aside. I nearly said dribbled aside because today, conflicts of interest make me think of soccer. They have been swept aside by the same people who are purporting to do public service on the National Planning Commission.

I simply rise to say that I support the Motion. We have been told what it is for, but on every occasion we must remind the Government that acquisition of land, particularly in a small island nation, is a sensitive matter and should be the subject of sensitive treatment.

I regret that apparently the non-aggression pact extends to “picong” because had it not extended to “picong”, I would have been forced to comment on the fact that the Minister presenting this Motion for land acquisition seems to be pursuing a career in land acquisition outside as well as inside the Parliament, apparently to the distress of some of his colleagues. Regrettably, I cannot develop that point any further. It is somewhat ironic that the Minister should be so high profile in land acquisition outside of the Parliament at a time when he has to present a simple motion inside the Parliament. Regrettably, we have a non-aggression pact.

With those few words, Mr. Vice-President, I thank you for the liberty you have shown.

**Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie:** Mr. Vice-President, I support the Motion and I want to let the hon. Minister know that we recognize the efforts he is making to have discussions with the people of Tobago who have been affected by the delay in having their claims settled. I have been chatting with some of the people affected and they seem very heartened by the fact that the hon. Minister has been

having discussions with the relevant agencies in Tobago, assisting to speed up the process. Because of the positive type of action that we are seeing, I also join in trying to keep the discussion very calm. I think enough has been said and forcefully enough, although in few words, by Senators Daly and Kenny.

I must let the hon. Minister know that we are heartened by what is happening. We know he will go a little faster with the structure he has set up—Helping to Expedite the Lengthy Process (HELP)—in the ministry. We are pleased about two things. At one time we thought that some people were jumping the queue; that some people whose lands were utilized very recently were being considered for payment before people whose lands were taken a long time ago. We are heartened to see that you are trying to do both—bringing those who are suffering some relief and, at the same time, not stopping the process of compensating those who are coming on stream now.

We are going to look at you very closely still, but we are heartened by the efforts that you are making. We look forward, the next time you come here, to your telling us not just that \$4 million had been given to people for their lands, but that 20 more persons were compensated. One could give a lot of money to just one person, but tell us how many persons have been compensated since last you spoke. I thank you.

**The Minister of Housing and Settlements (Hon. Sadiq Baksh):** Mr. Vice-President, I, too, join the rest of the Senators in expressing my own horror at the events of today in the United States. I agree to some extent that we need to look closer at our actions generally and that we should proceed with activities that heal, instead of activities that hurt.

Mr. Vice-President, out of the \$4.5 million, a number of persons in Tobago did in fact receive compensation. On two particular matters, one in Auchenskeoch Road by Mr. Elder, and Mr. David Scott received their payment—80 per cent of the acquisition and the other is still to come. Of the \$4.5 million, I am aware of a number of people in Tobago receiving payment, but I can give you only two names offhand. I assure you that on the next occasion I will walk with the list of those persons who have received compensation. For the year 2001, those who will receive compensation from the backlog from the year 2000—2001 and, in fact, we are working on the process in terms of developing the entire amount owed to people in Trinidad and Tobago that is in dispute at this time. I point out that not all the matters are as a result of the problems within the Government or within the ministry. Many problems arise because of the situation with title and ownership.

**Sen. Dumas:** Mr. Minister, can you tell us anything at all about the possibility of acquisition and straightening out that block around the airport in which the THA has a critical interest in ensuring that the airport terminal can be effected?

**2.25 p.m.**

**Hon. S. Baksh:** Mr. Vice-President, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago supports the move for the acquisition of lands surrounding the airport so as to facilitate development there that took place a long time ago. In fact, that is one of the main reasons people were not allowed to construct additional houses; so as to reduce the cost of acquisition. As I said, that took place over two decades ago and continues like that until a firm decision is taken. I am sure the Government would do so shortly in consultation with, obviously, the Tobago House of Assembly.

Mr. Vice-President, I am also extremely pleased to report to this honourable Senate that specifically emanating from discussions held with the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly, effective last Monday, we did, in fact, assign a planning officer from the Tobago House of Assembly to the Ministry of Housing and Settlements in Trinidad, and he will, in fact, expedite all matters dealing with Tobago. That is, in fact, the Government's positive move towards ensuring that these matters are handled expeditiously, and as such, they will have someone within the ministry expediting those matters. This is all part of HELP, Helping to Expedite the Legal aspects or the Process.

In addition to that, Mr. Vice-President, we are also placing in key approval agencies—the Environmental Management Agency, Town and Country Planning, WASA, T&TEC and other areas—employees from the Ministry of Housing and Settlements so as to speed up the bottlenecks in those areas. It is part of a wide range of measures that will be initiated this year to ensure that we handle the matters that you rightfully said, need to be more sensitive. I assure you that the ministry and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will do everything to be as sensitive as possible to the acquisition of lands and all other matters.

Mr. Vice-President, in keeping with the trend today, I am extremely pleased for the support given. I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That this House approve the decision of the President to acquire the lands described in Appendix I for the public purposes specified.



## APPENDIX

<p><b>1.</b> The parcel of land containing 116.9 square metres more or less, situate on the eastern side of Store Bay Local Road in the ward of Tobago in the parish of St. Patrick and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 26<sup>th</sup> October, 1999 and filed in his office is required for a public purpose:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>SCHEDULE</u></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 116.9 square metres more or less, situate on the eastern side of Store Bay Local Road in the ward of Tobago in the parish of St. Patrick and said to belong now or formerly to TATECO Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited.</p> <p>A parcel is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1243, folio 25 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old Post Office, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain.</p>	Road Improvement
<p><b>2.</b> A parcel of land comprising 0.8450 of a hectare more or less, situate along the Uriah Butler Highway in the vicinity of Mt. Hope in the ward of Tacarigua in the county of St. George and described in the Schedule and coloured raw sienna on a plan of survey signed by the Director of Surveys and dated 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1999 and filed in his office is required for a public purpose.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>SCHEDULE</u></p> <p>A parcel of land comprising 9.8450 of a hectare more or less situate along the Uriah Butler Highway in the vicinity of Mt. Hope in the ward of Tacarigua in the county of St. George and said to be leased to the University of the West Indies.</p>	Construction of an electrical sub-station by the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission

**APPENDIX**

<p>This parcel is more particularly shown coloured raw sienna on a survey plan filed in book 1243, folio 15 in the vault of the Lands and Surveys Division, Old Post Office, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain</p>	
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**CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
FREE TRADE BILL**

**The Minister of Enterprise Development and Foreign Affairs (Hon. Mervyn Assam):** Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to give effect to the Free Trade Agreement between the Caribbean Community and the Government of the Dominican Republic, be now read a second time.

Mr. Vice-President, it is a bit of cruel irony that I stand here this afternoon in this honourable Senate to pilot a Bill to expand trade, while in the United States, in the city of New York, people have conspired to destroy a symbol of trade; the World Trade Center. It is more than a cruel irony because not only are we talking about a building, we are talking about the lives of so many persons.

*[Cellular phone rings]*

**Mr. Vice-President:** Hon. Senators, Members of Parliament, members in the public gallery, if your cellular phones are on, could you kindly switch them off. We do not want to get a repeat of what just occurred.

Hon. Minister, could you continue please?

**Hon. M. Assam:** Mr. Vice-President, there are so many people's lives that have been destroyed or maimed as a consequence of recklessness and terrorism, whether it was internally or externally orchestrated. Mr. Vice-President, as you are well aware, the centrepiece of this Government's foreign economic policy is the creation of market access for both our traditional and non-traditional goods and services. This has been a policy initiated not only by this Government but also by previous governments. This Government, however, has accelerated the pace of transformation and diversification of the economy and has increased the pace of negotiating market access, through free trade agreements, with either single countries or groups of countries.

As you are well aware, Mr. Vice-President, we have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Colombia; we have a partial scope with Venezuela; we have CARIBCAN with Canada and we have the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) which was really enhanced as the World Trade 2000 Bill with the United States; we have a trade cooperation agreement with the Republic of Cuba; we have just signed a partial scope with the Federative Republic of Brazil; we are negotiating an FTA with Costa Rica and we are also pursuing one with Mexico and, of course, we have already concluded one with the Dominican Republic, hence the reason I am here this afternoon to have it ratified before this honourable House. So the purpose of this Bill is to give effect to the FTA between Caricom and the Dominican Republic.

This Bill outlines the legislation that will govern the Free Trade Agreement that was signed between the Caribbean Community and the Dominican Republic in August, 1998. This agreement is complemented by an accompanying protocol signed on April 28, 2000, which provides the details of the trade agreement contained in this voluminous document.

Under the agreement, the parties are required to complete legislative and administrative arrangements for the Agreement to enter into force. The proposed legislation before this honourable House is therefore intended to give full legal effect to the agreement in respect of Trinidad and Tobago because each party to this agreement has to go to its respective Parliament or legislative assembly to do what I am doing today.

You would recall, Mr. Vice-President, the trade policy for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, a document which was laid in this honourable House, 1997—2001 states:

“Efforts will be directed toward expanding market share for non traditional products in traditional markets, particularly where preferential market access arrangements are available...”

The free trade agreement will provide preferential market access opportunities to a market of approximately 8.7 million persons. You would understand the scope of this, since the total population, the total market of Caricom is just slightly over five million and we are now having an opportunity for preferential market access to one country which has a population of 8.7 million, but which, in fact, has a larger population when you consider that they have an annual tourism inflow of over two million per year, so that if you add 8.7 million to that; the market is even larger.

The Dominican Republic's economy has been one of the fastest growing economies in the hemisphere for the past few years, with average growth rates of 6 to 7 per cent annually. In fact, there are three economies that seem to be doing quite well over the last several years with steady growth rates: the Dominican Republic, Australia, China and Trinidad and Tobago.

In addition, rapid tourism growth has been fuelling internal demand, as I mentioned earlier, inclusive of the demand for imported products. Tourism arrivals for the Dominican Republic were estimated at 2.5 million in the year 2000. Mr. Vice-President, let me give you some idea of the kind of trading pattern that has been evident between Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic over the last several years, and to indicate to you the importance and significance of this agreement. Now that we have preferential access, you could imagine the increase in trade flows that will take place between these two countries.

In 1997, Sir, Trinidad and Tobago imported \$27.8 million from the Dominican Republic and exported \$315.7 million, a trade surplus of \$287.9 million. In 1998, Trinidad and Tobago imported from the Dominican Republic \$38.2 million and exported to the Dominican Republic \$390.3 million, a trade surplus of \$352.1 million. In 1999, Trinidad and Tobago imported from the Dominican Republic \$20.5 million and exported to the Dominican Republic \$388.9 million, a trade surplus of \$368.4 million. In 2000, I would anticipate the signing of this agreement and its coming into effect, it was almost like the jackpot year, Mr. Vice-President, where Trinidad and Tobago imported \$22.8 million from the Dominican Republic but exported to the Dominican Republic \$679.2 million, a surplus of \$656.4 million.

Mr. Vice-President, I think that it is only important and fair for us to commend the private sector in this country for the extraordinary work they have done since the liberalization process has taken place and since the threat of globalization hovers around us; in the kinds of inroads they have made, not only in the Dominion Republic but into even more developed economies.

We must also commend the Government for the facilitative environment and the legislative arrangements, and the incentivization that they have given to the private sector to make all of this possible. Therefore, we continue to have this partnership between the private sector and the public sector allowing the private sector to be the engine of growth and development.

Mr. Vice-President, over the period 1997—2000 Trinidad and Tobago enjoyed a favourable balance of trade, in fact, an overwhelming favourable balance of trade with the Dominican Republic. This favourable balance increased

by some 128 per cent, from \$287.9 million in 1997 to \$656.4 million in the year 2000.

With respect to exports, Trinidad and Tobago exports increased from \$315.7 million in 1997 to \$390.3 million in 1998, or by 23 per cent. In 1999, there was a slight decrease of \$1.4 million but as I said, in 2000, it increased from \$388.9 million to \$679.2 million. This is an increase of 75 per cent from 1999—2000, a phenomenal growth, Mr. Vice-President. The converse has already indicated that imports from the Dominican Republic, although remaining steady, did not show any kind of dramatic increase and it hovered around the \$20.5 million reaching the highest of \$38.2 million in 1998.

In addition to the demonstrated importance in the bilateral relationship in respect of trade in goods between Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic, it is to be noted that the Dominican Republic is increasing in importance as a strategic partner at the Caricom level in issues and problems being addressed in other international fora. Examples of such interaction, in which Trinidad and Tobago is an active participant, include:—

- CARIFORUM/ACP-EU
- Association of Caribbean States
- Free Trade Area of the Americas
- World Trade Organization

Mr. Vice-President, there are several important elements of this FTA. The article on trade and goods allows the parties to implement a programme to liberalize trade in goods. This, in effect, means that both parties have agreed to allow products from the territories of the other party to enter their territory under preferential market access arrangements.

#### **2.40 p.m.**

There is also an article on investment, and you know how much importance we are placing on investments, particularly, Mr. Vice-President, in the non-oil sector. We have been rather fortunate in attracting a lot of investments in the energy sector, particularly in the gas sector, but we are now trying to increase our efforts and place more emphasis on the development of the non-oil sector, simply because in the energy sector you have large investments but very small job creation, but in the non-oil sector you have much smaller investments with the generation of employment increased at higher levels. So the article on investment

allows the parties to agree to promote and facilitate investments within the free trade area.

There is also provision for deeper economic cooperation. So under the article related to economic cooperation, the parties have agreed to develop broad cooperation programmes in such areas as agriculture, industry, construction and tourism, and you know how dynamic the tourism industry is. Therefore, we can learn quite a bit from the Dominican Republic in this regard, although I suspect that our Minister of Tourism will want to have a kind of a different approach to the development of our own tourism as opposed to their own open-market system.

Telecommunications is another area that is extremely important for the diversification of our economy and for driving down rates that will facilitate business expansion and the decrease in transactional costs. As you are aware, Mr. Vice-President, we recently passed a Telecommunications Bill and I hope before long we will be seeing the benefits of this piece of legislation as competition is increased and service providers enter into the economy, creating a whole new industry with new high-paying jobs and the kinds of synergies and backward and forward linkages that would be made possible as a result.

Transport, banking and insurance—and you know we have a very mature and dynamic insurance sector in this country. Capital markets, which we are trying to develop—and we are going to start with the capital markets of the Caribbean in order to ensure that these emerging markets develop with a certain amount of dynamism. I am very heartened to see that our own stock market, Mr. Vice-President, is becoming increasingly bullish day by day. Professional services and of course science and technology—and as you are aware, this Government has embarked on a very ambitious and very important project called the Science Innovation and Technology Park in Wallerfield. We have a thousand acres there. We have already cleared over 200. The infrastructure will soon be placed in that 200-acre area—water, electricity, sewerage, telecommunication and roads—and we will be erecting two buildings, a technology centre and an incubation centre.

Already we have excited the imagination of foreign direct investment and local investment into that park so that it will be linked to the vision of the Minister of Transport. She is going to develop an aviation city from Piarco into Wallerfield and there will be a direct link from the University of the West Indies into Wallerfield creating one of the greatest industrial centres in this country. [*Desk thumping*] It also encourages joint production of goods and collaboration in the provision of services to exploit market opportunities in third states.

As you are fully aware, Mr. Vice-President, the provision of services is becoming even more important than manufactured goods. That is why we are moving into the science, technology and innovation park, because we are going to create knowledge-based industries that would create a new type of economy and will require new types of skills. That is why the dollar for dollar programme is so critical, whereby we will now have a higher percentage of the high school graduate cohort moving from secondary into tertiary education, enabling us to achieve the vision of 2010 that Trinidad and Tobago could be a First World country and that our standard of living will be second to Canada and the United States in this hemisphere. That is the kind of vision that we have and we are using a number of strategies, including market access, to achieve these objectives.

There is also provision, Mr. Vice-President, for private sector activities because, as I mentioned, the private sector must be the engine of growth and government must step back and be just the facilitators, providing the right type of environment, the legislative framework and the incentives for it to happen. So this article governing private sector activities allows the promotion of the active participation of the private sector towards the fulfilment of the objectives of the agreement.

Already in this regard, the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association has seized the initiative and has scheduled a trade mission for the period of September 10—16, 2001 to promote interaction between the private sector of Trinidad and Tobago and that of the Dominican Republic. In fact, they have about 38 manufacturers/exporters in the Dominican Republic as of today, and I regret very much that I am not there with them. I was supposed to have led that delegation, Mr. Vice-President, but I thought it was more important for me to go to the other place and pass the Bill last Friday and then come to this honourable Senate today to pass this Bill. I had intended to travel tomorrow but these supervening events of great catastrophe that have now overtaken the United States make it almost impossible for me to make a prudent decision to leave Trinidad and Tobago and to go outside.

There is also provision for a double taxation agreement, Mr. Vice-President, because this is very critical. There are two things that are very critical when you are doing business with another country, that is, a double taxation agreement and an investment promotion protection agreement. They are twins that are critical for the success of business in either country, and most countries enter into these agreements in order to protect the business sector. So the article on double taxation makes provisions for the parties to work towards the adoption of

agreements to prevent and to avoid double taxation between the member states of Caricom and the Dominican Republic, because certainly no company wants to pay taxes twice—in their country and the country in which they are investing.

Equally important, Mr. Vice-President, is the provision for the settlement of disputes. In fact, if you drive down Richmond Street next to the Sacred Heart church, you would see a sign on the refurbished building called the Caribbean Court of Justice—very impressive. This is one of Trinidad and Tobago's contributions to the development of the single market and economy of Caricom, although some people think that we do not play an important role. That Caribbean Court of Justice, one of its functions will be to settle disputes with respect to any violation or infractions of the treaty and the now constituted nine protocols which had been agreed to by the heads sometime ago. Therefore, it is important to have an article on the dispute settlement and it provides a mechanism for the parties to settle disputes arising from the agreement.

There are some other areas that are worth mentioning, Mr. Vice-President. In addition to the areas identified above, the agreement covers related specialized disciplines which are either complementary to or facilitate trade in goods. These disciplines include trade in services, and I pointed out earlier the importance of trade in services. Government procurement—critical—and, of course, intellectual property rights, and Trinidad and Tobago is putting itself in a state of readiness in all of these areas. In fact, for a small country, we have some of the most advanced modern intellectual rights legislation on the books compared to any developed country in the world, Mr. Vice-President, and we are working with the various working groups in the free trade area of the Americas.

In fact, we are taking a lead role. Our Director of Contracts, Ms. Merlyn Marciano, is taking a lead role in that procurement group, and of course we are also very active in trade in services. These areas are to be further negotiated in the near future as the Caricom region is in the process of determining regimes which will allow favourable interaction with the rest of the world in these areas and, of course, it would become increasingly important as we move to the next ministerial round in Doha, Qatar of the World Trade Organization. When these regimes are completed, parties will conclude such negotiations.

There is also the provision for the administration of the agreement, Mr. Vice-President. The agreement is to be administered by a joint council comprising representation from the member states of Caricom and the Dominican Republic. The key functions of this council will be: to supervise the implementation and administration of the agreement; to resolve any disputes which may arise from



interpretation, execution of, or non-compliance with or application of the agreement; to establish and delegate responsibilities to ad hoc or standing committees, working groups and expert groups established under the agreement, and to keep the agreement under periodic review, evaluate the functioning of the agreement and recommend measures which it considers suitable to better achieve the desired objectives.

I would like now to deal with some of the main provisions of the Bill, Mr. Vice-President. Clause 3 is fundamental to the agreement because it provides for the establishment of the free trade area. This clause allows both the Dominican Republic and the member states of Caricom to trade in goods on a duty-free basis as provided for in the agreement. Specifically, the agreement provides for immediate duty-free entry for products. As I mentioned, if you were exporting in 2000 over \$680 million when duties were being imposed, you could imagine how competitive we will become as soon as this agreement comes into force, because there will be immediate duty-free entry for products leaving the member states of Caricom and entering into the Dominican Republic. Of course, the reciprocal arrangement is going to take place and for products leaving the Dominican Republic and entering into the more developed countries of Caricom.

In other words, the LDCs, which are the less developed countries, are not at all going to be affected by any of these arrangements in terms of any disadvantageous arrangement that may arise out of the signing of this agreement. They do not have to remove their duties for fear that there may be an onslaught of exports from the Dominican Republic into their countries, weakening their very small, infant industries. However, by the same token, they can export to the Dominican Republic with the same kind of advantages of the MDCs, that is, duty-free preferential market access. This is one of the safeguards that we negotiated for the LDCs in this particular agreement, Mr. Vice-President.

The category of products is the majority of products in the classification, and the arrangement is varied only in the following incidences outlined in the undermentioned lists, and that is the list of products to which a most favoured nation or normal rate of duty will be applied. The list of products to which phased reduction of the MFN, which is the most favoured nation, rate of duty to zero will be applied. There is a time line for the phased reduction, a selected list of agricultural products to be afforded special treatment in keeping with the seasonal nature of such products because, as you know, Mr. Vice-President, the Dominican Republic has a more advanced agricultural industry than any of the Caricom countries and therefore we had to be very careful in negotiating this section.

Clause 4, Mr. Vice-President, empowers the Minister, that is the minister responsible for trade, to make by Order such provisions as he may consider necessary or expedient to give effect to any other article of the agreement, except 4. Instead of Article 4, the exception in this law should refer to Article 5 which pertains to the conditions, that is the duty-free, the phased reduction of the MFN rate of duty or the MFN rate of duty under which the goods under the agreement are traded. It is to be noted that the list of goods under the different schedules ought not to be amended unilaterally by parties to agreement. Such amendments ought only to be made as a consequence of an agreement between the parties, otherwise they will constitute a breach, and this is where the joint council will come in and the dispute settlement mechanism will trigger. Recognizing further that there are free trade issues other than trade in goods in the agreement, which are still to be developed and which may require the Minister to give effect to those provisions, it was felt that the Minister should be empowered to give effect to other aspects of the agreement but subject to parliamentary approval.

In clause 5, Mr. Vice-President, the Minister is given the authority to amend the Schedule where the parties to the agreement agree to amend any aspect of the agreement or their constituent documents. In clause 6, the President is given the power to make regulations in respect of the trade in goods. This clause facilitates the enactment of the annexe on trade in goods, which is attached to the agreement. This will give authorities on the conditions under which goods are to be traded between Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic, and of course the other Caricom countries will be similarly treated. The clause goes further to empower the Minister to make regulations in respect of the free trade issues other than trade in goods. Having regard once again to the fact that the other free trade issues are still to be developed, whereas the trade in goods aspects are already outlined in the agreement, it was felt that regulations made by the Minister in respect of the other free trade issues should be subject, as I said earlier, to parliamentary approval.

Mr. Vice-President, it may be said that this was signed in 1999 and the protocol in 2000, why are we coming in 2001, September, to have it ratified at the Parliament? The main reason for that is, when the protocol was signed in 2000 an election took place in the Dominican Republic and the government changed. Therefore, we had to wait on the new national assembly of the Dominican Republic to ratify the agreement and it was only ratified earlier this year, I believe in April of 2001. When that happened, and we knew that it was not going to be readily passed in this House because of the legislative agenda, we took it upon ourselves, Mr. Vice-President, to go to Cabinet.

I went to the Cabinet with an interim arrangement and in June of this year the Cabinet agreed to authorize the invoking of the exercise of presidential discretion under section 9 of the Customs Act, Chap. 78:01, to facilitate the commencement of trade, prior to the full implementation of the agreement. So we put an administrative arrangement, an interim arrangement, in place in June of this year until now when we are giving full legal effect to this trade treaty. Mr. Vice-President, I wish to indicate that this agreement is the first full-fledged trade agreement to be negotiated between Caricom and an external country.

I would also like to indicate that Caricom has included, as I said earlier, a trade and economic cooperation agreement with Cuba, and I intend to bring the legislation to this House as soon as possible to ratify this particular trade and economic cooperation agreement with the Republic of Cuba. Passage of this Bill will allow Trinidad and Tobago to fulfil its responsibility as a member of Caricom, through the completion of its internal procedures, which are required to be put in place before the free trade agreement can properly and legally be entered into in force, notwithstanding the administrative arrangement that we put in as an interim basis.

So that, Mr. Vice-President, I hope Senators opposite would support this very important piece of legislation because, as I said earlier, it gives Trinidad and Tobago an opportunity to market its goods and services in a country whose population is more than that of all Caricom in aggregate. It also gives our manufacturers/exporters an opportunity to engage in all the economies of scale and economies of scope that they have been attempting to develop over the several years that we have begun to liberalize the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, Mr. Vice-President, we should give all the encouragement and incentive to our manufacturers whose investments are dedicated to the creation of employment, to the creation of foreign exchange and to the creation of sustainable growth of development of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Vice-President, I thank you and I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question proposed.*

**3.00 p.m.**

**Sen. Rennie Dumas:** Mr. Vice-President, thank you for your indulgence. I was just a while ago noting that sometimes with the best of intentions, there are some people who make it very difficult for you not to remember that there are differences.

I think I want to take the opportunity to remind the Senate that the major irony we may have is that, in fact, the Minister was carrying on apace with the task that

has been set for him by a number of people, both past and presently engaged in the business of expanding the trade of Trinidad and Tobago and its relationships with the rest of the Caribbean and the growing arrangements we have with the nations that surround us. It is from that perspective that we can find a lot to agree with, but we need to remind the Senate that there are a few philosophical differences that we should be able to state.

We have a situation in which this Bill before us, in its preamble, lays out clearly what we seek to achieve. The integration, the joint presence, the question of dynamic and balance trade and investment relations, accurate guidelines to do all that, and the full participation of all economic agents. I listened to the mood and the boast in which this thing was presented, and I asked myself, do we forget that everything that happens anywhere is almost immediately available to everyone who has an interest and who is willing to listen and learn?

If I was from the Dominican Republic and I was sitting, or able to hear the Minister, I would wonder if this is really my friend and if it is really someone with whom I should be in an arrangement and in agreement with, because what we are, in fact doing, is boasting that we are outstripping these people and the mood might come that maybe we are taking advantage of them. That view may very well have been projected by our Minister, and I am sure that is not what the nation would like to have projected when we speak to, and or about our trading relations with the rest of the people with whom we are involved.

On behalf of this side of the Senate, I, too, would like to extend my congratulations to the economic agents, the various enterprises that have formed the basis and have created the means by which the trade in non-oil activity in the country has grown and continues to grow at a pace that we could have only imagined a few years ago.

One can only hope, though, that we must remind the rest of the Senate, as we remind the rest of the nation, that we acknowledge that there are other issues involved in trade. That trade, its benefits, and the distribution of those benefits, are of significant concern to very large numbers of our population and very active organizations across the world. Trinidad and Tobago also shares in some of the concerns. Organizations in Trinidad and Tobago also share in some of the concerns as to who benefits from the trading relationships and the agreements.

Mr. Vice-President, in terms of the structure of the agreement, in terms of the structure of the Bill, there is very little we can argue with. The application of the duty-free zone, the application of the concepts of the most favoured nation, rate of duty. The question that the Order is done in the name of the people of Trinidad

and Tobago by the President, or in the name of the President through all processes. The fact that the Minister has administrative rights and clear subservience to the Parliament in making those Orders by seeking affirmation is difficult to query.

Where we would have the problem though, is in what is the scope and what is the likelihood of this agreement serving its full potential for all the people and all the parties that are established. And in the main, we speak to the future, because this agreement has been reached, and the Minister has indicated though, that there is continuous negotiation in some of the areas. We would like to advise that we look closely at some of the things we do with these people, with Caricom, and with some of the future agreements we are going to put in order.

I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the agreement under objectives. Number two; I think it is on page 10. The concept of the harmonization of technical, sanitary and phytosanitary procedures as a small country acknowledging, as the Minister just did, that we are developing the whole question of these procedures. We need to look very closely at this area. Why? The phytosanitary procedures are an Achilles heel for agricultural and other primary producers.

I am not satisfied, as I do not believe anyone who has looked at the procedures we now follow, at the provisions we have made, and particularly the absence of provisions that we have made, could be satisfied that we know what we are talking about in this area, or that we are taking any action in this area. Unfortunately, this is one area in which the Government has to take the lead. The private sector can only use the facilities that the Government provides. The facilities are absent at the airport. The facilities are absent at the port. The facilities are absent at our fish landing ports. The facilities are absent from all our markets. We need to look at the facilities. We need to look at the procedure.

There is a very large number of our population involved in activity which requires us to meet the international standards in this area. We are not providing for them. The private sector does not have an interest in providing these things. The interest in these areas—these are low profit, slow growing areas. We need to look at that, but this is the area in which we have the largest distribution to the various parts of our population, and this is the area that must be funded and led by Government activity. It is not being done.

When we look further at three, the question of the progressive liberalization of trade in services, I want to confess that I do not know what that means. I do not

know what it means because it is not defined properly. It is not closely defined. It is not laid out. It is not set out. What it means for us? I will tell you what people in my community believe it could mean. We have four large hotels surrounding my village and when we did not have airlift a few weeks ago, the providers of services from my area sent most of the people home. Regulation of how the services are provided, and the question of how it impacts on the people and the rate at which those impacts come are a matter of concern for these communities.

I am suggesting that if we feel we are mighty and powerful where trade in goods is concerned, then we need to look carefully at what we mean by this liberalization in trading services. In this area we have a very soft belly, despite the boast that we have the best this and the best that and the most active that. We have a soft belly in the trading services. We have to be careful how we take the lead in this process, and what it means for our people.

You know, I heard the Minister say, the state must step back and let private sector go to the front and run the thing, and so on. I could not help but chuckle. Let us face reality. In this country, everything is government. Even the people who think they work in the private sector, they do it and are enabled in doing it, because the State takes the lead, or has taken the lead, or has indicated it will take the lead in some direction. That is reality.

What we have to face is that we have a task to do when people say to you that there is a redistributive function coming out of the trade and out of our economic activities. Let us pay some heed to that and do not just toss the philosophical words around. We have to make what we feel reality sometimes before we can impose it on the people. We have to face the reality, take into account the roles that the State must play in development, and play those roles before we go on to this next step in this neoclassical economy that we want to talk about and the philosophy we want to pursue. It is not real now and it is not likely to be real in the very near future. In Trinidad and Tobago, the State is the lead sector.

One understands the protection for investment, but I hear, and I have heard and I continue to hear from the bowels of the leadership of the Government that the role played by capital, the role played by seeking to protect investment, is questionable. I do not want to get into the words, but I want to argue that it is also clear that as we protect capital, we have to pay regard to the other owners of other factors of production. We have to pay regard to the larger number of people who own those other factors; the larger number of people whose lives are made marginal if capital does the wrong thing. Therefore, as we protect and seek to protect investment, we need to deal with that.

The Minister is clear. The competitiveness of Trinidad and Tobago is strong. And we must strengthen and continue to strengthen that competitiveness. It would have been pleasant to have some evaluation of the national competitive capacity of our firms, the international competitiveness of our sectors, and even the competitiveness of our firms as they exist in the various parts of our country; because it is no longer good enough to say "our competitiveness" if we do not know the distribution of that across the various parts of our economy, and where we are building this competitiveness and the capacity to earn money and, therefore, keep parts of our country alive.

While you have hegemony among nations, you also have hegemony within nations, and we have to be very careful that as we distribute our activity and as we fund our activity and support our activity as Government, we reach all our people.

I read Article 6. I am sure that I have not met many people from the Dominican Republic. I am also sure that I am not in very close relations with many people from the Dominican Republic. I am sure that holds for maybe 90 per cent of the population. I am looking and seeing the promotion and development of cooperative activities, and I am asking, where or why is there an absence to a commitment to more knowledge of the peoples in social and cultural areas. I do not know if we plan to do anything about that, but I see nothing here.

Mr. Vice-President, I look at the Joint Council and the role of the Joint Council. I would hope that when the Minister is wrapping up, he will tell us a little more about the composition of the council, because the council does not have an identity here in those terms. If he could tell us a little more as to how it comes together and who comprises this council from the Caricom area, and how it comes about, it could be useful.

As a point of reference, I would just say that we keep hearing about the regional negotiating mechanism and so on. Things like that. How do they come about? Who funds them? How do they go about? We do not know, but one would have thought that if they were going to set this council up, the financing and so on, we could know something about that, because I think when we pass this, we are also passing a commitment to financing and maintenance of that council and its activities.

And then in Article 2(v), is this where we are taking care of our social and cultural entities; where we give the council the requirement to consult with intergovernmental and non-governmental entities?

**3.20 p.m.**

Mr. Vice-President, in the agreement I was wondering what is the reference to intellectual property rights issues; why does this reference seem very settled, as if

the World Trade Organization (WTO) has already settled these things and about the Minister's references to other authority. I do not know that these are issues that are settled at the WTO level. Therefore, when we refer, are we referring to changing standards and saying that these changing, evolving, contentious standards, as happen at WTO are, in fact, the ones that we are suggesting, as this agreement suggests, that they are settled? I think that we are not being very—and the best word I want to use there is “clear”.

When I look at the committees, I suggest that you have left out three committees that would be crucial to the continuation of the relationship. There is a social context that is missing; there is a cultural context that is missing from Article IV and an educational context. I think that you would want to look at those.

The Minister is clear that this population to which we are adhering ourselves through this—the articles of this agreement are very large. I think, if my geography holds good, there are quite a number of millions of people. I think it would be, at least, five times the population of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, the question of how you resolve disputes comes up. The Minister talks about the exceptions. I think there is an issue of believability, because I suggest that we have a responsibility also.

When the Minister leads our delegation to talk with these people, the agreement is a promise that we are making to regional and other governments. Then the legislation is a continuation of that promise. It promises that certain activities would occur; certain projects and programmes would happen and you would have a long-term commitment and relationship.

I have a question. I read Article VII and I wonder if anyone can believe us if we say we have a commitment to the provisions there. What are the exceptions that you would not put in the agreement? If you join with me and read them—and I would take them as read—from A—F, we would have to ask ourselves whether Article V, page 25 at the bottom, No. 1, A—F and No. 3, have any value for us. I would not go any further with that.

I would just say to you, Mr. Vice-President, from here on in, when this legislation is passed, this matter becomes one of administration. We have to ensure that we can, in fact, hold up our commitment to these people on the one hand and our commitment to the population of Trinidad and Tobago on the other hand. It is not the mere passing of legislation that does that, it is a number of things.



I would not mention what the negatives are, but I suggest that what we want to have, as a long-term effect, is that the people who administer this in our name can do so with the moral authority; with the credibility; with the population support required, based on the two above; that we can do it with certainty that the population would be satisfied—all of the population, all of the interests; that we can do it with a certain measure of political authority that derives only from legitimacy of the previous and, finally, that we can do so knowing that Trinidad and Tobago is acting under a leadership which demonstrates an essential organizational coherence. If that is not there, the Bill would have been a waste of our time.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. Rev. Daniel Teelucksingh:** Mr. Vice-President, permit me to associate with this honourable Senate and the people of Trinidad and Tobago in identifying with the sadness and grief of the Government and people of the United States of America, on the loss of so many civilian lives and the destruction of so much property in this morning's tragedy.

This morning's disaster in the USA underscores the political restlessness that threatens global peace and challenges almost every citadel of democracy. Trinidadians are often described as copycats, mimic men, but let us not ever support any kind of terrorism or violence at home or abroad.

I remember some weeks ago, on all the front pages of the media, there were photographs and reports of police seizures of sophisticated weaponry and military equipment such as used by terrorists; seizures made right here in Trinidad and Tobago. When we think about the disaster, we saw those horrible pictures this morning on television; of the crumbling of buildings possibly swallowing so many innocent people, we need to appeal, over and over, to all and sundry across this nation, to learn from the North American experience, to choose the way of peaceful resolution to political and social problems. It is always the better one. In even the smallest country we need to talk about that. It is a lesson for all the world to learn.

Regarding the Caricom Dominican Republic Free Trade Bill, Mr. Vice-President, Trinidad and Tobago has been a faithful and committed member, a pioneer member of Caricom. We all know that and, as such, we would meet our legislative obligation and this afternoon give approval to effect the agreement to the free trade association with the Dominican Republic. In fact, as we heard from the hon. Minister, this association started a long time ago.

We are very much aware that the formation of trading blocs is a global phenomenon. The expansion of the Caricom trading community to incorporate our neighbours, such as the Dominican Republic, will certainly be a positive step in improving and expanding relations among all nations of the Caribbean chain. This indisputable move to foster better relations with the non-English speaking Caribbean nations, deserves every support and commendation. I want to congratulate the hon. Minister and the Government for the work they have been doing, and these have all been listed, in the promotion and expansion of trade in the Caricom bloc and outside this trading bloc.

I have much more to say and I think all of us would have much more to say on the virtue of economic, cultural and political interfacing within the Caribbean family, but I personally believe that there would be another time for that. I say this because, today, the man-in-the-street and some of us in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, are not so much interested in the affairs of the Dominican Republic or Caricom unless we can sort out the affairs of the Trinidad and Tobago Republic.

Of paramount importance today—as it has been for some time now—is the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and no other republic. The Dominican Republic can wait; this is how I see it. And do not remind me—I know it already—to be my brother's keeper, because if we cannot be our brother's keeper at home, in some minuscule party group quarrel, then I fear for the way we would keep our distant brother, the Dominican Republic.

Do not remind me to love my neighbour as myself, for I would be sorry for the Dominican Republic, since in simple relations we treat each other as enemies and we are experts in propagating hate and bitterness and we are losing the art of cooperation, understanding and goodwill toward one another. This is how I feel.

The Bill, in my opinion, is badly timed as far as our history is concerned; it does not deserve such precedence as today. Before Government can deal with legislation to engender closer relations with other nations, the Government must first set its house in order. That is important. I feel very strongly about my views today.

Last week coming from Durban in South Africa at the United Nations' conference were reports of the struggles of the international community to find solutions to one of the world's most serious problems, Sir, against racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance. Let me remind you that one of the achievements of that conference was an apology from the European Union—and I

hope other nations will join—for their part in slavery, colonialism and the exploitation of other peoples. Nations that once ruled other nations now wonder how they could apologize, if ever they can find the words to apologize for hurting their subject peoples.

I want to use the principle of apology, an international principle or a principle of which we have been reminded internationally at the Durban conference. I want to use that principle and hasten to add that the ruling party in Trinidad and Tobago needs to apologize to the people of our land for the stress and anxiety inflicted upon them within recent months; apologize for the bacchanal in a deadly power struggle overshadowed by incessant cries of corruption allegations and a heightened sense of insecurity at the level of governance. How can we extend the hand of friendship to the Dominican Republic when we cannot demonstrate clearly that we know how it is to be friends right here among our own peoples?

Mr. Vice-President, you know this, after the nation went through a very demanding and most serious general election, we were bombarded—this is how I feel, along with so many others—by silly and infantile noises of in-fighting in club-like party elections, almost to the virtual neglect of state affairs. You play your own harp, while our glorious Republic burns and the arrogance of carrying on with business-as-usual, as if the people of this nation do not matter.

We need to be reminded at all times that rulership and governance, ownership and personal power are given so much prominence from time to time over humble service, in one of the most peaceful, loving and immensely tolerant society in the Caribbean, and I mean the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Such a wonderful people do not ever deserve the trauma, the stress, the disappointment and the anguish that politicians are capable of creating.

Decadence, degeneration and decay in political, spiritual and moral leadership is a curse to any nation and a reproach to any people. But the potential for recovery and survival is always within our reach and I thank God for that. It is the hope for this recovery, Sir, that has made us such a great people and anybody in power must always remember this

I thank you, Sir.

**Sen. Prof. Julian Kenny:** Mr. Vice-President, I must confess considerable confusion in my mind as to the condition of this legislation; the timing of it. I thought that it was an accident that I received one with the cover torn off, but I think that everyone, at least, on this side, has received this with the cover torn off. Why? Why? Is this like a book burning? Are we hiding something in the cover?

Hon. Minister, I would give way if you would explain to me why this thing has been mutilated.

This is going to form part of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago and it comes to us in a form in which part of it we are not permitted to see. I do not know what is the reason for it and this, of course, creates a certain amount of confusion in my mind.

I would like to crave your indulgence to raise a general matter of treaties, at the risk of having Sen. Als suggest that I am being irrelevant. [*Laughter*] I would like to crave your indulgence to raise a matter of treaties and the relationship of what is going on with treaties and Parliament. I will refer to specific treaties.

Secondly, I would like to refer to the very important clause 3, to which the hon. Minister referred; but first of all, treaties. We are part of a global community and we make treaties internationally. We make them through the United Nations and we make treaties bilaterally. I find it very, very strange that we are seeing a treaty which we, or which Caricom, has signed with one of the countries in the Caribbean being brought to Parliament.

In the last parliamentary session there was a treaty called the Shiprider Agreement which we, as parliamentarians, never saw and there was a certain amount of dissension in the Caricom countries. Some were buying the treaty just as is; some were refusing to sign it except with modifications. Here we have a treaty, which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has signed with the United States and we in Parliament were not treated to this sort of thing.

I do not know whether this is a general policy that some treaties are within the preserve of the executive branch and we are allowed to see some treaties. I mentioned the Shiprider Treaty.

**3.40 p.m.**

Mr. Vice-President, we have signed international treaties, I refer to two of them which I find of considerable importance. In fact, I think it was Sen. London who referred to it when he was speaking on my motion earlier. We had signed the CITES Treaty in 1984: This is a United Nations Treaty and it is concerned with the trade in endangered animals and this requires domestic legislation. So here we are, we go to a conference, sign these treaties and then simply ignore the obligations of the treaty.

A second treaty more recently was the United Nations Convention in 1992 on the environment—and one of the things at the convention was conservation of

biological diversity. This treaty which we have solemnly signed before the rest of the world—I am talking about treaties, CITES. Everybody knows internationally what CITES is and most nations have actually done their domestic legislation; we have not. The Bio-diversity Treaty we have signed. Under the treaty and under clause 8 of the treaty we are required to do certain things and here we have in the last Parliament, a plan made by the interim planning commission, which when you read through it, is actually proposing to put a marina, resort and hotel at Chacachacare Island which is the only significant patch of dry tropical forest in the country which we, in clause 8 of the Bio-diversity Treaty said that we will undertake to protect, and here we are in front of the world—and this is why I am talking generally and I crave your indulgence. As a nation we should aspire to having the international global community look at us as a serious Republic and one that meets its obligations to international treaties.

The third treaty to which I refer is one in which—it is not actually a treaty but a piece of legislation—I had a certain amount of my time devoted to it and in fact it was unprecedented in that I ended up chairing a Senate Committee which is most unusual for a Member of the Independent Bench. The hon. Minister at the time, Minister Baksh, thought that because of my expertise, he asked me whether I would chair it and we spent months before we took the marine pollution shipping—I forgot the name of the actual Bill—Marine Pollution Bill. This was part of the MARPOL Treaty, the Marine Pollution Treaty which is an international treaty for all the nations of the world and here we are, we have already gone through the legislation which was model legislation. I suspect that this is also model legislation and all the Parliaments of Caricom would just simply accept it. But the Marine Shipping Bill—I think that is the right name—was something that was devised in London and sent to all nations of the world and we are supposed to put it into our domestic legislation and the Senate committee's task was to take this legislation and convert the terminology where appropriate to our own legislation, recognizing our institutions such as the Environmental Management Authority and the various ministries involved.

Here we have something which has been completed in the last Parliament, it never got to the other place and that legislation has actually been laid very early in the life of this Parliament, in this session, and here we have week after week, month after month, other things taking precedence. I support the legislation, I am obviously duty-bound to support the legislation, but my confusion is that I cannot see a pattern. Already we were led to believe certain things today which have been changed, and we are getting notes from Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie telling

us what is coming up on Thursday. We did not know until today that we would be meeting on Thursday. So I have been trying to see if there is some order or pattern. I have been doing this for six years and I am afraid I still do not see a pattern.

Having worn out your tolerance, I would like to turn to clause 3 of this piece of legislation. Under clause 3 subclause (2) it says:

“The President, may by Order, grant a phased reduction of the Most Favoured Nation rate of duty...”

The words “Most Favoured Nation” in upper case letters. Now I thought that this term was something that came straight out of the United States. I have looked to see if I can find it in the index in our legislation and I cannot see the term anywhere. Are we just simply taking bits of terminology from other jurisdictions, introducing them into our legislation without putting some interpretation clause as to what does the Most Favoured Nation mean?

In the American system the “most favoured nations” favoured some bandit nations. Let us face it, the “most favoured nations” category was applied to right wing dictatorships. So, is this the sort of thing that we want to have in our legislation? I am not talking about Caricom, this is going to become the law of Trinidad and Tobago. I thought that in trading, preferential treatment or rates might have more meaning for us because I can find that term in our existing legislation.

I am bound of course to support it, but I find it difficult to simply take this Bill in mutilated form not knowing what the cover was, and then just simply giving it a rubber stamp.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. Martin Daly:** Mr. Vice-President, I strongly support any measure that will encourage or stimulate trade between this country and its Spanish-speaking neighbours. I strongly believe that we look North far too often and that our trade and much of our other future depend on the establishment and improvement of relations with countries like the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela and other places in South and Central America that could be considered Caribbean. We have far more in common with them and so I strongly support any legislation that facilitates trade between Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic.

I was struck, Mr. Vice-President, by the fact that this legislation is not only designed to improve our trade relations and to supply the native or resident population of the Dominican Republic, but we were told by the hon. Minister that one of the things we could look forward to was a strengthening of the ability of

our suppliers and manufacturers in Trinidad and Tobago to supply the Dominican Republic for their tourism industry which I think is acknowledged as being very successful. I just want to ask the Minister whether in pursuit of these good relations which we are enjoying with the Dominican Republic—we may not want to do it very willingly, we may have to do it somewhat surreptitiously, but whether we could not take some lessons from the Dominican Republic on how to organize the tourism industry.

I feel strongly about this as I do about trade with our Spanish-speaking neighbours because I think I was the first person to say that insofar as tourism was concerned—I do not know about industrial projects—Tidco was not doing very much. I got into an awful lot of trouble indeed before berating people who had a different idea became the norm in this country, I was berated because I described Tidco as “Tidco posse”.

Happily Mr. Vice-President, by July of this year, the Prime Minister was acknowledging that the establishment of Tidco was ill-conceived and we have to have a new tourism body, and I am very happy to secure the agreement of the Prime Minister even though at the time he may not have seen my point of view judging from his various public utterances.

I refer in particular to an article on page 3 of the *Trinidad Guardian* of July 21, 2001 in which the Prime Minister promised that a new look tourism body was coming. I am raising this, Mr. Vice-President, on the occasion of this debate because we had mentioned, tangentially at any rate, tourism in the Dominican Republic and since unlike the Minister who presented earlier, I have a clear idea where this Minister’s political allegiances lie, I take the opportunity to plead with him to get together with the Prime Minister and see whether in the course of executing a new tourism policy and in the course of giving the “Tidco posse” a decent burial, we might not get some tips from the Dominican Republic with whom we enjoy such good relations about how to organize our tourism industry.

Indeed, Mr. Vice-President, when I told them that much of our success which they were insisting was Tidco's success in the yachting business was a result of an accident of nature that also caused a certain amount of dismay and it was said that this was all Tidco’s doing—Well I want, because again, of what sort of day it is today for everybody, to just restate my point that Tidco did nothing for the tourism industry of this country; it is now acknowledged to be a failure; it is acknowledged by the highest authority which in turn is acknowledged by this Minister. I cannot say that for the previous Minister who presented earlier this afternoon and, therefore, we should take this opportunity while we are enjoying

good relations with the Dominican Republic to get some ideas about the reorganization of the tourism industry which the Prime Minister has agreed needs reorganizing.

Subject to those few words, I am very happy to support this Bill. I just say one other thing *en passant*. You know, political stability is an important part of trade, so we do not want to do anything that would make the people who have receivables in the Dominican Republic for our suppliers nervous that would cause them to curtail whatever credit terms obtain now between our Trinidad and Tobago suppliers and those in the Dominican Republic. In short, we must not do anything unnecessary to imperil the healthy trade surpluses about which the Minister spoke and certainly, political stability is an important factor in those healthy trade services.

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

**Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand:** Mr. Vice-President, I do not have a long contribution, I just want to—since the hon. Minister is in a teaching mood rather than in a castigating mood—I am hoping I can ask him some questions and get some answers.

The document that I have looked over seems to cover economic cooperation, economic integration, and terms of trade. While I have no objection to economic cooperation and economic integration with other territories in our region, I wonder whether those kinds of arrangements for greater economic cooperation and greater economic integration are being taken seriously among the Caricom states, for we within the Caricom states have a great motivation for economic cooperation and economic integration.

It is well recognized that the reason for the failure of the West Indian Federation is that we had not gone into those issues of economic cooperation and economic integration with intelligence, understanding and an absence of insular jealousies. So I am wondering whether this model legislation which is to apply to our relationships with the Dominican Republic for cooperation and integration is going to be extended within and among the Caricom states.

Turning to trade and the trading relations between ourselves and the Dominican Republic, I sat in wonder as the Minister described it, the phenomenal improvement in the balance of trade in our favour with the Dominican Republic, and just to remind him it is 28 versus 315; 38 versus 319; 20 versus 315. I almost thought he was reporting on the test series between England and Australia—2,023 versus 679. A little oriental, Asiatic thing is saying to me: Well, if things are



going so good for us, if in the present arrangement whatever barriers they have against us and whatever barriers we have against them we are doing so well, why do you want to interfere with a good thing?

So I wonder if the hon. Minister could tell me whether a calculation has been made and we have weighed up? Whether by opening up our market in a free trade arrangement for products from that country we stand to lose the present favourable balance? Will we now open up and allow them to flood us with stuff? The barriers which seem to be working for us at the moment might not work for us if we change things up. Can the Minister explain why we want to interfere with a good thing?

The last question I have is perhaps a controversial one. Mr. Vice-President, I have always had a great worry about Caricom trade. As the last of the Commies, I always feel that Caricom trade really exists for the business groups in each territory. When we say Trinidad has won so many million in Caricom trade, has Trinidad really won it? Is that money here and working for the country, or is it in accounts overseas where it is safe? How much does the Government get back from the traders for its meetings and discussions, treaties and agreements? All those things that the Government takes the trouble to arrange, how much of Caricom trade is really beneficial to the country as against the individual? If one can make a distinction between the two, I know it is a hard distinction, and one can argue that the individual's being wealthy makes the country wealthy too. But in hard figures, what enhancement of the country's revenue and of money that the Government can use, do we really gain from Caricom trade?

**4.00 p.m.**

Mr. Vice-President, I have an anxiety about all the trading agreements and contracts made because I am quite old-fashioned in my economics and I believe that trade depends upon productivity. To be a winner in trade, one has to produce something that the other fellow does not produce but wants. Or you have to produce something that he is producing but yours is better and is produced at a more competitive rate. So tells us about matching measures to improve production.

I want to tie up what I am saying about the manufacturers or the traders and the Government. Somebody who wants to trade with Jamaica, for instance, may decide he is going to produce candles to sell to Jamaica; and Jamaica will sell candles here. To me, that is just an exchange of products between capitalists. Trinidad is not famous for making candles and I do not think it is Government's

policy to encourage the manufacture of candles. I am wondering whether in these kinds of agreements the traders could be guided, that the Government is encouraging, let us say, the export of yam flour to the other territories, therefore, we are relating our support of Caricom to an agricultural policy which gives incentives to the growers of yam or peanuts, as the case might be. I do not see anything in this document to imply that the Government is interested in taking a lead to indicate the kinds of items we want our people to manufacture and trade in, under these kinds of agreements.

Mr. Vice-President, these are just questions that I hope the Minister will be able to answer. I am not trying to criticize the Bill. These are just questions that have come to my mind, reading it over. Thank you.

**The Minister of Enterprise Development and Foreign Affairs (Hon. Mervyn Assam):** Mr. Vice-President, I am very grateful for the many interventions on this Bill. I will try and follow the tone set by Sen. Montano whom, Sen. Daly, in his contribution, described as having suggested a non-aggressor pact, notwithstanding the fact that he, to some extent, violated it.

However, let me try to answer some of the issues raised by Sen. Dumas. I was a bit surprised that he accused me of not giving credit to my predecessors and predecessor governments. It was one of the first things I said when I started my presentation, that this was a continuation of what had been started in the past, except that we accelerated it. I do not know he can forget what I said, but it is unfortunate that he either forgot or perhaps he was not paying attention.

Then he said that I went on in a mood of boast. Now, can a fact be a boast? I was giving statistics provided by the Central Bank and the Central Statistical Office. Can a fact constitute a boast? If Sen. Daly said that he made \$5 million in his legal practice last year, is that a boast, if it is a fact?

If Sen. Prof. Ramchand said in his whole professorial career, he wrote 50 books, and he published 120 articles in 35 journals, is that a boast, if it is a fact? I do not know how a fact can constitute or can be construed as a boast. And I was not boasting in order to irritate anybody from the Dominican Republic. I was trying to compliment our own manufacturers/exporters on the exceptional performance of their various industries, notwithstanding the fact that within the shortest possible time they were confronted with the phenomenon of liberalization and globalization and the removal of the negative list. That is what I was trying to do. I was not trying to irritate anybody in the Dominican Republic. I would never do that. I am not that foolish.

In fact, I do stroking, if you know what is the principle of stroking. I stroke my competitors, and I stroke my counterparts, wherever they are. If you know what the meaning of stroking is. It is a very subtle art, stroking.

Then he said that our philosophy is different and I could not understand what he meant because he did not develop the point. But he fell into the trap subsequently, when he asked how could we allow the private sector to go in front. When I said so he chuckled. I understand, he is a PNM.

The PNM is accustomed to a statist dirigisme kind of economic philosophy where the State must control everything. That is why Trinidad and Tobago became so inefficient and uncompetitive that we could not export. We had poor quality, high prices, and unreliable service because of dirigisme and statist policies. All the State enterprises that were erected from the time of Eric Williams right down to Manning. That is what happened.

Now we are saying that the private sector must be the engine of growth. The Government would provide the facilitatory environment, the legislative framework, the incentives and you go out there, create the jobs, get foreign exchange, seek out appropriate technology; retool, reengineer and go out and sell your goods and services in every country of the world. We would give the opportunity through the creation of market space and market access. So our philosophy is indeed, different. Diametrically opposed.

He spoke about sanitary and phyto-sanitary matters. But cockroach must not get into fowl business, you know. If you do not understand what this means, please desist. Trinidad and Tobago is on a committee of the working group of the FTA, developing standards for sanitary and phyto-sanitary matters; and he said we are not doing anything about it. He must not come to the Parliament and speak untruths or mislead the population.

**Sen. Dumas:** Mr. Vice-President, I think there is a significant difference between developing standards and actually putting the infrastructure that allows the standards to be met by the producers.

**Hon. M. Assam:** Certainly, that is a contradiction. If you are involved in the development of standards and in order to export your agricultural products or agro-processed products abroad, if you do not follow these standards, what would happen to you. You must implement the standards that you have developed if you are to survive. So I do not know what he was talking about.

He did not understand what was liberalization in trade and services.  
[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dumas:** I said I do not understand what is meant by “phased”. I never said what Mr. Assam said. The Minister is a stranger to the truth.

**Hon. M. Assam:** I do not mind him calling me a liar, it is all right. I have no difficulty. I have been called worse things in my life. All I can say, like the good priest, I forgive him.

**4.10 p.m.**

I am in a forgiving mood, particularly when I stand right across from the great Senator Reverend. He always reminds me of forgiveness. He said phased liberalization, so I will quote phased liberalization. You see, one of the problems about liberalization in services, is the whole argument about the movement of natural persons. That is the big argument. You cannot liberalize services and at the same time restrict the movement of natural persons. That is the big problem, where the developed countries do not want the movement of natural persons of the developing world to go to the developed world. How will you go and sell your skills in computer technology, medicine, law, engineering, construction, if you do not have the prohibition against the movement of natural persons relaxed—liberalized? That is the phased liberalization we are talking about. I hope the Senator understands now.

He speaks about having a cultural, social and education—this is a trade agreement, you know. I do not understand. This is an economic cooperation agreement. I do not know how cultural, social and all kinds of things come in here. But, again, he did not listen to me. In my presentation I said that the Dominican Republic is part of Cariforum; that the Dominican Republic is part of the ACS, and within Cariforum and the ACS, you have all the avenues for developing the social, cultural and educational contacts so that the people of the Dominican Republic will get to know better the people of Caricom.

He wants to know the composition of the joint council. I made my presentation and I told him the joint council would be made up of representatives of the Dominican Republic and the Caricom countries, and the Caricom countries have an institution called COTED, the Council of Trade and Economic Development, where Ministers of Trade sit and decide who will be the representatives of the various Caricom countries, and the Dominican Republic will decide, and then the council will be constituted. I hope I am helpful to him.

Who funds the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM)? Well, I do not know how RNM came into this, but I will tell him, nevertheless, because I am not going to say that he is irrelevant. I am here to, obviously, answer his questions and

address his concerns and assuage his woes. RNM is the Regional Negotiating Machinery. It became necessary because Caricom was involved in a whole range of trade negotiations: the ACP-EU, the FTAA, the Dominican Republic/Caricom, Cuba/Caricom, and so forth. Therefore, we thought it was necessary, in order for us to sing from the same hymn book, from the same hymn sheet, the same tune, in a harmonious fashion, to put up an organization called RNM and staff it with experts who are both technical experts in terms of the research and experts in negotiating, all directed by COTED. This is the council that trade ministers sit in, who get their directives from their Cabinets. That is the reason for RNM.

The RNM is funded by the respective Caricom governments, but they also get grants from the CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), from the EIB (European Investment Bank), they get it from the World Bank, the IDB and from private sector donors: like Neal and Massy, Ansa McAl, Republic Bank, and Cable and Wireless. All of these corporate donors have contributed to the fund that is responsible for running the RNM.

The reason there is a reference to the World Trade Organization—not that it is settled; there is a reference to it that when it is settled, all of these agreements would become WTO-compatible. That is the reason for it. It is not that it is settled, but when they are settled, they will all be WTO-compatible, because the WTO, which is the World Trade Organization, is the body that is responsible for making the rules for the regulation of world trade. I hope I have assisted.

Sen. Rev. Teelucksingh wants an apology from the UNC for traumatizing the country. But you know, as I said in some other forum, in every human organization you have quarrels and you have problems. As a matter of fact, I think that the Presbyterian church should have apologized to their membership when they had some alleged fraud some time ago. I did not get that apology. I think the Catholic church should have apologized to the Catholic community when so many of their priests attacked the appointment of Archbishop Gilbert. I think the West Indian Cricket Board of Control should have apologized to the West Indian community for all the trauma that they put them through. I remember at one time there was a big problem between Republic Bank and an insurance company and the shareholders were traumatized, with all the advertisement and the millions of dollars they spent in this kind of campaign.

I make these points, not to diminish what he is saying, but to reinforce what he is saying, that all of us, irrespective of what institution we belong to, have a responsibility not to traumatize our members, and moreso a government, because I agree that political stability is the cornerstone of a democratic society and the

cornerstone of providing confidence and increasing levels of confidence, not only to your own society, but to people abroad. So I agree with the Senator from that standpoint.

I regret very much, Sen. Prof. Kenny, that I created confusion in your mind, simply because the cover of this document was removed. I really am sorry and I do apologize that he had confusion because the cover was removed. The cover was removed simply because, to use the same word that Sen. Daly used, it was irrelevant. It had no place, so it was torn off, and a bit, in my opinion, not very neatly. But that is the reason, because it was irrelevant. It made no sense giving you a cover that made no sense. There was something on the cover that was not relevant.

I am not an expert on treaties, and maybe I thought that Sen. Thomas might have jumped to my rescue, because Sen. Thomas is more eminently qualified because of his past distinguished career in the diplomatic service, among other things, to have answered this question. But my very rudimentary knowledge of what treaties are all about; there are some treaties that do not need to come to Parliament; there are some treaties that the Cabinet can approve; there are some treaties that are covered by omnibus legislation, like the Mutual Legal Assistance law. So that not all treaties have to come here. I hope what I am saying is correct, but I think I am on good ground because I see Sen. Thomas nodding his head in agreement with me.

So that not every treaty has to come here, but I do agree with him that there are some that should have come that have not come. I am agreeing with him, and it is something that we need to get the Attorney General's office—and I am not knocking the Attorney General, I am just saying to remind the Attorney General's office and the Chief Parliamentary Counsel to speed up.

But it is a question of priority. Somebody is complaining that Thursday is Senate. When there is no Senate or when there is not much on the Order Paper, they say, "this Government is a joke Government; they have nutton." When there is plenty, they say the Government is doing all kinds of things, helter-skelter.

So that it cuts both ways. The point is, it is a crowded agenda and they do not have the level of staffing at the CPC to handle all the bills that need to be drafted to come to the Parliament. So bear with us. They will come. I accept his point; it is a correct point; those treaties that ought to come, must come for parliamentary ratification. I accept that.

But you know, not because you entered into a treaty, that you must not, in moments of reflection, as Shakespeare would say, "in your moments of soliloquy"

not look at what the consequences could be today as opposed to what they were three, four, five years ago. I am not at all attempting to condone what President Bush did with respect to the Kyoto Treaty, but he, in his wisdom, or lack thereof, decided that it would be economically disastrous for the manufacturing community of the United States for him to endorse the treaty. Therefore, either he shelved it or put it on ice or renounced it, I am not too sure, but something like that.

So that there is some principle in treaty-making which allows states to reflect on their commitment if there are significant changes that have taken place at the time of signing and when the reality of ratification takes place.

**4.20 p.m.**

So, one has to be flexible. It is one of the most important principles. In fact, one of my permanent secretaries gave me a hilarious book entitled *Who Moved the Cheese?* Everybody should read that book. It is a hilarious book. In that book there are four characters: Hem, Haw and two rats, I forget their names now.

**Sen. Daly:** The AG and the Prime Minister. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. M. Assam:** Who it is? [*Laughter*] You said it, I did not. [*Laughter*] Anyway, it is funny because all of them are in this maze, because they are all “amazing”, and they are all looking for their cheese—the right kind of cheese—to nibble on. Once that cheese is moved they are in a tizzy because they are not flexible. They cannot change the quality of their cheese, or where the cheese is located. So, we must be flexible because our cheese is going to be moving. [*Laughter*]

Now, that phrase, the “most favoured nation”. I do not know how anybody could say that is an invention of the United States of America. If you go into the economic literature of international trade you would see that the “most favoured nation” is part of the literature. It is very much part of the literature of international trade and not a United States invention whatsoever. So, you do not have to feel that this statement has been, in any way, degraded by the introduction of the phrase “most favoured nation”. It is a phrase that is part of the economic literature of international trade.

Now, as usual, I enjoy the contributions of Sen. Daly. They provide me with a great amount of pleasure whenever I come to the Senate. He speaks so well. He has this great ability of exposition and he uses the euphemism and sarcasm with great skill, almost like a gladiator with rapier-like style. How to organize the

tourism industry a' la Dominican Republic? Well, we do not want to organize the tourism industry a' la Dominican Republic simply because the Dominican Republic is mass tourism and Trinidad and Tobago wishes to develop niche tourism—a fundamental difference. We do not want these packages to come into our country with their knapsacks on their backs, dirty sneakers on their feet and scrounging around the place. We do not want that. If any country wishes to develop mass tourism we have no difficulty. Would you like to see that beautiful celestial place that is called Tobago invaded by mass tourism? Would you like to see that? No, we need to have a different pattern, model or strategy for tourism development in Tobago and also Trinidad because we have two strengths. The tranquil Tobago will give you the soft adventure of all types: beautiful sea, beaches, golfing, snorkelling, diving, horseback riding, birdwatching, butterflies, good food, heritage and so on. In Trinidad you have the conference, the festivals and some ecotourism. Those are the kinds of things we are trying to develop and the new Minister with responsibility for tourism has it well in hand.

The Tourism and Industrial Development Company (Tidco) is not a failure. Notwithstanding what was quoted from the newspaper, Tidco is not a failure. From time to time all of us in this world—I do not care who you are—must sit back, reflect and see whether we have moved away from our moorings. Perhaps, Tidco, from time to time, has moved away from its mooring, but with good leadership and direction it would always be brought back to the mooring. Have no fear it would be brought back to the mooring. The Tourism and Industrial Development Company is not a failure; it can be a very valuable organization. It has done some good work and can continue to do good work but it needs the kind of direction and leadership that, of course, the distinguished Minister will give. *[Interruption]* I see the Senator is worried about my political allegiance.

**Sen. Daly:** Can I take it that Tidco is officially assigned as part of that ministry as a responsibility of the distinguished Minister?

**Hon. M. Assam:** Well, this is what the President did. Of course, he gave an instrument; a warrant.

**Sen. Daly:** Does it include Tidco?

**Hon. M. Assam:** Yes, I said so. Now, you were worried about my political allegiance and I want to make it abundantly clear to you, and to Trinidad and Tobago, that my political allegiance is to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So, you must not worry about what you read in the newspapers.



The Senator also has a concern for political stability. Trinidad and Tobago is very stable. In fact, I have the opportunity to travel from time to time and when I go abroad I interface with all kinds of publics: investing public, nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, the ordinary man on the street and so on. Do you know one thing that is common to the conversations of all these people? It is that Trinidad and Tobago is one the most interesting, dynamic, successful, prosperous and stable countries in this part of the world. They all say so. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Daly:** Let us not spoil it.

**Hon. M. Assam:** We will take your advice, Senior Counsel, Senator. We will not spoil it. Once I am part of this Government it cannot spoil, it can only get better. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Sen. Prof. Ramchand asked some very interesting and important questions. The thinker that he is, he always asks difficult, but very interesting questions. Is economic cooperation and integration being taken seriously among Caricom? If we want to do it with the Dominican Republic, are we doing it seriously within Caricom? I say, yes. The fact that we have moved from an ordinary common market, and soon we will be proclaiming and operationalizing the Caricom single market and economy is indeed one of the most serious steps in the integration movement. In fact, it has taken us less than Europe has because up to now Europe is still quibbling about many things, including the monetary system. The United Kingdom has not gone into it as you know and their euro is already a currency but they would have the coins and notes come January 01, 2002, and there are many areas that they are still quarrelling about.

In fact, when Germany made a statement recently about political cooperation, everybody began to worry because they are only interested, at this point in time, in economic cooperation. With the reunification of East and West Germany, and with a population close to 80 million, people began to tremble when Germany spoke about political cooperation in Europe.

So, I say, yes we are serious, and the Prime Minister of Barbados is chairman of a committee that will ensure the rapid operationalization of the single market and economy. The Prime Minister of Jamaica is the chairman of the committee on external economic relations and negotiations. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is the chairman of the committee on safety and security and this is spread among prime ministers with different portfolios. They are working together and have a bureau that meets, if not in person, through telephone hook-up conferences; or they meet twice a year in the intersessional or the heads meeting;

or they meet in these subcommittees as they are called by the various prime ministers. So, there is an enormous amount of work that is being done and an enormous amount of cohesion that is taking place in Caricom today as you have never seen before. With the establishment of the Caribbean Court of Justice and with the ratification of these nine protocols you would see that the economic cooperation and integration that is being talked about for the last 20-odd years would become a reality.

Of course, an educational process has to take place. We need to educate our citizens. We are doing it. The Ministry of Enterprise Development and Foreign Affairs has been holding a lot of discussions with various stakeholders in the society educating them on the various protocols that constitute the new single market and economy.

I forgot to mention, Sen. Dumas, that this is not an agreement between Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic. One got the impression from your comments that this was an agreement between Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic. This is an agreement between Caricom and the Dominican Republic. More than that, he asked: Is it going to benefit citizens and do we know about it? I want him to know that we have a certain democratic machinery in place for negotiating any trade agreement, and indeed, any agreement that we enter into with a third country or a group of countries.

**4.30 p.m.**

In fact this Minister appointed a committee on trade and related matters. It is chaired by the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturing Association (TTMA). On that committee there are all members of the private sector organizations, non governmental organizations, trade unions, the Inter Religious Organization and every single group in this country is represented. When we go out with a position, we go out as a result of a consensus of all the stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago. I hope he understands that.

He went on to ask: Why do we want to disturb? As someone said, if something is not broken, why do you want to fix it? Why do you want to disturb a relationship? You are already prospering to the tune of \$680 million in trade, a big surplus of over \$500 million. Why do you want to disturb that? It is very, very simple. You are doing two things at the same time. By entering into a preferential market arrangement, you would be competitive against other countries. I would give you an example. When our disposable diapers as Teddies and Cheekies go into the Dominican Republic, when this is ratified, we would

beat the pants off pampers coming from the United States. The United States will have to pay 25 and 30 per cent duty and we would pay zero. We would beat them. That is the first dimension of this thing.

The second dimension of this is that we would then be able to increase our plant capacity and create more jobs, so that the economy of Trinidad and Tobago would be further developed. That is the two-pronged dimension of this. You would be beating the competition up North because they would have to pay duties. Now, you have to produce more, so you have to increase plants and create more jobs. The fear that the ordinary man is not benefitting cannot be correct. The ordinary man would get more jobs and better paid jobs.

Is the money working for the country? Are we getting it back? It is very clear. When we declare on an annual basis a surplus balance of trade, it is very clear that our exports are exceeding our imports. More than that, when we say that our foreign exchange reserves have been climbing, do you think those foreign exchange reserves are only from the Government? They come from the entire private and public sector generation of foreign exchange. They are increasing. For the last five years it has more than doubled. That is a sign that the money is coming back. It has to come back in some form.

How will they buy machinery, raw material packaging and all that is necessary to produce their goods? Trinidad and Tobago does not produce many of the things needed to put into the manufacturing process. They have to bring back money even for that and to pay salaries. They are also bringing back money for reinvestment.

You spoke about candles. I have been to this honourable Senate a number of times and I have invited Senators, not only in this session but also in the previous session to come with me and I will take them to the factories and industries of Trinidad and Tobago. Many people do not know about the sophistication and industrial excellence that we have here. When I go to Point Lisas, I stand up like the boy who went to Scotland. I stand in my shoes and I wonder. This little country of less than 2,000 square miles and 1.3 million people has produced that. First world petrochemical complex.

They criticized the Bureau of Standards. I want them to go to the Bureau of Standards at Macoya. It is an internationally-rated First World organization. Recently, I went to visit KC Confectionery. They must have seen me on the papers with "meh lil hat on". They export 75 per cent of their candy of which more than half goes to the United States. They are beating the pants off all the bubble gum

producers. Charles Candy is the same thing. Chubby! Do you know that they are exporting to 60 countries in the world? Are you aware of that?

**Sen. King:** It is subsidized.

**Hon. M. Assam:** Sugar is subsidized here? You are the minister of trade, I suppose. You know that it is subsidized. I want to make it categorically and unequivocally clear that sugar to manufacturers is not subsidized. The formula is that Caroni (1975) Limited imports sugar for people who export anything that has a sugar content at world prices, and they put on 20 per cent. Is that subsidization? Caroni is the agent for buying sugar at world prices. They bring it in and sell it to the manufacturers who are involved in pastry, candy, soft drink and chocolate with a mark up of 20 percent. Is that subsidization? Come on! Let us not spread rumours. The first thing that they will say in Caricom is that a Senator said that sugar in Trinidad and Tobago is subsidized. Therefore, it is unfair competition in Caricom. That is not true. They export 75 per cent.

A company that started 82 years ago in the backyard of Mr. Khan's house in Princes Town. If you see the state-of-the-art equipment, processes and technology. I was amazed when I saw a machine with fingers wrapping candy. Peakes which originally was an agent or carrier has its brand now, from the ground up. They are beating the pants off Train, Carrier and Daihatsu. They are competing in every market of the world. I can go on and on.

I come to candles where you said that Trinidad does not produce candles. Come to the constituency of Tunapuna! Come to a place called Range Road in Five Rivers which is the headquarters of the factory of Venita Candles. You hear the name? Venita Candles was rated No. 1 in the world. Thanks to the help of the German industrial people who helped them with the technology, packaging, design and financing. They came first in the world. They are exporting to Italy, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Venita Candles! Remember that! We do not make candles? A lot of candles. We make candles and from the constituency of Tunapuna, Range Road in Five Rivers. I give you full address.

The last point I want to raise is about incentives to agriculture. There are incentives to agriculture. We have identified those industries that we would like investors to get involved with to diversify the economy and more importantly, to deepen the manufacturing process. What has happened? I would be the first to admit it, but it is changing. When the IDC was established over 40 years ago, it was started by Albert Gomes. Many people have forgotten Albert Gomes. The PNM kicked Albert Gomes, martyred him and he died in ignominy and shame in

the United Kingdom. Poor fellow. A man who was responsible for helping the Baptist legitimize themselves; a man who was responsible for getting the steelband movement through TASPO to legitimize itself. When he was minister of trade he was a man who started the pioneering to aid industries. It was the beginning of industrialization in Trinidad and Tobago. This man was humiliated by the PNM and sent into exile in shame and ignominy. That is a man who should receive a national award. That is the way we deal with people in this country. I hope one day that Albert Gomes would be suitably recognized for what he did for the country. He did a lot. You must read what people have done.

When IDC started many years ago, they were deemed to be what is called infant industries. They got all the incentives, industrial estates, paid peppercorn rents, ministers' licences and tax free holidays. They got all kinds of things. Do you know what happened? The infants never grew up. For years, the infants remained infants until the economic strategy changed and we started to remove the negative list, open up the doors and liberalize. Suddenly, they realized it is not business as usual. The NAR started it followed by the PNM. It was during Mr. Robinson's regime as prime minister that he started it. Mr. Manning continued it. From 1995, this Government accelerated it. You think I would not give you the credit. I am very fair. I do not know what Sen. Dumas is saying. I give credit where credit is due. Anyhow, they have not grown up.

They had to wake up quickly. Now they are seeing the light of day because the name of the game is competitiveness. We have just produced the Enterprise Development Policy and Strategy 2001—2005, where the theme that flows through that policy is competitiveness. Everybody has to be competitive. Therefore, they have a whole range of industries that they can go into. Further than that, to deepen the manufacturing process so that they do not have to import many ingredients, by-products and raw materials from abroad.

I hope that I have given an account of some of the questions and concerns of hon. Senators opposite. I thank all of you because you have said that you wanted to support this very important trade Bill. The Bill is designed to ensure continued sustainable growth and development, job creation, sourcing of foreign exchange, importation and the use of proper and appropriate technologies, placing Trinidad and Tobago on the map of the world, and in time, as a First World nation.

I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill committed to a committee of the whole Senate.*

*Senate in committee.*

*Clauses 1 to 6 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Preamble ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be reported to the Senate.*

*Senate resumed.*

*Bill reported, without amendment; read the third time and passed*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Lindsay Gillette):** Mr. Vice-President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to Thursday, 13 September, 2001 at 1.30 p.m. We will discuss the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill, 2001. I think that you all received a letter from Parliament that said Thursday, September 14, but it is Thursday, September 13.

We also want to pass the amendments that were made in the House of Representatives on Friday, July 20, 2001.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 4.46 p.m.*