

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, July 01, 2003***SENATE***Tuesday, July 01, 2003*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to the following Senators from today's sitting: Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning and Sen. The Hon. Knowlson Gift.

**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH BILL
(JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE)**

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following communication from the Hon. Barendra Sinanan, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

"June 30, 2003

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Linda Baboolal
President of the Senate
Parliament
Red House
Abercromby Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Madam President,

Resolution—Joint Select Committee

Please be advised that at a sitting held on Friday June 27, 2003, the House agreed to the following resolution which was moved by the Honourable Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development:-

Be it Resolved that a joint select committee be established to consider and report on the Bill entitled the Occupational Safety and Health Bill, 2003;

Be it further resolved that this committee be mandated to publish the Bill and receive public comments within two months.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that you cause this matter to be placed before the Senate at the earliest convenience.

Respectfully

Barendra Sinanan, MP

Speaker”

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the sitting. [Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith]

Question put and agreed to.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have also 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 GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS,
President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic
of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MRS. JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN

WHEREAS Senator Hazel Manning is incapable of performing her duties as a Senator by reason of her absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, 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, JOAN HACKSHAW-MARSLIN, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 1st July, 2003 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Hazel Manning.

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 27th day
of June, 2003.”

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS,
President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic
of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

Senators' Appointment

Tuesday, July 01, 2003

TO: MRS. MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH

WHEREAS Senator Knowlson Gift is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, 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, MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate with effect from 1st July, 2003 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Knowlson Gift.

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 27th day of June, 2003."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Senators Joan Hackshaw-Marsh and Magna Williams-Smith took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law:

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Wade Mark:

**National Minimum Wage
(Increase of)**

62. Could the hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development:

- A. State whether the Government has any intention to further increase the level of the national minimum wage?
- B. Indicate what steps are being taken to deal with the terms and conditions of employment of specialized groups of workers (such as private security guards as well as non-unionized workers) employed in the energy and energy-related industries?

The Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs and Acting Prime Minister (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Madam President, I ask the hon. Senator that we defer question No. 62 for one week.

Madam President: Question No. 62 is deferred for one week.

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Public Sector Reform
(New Initiatives)**

63. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information:

Could the Minister indicate to this Senate what new initiatives are being taken to promote public sector reform inclusive of the Public Service?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, public sector reform has been and continues to be a major concern to this administration as was demonstrated in 1992 when significant resources were dedicated to a very vibrant public sector reform agenda with a public sector reform secretariat in place. This was based on the Government's concern for quality service provision, equity, widespread access and transparency and these principles informed the efforts at reform.

Precedent to the uninitiated, it appeared that the former administration shared this vision since on its assumption of office it established a Ministry of Public Administration. Sadly, this effort proved to be short-lived and the same administration moved with dispatch to dismantle the Ministry of Public Administration after the 2000 general election.

This Government, therefore, has moved swiftly in 2001 to recreate the Ministry of Public Administration and Information as a reflection of its commitment to improving the quality of public management and its impact on the performance of Government programmes. The ministry's goal therefore continues to be ensuring that the public service has the capacity and the will to provide the highest degree of citizen satisfaction possible.

In recognition of this, the ministry has in train several initiatives aimed at the transformation of the public sector and in view of the demise of its predecessor, all public service sector reform initiatives can be regarded as new. These include the following:

1. A development of the road map of public sector transformation: In recognition of the need to accelerate the rate of reform as well as to ensure the sustainability of the transformation initiatives, the Ministry of Public Administration and Information in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank is currently crafting a road map for transformation of the public service.

The ministry already has in place a transformation division which is involved in several of the initiatives already in train and is also directly

involved in the development of this road map. A completed road map will present reform projects to be implemented, this would then form the basis for the 2003—2005 public reform agenda.

With the focus on value for money, several key agencies have been identified for immediate action particularly those central agencies whose work impacts on the work of all the other ministries namely agencies involved in the recruitment and selection process; financial and information management and public procurement.

2. Implementation of the Integrated Human Resource Information System (IHRIS): Project IHRIS is a major transformation initiative intended to serve as a platform for the human resource management functions related to placement, performance appraisals, promotion and training in the public service. This tool allowed for the development of a database of public service employees which provides information on the qualifications, work position history, agency history, training needs, et cetera.

This IT tool provides the agencies with the wherewithal for career planning, financial and leave administration, as well as human resource development planning. The project is currently in its second phase which involves the rolling down of the functions for recruiting and administering workforce and position management in the line agencies.

3. A review of the classification and compensation system in the civil service: As we are all painfully aware, there is need to motivate, retain and attract the right persons in the right jobs in the public service. There is a recognized need therefore to modernize the management for benefits in the public sector. Part of the transformation effort the Personnel Department will review is the classification and compensation system in the civil service and statutory authorities and the aim of attracting and motivating the right persons to a competitive salary structure and the aspect of this project began in the current financial year.
4. Enhanced career and succession management processes: Leaders in the current public service environment have to be innovators, eschewing appropriate adherence to procedures they must be able to establish and enthusiastically communicate vision, reshape culture and reengineer the organization. They should also be able to motivate and manage others, above all, to manage themselves, their own careers and growth.

It is believed that the public service has in its employ persons who have the potential or are already well qualified to fill senior management positions. However, current public service systems for promotion emphasize seniority and, as a consequence, such persons are often not even considered for promotion.

This administration moved with great dispatch to introduce the position of Deputy Permanent Secretary. The candidates would be selected utilizing an assessment centre method which will assess their potential relative to leadership competencies which have already been identified.

5. Implementation of a management trainee programme: An evaluation of the executive leadership of the public service conducted in 2000 identified a serious transformational gap, which can be cited as a significant factor for the slow progress of recent, and perhaps former reform efforts within the public sector. There is therefore an identified need to strengthen the capacity of the public service to effectively manage its environment and maximize its contribution to national development.

One of these strategies is a management trainee programme, which is aimed at the development of innovative, creative, problem solvers trained in the public service to provide high-level public service management. Cabinet has decided to move ahead with this programme which is currently in its planning stage.

6. Reintroduction of a national scholarship programme. The human resource capacity in Trinidad and Tobago must be infused with accelerated appropriate development if the country is to advance to sustainable development. All agreed that the public service suffers from a lack of qualified personnel to provide the necessary technical input; the management of many of the public sector agencies.

Cabinet has agreed to facilitate the building of identified skills within the public service through the reintroduction of a scholarship programme for the public service aimed at filling the technical and managerial gaps in the public service. This programme will begin in the 2003/2004 period.

7. On-going opinion leaders survey: This Government recognizes the need for higher levels of public participation in the decision-making of Government. In 2002, the Ministry of Public Administration and Information engaged the services of a United Kingdom based Market and Opinion Research International (MORIN) to establish a local opinion panel that would serve as a reservoir for obtaining citizen feedback on the wide range of issues and services provided by Government. This panel comprised 2,747 randomly selected individuals representative of the country's full range of demographics.

A baseline survey was conducted over a six-week period and like most countries, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago placed local issues over national issues. In response to questions about the image of the public service, most respondents viewed the service as slow, inefficient, and rendering poor customer service. People were however, positive about their description about the quality of service provided by public service staff.

The public service transformation agenda is currently working on addressing these issues and a second survey will begin next month.

8. Implementation of an approved National Information Communication and Technology Plan: Information and communication technology is pivotal to any plan to bring Trinidad and Tobago to develop country status by the year 2020. A national plan must therefore be produced to further the development of the electronically-driven environment in Trinidad and Tobago and for the implementation inter alia of technology-based business practices within the public service.

A steering committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Public Administration and Information has been established to produce a plan. Five working groups representing various interests including youth, business, public service, and the University of the West Indies have been established to focus their efforts on key elements of the plan. The Government of Canada has been selected to assist Government with the development of the plan which was launched by the Prime Minister on May 02. The plan will be completed by September 2003.

9. Promotion of monitoring and evaluation mechanism: Public service management within the last 15 years has changed dramatically with much of the work being done in project format. Millions of dollars are invested in Government's Public Service Investment Programme (PSIP) every year. The need for constant monitoring and evaluation of these programmes especially from the value for money perspective is of critical importance. Mechanisms are therefore being put in place to ensure that all ministries have the capacity to monitor and evaluate all their programmes ensuring that value for money is the guiding principle. Persons have already been trained in the development of monitoring and evaluation instruments and tools and this will be rolled down to all ministries within the next calendar year.

Enhancement of Freedom of Information Systems Management: Madam President, the Freedom of Information Act, 1999 came into effect in February 2001 and the Freedom of Information Unit was established in May 2001 as the oversight agency for the implementation of the Act. The unit was responsible for ensuring stakeholder awareness and participation within the Freedom of Information Act, 1999 and monitored and reported on the operation of the Act.

The unit is currently working on the enhancement of the information management system building on the work undertaken in 2002. The 2003 project centres on improving the monitoring and reporting efficiency of the unit and facilitating its commitment to providing support to all stakeholders of the Act. It would also serve to promote the use of technology for increased productivity and enhance decision-making as part of its goal to promote openness and transparency in public affairs.

10. Institutional strengthening of the Government's information service: As part of Government's thrust to increase the level of public participation in Government decision-making, as well as to further the ideals of the Freedom of Information Act, the agencies responsible for the provision of Government information services are being reviewed. The need to enhance the delivery of public information has become critical; action is currently under way to construct a seven-floor state-of-the-art building on the present site of the Government Information Services on St. Clair Avenue. The building is intended to house a restructured

information division equipped with cutting-edge technology in all areas of public broadcasting. The mandate for this reengineered organization will now include public education, distance learning and Government information and quality local programming.

Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, could the hon. Minister indicate to us what is the time frame set for the development of the road map as he has outlined, and when that document is completed, whether it would constitute the basis of a green paper for public discussion?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, the ministry is in intense discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank at the moment, both for developing the road map and possible funding of the programme. As we progress, I will of course make the information available as it becomes necessary.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, could the hon. Minister indicate to us what is the composition of the transformation division that he mentioned, as well as the mandate of that division?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, I do not have the names of the officers who are in the division at the moment. It is a division that has been built up as we kept suitable resources and if the Senator wishes, I will give him the information.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I am sure the hon. Minister would agree with me that transformation goes on two legs; administrative and financial. I wonder if the hon. Minister would be so kind to let us know what steps are being taken by his ministry to speed up financial management reform in the public service of Trinidad and Tobago?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Madam President, I think if the Senator puts the appropriate question to the Ministry of Finance, he would get an answer. Suffice it to say that the Ministry of Finance is also engaged with the Inter-American Bank on a programme of development and financial reform in the Ministry of Finance.

International Wheat Price (Reduction of)

64. Sen. Wade Mark asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

Could the Minister state whether the recent reduction in the international price of wheat will redound to the benefit of the consumers in the form of lower prices for flour and flour-related products?

The Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Madam President, there have been and continue to be significant changes in the global economy which impact on local consumers. The national consumer policy for Trinidad and Tobago aims to advance the quality of life for all by promoting and protecting consumers' rights for just, equitable and sustainable development.

The policy document provides the framework within which various governmental and non-governmental agencies operate in addressing consumer concerns thereby making people our priority in accordance with the stated vision of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

One of the main objectives of the Consumer Affairs Division of the Ministry of Legal Affairs is to encourage the development of educated consumers who, armed with information, can make appropriate choices regarding quality goods and services and fairness of prices within a liberalized economy.

The issue of flour prices has occupied the attention of the Ministry of Legal Affairs ever since the international price of wheat was increased in January 2003. Following that increase, the Minister of Legal Affairs and other senior officers of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Consumer Affairs Division in particular, held discussions with officials of the National Flour Mills Limited. The ministry's intervention was necessary because of its commitment to work towards solutions whenever there are developments that are unfavourable to consumers.

During the discussions, the officers of the Consumer Affairs Division were requested to monitor the price of wheat on the international market and National Flour Mills Limited made a commitment to the Minister of Legal Affairs to reduce the price of flour to the general public when the price of wheat fell.

Madam President, consequent to a recent reduction in international wheat prices, National Flour Mills Limited fulfilled its commitment to the national community and to the Minister of Legal Affairs by effecting reductions of between 10 and 17 per cent in the prices of flour on May 5, 2003. Investigations by officers of the Consumer Affairs Division have indicated that most supermarkets have passed these savings on to their customers. However, the producers of bread and other flour-based products have not made similar concessions.

With respect to the price of bread, as a result of several public calls by the Minister of Legal Affairs, the Bakers Association in a statement to the media, published in the *Daily Express* on Wednesday May 21, 2003 gave the assurance to the national community that bread prices would definitely be going down. However, the Minister is

not satisfied that the prices have been reduced across the board as this is not reflected in the examination made by the Consumer Affairs Division, or in reports reaching the Minister from members of the national community.

Madam President, as regards other flour-based products, most producers of these products have not reduced their prices. In a liberalized economy the Government cannot implement price controls and, therefore, can only rely on moral suasion and on the integrity of producers to pass savings on to consumers. Consequently, the onus falls on consumers to exercise the power of choice and patronize only those businesses that operate in the interest of consumers by passing savings on to them.

Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, could the hon. Minister indicate what further efforts she intends to pursue to ensure that the price of hops bread, and butter bread as the case may be, is reduced for the ordinary consumer, having regard to the fact that the National Flour Mills has reduced the price of flour to wholesalers and retailers?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Madam President, I repeat that this is a liberalized economy and we can only rely on moral suasion in order to get the producers to reduce their prices consequent to the reduction made by National Flour Mills, and I would assume in circumstances where Sen. Mark—and I am sure he speaks on behalf of his colleagues—is so concerned about the prices that he will use suasion on the businessmen he knows in order to get them to reduce the prices of bread and other flour-based products. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. R. Montano: We have done so already.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, is the hon. Minister aware that since the PNM Government came into being, the prices of basic foodstuff have skyrocketed in this country? Is she aware of that?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Madam President, I am aware that prices have been increasing, but an examination of the statistics indicates that prices have been increasing over a period of time including the six years the last administration was in office.

Police Service (Recruitment)

81. Sen. Sadiq Baksh asked the hon. Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation:

Could the Minister inform this Senate of the number of new policemen and women recruited into the police service on an annual basis from 1991 to 2001?

The Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation (Sen. The Hon. Howard Chin Lee): Madam President, this honourable Senate is advised that during the period 1991 to 2001, 3,466 new police officers comprising 2,964 males and 502 females were recruited into the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service as follows:

Year	Male Recruits	Female Recruits	Total
1991	141	04	145
1992	117	Nil	117
1993	74	40	114
1994	122	40	162
1995	71	17	88
1996	201	40	241
1997	427	83	510
1998	429	80	509
1999	07	Nil	07
2000	544	77	621
2001	831	121	952

**Unemployment Relief Programme
(Money Spent)**

82. Sen. Arnim Smith asked the hon. Minister of Local Government:

A. Could the Minister state the amount of money spent on the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) for the period October 2002 to April 30, 2003?

B. The details of work being done on the URP projects during the period October 2002 to April 30, 2003?

The Minister of Local Government (Hon. Jarrette Narine): Madam President, for the period October 2002 to April 30, 2003 a total of \$68,280,616 was spent on the Trinidad arm of the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP).

There are 12 regions under the URP. During the period under consideration, the URP undertook a mixture of sanitation and construction projects.

The sanitation projects included cutlassing, brush cutting, weeding, edging, cleaning drains, digging drains, reducing the shoulders on roads and cutting of overhanging branches. Work was undertaken on sites which could not be carried out by the Municipal Corporations under their recurrent programmes. Trucks were used to remove the debris from the worksites. An average of 534 sanitation projects were undertaken per fortnight.

Examples of the sanitation projects were cutlassing and brush cutting; cutlassing high grasses to lower levels from road aprons; access earthen roads; tracks and traces; sides of drains; school compounds; playing fields; community centres and abandoned lots. The use of whackers under this category resulted in very high productivity in certain areas.

Weeding—weeding grasses and weeds from roadsides, access roads, road surface and traces.

Edging—chipping and cutting grass from roadsides, clearing drains, removing grass, high bushes and debris from drains to allow for smooth flow of water. Digging new drains to allow for flow of water which could not be accommodated with the present drainage system.

Reducing shoulders; that is removing excess dirt from apron drains, cutting overhanging branches, that is removing branches hanging over roadways and traces.

Madam President, the construction projects included bridges, box drains, footpaths, retention walls as well as improvement and completion works to pan theatres, basketball courts, community centres, a promenade, and fencing of a school compound together with spreading of pitrun gravel and preparation of foundation base for several roads. Some of the construction projects undertaken are as follows:

Retention walls: Rossland in St. James; Union Road, Four Roads, Diego Martin; Paramin, upper Maraval; Upper Bournes Road, St. James; Unity Springs River, Off Unity Springs Lane, Diego Martin; L'Anse Mitan, Carenage; Boissierre Lane, Belmont; Gonzales Circular, Gonzales; Marie Road in Morvant.

May I say, Madam President, that I visited this job at Marie Road in Morvant and it is one of the most beautiful stonewalls built. It is over 20 feet tall, and it is an accomplishment for the people who did that job in Morvant off the Lady Young Road.

Barataria Anglican School. That is another project that I visited. In that school, the walls were low and vandals were jumping the walls opposite the playground and I was well pleased that in two fortnights we were able to carry that wall to a proper height where perpetrators cannot enter the school. We are also doing some barbed wire mesh at the top and we have been asked to do an extension in the front so that the children can have shelter when rain falls.

Wiltshire Savannah Road, Don Miguel Road in Aranguez that is near to the Hindu School in Aranguez, was a very unsightly area for a number of years, I lived in that area for three years and I was well pleased to know that the Unemployment Relief Programme did—

Sen. R. Montano: Madam President, on a point of order which is twofold: one the Minister seems to be wasting time deliberately because in two minutes, if my colleague does not request—*[Interruption]* Please be quiet Sen. Joseph, while I make my point!

Madam President: Sen. Montano, please address me.

Sen. R. Montano: Yes, Madam President, but I have been getting kibitzing here so loud that I cannot even hear myself. May I point out that in a minute and a half, unless a Procedural Motion is requested by my colleague, question Nos. 84 and 85 will lapse. The Minister is taking an extraordinarily long time and he is going off into all sorts of personal anecdotes, and my colleagues are going to need to make the motion to ensure these questions would be answered next week. So on a point of order, I request that my colleague be allowed to make the motion now.

Madam President: The Minister is answering the question and I did not see anything improper in the way he is answering it. Please continue with your answer.

Sen. R. Montano: Madam President, on a point of order.

Hon. Senator: What is the point of order?

Sen. R. Montano: The point of order is that in a minute the time limit for asking questions is going to lapse and I am thereby requesting that my colleagues, now, make the request for their questions to be deferred because if that is not done, and the Minister goes over 2.15 p.m., then it would be unfair to say that their questions have lapsed.

Madam President: As far as I know, the questions automatically go over to the next week. I do not think there is any need for a motion. Please continue with the answer, Minister.

Hon. J. Narine: Thank you very much, Madam President, and may I indicate to the hon. Senator that Part B of the question asked for details of work being done, details.

Madam President, while I was interrupted and lost time, [*Laughter*] I will return to retention walls.

Penal Rock Road in south Trinidad. You would remember earlier this year there was a landslip that was disturbing Penal Rock Road for a number of years and the former Minister of Works and Transport paved around the landslip and left the landslip. There was a demonstration earlier this year where they burnt tyres and blocked the roadway. I can report to you and Sen. Smith who asked the question, that the retention wall has been built in two fortnights at a cost of \$46,000 including labour and materials. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, there is much work going on at Boodoosingh Lane, La Brea because the road has become impassable and almost 30 residents are marooned. There is also a retention wall going up.

Retention walls are also being built in Egypt Village, Point Fortin.

Bridges—Sea Trace in Bagatelle, Diego Martin. The URP completed a very large box culvert that you can actually call a bridge.

If you are familiar with Jacobin Extension in Morvant, it is the road that takes you to the police station, and across that wide ravine that travels from north to south and passes near the police station in Morvant, a bridge has been completed for persons living on the other side so they can cross.

North Eastern Settlement in Sangre Grande is an area that has been regularized now for persons who had occupied lands illegally many years ago and there are a number of bridges in that area. We have tried to make it comfortable under the URP to employ persons in that area and I can tell you two bridges are now under construction there and I am certain you will agree with me that two weeks from now Sangre Grande will fall under the People's National Movement. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, I go on to box drains. Niles Street Cocorite, Diego Martin; Corporate Drive, Diego Martin; River Estate River, River Estate Diego Martin; Cameron/Superville Quarry, St. Lucien Road, Diego Martin; Broome Street, off La Puerta Avenue, Diego Martin; Sparrow Drive, Petit Valley, Diego Martin; La Paix Circular, Sea Lots East, Sea Lots and I can tell you when the newspaper caught me peeping through some fence in Sea Lots, nobody was at home and I

Oral Answers to Questions
[HON. J. NARINE]

Tuesday, July 01, 2003

was trying to see how far that box drain went to the Dry River. [*Laughter*] Never before has URP performed so well in Sea Lots, Madam President.

As a matter of fact, when I look at the records on the last programme of the last regime, there were about 11 construction projects throughout Trinidad, so we have surpassed that by leaps and bounds and we are going ahead to complete these projects in a very short time and we are also going to start new projects in these areas. [*Desk thumping*]

Straker Village, Laventille; I am certain you are aware of that area. There is a small plot of land where the young people play small goalpost. You know lands are not available in Laventille as in other areas where we can build full size recreation grounds and facilities. The box drain that was built as Straker Village has now extended that parcel of land so that the young people can engage in sporting activities. I understand that part of that area is private and after July 14, my councillor for that area will move a petition at the San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation and we will certainly acquire that parcel of land for public purpose. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, 9th Avenue Extension, Barataria; Mary Lane, San Juan; Khandahar Road, Tunapuna; Upper First Trace, Tunapuna; Belmont 5th Dimension Pan Yard, St. Francois Valley Road, Belmont where some drainage was done on the extension of the pan yard. Lenora Drain, Arima, which is an area where the owner of the sawmill on the Piarco Old Road blocked the natural watercourse. We had to divert that box drain so it can empty into a larger drain and it is creating a lot of health hazards in that area; Lenora Drain, Arima; Balmain Box Drain, Craig Street, Balmain Couva; Temple Street Box Drain, Temple Street, Carapichaima; Roopsingh Road, Jacksonville Street, Carapichaima; Monkey Town Phase 1, Princes Town and you would realize Senator, that we are not segregating and we were not going in particular areas to do work. My constituency, Arouca North got nothing for six years, we are going into areas that are unchartered waters for any government and the People's National Movement is certainly going to build drains all over Trinidad. [*Desk thumping*]

Monkey Town Phase II in Princes Town; we have built drains in La Lune, Jim Street; Papourie Road, Princes Town; Smart Avenue, Lachoos Road, Penal; Boodoosingh Lane, La Brea; Navet, Navet Village, Rio Claro where nothing was done for about 10 years. We are now trying to help the people there.

Newlands, Newlands Village, Guayaguayare; San Fabien Road, Gasparillo; Roolal Avenue, Victoria Village; Vos Government School, Pointe-a-Pierre; Skinner Street, San Fernando; Sunset Boulevard, Marabella; Bamboo Village, La

Romain. Most of these areas have no representatives but we still go into these areas and do a lot of work.

Madam President, Community Centres—and I am reporting to you today that 7th Avenue in Malick, Barataria will be opened in the next fortnight or two. [*Desk thumping*] I understand that community centre started many years ago and after many difficulties, the Unemployment Relief Programme will now complete it.

Mon Repos Community Centre in Morvant which was built by the last administration, but it is incomplete. We are completing it and certainly it should be opened before election. [*Desk thumping*]

Mausica Folk Performing Theatre, Mausica Road, D'Abadie. In 1994—the Mausica Folk Performers did well in Best Village for a number of years—we decided to build a Folk Performing Theatre and after 1995 nothing was done for the last six years. We started back last year so that Mausica Folk Performing Theatre will be completed. [*Desk thumping*]

We did some work on Indian Trail Community Centre in Couva; in La Brea we did the La Brea Community Centre which we have restarted after six years; Fanny Village Community Centre in Fanny Village, Point Fortin—

Madam President: Minister Narine, I know you are giving a very comprehensive answer. Can you tell me how long again you think your answer will be?

Hon. J. Narine: Madam President, it will take a while because the question asked for details, but what I am going to do—I am going to say, Madam President, that I am a very experienced Member of Parliament.

Basketball Courts were done throughout Trinidad, Pan Theatres were erected throughout Trinidad including Diego Martin; Sforzata, Valley Harps, Hatters including Skiffle Bunch in San Fernando and I am certain that the acting Prime Minister was well pleased with the URP working at Skiffle Bunch.

Pavements and footpaths, road paving and spreading of pitrun, most of the pitrun was spread in central Trinidad where the last government had owed the people for hundreds of years and we are doing work there on roads.

Sen. Smith: Madam President, on a point of order, I did not ask the Minister about what the last government had done, I asked him what URP did.

Hon. J. Narine: Obvious they did nothing in central too.

Sen. R. Montano: Madam President, this is an abuse of—

Madam President: Mr. Minister, do you have a lot again?

Hon. J. Narine: I am completing.

Madam President: Just finish it, please.

Hon. J. Narine: Thank you very much, Madam President.

Sen. R. Montano: Madam President, on a point of order, what is taking place here is an abuse. The Minister is not answering the question, but he is using the opportunity to make a speech, and furthermore, in making the speech, he is doing it in such a way that the Standing Orders have now dictated that we cannot question him because 2.15 p.m. has long since past and the Standing Order states clearly that no questions can be asked. The Minister is making a speech, he is not answering the question, and this is an abuse.

Madam President: Minister Narine, just wind up for me, please.

Hon. J. Narine: Madam President, construction of promenade—and I am speaking about the Croisee—which is going to be opened this week. Repairs to pre-schools; recreation grounds; renovation to buildings; construction of handrails.

Madam President, there were many other projects that were done by the URP under “Construction”, but this is what I have to report for now.

Thank you.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, under section 18(7) of the Standing Orders, the other questions remaining on the Order Paper will automatically be put on the Order Paper for the next sitting.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

CEPEP Projects

(Details of work carried out)

- 84.** Could the Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment provide this House with details of the work carried out on the CEPEP projects during the period October 2002 to April 30, 2003? [*Sen. A. Smith*]

National Petroleum Marketing Company

- 85.** Could the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries indicate:
- A. If there are any ex-employees of the National Petroleum Marketing Company (NPMC) or any of its subsidiaries who have been engaged as consultants with the company from January 2002 to present?

- B. If the answer to (A) is in the affirmative, could the Minister indicate which of the said ex-employees/consultants (if any) were ever terminated by NPMC or its subsidiaries and the reasons for such terminations?
- C. If the answer to (A) above is in the affirmative would the Minister provide details of the contract between NPMC or any of its subsidiaries with the said consultants inclusive of the scope, cost and duration? [*Sen. Seepersad-Bachan*]

Question time having expired, questions 84 and 85 were not dealt with.

**DEFINITE URGENT MATTER
(LEAVE)**

**Caroni (1975) Limited
(Imminent Retrenchment)**

Madam President: Hon. Senators, from Sen. Wade Mark, the adjournment of the Senate on Definite Matter of Urgent Public Importance—the Imminent Retrenchment of 10,000 workers of Caroni (1975) Limited.

Hon. Senators, under Standing Order 12(2), I am not satisfied that this matter is definite or urgent and, therefore, leave is not granted.

However, the Senator is advised that he can bring this matter under Standing Order 11.

2.30 p.m.

**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH BILL
(JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE)**

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith) Madam President, in order to facilitate the Occupational Safety and Health Bill through the Parliament, I beg to move the following Motion:

Be it resolved that a joint select committee be established to consider and report on the Bill entitled the Occupational Safety and Health Bill, 2003.

Be it further resolved that this committee be mandated to publish the Bill and receive public comments within two months.

I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That a joint select committee be established to consider and report on the Bill entitled the Occupational Safety and Health Bill, 2003.

Further resolved that this committee be mandated to publish the Bill and receive public comments within two months.

**FINANCE (SUPPLEMENTATION AND
VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) BILL**

Order for second reading read.

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):
Madam President, I beg to move,

That a Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum, the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 2003, be now read a second time.

This Bill was passed in the other place on Monday, June 16, 2003. This Bill is consistent with the provisions of our Constitution where at section 113(3) of the Constitution it states there where, if during a financial year it is found:

- “(a) that the amount appropriated by the Appropriation Act for any purpose is insufficient or that a need has arisen for expenditure for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated by the Act; or
 - (b) that any moneys have been expended for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated for the purpose by the Appropriation Act or for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated by the Act,
- a supplementary estimate showing the sums required or spent shall be laid before the House of Representatives and the heads of any such expenditure shall be included in a Supplementary Appropriation Bill.”

Additionally, where an amount under a head of expenditure is insufficient for the purposes intended by the Government or where moneys have been expended for any purpose in excess of the amount approved by Parliament, a supplementary estimate showing the additional sums required must be laid in the House of Representatives and an increase in that head of expenditure included in a bill to be known as a Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

In addition, where a need arises for expenditure for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated in the Appropriation Act, this expenditure would also need to be contained in the Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

The Supplementary Appropriation Bill will therefore contain increases in expenditure for purposes already contained in the earlier Appropriation Act and/or new expenditure for a purpose which was not already included in the Appropriation Bill.

A mid-year review conducted by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development, in collaboration with other ministries and departments, has resulted in the need to present to this Parliament a supplemental appropriation bill. Our review confirmed that based on current implementation rates, there would be need for additional spending to fund new programmes and to meet expenditure areas where spending is proceeding at a faster pace than previously anticipated.

The review has also determined that on the existing budget, the revised outturn projected for the fiscal year 2003, would be a surplus of \$191.7 million. However, when it takes into account the adjustments being proposed, our projected deficit would be slightly lower than originally planned. Our projected deficit is therefore calculated at \$568 million, compared to the original budgeted deficit of \$618.9 million.

A supplementary appropriation in the sum of \$742,651,500 is also being proposed. The details of these amounts have been circulated in the Senate documents previously circulated at pages 1 to 8. This would increase the overall appropriation from \$13,396,416,175 to \$14,139,067,675.

Additionally, the variation of the appropriation previously approved is intended to utilize the sums accruing from a reduction of expenditure under nine heads of expenditure for the purpose of meeting increased expenditure under seven heads. The value of this amount is \$50,384,000. The details of these amounts have been circulated in the Senate documents previously circulated at pages 9 to 15.

During the fiscal period Government expects to realize increased revenue of \$373 million in the following areas:

Petroleum profits taxes and supplemental petroleum tax	\$155.4M
Royalties on oil	\$194.2M
Unemployment levy	\$23.4M

Due to the higher than anticipated prices of petrochemical products, the Government also anticipates an increased outturn in the area of corporation taxes.

However, this is expected to be offset by lower than anticipated revenue, mainly in value added tax due to the decision to address the backlog of arrears of refunds which had accumulated over the past few years. Total value added tax refunds issued as at April 30, 2003 was \$1.5 billion which is \$275 million more than originally budgeted.

This decision was taken because of increased efficiency in the information system. In order to provide increased funding in areas progressing at a faster rate than previously anticipated and to fund new programmes which have become necessary at this time, the Government is now seeking parliamentary approval for a supplementation of the Appropriation Act 2003 in the sum of \$742,651,500.

The supplementation of the Appropriation Act that is currently being sought, together with the increases in direct charges, represent a total increase of \$760,103,010 in Government expenditure.

The supplemental funding of \$742,651,500 being sought is primarily to cover expenditure in the following major areas:

Establishment of the Caribbean Court of Justice, a one-time payment—\$199.1 million; settlement of arrears of increments due to public officers and implementation of the report of the Salaries Review Commission—\$184.6 million; increased appropriation of the Tobago House of Assembly with respect to the rolling three-year plan for tourism—\$18.3 million; annual subsidy of BWIA to replace revenue foregone as a result of the reduction of the airfare on the domestic air bridge—\$20 million; increases in the Public Sector Investment Programme—\$142.1 million.

These amounts can therefore be summarized as follows:

- Recurrent Expenditure \$600,592,500
- Development Programme \$142,059,000

Hon. Senators are asked to note that arising out of the implementation of the recommendation of the Sixty-Seventh Report of the Salaries Review Commission, there is an increase in the direct charges on the Consolidated Fund of \$17,451,510. This sum represents the enhancement in the terms and conditions of employment of individuals whose salaries and allowances are excluded from the Appropriation Act in accordance with section 113(2) of the Constitution, Chap. 1:01.

The nett effect of this supplementary expenditure on the current budget would be a revised projected deficit of \$568,353,928 or 0.89 per cent of GDP, compared

to the original projected budget deficit of \$618.9 million. This amount is in keeping with the accepted standards as set by the international agencies whose business it is to monitor and report on the results of countries like ours.

Madam President, this is a very simple exercise. It is one in which Government seeks to, at this point in time, carry out its constitutional mandate to report to the Parliament on its plan and, therefore, at this time, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Sen. Wade Mark: Madam President, I want to say from the very outset that I disagree with my honourable friend that this is a very simple matter before us. It is a matter that involves some \$740 million that the Government is seeking as a supplement to the \$20 billion budget that this Senate approved, as you would recall, sometime last year.

The object of the Bill, as is stated in the Explanatory Note, “is to supplement and vary the appropriation provided for by the Appropriation Act, 2003 and to authorise the utilisation of any sums accruing from a reduction of expenditure under certain Heads of Expenditure for the purpose of meeting any liability incurred through the increase in expenditure under other Heads.”

The present regime has utilized almost \$40 billion in the last 18 months. We left them with \$16 billion; they squandered it. They came to this Parliament and got approval for \$20 billion more in the 2003 budget; that, too, seemed to have been squandered, and they have now come back to this Parliament for \$740 million. That, too, is going to be squandered.

I want to refer you to the budget statement of 2003. This is the Appropriation Act that they are seeking to vary and also supplement. If you turn to the opening paragraph of this budget speech, the Minister of Finance who is the hon. Prime Minister, spoke on the issue of making Trinidad and Tobago—and demonstrating to the world that Trinidad and Tobago is the ultimate democracy. In fact, he went on to say: “This is, indeed, God’s country.”

I think that the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance should be a little more straightforward with this Parliament. He should tell this Parliament exactly what has happened to date. They have done a mid-term review of the budget. He spent less than 10 minutes on his legs. We have not had from the hon. Minister an account of what has happened since this budget was passed in September 2002.

When the PNM speaks to the issue of an ultimate democracy and that this is God’s country, does that give the PNM the right to abuse state power? Does it give

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the PNM the right to distribute state resources in a very one-sided fashion, as they are doing? Does an ultimate democracy as defined by the Minister of Finance give the Government the right to brutalize innocent citizens in El Socorro on two consecutive nights? To date, as we speak, we are yet to get a proper report from the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation—and I would have more to say about crime when we deal with the reductions in this particular measure that we have before us.

Whilst the Government seeks to increase its allocation by \$740 million, citizens are being brutalized and terrorized. The physically challenged, as we know, have been victims of a vicious assault by a PNM policewoman and up to now that lady is still in the police force; up to now not a report has been issued about this female police officer. You would agree with me, Madam President, that as we seek to increase this \$740 million—These physically challenged people do not seek pity, sympathy or charity; what they want is justice, equality and the right to work.

I raise these matters from the very outset to put my contribution in a context, because we have an Appropriation Act of 2003. That is the Act that is informing this supplementation of \$740 million, as well as the variation of some \$40 million or \$60 million. Could we say we live in the ultimate democracy that the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance spoke about, when farmers' lands are being bulldozed in order to make way for house-padding in the constituency of St. Joseph, without notice, without consultation?

You may not be aware, but let me remind you that the Chaguaramas Development Authority used force some months ago against a major exporting company in this country called Peake's Marine Company Limited. So what we have here is that the people of this country are paying taxes in order for the PNM to brutalize them. That is what is happening in this land. Ten thousand workers are to be retrenched at Caroni (1975) Limited. You would have read in the newspapers as I have read—and I was shocked—that a minister who seemed to be totally ignorant of basic industrial relations principles remarking after the court ruled, that "if the court say I wrong, forget VSEP; ah going and retrench 10,000." The court told them to sit with the union and work out a proper arrangement, but the PNM, as you know, feels that this country belongs to them and they can do whatever they want. So the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources simply said to the court: "To hell with you; I don't care about your ruling. I, John Rahael, Minister of Agriculture, am going to retrench 10,000 workers." This is not John Rahael's country; this is not PNM country.

Sen. Dumas: On a point of order, Madam President. There was no such statement made by the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. He is misleading the Senate.

Sen. R. Montano: He is not!

Madam President: Please continue, Sen. Mark.

Sen. W. Mark: What I am asking is: Is this the ultimate democracy that we talk about? I want to let you know that this Bill before us is not about simply increasing \$740 million for further expenditure patterns, which I would go into in a short while; it is about providing a government with more and more power to spend our moneys in the most reckless of ways and to continue the “squandermania” that we have experienced in this country over the last months.

You would have read in the newspapers today, Madam President, that the Emergency Health Services have grounded to a halt. Do you know that in the system’s plan for the EHS, which is now the EMS, the Emergency Medical Services, there is supposed to be 40 ambulances operating in Trinidad under the EHS, now the EMS; five in Tobago? As we speak the PNM has reduced the EHS, now the EMS, from 40 ambulances to eight and in Tobago—for the hon. Minister of Public Utilities and the Environment who is supposed to be looking after Tobago’s interest—one ambulance is now operating in Tobago.

This Government comes for \$740 million and they do not have an EHS ambulance to go to the people of Toco. If somebody falls ill today in Toco, Point Fortin or Chaguanas, there is no EHS vehicle to collect the sick. I was told by someone that when Andre Tanker died from a heart attack, even if they had called the EHS they would not have been able to pick him up because they have no vehicle available in the fleet. But this Government is giving to CEPEP \$400 million; they are giving to their friends contracts for over \$2 million. But do you know what? People are dying. You go to the hospital right now and simple blood transfusion exercises cannot take place because of a lack of resources, of money, of nurses. Where there was supposed to be four or five nurses, there are now only two on the ward. And they come for \$740 million more!

Where is the human dignity that the Prime Minister spoke about in his budget? When the Prime Minister said that for every individual, irrespective of race, colour, religion, outlook or ethnicity, their human dignity would be upheld, where is the human dignity when a citizen of this country cannot get an emergency health service vehicle if they fall ill? We have a budget of \$20 billion and the Government is now seeking another \$740 million and we do not have a proper health care system for the people of this country.

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But you can understand why. They fixed up WASA—the CEO—from \$36,000 to \$50,000 per month, under the hon. Martin Joseph, the Minister of Public Utilities. He approved, I understand from reliable sources—

Sen. Joseph: Madam President, on a point of order. The statement being made by Sen. Wade Mark is not correct. He knows it. I approved no salary for the CEO of WASA.

Madam President: Sen. Mark, please desist from that.

Sen. W. Mark: Well, if he said so, we would see jail for some of “dem fellas”. We “bound” to see jail because they have violated the Act and those people who have violated the Act must face jail, the same way they wanted to send Tim Gopeesingh to jail—misconduct in public office!

If the Minister says he is innocent, he is my former teacher, I want to believe him. I do not think my teacher “does” lie, so I want to believe my former teacher. But the point we are making is that human dignity is being compromised in this country and while these things are taking place you see public officials getting large increases in salaries; huge allowances; whether it is the executive chairman of Petrotrin, Mr. Malcolm Jones—\$102,000 every month he takes home—or the CEO of WASA, \$50,000 he gets every month, or the two salary increases that the PNM Ministers have received consecutively. That is what is taking place.

So when we look at this proposal that is before us, we cannot understand or fully appreciate why the Government would want to come here, get another \$740 million approval from the Parliament without giving us some appreciation of what their mid-term review revealed. Is the economy growing? Is the economy slowing down? Is there some sluggishness in the system? What is happening to unemployment? What is happening to our exchange rate? The cost of living continues to rise and we hear we live in a liberalized society and therefore we cannot do anything about it.

We should have been getting an account from the Minister in the Ministry of Finance on this mid-term review. We have not got that. You see, they take us for granted here. But I want to tell you, Madam President, for your purpose and enlightenment, some of the things that were promised so far in the 2003 budget are yet to materialize.

In this budget speech of 2003 the Minister of Finance promised that legislation would be introduced in this Parliament to integrate the supervision of insurance companies and pension funds with that of the banking system under the

authority of the Central Bank. That was a commitment given by the Minister of Finance. No legislation has been brought to this Parliament and we are now in the month of July. We are going into recess on July 15, I am told, and we are returning in September for the budget, and after that they intend to prorogue the Parliament and then go into a second session. That is what I have been told. I could be wrong. Advise me.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Who told you that?

Sen. W. Mark: Not you; you were sick. Do not worry about who told me that. I was praying for your speedy recovery.

Madam President, I want to tell you that in addition to the failure of the Minister of Finance on this matter, the Minister also promised in his budget speech—because since the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance failed to give us an account, I would have to do that for him. We would like the hon. Minister to tell us what has happened to the legislation for the establishment of a financial services ombudsman to protect consumers' rights at the level of the banking system. They promised they would bring legislation to that effect here—it is not here—also legislation to institutionalize the interim revenue stabilization fund. We were told that since last year in the budget speech and up to now all we get from the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance are excuses. Every time I ask about that: “it is coming”.

It reminds me of the Attorney General: “Lindquist is coming with a report next Monday. He is coming with the report the following Monday. He is coming with the report the next Monday.” I think the time has come for us to get Mr. Lindquist to relinquish his position as investigator, because Mr. Lindquist is hoodwinking the population. It is either he is doing that or the Attorney General is misleading the country. It is major cover-up, because with the PNM it is one law for us; one law for them. I would say more about that.

I think the Minister in the Ministry of Finance must tell us. The average price of oil from the Central Bank Economic Review for 2002 was about US \$26 per barrel, but we understand there were some shortfalls in the revenue collection and therefore they had some balancing act to do. But for the year so far the average has been US \$31. We budgeted at US \$22. We hope that the Minister in the Ministry of Finance could tell us what is the current status in terms of the revenue surplus arising from this increase, or hike in the price of oil over the last couple of months, and whether that money is going to find its way into the interim revenue stabilization fund.

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The Minister of Finance promised us in his budget speech that there would be legislation on the Trinidad and Tobago Unit Trust Corporation Vesting Bill. The Minister of Finance has told us nothing and you have been here since I have been here and no legislation has come to this Parliament on the Unit Trust. What about the Terrorism Prevention Bill that we were told about in the Parliament? The American Ambassador had to warn this country that if we do not pass the relevant terrorist legislation he would actively dissuade people from investing in this country and he is getting telephone calls on a daily basis from people in America who would like to invest in Trinidad and Tobago. He is concerned because the Government and the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation have not taken measures to bring the anti-terrorism bill to this House. Is it because they are in bed with the terrorists? I just bring this to your attention, Madam President; there is no terrorism bill.

Would you believe, Pontius Pilate, holier than now, PNM, talked so much; misled the country so often on corruption allegations, but an amendment to the relevant legislation relating to corruption in public life, including the penalties for offences, is yet to be introduced? They said in their budget speech they were going to amend the legislation in order to make it tougher and to increase the penalties for a corrupt act. Nothing!

It is a shame; it is a scandal that a simple integrity form that requires an affirmative resolution of the Parliament so that public officials like Ministers, Senators and other high ranking state officials, can fill out their forms and return them to the Integrity Commission under the Integrity Act of 2000—the PNM has been in office for 18 months and to date as we speak, that form that is required by law to allow the Integrity Commission to function and for us to submit our returns on our earnings, they have not brought it to the Parliament as yet, but they tell this country that they are the corruption busters. If they are the corruption busters, why have they not brought to the Parliament a simple form to get the approval of the Senate? It is 18 months, Madam President; not 18 days or 18 weeks.

We know that talk is cheap and that is what the PNM is about, mamaguying the population. On page 31 of the Schedule, to show you how the PNM is really against corruption, there is a project called “Project No. 001” entitled “Implementation of the Integrity in Public Life Act 2000”. That is what we passed. They say that the UNC was this, that and the other. We passed an Act. They said they provided \$2 million in the 2003 budget for its implementation. Do you know what? They spent \$350,000 and they are removing \$1.6 million from this particular head.

Why is the Government afraid to implement the Integrity in Public Life Act of 2000? Why when we allocated \$2 million for its implementation, you spend \$350,000 and you take \$1.6 million away from the implementation of the Integrity in Public Life Act? I would like the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell us why the Government is not doing something to deal with corruption. Why is the Government so soft on corruption when it comes to their friends? But when it came to Carlos John, they sent the man in charge of the anti-corruption bureau into the man's bedroom to get figures, facts, papers and documents. But right now they are burning documents at WASA because they do not want to trace their crime—\$40 million in the Waterfarm scandal they “tief”—they stole.

I do not know if you are aware, but I want to bring it to your attention, Madam President, and the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation should tell this country in a statement whether a few weeks ago there was an incident at the residence of the Prime Minister of this country in which two persons were involved in an altercation; a soldier and an ordinary cook. I understand it was a handyman. They got into a fight in the kitchen and we understand that the Prime Minister, upon hearing this commotion, came downstairs and the following day every single member of the military staff, from the Comptroller of Households, Captain Johnson, and all other members of the military staff, were removed from the Prime Minister's residence without any questions being asked. I would like the hon. Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation to tell this country if there was an incident at the Prime Minister's residence two or three weeks ago involving a fight and all the military personnel, from the Comptroller of Households, Captain Johnson, to cook, were dismissed. This is what we have been told by the country. We are getting word on the ground that there was this scandal at the Prime Minister's residence and we need to get some information from the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation.

I have the list of all the army personnel. They are now demoralized. When we were in office and the hon. Basdeo Panday took over the residence of the Prime Minister, he kept every single military staff member who was handpicked by the former Prime Minister. But the present Prime Minister has dismissed every single military personnel from the residence of the Prime Minister. We would say more about this on the hustings.

I want to get to the Schedule that is before us. If you go to page 3 of the Schedule you would see where, under Sub-Item 09—“Office of the Prime Minister” there is the heading: “Remuneration to Chairman and Members of Commissions of Enquiry.” The original provision was \$1.7 million; revised, \$3.2

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million; increased by \$1.5 million. I thought that the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance would have told us the rationale for this.

We had a commission of enquiry, as you know, into the Biche High School. It turned up nothing; was a waste of time and the people who gained from that whole exercise were the lawyers and the one-woman Commissioner. They made thousands of dollars and nothing has happened to the Biche High School enquiry. In fact, if I were the Minister of Education who is now in Jamaica, I understand on some beach—that is what I understand. [*Interruption*] Well, I am sorry. I take it back. If that is not true, I withdraw, in the interest of the hon. Acting Prime Minister.

We would like to know from the Minister in the Ministry of Finance why this increase when two of the commissions of enquiry have ended their work. Mr. Deyalsingh on the Elections and Boundaries Commission Enquiry has completed his work and also Justice Sealey. The only work we have going on now—I call it a circus that is taking place on Richmond Street every day and is costing this country millions of dollars and we have to allocate \$1.5 million for a continuation of a circus called an enquiry on Richmond Street. Today I understand it is the 165th day of that enquiry and at the rate it is going, I feel when we have the next general election in 2007, that commission of enquiry would still be going on. When Mr. Bernard and his Commissioners end that commission of enquiry, I guarantee you every single one of them would go home with about \$5 million to \$6 million net. They would not have to work for another day of their lives. In fact, they are already retired.

That is a circus, but that is the PNM's way of "ramajaying"; public relations gimmick.

Let us go to page 8 of this Schedule. This is where the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information comes in. Just a short while ago he was boasting that he has a public service transformation division which is leading the public service reform exercise. That seems to be inconsistent with the reality, because \$860,000 was allocated for the establishment of a Public Service Transformation Division; \$560,000 was spent; \$300,000 gone. Now tell me if you are really interested in public service reform and you allocate \$860,000, would you reduce it by \$300,000?

I am saying that Dr. Lenny Saith, the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information, is being misled. What he has read for us in this Parliament is misleading. Somebody is misleading Dr. Lenny Saith. He had better take charge of his ministry, you know, because he does not seem to be in charge at all.

Madam President, you know the state of industrial relations in this country and one would have thought that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago—they seem to be getting a lot of poor advice on industrial relations matters. The National Union of Government and Federated Workers (NUGFW) had to take about 10,000 workers through the streets last Friday. They marched through town. What do you think they are marching against? It is poor industrial relations practices. That comes under the Minister of Public Administration and Information again. I hope that he is not sleeping on the job, because I have seen photographs in the newspapers today with the Prime Minister's head bouncing Mr. Valley's in the lower House and they are sleeping away on the job. I hope Dr. Lenny Saith is not asleep on the job. Because what explains, in the face of all the industrial relations crises in this country, that you would allocate \$645,000 for the establishment of an industrial relations division and then decrease it by \$400,000 and you allocate \$245,000? I do not think the Government is serious about public service reform and industrial relations peace in this country.

Turn with me to page 9, Madam President—walk with me, because this is a long journey. Look at what is happening on page 9. When we say “Trinidadians first”, the Independent Senators attacked us. I want to tell the Independent Senators today—some of them—I have no problem with taking on Sen. Dr. Saith, Sen. Yuille-Williams and any Member of the PNM because they have to face the polls, but I want to tell Independent Senators if they want to play politics with us in front here, we would have to deal with them as fiercely as we deal with the PNM on that side. We want to tell them that. [*Crosstalk*] I want to say that, because when we were making our points last week on the Immigration (Caribbean Community Skilled Nationals) (Amdt.) Bill, we were attacked and I do not expect the Independent Senators to attack the Opposition. They are not here to do that! They are there to make a contribution to ensure that there is balance, not to attack us. If they attack us, I serve warning, we shall attack them!

Look at page 9 of this Schedule and you would see Liat (1974) Limited getting \$30 million as a subsidy. Could the Hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance tell this honourable Senate the terms and conditions of the \$30 million which has been loaned to Liat (1974) Limited? Because we know we have a Prime Minister who is a godfather, you know. He is godfather to the region! Anything they say they want, Mr. Prime Minister gives to the Caribbean leaders. So we would like the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell us the terms and conditions of the \$30 million that was granted to Liat (1974) Limited. As I told you the last time, we have information that prior to this \$30 million the

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Government gave to Liat (1974) Limited the sum of TT \$20 million. So in all, \$50 million has been given to them. We want to know the terms and conditions of this loan.

Meanwhile, BWIA workers are crying blood. They were retrenched in a most brutal way and today, as we speak, they are still owed over \$50 million by BWIA. It disturbs me for a Minister of Trade and Industry to tell workers in this country: “Cut your salary; reduce your allowances, otherwise we would make BWIA crash.” How can you treat your own citizens in that brutal way when you are giving to Liat (1974) Limited, a regional airline carrier, \$50 million and not a single Liat worker has been retrenched? But we retrenched 617 BWIA workers and as we speak not a single cent was paid to these workers.

I would like the Minister to tell us why are BWIA workers yet to receive their retrenchment and severance payments? We have some difficulty with this loan or subsidy. As I said, we would like the Minister to tell us the terms and conditions of this arrangement.

Let us go to page 13 of this Schedule. Madam President, I do not know how you feel these days, but I can tell you in Trinidad and Tobago the feeling is not good. Crime is out of control in Trinidad and Tobago, yet under the Development Programme of the Ministry of National Security and Rehabilitation we see a reduction in the allocation to this Ministry to the tune of \$1.5 million. It has decreased! This is taking place at a time when there is a lot of fear in the society. All you are hearing these days is somebody being kidnapped and then they are being released. Do you know what goes on? The new arrangement now is they are releasing people for marijuana. Just now it would be for cocaine, and then money. What is going on here? What is the police doing? What is the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation doing to give us a sense of comfort in this land?

Madam President: Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Senator’s speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. S. Baksh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. W. Mark: I did not believe that my time had passed that quickly. I would have to speed up because I have a long list. I want you to look at page 27—you see, you have to move from page 15 to page 27, but my colleagues would take up the slack—under the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise

Development we see under a vote called “Consulting and Other Contracted Services” an increase in the allocation by some \$671,000. We have received no proper explanation in my notes here to justify this increase. We want to know to whom the jobs were given. We want to know the rate of pay that these jobs fetched in the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development. Who got these jobs after the Ministry had allocated, properly, a sum of \$2 million and it has to increase? In fact, the provision was \$1.3 million and it has increased by \$671,000 and now the revised figure is over \$2 million. We would like to know from the Minister who are the people doing those jobs and the rate of pay they are enjoying.

My good friend who is with us for the first time after his recovery—and I wish him good health for the rest of his life—Dr. The Hon. Lenny Saith—I see under his Information Division on page 28, another “Consulting and Other Contracted Services”. There is no proper explanation again. It is jobs for the girls, boys, friends and family of the PNM. They increase the allocation by \$900,000 and we have received no proper explanation from the Minister in the Ministry of Finance on this question. We want the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to tell us for this \$900,000 increase, how many jobs this fetched; who got the jobs and the rate of pay.

If you go to page 39 you would see under the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs—well this one is a scandal—they have increased the allocation under the same vote, “Consulting and Other Contracted Services”—that is a term for jobs for the boys, girls, friends and family of the PNM. You see the sum of \$5.3 million. Could the Minister of Finance tell us what was the basis for this increase? Why this \$5.3 million? Who were the people employed? We need to get some answers. [*Interruption*] You want me to file a question? But this is the appropriate time. You want me to support your Bill or do you not? You know it could pass without me so that is why you said file questions? Do you think I would not file?

3.30 p.m.

I will file questions. I serve notice on the Minister of Finance today that if he does not supply me with answers today, I will file questions on all these matters. Do not worry. I do not get anybody to write anything. I do my writing. I have a publication. I must bring it for you.

I go to another area on page 52. The hon. acting Prime Minister of this country is a very decent lady, but very dangerous. Look at page 52 of the Schedule. When I saw this thing I laughed. I thought this was the responsibility of

Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo. When I saw the increased allocation to the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs under the hon. acting Prime Minister and Minister of Social Development, I believe that this ministry is causing all the “cochur” in the government. Could you believe that the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs got an additional \$2.8 million. For what? We got no explanations. Is this part of the Geriatric Adolescent Programme? I do not know. Is this about recruiting people for the local government campaign? I do not know. Let the Minister of Finance tell us what this \$2.8 million was used for. When the budget was passed they requested \$1.3 million. They got it and half year has gone and they want \$2.8 million more. For what? We do not know. Minister of Finance let us know, please.

Page 8 of the report under the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs says \$8.6 million. Hear what it is for. It is for employment on contract of staff to facilitate an integrated approach to the delivery system of social services in Trinidad and Tobago. Why do we have a minister of social development? Is that Minister of Social Development, Sen. The Hon. Abdul-Hamid? What is the Minister of Social Development doing? If the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs is dealing with an integrated approach to the delivery of social services, what is Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo doing? Are they just there pretty making up numbers and the real Minister of Social Development is the acting Prime Minister? It is \$8.6 million for the Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs to establish an integrated approach for the delivery system of social services. What is going on here? Minister of Finance, we need an explanation! Your Cabinet is too large! Acting Prime Minister, you need to get rid of two immediately!

They are expanding the soup kitchens. It is a big name, Transformation and Development Centre Programme to provide seven additional centres. I believe that I have the answer to this problem. The Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs was responsible for the construction of two community centres last year. I recall “Mr. Corruption Buster, Mr. Clean”, the Member for Diego Martin West and Minister of Planning and Development telling the people of this country, “I will tolerate no cost overruns on the Point Cumana Community Centre.” A centre that was supposed to cost \$1.5 million or \$2 million is now costing over \$3 million. That is over \$1 million more. There is a community centre that is being built in the Prime Minister’s constituency, by the Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs. I understand that it is the best for the new executive president. The best community centre in the whole of Trinidad and Tobago, the Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs now

acting Prime Minister placed that in that constituency. I understand that the cost overrun there is ridiculous. It was supposed to cost \$2 million. I understand it is costing \$3.5 million. I want the Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs to tell us if there were not cost overruns in the construction and completion of the Point Cumana Community Centre and the Mon Repos Community Centre in the San Fernando East constituency. We want to know. Let the Minister of Finance tell us.

I also noted on page 47 of the Schedule, that the allocation to the Ministry of Science and Technology and Tertiary Education has increased by \$26 million. I want to know if that is on the job training. What is that for? Let the Minister of Finance give this Parliament a proper explanation for this matter. Something funny is going on. Just now I raised a point and I heard the acting Prime Minister mumble.

Look at page 53 under the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs, under the item construction of community centres. I was not wrong. The facts are here. The original allocation for those two community centres is \$3 million. It has increased to \$6.5 million. It is a difference of \$3.5 million. One costs \$2 million more and the next one, \$1.5 million more. The Minister and acting Prime Minister cannot deny that. We have cost overruns at those two community centres.

I want to advise the Minister of Housing that he too, will fall into a trap. He has been saying to the country that they would build those houses at budgeted price. Dr. Rowley told us that he would bring home the community centre in Point Cumana at cost price. He would not tolerate cost overruns. We have some difficulty and we want to get some clarification and information on this matter. We want the Minister of Finance to give the Senate a detailed explanation on all these matters that we have raised. We know that they do not need our support because it is a money bill.

With two more weeks to go before the local government election, this document should make interesting reading for the population of this country. I hope that the Minister of Finance will not allow us to go on the hustings and deal with these cost overruns in the San Fernando and Point Cumana/Carenage areas and all these jobs for the boys and girls that they cannot explain. I hope that they would explain that to us before we can even contemplate giving any support to this measure.

Thank you.

Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran: Madam President, the first thing I would like to do on my behalf and quite possibly on behalf of my independent colleagues—who for some strange reason found themselves under unexpected siege by the previous speaker, a matter to which I will give brief reference—is welcome Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith as Leader of Government Business to this Senate. If we can judge by the rosy flush on his cheeks, I think that the future looks quite bright in terms of his health. We convey best wishes for both your health and political prosperity.

There is another matter which I think I should clear up because I listened in awe and shock to my very good friend—that is why it tends to hurt so much. I have known Sen. Mark for a very long time. I think we need some clarification when he spoke about his disposition to unleash an attack on Independent Senators primarily because of some views expressed at the last sitting with respect to the Caricom Bill. I did not speak so that leaves eight and about four or five did not speak, so that leaves three or four. I will be very grateful if Sen. Mark could rephrase his concern to be more specific. I take the opportunity to remind this honourable Senate that whilst we are nine, we are nine different people. Many times we have held strong differences not only of opinion but also of our role in this Senate. These differences have not always emerged but we are nine individuals appointed under section 40(2)(c). It says:

“nine senators shall be appointed by the President in his discretion from outstanding persons from economic or social or community organizations and other major fields of endeavour.”

We do not have any leader. We have asked Sen. Dr. McKenzie to facilitate us by looking after certain administrative matters and she has done very well. As a group we are certainly not. I look forward to Sen. Mark adding some modesty to his concern. It did not go down well because some of us stand accused without committing anything in that regard. I do not want to belabour the point but it puts the Senate in a bad light. I believe that this proceeding is about a debate. I do not think that we are here to launch an attack on the UNC Senators, the Government Senators and more grievously, the Independent Senators. I prefer and I am sure Sen. Mark has the capacity which he demonstrates week after week, to unleash a sharp difference of opinion on points raised by any Senator. We look forward to better times.

He is right with respect to the commission of enquiry and the cost of such. I believe that it is a matter that is getting out of hand, if it has not already gone out of hand with respect to the benefits to be accrued from such expenditure. I

understand justice is an expensive objective. I think anybody who looks or has had the opportunity to look at that proceeding on television, one in particular, you will see the protracted delays and overly extensive cross-examinations. Each minute counts to the taxpayer. This is not a private enquiry. This is at the taxpayers' expense. In my respectful view, I do not know what jurisdiction the Government would have in a matter like this but, certainly, I think the matter should be heading for a closure at this point. It continues to be embarrassing to the Government and the country.

With respect to the particular matter at hand, I have a few remarks to make on various sections. I think last Monday and Tuesday about six reporters called me—I see two of them in the press gallery—expressing great anxiety about the reduction of \$1.5 million in the Ministry of National Security and Rehabilitation. I was jolted because I had not read the documents so I could not answer properly. It signalled to us in the country the great anxiety of matters of national security, to the extent where they see any reduction in a place where no reduction should be, but perhaps an increase with proper performance outputs should accrue. I believe that for that matter the anxiety by the media was expressed.

As I read the document, I am referring to the document which tries to rationalize the increases and decreases. I refer to page 14, Head 22, Ministry of National Security and Rehabilitation where the decrease was \$1,490,000. The decreases are justifiable. I do not think there is any room for squandermania or irresponsibility except to look at some of the qualitative aspects. To this I would draw the attention of the hon. Minister. These matters of delays should be enquired into. They should not remain as a bureaucratic sin of omission. I think the ministry should show some vigilance and before the day is done, we might hear some response as to why these delays accrue with respect to constructing the Sangre Grande Fire Station.

The other reason for the decrease is the incompleteness of a user brief for the training college at Golden Grove which I believe should be for prison officers. This is an important matter because if the ministry is now engaged in the process of rehabilitating prisoners, the question of training to handle this new policy becomes very urgent. I again implore the Minister to use whatever powers he has to hasten the construction of this training college. Recently, I heard some prison officers asking the Government to provide them with guns to control prisoners. I do not believe guns for prison officers is the answer. It was an unexpected request.

I believe that this training facility would provide them with the skills and knowledge to handle the prisoners daily. In the particular context, when 99 per

cent of these prisoners come from poor working class background, 98 per cent are men. As the Minister knows, 60 per cent of them return to prison again and again; sometimes 40 per cent of them return four and five times. You need a new kind of prison officer and this training college should be expedited within the next year.

Sen. Mark is right. Whatever investments accrue to this country would be subverted very severely by matters of crime and national security. It reminds me of a story of three little pigs when I was in primary school. One built his house with straw and it was blown down by a wolf. Another one built a house of wood and that too was blown down by a big bad wolf. The last one who was smarter than the two before him built a house of bricks and his house stood the test of time. That metaphor is designed to draw the attention of the Government about preparing ourselves to manage the new prosperity coming before us. As I would indicate later on, countries in the Middle East, Latin America and particularly, Venezuela have suffered immensely even after having the benefit of oil prosperity. That is the real history of oil-producing countries.

I might take the opportunity; I do not want to pre-empt myself because I might have to deal with this matter more extensively. I have just come back from a crime conference where people related their experiences. I must tell you without trying to neutralize our concern, that crime and violence are really spreading all over the world in unprecedented proportions. That does not excuse us from doing nothing. One of the issues raised with respect to Trinidad and Tobago by the United States as well is our intention to expand our gas production, especially pipelines connecting our gas supply to regions in the north including the United States. It was suggested that with that expansion and gas connection it puts this country in a most vulnerable position with respect to terrorist activity. The United States is concerned about such vulnerability. The warning has been sent there and to other countries, that those countries that cannot look after their internal security and give certain guarantees to large scale investors will suffer the consequences of reduced investment. It is not an old story. It has to be a story of greater urgency because of our imminence in oil and gas production. I sound a warning.

Some of us will say that we do not know what else to do about crime. I have grown hoarse talking about it. As Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams might tell us, our feet might be tired but our spirit shall still remain strong. We have to do something about crime. There is a repeated appeal for the head, the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation to resign or be removed. I have thought about that because we need to do something about reducing crime.

When you examine the record over the last 20 years and look at the official crime rates under the different regimes as the PNM government, NAR government

and the UNC government, there has not been much significant difference in the crime rate. You would find some peculiarities. In 1988—89, there was the sharpest increase in serious crimes under the NAR. There are reasons for that. If Sen. Mark wants a balanced response from the Independent Bench in this case, I do not believe that taking the minister's head at this time will solve our crime problem. I have reasons to suggest that. We do not need a Rambo in the Ministry of National Security and Rehabilitation to have shootout with the bandits. We need reflection and strategic operations. Perhaps it is good that the Minister has a low public relations profile in this context. We seem to forget very easily. There was a Minister of National Security who as soon as he came in tried to wrestle the police and he was very prominent in his announcement about what he would do and in the end, nothing much was achieved except a big schism between the police and the Executive. We have had that piece of evidence. The Minister has his job cut out in spite of what I have said. I would give you an indication.

I refer to the *Trinidad Guardian* of 19th June. Page 3, the headline says,

“Cops aim at hearts and minds”

It is a gentle approach to crime in Laventille. All that sounds good. Compassion, gentility, winning hearts and minds sound quite inspiring. My point is inside the story.

“A NON-COMBATIVE anti-crime initiative,...will soon be launched by the Police Service and Defence Force.”

How “yuh” mean will soon be launched? Why was this initiative not launched years ago? Who would ask the questions of the police and the army as to why this had not been launched before? Why you have to wait until people die by the dozens in Laventille to tell the country you will start and launch? It does not end there. These things the Minister has to ask now. Over time if he does not and the accounting starts then, perhaps, I will support those who have another view about his position. As of now, I think that it makes no difference.

I do not want to call the names of the officers. A senior officer “addressing a hall more filled with police than civilians,” in the Laventille area asked the school and all the social groups to assist the police. One person got up in the audience and said the police already knew who the bandits were and that even the police are afraid to go into Laventille.

These are matters for enquiry and developing police strategy. Do not let the police keep pulling the wool over the eyes of the Executive time and time again. Another senior officer, an assistant commissioner, I will not call his name said:

Finance Bill
[SEN. PROF. DEOSARAN]

Tuesday, July 01, 2003

“We’re going to try to bring all the parents together to talk about parenthood...”

That is the plan. We are going to try. It is not that we have tried in the last three years and we have been able to reduce delinquency in these areas by 10 per cent. He would get up now and say that as a senior police officer. This is what worries us. You keep hearing this stuck record. That is why the public is so fed-up. This is the job the Minister should tackle now. Listen to him again.

“...we will bring all our skilled personnel to interact and ...to benefit the community.”

How “yuh” mean we will bring? I hate to say it is too late but I have heard the commissioner and the police in the documents talk about proactive and preventive measures. This is not a preventive measure. This is obeah. This is horoscopic projection. We “will”. This does not build public confidence in the police. This does not tackle the issue frontally as a well-equipped operational force. What is this? This reminds us of the past “shoulda” and “coulda.” The days for that are over. The scenario is too frightful and fraught with very serious implications as I mentioned earlier.

He said:

“We will also network with other agencies...”

That should have been on the table a long time. That is what community policing was designed to do 10 years ago. Anybody who wants to read the community policing document can do so. I pause because when I referred to these things I raised the question to the government side.

What can a minister do in these situations considering the jurisdiction that the Commissioner of Police has in his area and as minister representing the Executive and the space between? Is there sufficient management control by the Executive over the police to demand a better way of doing things, or should we rely more decisively on the kind of commissioner of police we have in these times? The report went on about what the police will do. That does not build public confidence.

It is a matter of coincidence that the Minister announced to us the number of police officers hired over the last 10 years. It is over 3,000. At present there are over 7,000 officers. Doing what? Is it not time for some kind of accountability for these services and high expenditure? Apart from officers, hundreds of motor vehicles, motorcycles and jeeps were bought for them over the last few years.

With great fanfare they were launched for community policing. Where are the results? Why is the Government not asking for results for the taxpayers' investment? You might hear about some more hardware provisions next month or the next couple months. The time for accountability has more than passed. The country cannot tolerate an increase in serious crime and the kind of disorder and lawlessness, when such vast expenditure is poured into national security year after year.

I draw these things to the Minister's attention, not so much to criticize but to advise and warn about the consequences. I believe that we are soon to appoint a new Commissioner of Police. Now is the time to make the specifications clear about what is required for an effective police service. Let us not have anything about "we would do this and that" year after year. We want a new kind of police commissioner in these times. I hope that the opportunity is taken to appoint one so disposed and capable. If we miss the opportunity the Government might have to stand the consequences of public discontent.

I want to direct some remarks briefly to Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph who is a minister that I hold in regard for his capacity to implement projects. [*Desk thumping*] They should have clapped when I was talking about Mr. Chin Lee too. It is interesting. For Independent Senators the job is not easy. It is easy to take a side consistently week after week. There is no homework. You can almost predict what would be said for the Government side. I can tell you almost everything that would be said on the other side. I notice that Dr. Saith usually repeats in advance what some Senators are inclined to say. On the Benches here, we have, perhaps out of professional pride, to make some extra preparation so that we would not be unduly offensive, because offensiveness seems to be a commodity. We have to desist from that. It takes extra effort. That is why I refer to Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph.

The Senator is engaged heavily in housing expansion. I have told him privately that the squatting issue should be controlled. That is another matter which has contributed not only to incivility in different districts of the country, but also it has fed into more serious crimes by producing what I have called criminogenic conditions of life such as drugs, prostitution and petty crimes that move on to serious crimes as the children grow up. The task is very daunting. I would submit briefly—perhaps I would elaborate in a full budget speech—that we have to think about civic mobilization from the ground level. I have come across some evidence from European countries when they are building new housing developments, they design them in a way to achieve reduction and control of

crime. The methodology is called CPEPD. It is not CEPEP. This is a different thing. CPEPD means Crime Prevention through Environmental and Physical Design. If the Minister is so disposed I can pass some of the work to him. We have an opportunity now. I do not want on this occasion to dwell on the past. I have been terribly upset about Mr. Humphrey and squatter regularization which became a substitute for cultivating political patronage. It is clear. I live in areas where I know about what has been done to squatters. It is double jeopardy for them. You give them but you want back something in return on election day. I do not think that is the way to go. I have indicated my view on that to the hon. Senator privately.

Briefly, this provides an opportunity when he is starting on these housing developments, I am quite sure they would agree to plan the environmental design for which there are models to keep crime down and keep the areas crime free. We know that all over the world, New York primarily, Los Angeles some parts of London and Europe, wherever there is government subsidized housing, drug abuse, petty crimes and prostitution abound. This is not to stigmatize any particular group. That is the evidence. Because of that, countries have to step back and see what they can do in providing the subsidy, but yet keep the community civil. You ask any police officer in police stations in the areas close to or in the housing developments in this country such as La Horquetta and Maloney and they will tell you about crime. Young boys and girls are committing all kinds of crime because of the way the infrastructure is designed.

The Minister spoke about Laventille not having enough space. That is a cue to what I am speaking about. They will seek alternative means of expressing their energy. I am not excusing them for committing crimes. Nobody should commit a crime through poverty or opportunity. When you facilitate criminogenic behaviour it gives an opportunity to reshape the environment if you know how it could be done. This is an instance. I do not intend to spend too much time on that except to alert the Minister, in his own thoughtfulness, I think that he is capable of taking this advice to heart.

I refer you to page 7. I do not know if my distinguished colleague, Sen. Seetahal would speak. I want to make brief reference to this matter of providing financial assistance to 30 nationals of Trinidad and Tobago to pursue their legal education certificate in the Bahamas. I support that. My concern is lodged in a bigger issue which I first expressed through a question. Is this financial assistance tied to any conditionality that they should return to serve in any capacity? I wish to go no further because I am not aware of any conditionality. If there is none I believe that some should be put in for several reasons such as precedence, the

precedence in that many people have been sent on scholarships through taxpayers' money and even if they return the conditionality becomes subverted.

I am sure that the hon. Attorney General would agree with me. The office of Director of Public Prosecutions, the State Prosecutions Department could do with some strengthening. It is a pity. Not only is it understaffed through no fault of the Attorney General and the Government's policy; it is just the availability and the vulgar unevenness in the earnings that are disparate in the legal profession. It is a matter to which Sen. Mark referred. This free market business in the legal profession is not working. It is working for some, but justice in this country is now an economic commodity. You can only get the best justice depending on how much you can afford. When these lawyers come back trained with the knowledge and they see lawyers at commissions of enquiry getting \$300,000 and \$400,000-plus refreshers, you think their public service propensities would be embellished? On the contrary, they will tell the government they need equal pay. Several times over the last 10 years there has been some increase. I do not know when this would end. In terms of fees in the legal profession the market has gone literally crazy. We have seen some evidence of that. The Government has to pay because there is no alternative because the free market has gone loco. Where would we get dedicated, efficient and well trained state prosecutors in such a context? It worries me and I seize the opportunity to make brief reference.

When you look at it this way, moving the Minister of National Security and Rehabilitation would be less than a drop in a large bucket. We had a prime minister once acting as minister of national security and nothing happened. I can tell you that. I have the records. I must be balanced.

I support page 2 for several reasons all of which I will not go into except to make brief reference to one or two supporting points on the Caribbean Court of Justice. I am puzzled as to the reluctance to accept in principle the establishment of such a court, when so many countries in the Caribbean have had political independence for almost 40 years. The Caribbean is a peculiar place. It is a place not only of in-betweenity; it is a place full of love/hate sentiments. You never know what you want. There is a calypsonian who put it more eloquently than I could. Maestro sang *The Confused Trinidadian*. We never know what we want. We never care to spend the time to look at the logic of history and the expectation for the future, until England has almost decided to kick us out of the Privy Council. It is then we pick up our beds and decide to walk again rather than take the leadership and build our spirit of patriotism and self-confidence. I am quite sure that the Attorney General knows that the Privy Council will not be with us

much longer. We will have to do something and now is the time to do it. I take Sen. Mark's concerns. We would hate to see any political interference in the appointments or management of the court. We leave that for another time.

I would like to see more scholarships and research supporting such an institution. I am always proud of the work that my colleague, Sen. Seetahal, has produced on matters of evidence. We need more of that. If you forgive me I wrote something on the jury system. We are all doing our part but nothing compared to the work by my colleague. We need scholarship to support our institution. I think that it is embarrassing. I mean no offence to the lawyers here, but we practise without scholarship. We have the West Indian Law Reports. We had something published by the Law Association at that time of Trinidad and Tobago called *The Lawyer*. I had three articles in it. Forgive the reference. It shows that we need to build our scholarship. I think some lawyers or retired judges—a lot of these retired judges, I do not know if they are really retired when you look at what they do after they retire. Perhaps they get busier after than when they were on the Bench. We need scholarship so as to feed the culture of jurisprudence in the Caribbean. Perhaps that is why the public is so confused. We live and thrive in the midst of ignorance in the legal profession because we do not know how it functions. There are many things we do not know except for the works that come out now and again like the one to which I just referred.

As the irony of politics would have it, to me one of the only lawyers who, when he became Attorney General was going to do something about the legal profession to review the code of ethics and to get lawyers back—as you were trying to do when you were Minister of Health with the doctors, if I might remind you—was Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj. He appointed a committee to look into it but the lawyers pressured back. The lawyers do not take anything lying down so that became a dead horse. Along with the establishment of this court, whenever it sees the light of day, to have it lodged in a more enhanced, ethical and scholarly environment. Just as the system in England, the United States or even India and Australia have had theirs.

The major point I want to make concerns the arrangements for the oil revenue. I was prompted to do that by reading a number of concerns about what happens to the revenue especially when such revenue is preceded by questionable contractual arrangements. I do not make any accusation. Like the crime and national security issues, I am sounding a note of caution. One of the founders of OPEC, Pablo Perez Alfonzo, in 1975, said, "I call petroleum oil the devil's excrement." I think we know what that means. "It brings trouble. Look at this loucourant." Loucourant is

a Spanish word meaning waste. Corruption, consumption, our public services falling apart and debt we shall have for years to come.

It reminds me of what Michael Manley said about Trinidad's prosperity and how it passes through like diarrhoea. The Malaysian Prime Minister at an earlier time Lee Quan Yew related our wealth to our carnival mentality. We must not enter that era again. We must examine, reinforce and protect our Revenue Stabilization Fund which was one of the mechanisms used by Finland. When the oil dropped Finland was able to maintain the level of prosperity and social security that they had enjoyed previously. There was a phrase called the "dutch disease" which, without belabouring the point, explicated this more forcefully, that in the 1960's, when gas was discovered in the Netherlands, you had an inward flush of foreign currency which sent up the value of the dollar and other things, to the extent where the local currency became more expensive and the local products became less competitive. The Dutch economy suffered disastrously. Why? Because they had gained oil income profusely in previous years. In the Middle East it is the same story. Several Middle East countries conducted domestic expenditure at a 50 per cent increase and suffered the consequences thereafter.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. Dr. E. McKenzie*]

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President: Are you going to be more than five minutes? In that case we would take the tea break and return. Then, you can have your full 15 minutes.

4.25 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Madam President: Sen. Prof. Deosaran, you may continue.

Sen. Prof. R. Deosaran: Madam President, as I come to my conclusion on the extent to which oil revenues could create a vulgarized economy—not only by wastage and corruption, but also by attracting, surprisingly enough, an increase in serious crimes—one of the reasons that I am making these references is to alert the Government of our beloved country, as to the care it should take in handling our imminent prosperity in that regard. Of course, there is already a Revenue Stabilization Fund, which I think is very well handled. I would wish to add that something more graphic could be done to convince the international community

and our own citizens that the Government means business and it means decent business.

With reference to that, some of us might know the British government, inspired by its Prime Minister, Mr. Blair, has been promoting something called: An Extractive Industries Transparency. I am quite sure that Minister Enill may have heard about it—given his own interest in these matters—and is determined to proceed likewise. This encourages voluntary disclosures by big business for the public knowledge. A big oil company coming to invest in Trinidad and Tobago, through this arrangement, would have to voluntarily disclose certain features of its contractual obligations.

The reason that these matters are emerging as serious issues is that experience has taught us that oil and decency do not always mix. In an article in *The Economist* dated May 16, 2003, there is a headline which says: “Big oil’s dirty secrets” and it enumerated country by country—oil producing countries—that not only have suffered from this vulgarized prosperity that I am speaking about, but when the income is finished, more hardships are thrown upon the people, accompanied by an increase in the serious crime rate and the oil disappears, and we end up worst than where we were before, which is a very sad commentary on the management of a country’s natural resources. I do not have to belabour the point, but I have gone through some phases of structural adjustments: public servants had their salaries cut and a number of very deleterious consequences afflicted us after a certain period of oil prosperity. So the warnings I am giving are not to accuse, but merely to guide us into the required mood of governance over that prosperity.

In fact, as far back as 1997, the United States has had the Foreign Corrupt Practises Act, and there were several charges being laid against companies that we know that are now investing in Trinidad and Tobago. So the caution is there again in that regard. The day that the corrupt practice emerges from any one of these oil deals, it would spoil a government, which I believe, in many other areas is doing reasonably well. So, I say this for the benefit of the country, but also for the Government that is in power at this time.

One of the quotations in the article to which I referred, entitled; “Big oil’s dirty secrets”, ended in this way: “Sudden oil wealth affords ample opportunity for corrupting the politician who awards contracts to foreign oil firms” The warning is there underlined, and I could end by no better submission, but to warn the Government of this country to beware of the tides of oil, they do not always bear good news.

Madam President, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. Glenda Morean): Madam President, it was not my intention to join this debate this afternoon, but I feel constrained to deal with one or two matters that have been mentioned. The first matter is with respect to the question of integrity legislation. From the outset, this Government has indicated that it will spare no expense in dealing with corruption, and dealing with corruption means not only bringing those persons who may have been guilty of impropriety to justice, but it also means putting measures in place that are designed to prevent corruption from occurring.

With this objective in mind, the Ministry of the Attorney General embarked upon a comprehensive review of the anti-corruption strategy for Trinidad and Tobago. This review includes the establishment of a special anti-corruption agency, which would be equipped to monitor and investigate allegations of corruption and initiate prosecutions in both the public and private spheres.

Madam President, much talk is going around with respect to the cost of these investigations, both in terms of commissions of enquiry and forensic investigations. I am sure the investigations are costly and time-consuming but, as I have stated, the Government is going to spare no expense in dealing with this very serious problem, because we cannot afford to permit what transpired during the reign of the last regime, to ever occur again in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] The Government has to do whatever is legitimate to ensure that it does not suffer that same fate again.

In February, 2003, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme, one Mr. Bertrand de Spelville—a former commissioner of the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption—was engaged by this Government to advise on the development and implementation of the country's national anti-corruption strategy. Mr. de Spelville did his work and presented a report and the contents of that report are now the subject of a note before the Cabinet for a decision as to which model should be adopted—whether we will go with the new commission or whether we will beef up the Integrity Commission to ensure that we have the capability to deal with the whole issue of corruption in a holistic manner.

In fact, in Mr. de Spelville's report the consultant recommended that one of two strategies be adopted. One of the strategies is the new anti-corruption commission to be established as envisaged in the former Prevention of Corruption (Amdt.) Bill. It would be responsible for leading the implementation of the three elements of the strategy, and it would not have only a repressive role and that is important. The three elements to the strategy of fighting corruption are:

enforcement of the laws against corruption; prevention of corruption by eliminating opportunities for corruption from the systems and procedures; and prevention of corruption by public education and support and this third part is important, so that the people would be educated and they would be aware of the pitfalls.

The second alternative is that the Integrity Commission could be restructured and re-engineered to be the country's anti-corruption authority, responsible for leading the implementation of the three elements of the national strategy against corruption. I mention this to show that the Government is not asleep on this aspect of governance, and that it is working inexorably towards finding a solution to the problem.

So that while it is true that we are spending much money on investigations and on commissions of enquiry that is money well-spent; that is money better spent than the \$1 billion over-spent on the airport; [*Desk thumping*] that is money better spent than paying one man \$21 million for using his influence. So that we should have no quarrel with spending money to root out corruption. [*Desk thumping*] [*Interruption*] Madam President, may I be allowed to continue? There are some things that get to people and we understand why.

Madam President, with respect to corruption—because that is a serious matter and it destroys a county—we have to ensure that we do not allow that to happen. When other people make allegations against this Government, as I indicated before, those allegations are not going to be left unchallenged. For instance, certain allegations were made with respect to the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA). The Government promised that it would engage the forensic examiner to deal with the report.

Now, we have been dealing with investigations for sometime, and as we all know, investigations take time. [*Interruption*] I am hearing murmurs and rumours of where is the report, we would wait for the report, and when the report comes it would be brought right here because, as I said before, the PNM Government has no sacred cows. [*Desk thumping*] If anyone within this Government commits any impropriety, they would be dealt with just as we intend to deal with those on the other side, who are guilty of impropriety. [*Desk thumping*] So, when the report comes it would be brought here, so let not your heart be troubled, Senators would get the report.

Independent Sen. Prof. Deosaran raised the issue with respect to students in the Bahamas. Now, when we took over the reins of government in 2002, we met that situation—and this is a serious situation because of the limited resources of

the university—and as a result, the Government had to do something. With the opening up of the law school in the Bahamas, and through an arrangement made with the Council of Legal Education certain spaces became available, and the Government undertook to pay the full tuition—since it pays 80 per cent of the tuition in any event—and that was the arrangement. We paid that additional fee for those students because of the fact that in the Bahamas, the cost of living is much higher than it is in Trinidad and Tobago, and because this was a temporary measure, as such, there were no conditions attached.

A committee was established by the Government, through me—I think it was in March of 2002—to look into this whole question of places for the external students, and that committee has not yet completed its work. Again, because of the negotiations and the opening up of the school, these places became available, but there must be a long-term solution. One of the solutions suggested was to increase the facilities at the Hugh Wooding Law School, but there are many other factors which came into play when dealing with that matter which could not have been dealt with in the short-term, and that matter is still being looked at. So that is the present position with respect to the students in the Bahamas. Madam President, I just wanted to deal with these two matters in relation to what has been said.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, on a point of clarification, could the hon. Attorney General indicate to this Senate what are the difficulties in presenting to this Parliament the relevant forms that are needed for Members of Parliament and Ministers of Government to fill out the necessary returns so that we could send them to the Integrity Commission under the Integrity in Public Life Act of 2000? Eighteen months have passed and we are still awaiting those forms.

Sen. The Hon. G. Morean: The fact of the matter is that forms have been prepared and they are at present being revised by the legislative review committee. That is where they are at the moment. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, I am pleased to participate in this Bill, the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) Bill 2003, the objective of this Bill being to supplement and vary the appropriation provided by the Appropriation Act, 2003, and to authorize the utilization of any sums accruing from a reduction of expenditure under certain Heads of expenditure for the purpose of meeting the liability incurred by the Government.

I would first of all point out a few general issues that I want to deal with before I get into the specifics of each of the expenditure items. First of all, I must

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say to the Government of the day that the management of the public finance has deteriorated, notwithstanding the large number of Ministers of Finance in this current administration. [*Desk thumping*]

I also want to bring to the attention of this Senate the whole issue of transparency. I am not sure if at this point in time the Government has reversed the long-established policy of transparency. I say this because in preparation for this debate, I went on the Central Bank website, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) website and the World Bank website to look for a couple of reports so that I could inform my contribution and so forth. Normally, I would try to use the Central Bank reports. I must point out that the Central Bank reports are no longer timely. The latest report that I was able to use today was the March 2003 *Monetary Policy Report*. That was the last report. There are no quarterly bulletins. I do not know what has happened. The last quarterly bulletin was in November, 2000. So, probably, the Minister could tell us in this Senate why the Central Bank has stopped publishing such information which was rather timely and quite useful.

In addition, we are aware—the Minister may indicate to us—that there was an IMF mission that visited Trinidad and Tobago in very recent times and, usually, the report of those findings would normally appear on the IMF website, but when I went to that website there was no such report. Obviously, once they sought permission from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that report would have been available. I do not know if the findings of that mission were either positive or negative or what was the reason for not publishing such findings. Trinidad and Tobago should be in a positive position today, given what we have accomplished over the last six to seven years in terms of macro economic stability, and the whole issue of the strengthening of our economic indicators. I could not understand why such a report was not published.

The Member for St. Augustine, Mr. Winston Dookeran, always makes the point that this Government is a government by announcement and not by action, announcement of the desired effect and announcement of the actions that are to happen, but we do not see any action anywhere following from that announcement.

Madam President, I would also like to bring to the attention of the Ministers of Finance—because they are both here, and I want to acknowledge Sen. Christine Sahadeo as part of the finance team—what has happened to the public debt. I took the opportunity to print the March 2003 *Monetary Policy Report* and what is in this report—I was a little surprised—is what was spent to date to prop-up the foreign exchange rate. Under the section dealing with foreign exchange it

says:

“To help meet this demand...”

It is talking here about foreign exchange demand:

“Central Bank sales to the banks rose from US \$30 million in the third quarter of 2002 to US \$200 million in the fourth quarter.”

So in the fourth quarter, US \$200 million was spent on propping up the foreign exchange rate.

I think I may have heard it either from the Minister in his presentation or I may have read it in one of the Central Bank documents in which it was mentioned that there was a very high demand for foreign exchange coming down to the end of the year. In addition, we noted that there has been a reduction in inflows, because there have been very little foreign direct investments, but there has been some outflows, especially with respect to our Caricom neighbours and so forth. I could not understand that, but I still consider US \$200 million a very large sum in order to protect that foreign exchange rate.

What I was really interested in looking at was a more up-to-date report with respect to the position today and how much moneys have been spent to this effect. We are seeing a lot of spending and I would really like to get an update as to what is the status of the domestic debt situation. Where is it as it stands right now? Has there been a further decline? In order to put this debate in the proper context—when I am making my contribution, I like to put things in the proper context. I see this as our mini-plan; it came forward before and there were some variations to this plan, and the variations in this plan are telling us about the mindset, the thinking and the philosophy of the Government in taking this nation forward, and this is why I would like to review it in that context.

I now move to the areas of revenue and expenditure items. I had a little problem understanding how the figures were crunched, because the Minister mentioned—we know that the Minister was coming here for a supplemental of \$742 million so that is an increase in expenditure but, however, what was originally projected, based on the budget statement, was \$618 million, a deficit, but today I heard the Minister saying that with this extra amount of expenditure—let us leave the appropriation for the time being because all the appropriation is doing is taking out from one fund—so there was an increased expenditure of \$742 million and a projected deficit of just \$568 million which is \$50 million less than what was projected last year. Now, when I add up those figures it is telling me that we are still going to be in a deficit. My numbers may be wrong but the Minister could correct me in his response.

The Minister said he expected additional revenue of \$373 million in order to cover that debt—I am just quoting from what the Minister said. If we look at that figure and add up the figures, the Minister needs at least \$542 million plus another \$50 million, which is close to \$792 million, in additional revenues to cover this position. I am not sure how the Minister came up with that figure of \$372 million.

Obviously, the Minister was able to revise his budget statement and increase spending, because the Minister had anticipated improved revenue streams to the tune of \$800 million. That tells me about the whole thinking of this Government, in terms of the management of our public finances. I always like to compare this to the top business model. I have no problem with deficit financing—and I think I have made that point on the last two occasions; on the last Finance Bill and when the Government came with the Appropriation Bill for 2002—but how deficit financing is being used.

Are we going to use this to stimulate investments and savings in the economy? Is this deficit arising out of a need to promote economic activity through boosting the revenue earning capacity of the country? Once it is like that any seasoned businessman would say that there is no problem with that, and they would have no problem going into debt for that purpose, because they may experience this debt today—and I am sure that the Ministers would agree with me—but, however, down the road, they would have a long-term benefit coming in to cover them back in that position. I wanted to make this point open from the outset, because I want to deal with this revenue position. It is one thing to deal with expenditure and to talk about the many different expenditure items, but if we want to spend, we must have the revenues. So, we must also be spending enough to stimulate the economic activity in this country to be able to generate future revenue streams which are vastly improved.

On this basis, I just want to touch on a few of the areas. I would start with the energy sector and that is the recent signing of the agreement for the Atlantic LNG Train 4. Let me just say that having had the opportunity to participate in such negotiations, I find the clandestine nature of these negotiations does not lend itself well to what we have been promoting and, at least, what the Government has been promoting with respect to good transparency. Transparency becomes an issue even if we take into consideration what Sen. Prof. Deosaran just spoke about in terms of anti-corruption. Transparency alone could clean up that perception. The secrecy surrounding the decisions taken and all the commitments by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago—always remember that the Government has

taken these decisions and made such commitments on behalf of the citizens of this country with regard to a finite and depletable natural resource which is the province of the citizenry of this country and not the financiers of any political party.

I just want to quote from the statement made by the hon. Prime Minister on the Atlantic LNG Train 4. As one of its objectives this agreement speaks about the maximum benefits that it is going to bring to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I am of the humble view that these benefits, which have not been properly quantified, have not been communicated to the citizens of this country. The Prime Minister also indicated that this agreement will ensure continued prosperity and will provide a platform for a stronger social and economic development. How? These are the issues that I am interested in because it is these sorts of commitments that would tell us about future budgets and the way we should be spending today. He said this would help secure the country's future in the international environment, and that is very often characterized by uncertainty and volatility and that is something that we are very aware of in our dynamic global village.

However, the citizens of this country deserve some answers in the interest of transparency. Furthermore, this is the third time that I am calling on the Government to release the findings of the Gas Master Plan. Sen. Dr. Lenny Saith would remember me asking about the Gas Master Plan on at least three occasions. The Gas Master Plan addresses the optimum utilization and pricing for this finite and depletable resource.

Madam President, after the signing of the agreement of Trains 2 and 3, the then government committed to the people of Trinidad and Tobago that a comprehensive policy with respect to gas utilization and pricing would be developed. The Government then proceeded to commission this Gas Master Plan study, which was completed. We are well aware that the findings were submitted to this Government in early 2002 or if not, at the end of 2001. I am not sure if this plan has been shelved because the firm KENESJAY was not the selected contractor. Such a plan would have properly informed any such negotiations especially for Atlantic LNG Train 4.

I go now to some of the issues raised here by the Prime Minister, in terms of revenue generation. Natural gas pricing: With respect to the floor price, I asked this as a supplemental question at our last sitting when the Minister was asked to respond to the question on the Atlantic LNG Train 4 agreement. The importance of the floor price must be underscored. If the price of natural gas drops to a

dangerously low level, again, given the high volatility of international gas pricing—this is the same issue mentioned by the Prime Minister—and since all our revenue streams are dependent on such revenues from the gas-based sector then there must be a floor price to ensure that we could protect and secure some minimum level of that revenue stream. I say this because the same way that the Government mentioned in its document—when the statement was made in Parliament—that it expected to take about \$1.602 billion—the Government take at the wellhead is \$1.02 billion—without an appropriate floor price being negotiated and settled that could result in zero cents at the wellhead, because with the netback pricing arrangement—as the Prime Minister announced and the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries—with a netback pricing arrangement in place, one could almost end up with as much as zero cents at the wellhead.

In all the gas-based projects of Point Lisas—I think many Senators on the other side would be aware that it is one of the ways that the Government has been able to protect, at least, the minimum level of that revenue stream by having an appropriate floor price. I have asked this question and the Minister indicated last week that that information was confidential. I understand that negotiations are delicate and such details may be, and the confidential details and the specific figures may not be divulged, but we need to know if there has been any shift in that policy position, and that is whether or not a floor price has been maintained, because for the negotiations for Trains 2 and 3 and all the natural gas-based sectors in the Point Lisas area there are floor prices. *[Interruption]* Most of the projects, Sen. Dr. Saith, have floor prices; probably the projects that were negotiated under the PNM do not have floor prices.

The optimum use of natural gas: The Gas Master Plan was to inform the energy policy of this country with respect to the whole issue of the utilization of our gas. Again, there was a lot of work done on diversification, because of the impact of the commodity prices on the revenue streams from the gas-based sector. We have seen how many governments in the past have cringed at the thought of if methanol or ammonia prices should drop, the effect it would have on the revenue streams. As a result of that, the Gas Master Plan was there to address the diversification issue and the deepening in the gas-based sector.

As it stands right now, with the signing of the Atlantic LNG Train 4, 60 per cent of our reserves would now be allocated to LNG. Again, given, the netback pricing arrangement this would mean that revenue from the energy sector would again be highly dependent on international market conditions and the pricing of LNG. It was the policy of the United National Congress administration to attempt

to diversify and deepen the gas-based sector of the economy before proceeding with negotiations for Train 4.

Another issue addressed by the Gas Master Plan was the reserve to production ratio. I know that many people have different views on that issue and we are all entitled to our views. I noted that the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries shunned that issue when I asked that question with respect to the production ratio. I know this question is on the Order Paper and the answer is due next week, but with the signing of this particular agreement, such information should have been readily forthcoming. I say that because the reserve to production ratio is critical with respect to prospective projects in the gas-based sector. I am sure that every one is fully aware of that.

Madam President, are you aware that since 2001 to the present there has been very little exploration activity with respect to our deep-water exploration programme? This has not been successful and, as a result, there was no proving up of reserves. This is very important because it impacts on our reserve to production ratio and investors hold that ratio very dearly. The natural gas production was estimated at about 2 billion cubic feet per day, and with Atlantic LNG Train 4 coming in, it is close to 3 billion cubic feet per day, because that Train 4 is about 850 to 950 million cubic feet per day. With this sort of arrangement this is why there is more than 60 per cent of our current reserve position dedicated to LNG.

What are the country's prospects for other projects in the gas-based sector? If this reserve to production ratio falls to dangerously low levels, this would impact adversely on the future of prospective projects, based on some of the figures that I have used. The Government is free to come up with different figures, but based on the consumption rate for the Atlantic LNG Train 4, it is my estimation that the reserve to production ratio could fall below 15 years. This means that no investor is going to come to this country for another project unless that reserve production ratio moves to over 15 years. I say this because many of the investors who came to this country wanted as close to 15 to 20 years reserve to production ratio. Madam President, through you, Sen. Enill, just imagine that within 15 years all this could be done, and our whole natural gas sector could come to a halt if we do not address the reserve to production ratio.

I find this strange because we hear about Venezuela; there is also talk about a pipeline of the Caribbean, but I do not know where the gas is going to come from, and with all the political instability and fear of nationalism, bringing gas from Venezuela is more like gas in the sky than anything else. I really do not

understand how that sort of arrangement could even assist or enhance our reserve position. This is the only country with so many LNG trains and little natural gas reserves. It was brought to my attention that the technocrats in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries have already sounded all the alarm bells with respect to this particular issue. No banker is going to advise any investor to come to Trinidad and Tobago without a reserve to production ratio of 20 years.

One would recall that when we were discussing this issue with Norsk Hydro for the aluminum smelter plant—because the Prime Minister made mention in his speech about free electricity for the aluminum smelter plant—do you know for that very same aluminum smelter plant, no less than 30 years was required to even start discussions with Trinidad and Tobago? I want the Government to tell us a little more about that matter.

What has happened with projects like gas to liquids? With Atlantic LNG Train 4 on stream now, and no proving up of any more reserves, I am not sure what is happening to the other projects. I dare say the dream of Dr. Eric Williams, the father of the nation, would probably never come true. I do not know if Senators would recall that the father of the nation wanted an aluminum smelter plant using bauxite from Guyana, et cetera.

The other issue raised by the hon. Prime Minister was the downstream plant activity. The Prime Minister mentioned that the plant would be configured to allow 80 per cent extraction of ethane for processing into ethylene. The total extraction of ethane of Trains 1, 2, 3 and 4 would amount to 52,000 barrels per day to support this world scale ethylene plant. Let me just say from the outset, when the negotiations for Trains 2 and 3 were taking place, the feasibility and viability of that ethylene plant were explored, but the critical volume, in terms of ethane barrels per day, could not be realized with just those three Trains.

It was a firm policy decision that there would be no Train 4 unless there is an ironclad guarantee for an ethylene plant with possible participation for Trinidad and Tobago, through the national gas company or Petrotrin and for the participation in equity, together with the other three partners in Atlantic LNG. The only incentive that was considered for Train 4 at that time was the ethylene plant since it would have contributed significantly to that diversification process, and the deepening of the downstream gas-based sector. This is why I am so interested in knowing what has happened to the Gas Master Plan study, because I am sure that the Gas Master Plan study would have addressed those issues.

Madam President, what I find strange is that the Government signed an agreement for this Train 4, and it is only now talking about the prospects of an

ethylene plant. There are no guarantees in place for any participation, either through the National Gas Company or any commitments on the part of anyone for ethane to contribute to this ethylene plant, and that is what I have a serious concern for, because this was the benefit out of the Atlantic LNG Train 4 negotiations.

I just want to take a quick look at taxation, because the Prime Minister mentioned that one of his achievements in this negotiation was the whole issue of taxation and that there would have been no tax holidays and concessions, and the plant would be ring-fenced. Trains 2 and 3 were ring-fenced at the time of negotiations. There were no concessions and no tax holidays. The only tax holidays and concessions that were ever negotiated was for Train 1, and that was so, because when the UNC went into government they met a partially-completed negotiation for Train 1, which already had the tax concessions and tax holidays, et cetera in it. There was never any intention for Train 4 to have any access to tax holidays or concessions.

Likewise, the Prime Minister made mention about the royalty. The Prime Minister said that after the year 2017 the 10 per cent royalty rate would come into effect, but what he did not say was that matter was negotiated a long time ago—I think even from Train 1 days if my recollection serves me correct. It was agreed that as soon as the expiration of bpTT's licence—since bpTT is the only company that is licensed, all the other companies are production-sharing contracts—the 10 per cent royalty rate would have kicked in and that happened again when they were re-negotiating. The licence was expiring somewhere around 2017, so that was really no major achievement because that was already there from before.

I also want to take a quick look at the National Gas Company (NGC). The Prime Minister also mentioned purchasing gas from the Vermillion Petrotrin field, but that is a very small gas field. That field is about 60 million cubic feet per day. If one looks at the 950 million cubic feet which is close to 1 billion cubic feet being consumed by Atlantic LNG Train 4, we are just dealing with 6 per cent, and what happened under Trains 2 and 3 is that we moved along and gave the major producer—which would have been bpTT in those days—in getting Trains 2 and 3 as part of the negotiations. Madam President, bpTT and some of the other gas producers actually negotiated a price reduction to the NGC for gas, so it could have spurred prospective projects and other projects in the downstream activity in the gas-based sector. I say this because the floor price and the whole issue of reducing the gas price were the two deal breakers we had when we were negotiating for Trains 2 and 3.

We talked about widening, deepening and maximizing the return from the energy sector, and when we refer to the energy sector we are talking about the gas-based sector. So how are we going to maximize that if we do not negotiate some of those benefits which would in turn reap benefits for the people of Trinidad and Tobago? Because we would have been able to spur other gas-based projects and invite other investors, and the NGC itself would be able to improve its profitability position from a cheaper gas price.

The other issue is with respect to the concession of free gas for the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC), but no one has been able to quantify that to determine what has been the realizable value of that concession. It is timely that we are talking now about the whole issue of creating economic activity, because we have talked about these revenue streams. Everyone knows that the Government was planning towards Train 4 and what is to happen in this boom. I always say that there is a supply boom, which has to be properly monetized. Therefore, it takes a little more innovation on our part to monetize and maximize the return for us to be able to derive at these benefits.

I now come to the issue of local content. The Prime Minister made a song and dance in his speech on what he called “local value added”. He said that the contractor has agreed to include as an integral part of this agreement a detailed strategy to include local value added; to list all the activities, services and sub-contractors equipment supplies that are required for the project and those that are fully committed for local firms.

I want to inform this honourable Senate that only 40 per cent of the structural steel for the construction of Train 4 is being fabricated in Trinidad and Tobago. We are talking here about a large portion which is almost 60 per cent of the structural steel works and piping-fabrication is taking place abroad. Madam President, are you aware that in this particular scenario for Train 4—based on what I have seen on the papers—that there has been no invitation from local contractors for the bidding of carbon steel piping greater than 16 inches? Are you also aware that there has been no local bidding for stainless steel piping? Where is this local content? It has become more platitudes than tangibles. We have not really achieved any tangibles as it relates to the local value added.

If I just go back to the negotiations for Train 4, when the negotiations for Train 1 were concluded, it was negotiated that 40 per cent of such steel works and piping-fabrication would take place here in Trinidad and Tobago by local contractors. Do you know that in the negotiations for Trains 2 and 3 we had accomplished 60 per cent? It was estimated by the Ministry of Energy and

Energy Industries technocrats that this figure should have gone to 80 to 90 per cent for Train 4. I was disappointed with that because we have heard of no real figures or tangibles when it comes to negotiations for the local content.

Actually, the Prime Minister was right when he said that there were major differences with this agreement and prior agreements; the difference being that there is really no guarantee for local value added. There was nothing stated here that gives any guarantees to the local contractors of Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, the Government really has not been able to indicate the maximum local content negotiated; no value or figure has been quoted for that.

I also want to bring to the attention of this Senate a recent ad in the newspaper where Betchel formed a joint venture firm with a company by the name of Asset Risk Engineering. I think the citizens of this country need to know who are the principals of this firm. Is it a locally registered firm or is it an offshoot of KENESJAY? And we all know the principal is Ken S. Julien. I have a very serious problem with that because last week we heard the answer to another question, which dealt with a contract awarded to KENESJAY by the National Gas Company. I consider the principal of this firm who headed the negotiating team for LNG Train 4, Prof. Ken S. Julien—he having negotiated with the National Gas Company which was one of the companies involved in these negotiations—and here it is, the very firm KENESJAY was being awarded contracts for which there were no public advertisements by the National Gas Company.

Madam President, I consider that to be a very serious conflict of interest and I do not understand how the Government of the day—and I keep hearing the Attorney General talking about corruption and transparency—did not see that there was a very serious conflict of interest there, where the very same company, the National Gas Company, was one of the companies to benefit, participated in the whole negotiating process. The head of that negotiating team was Prof. Ken S. Julien and his firm received a contract for which there was no public bidding. The Government of the day says that there are no sacred cows and so forth, but I want to say to them, let us hear the action part of no “sacred cow”.

Madam President, how is the Government to maximize the returns to the citizens of this country if there is not enough ancillary economic activity associated with the depletion of this natural resource, which in turn would generate the very same personal income tax and corporation tax, which I am sure the Ministers in the Ministry of Finance are depending on in order to generate the revenue streams to fund this sort of deficit that they are looking at?

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Another issue in that whole negotiation is the relocation of Trinmar. To date, I have not heard anything with respect to that matter and it is my understanding—because even when I visited the Atlantic LNG plant, I was part of the delegation that went with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to the plant. It is obvious, it is well known and it is a well-established fact that there is no way that Trinmar could continue to operate where they are currently with Train 4 coming on stream, therefore, there is going to be a relocation of Trinmar. I am sure that the Government is fully aware of that. What is not known is who is going to pay for that relocation exercise. Is it the Government of the day? Is the Minister going to be budgeting another \$500,000 as a supplemental item before we meet the next budget in order to fund this relocation exercise? I am wondering if that was part of the agreement or did the Government get Atlantic LNG partners to commit to defraying the cost of the relocation of Trinmar.

Madam President, I must touch on the issue of the environment and the long suffering of residents of Point Fortin. I was a bit disappointed when I visited with the CPA and I looked at the Clifton Hill beach. The Clifton Hill beach, the Point Ligoure beach and the entire coastline have been destroyed. *[Interruption]* Madam President, instead of Senators grumbling on the other side, these are issues that we need to deal with. I am bringing up these issues because I want the Government to deal with them. I am not here just for political gain and short-term political points. I am just making my own observations.

Sen. Mark: And we will tell the people that on the campaign trail.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, the entire coastline of the southwest peninsula is eroding on a daily basis. What I am suggesting is that there should be some commitment on the part of all the partners of Atlantic LNG—including the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries—to look at the situation. I am sure they could adopt an approach where there could be some dynamic modeling and simulation, which could be done to ascertain the effects of the additional construction of Train 4. If we could accomplish this, at least, we would know what we have to deal with and where we are going.

What is the commitment with Atlantic LNG and its partners with respect to restoration arising out of this type of damage? Madam President, under Trains 2 and 3, I remember that it was negotiated that any environmental damage must be the responsibility of the partners. Under Train 1 there was a similar problem, and having recognized that, at least it was negotiated that there was a commitment from Atlantic LNG partners that they would take responsibility for restoration of

the environment, and that is why I am pointing this out. This is very important for us as a country. We cannot allow investors to come into this country, and at the end of the day, neglect our environment and treat it with such contempt.

6.00 p.m.

Recently, when I visited the Atlantic LNG plant, the beach had disappeared and I was so disappointed. I never realized that. Madam President, I do not know if you remember Clifton Hill beach; it was a beautiful beach. I remember as a child going to Clifton Hill beach and the beach is no more. Again, I appeal to the Government—*[Interruption]* Madam President, I hope they do not continue with Oh! Oh! etcetera.

Sen. Mark: Do not worry with them; the masses would deal with them eventually.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Anyhow, Madam President, I hope that the Government would be able to indicate, at the end of the day, if this or any further damage has been included in Train 4.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, I did not realize when you stood, so I apologize. I did not even know that my 45 minutes had expired. Just to wrap up, I had some other points that I wanted to make. I do not know if the Government Bench would have recognized that there has been some talk recently about the whole issue of kick-starting the economy. Come on Government Members, the economy is at a standstill for various reasons. The economy internationally is rather sluggish.

One of the issues that we must recognize is where we are in Trinidad and Tobago, and I am still of the firm belief—you may say that it may be an ambition but I still feel that Trinidad and Tobago is a haven for investors. And I still feel that we are not realizing the full potential of Trinidad and Tobago's economy. You see, we have been talking a lot—I know Sen. Mark and some of the Independent Senators spoke also on several of the expenditure items, but if you go through the expenditure items and given the constraint of time, a lot of those expenditure items that have been included here today do not represent, in any

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way, expenditure items that would boost the revenue earning capacity of the country.

I would just mention a few examples. When the hon. Member spoke about the Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL), I do not know if it is to prop up CEPEP; when he spoke about On-The-Job Training Programme, I find, in my own view that Sen. D. Montano needs to understand what the On-The-Job Training Programme is about. It has become nothing more than people being able to get some scab labour in their organization. If we want to talk about On-The-Job Training Programmes—I was looking on the Internet and there were several examples.

Even what you may find very strange is—would you believe—individual states in the United States which want to attract manufacturing and technology firms in terms of tax incentives, employ one person in the technology-based sector or in a software industry, and the second person whom they hire and train would get 200 per cent in tax credits for the cost of that person? Or, they may be given a certain percentage in tax credits for the salary.

Madam President, I noticed last week Thursday on the *Business Guardian* where the Trinidad and Tobago Stock Exchange Chairman was actually talking about the same issue about getting some tax incentives in order to ensure that they could widen the capital markets; they can encourage more companies to list on the Trinidad and Tobago Stock Exchange. You see, Madam President, we talk about moving the economy forward. How else can we move the economy forward without looking at our stock exchange? We talk about widening the capital market; we want to get people to participate in the energy sector; but you cannot get participation in the energy sector unless your capital markets are deepened. In order to do so—I agree with the Chairman of the Public Transport Service Corporation who said that he does need some sort of tax incentives and some sort of harmonization and synchronization with the tax laws in order to encourage and to give incentives to people listed on the stock exchange. That is the only way that we would be able to, at least, generate any prospect for the locals to participate in the energy sector, which we all know is highly capital intensive, but can also realize some very, very reasonable returns. It is on that basis that I was talking about stimulating the investment and saving opportunities—because I have not seen enough of that.

There is something I want to let the Ministers of Finance know—because I know they would tell me that this is not part of their budgeting process, and it is not part of how they account. If they take the model and the concept of

diversifying this economy and using the proceeds from the energy sector to build, what we call, a knowledge-based economy, which is of high intellectual capacity that is capable of exporting its services, then I would like the hon. Minister, on an annual basis, to look at—as much as you have a depletable resource like in a business model, you have an asset that is depreciating, which is our natural gas. If you put a depreciation cost to that and tell me how much of that are you building back in another asset, let us say the intellectual capacity of the economy, that would give you a good yardstick to tell you whether you are, in fact, transferring the benefits from the energy sector to the other sectors of the economy, and in so doing diversifying the economy. That is something I would like the hon. Ministers to look at again and they can come up with their own way of doing it. It is just an idea that I have thrown out there.

I just want to bring up the issue of the Desalination Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Desalcott)—because it has become an issue over the last week. This is again an opportunity where the Government does not understand business. I fail to understand when Sen. D. Montano speaks openly about the capital cost of \$112 million of this Desalination Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Desalcott) which the Government and WASA did not participate in. This very same company, WASA purchases at 4.45 per cubic metre from Desalcott and sells to the consumers at the Point Lisas Industrial Development Company at 7.75 per cubic metre or some figure like that. I do not understand why it is they are not making money from that. How is that as a cost? I thought that would have been a deal. I do not understand what is the problem.

Here it is you bring in Desalcott—by the way this is the same WASA Chief Executive Officer who is going to a world congress to boast with pride of our desalination plant and the same WASA CEO, who is now looking at a Train 5—actually, the next phase of it would be completed in August 2004, based on a newspaper report today in the *Business Guardian* again. And at this time, because we are talking about the additional Train—just like ALNG—we are looking at incremental cost. So they are saying that from the extra train—because of the capital cost that would be incurred—we could be buying the water at \$2.25 cents instead \$4.45 cents. I cannot understand for the life of me what is the problem.

Furthermore, during the drought season are you aware that a lot of the water from that very same desalination plant was used to service the country when the reservoirs were very low? I am sure the hon. Minister would be able to tell us that. So then what is the issue? This is why it brings me to the whole issue of corruption, because I keep hearing about this anti-corruption legislation, but I

want the Attorney General to understand something. I have no problem with the Government putting anti-corruption legislation and I have no problem with you going after corrupt public officials in this country; but not to score political points. Because at the end of the day the image of the country is being damaged.

I agree with Sen. Prof. Deosaran. This commission of enquiry has become a circus. Nobody knows what is going on with it again. We need a commission of enquiry into that Commission of Enquiry. [*Desk thumping*] It seems as though that by the end of the year there might be another airport. [*Desk thumping*] You see, Madam President, to this day she talks about the anti-corruption legislation. I want to know what is the delay—because I have it as a Motion under “Private Members—with this piece of legislation. It was in the last Law Reform Commission report and they vetted it; they approved it and they looked at the Singapore model and what the Attorney General has said today is nothing different from the draft bill that came under the United National Congress. So I am not sure if they are the ones who are afraid of corruption; or they have things to hide that they do not want the anti-corruption legislation. But you see, Madam President, you see this whole situation that has developed in this country, where corruption is concerned, I want the People’s National Movement to understand, please, that while they try to score cheap political points for a local government election, in two weeks time, they are damaging, long-term wise, the image of this country.

Do you know what the international companies are saying? Is it so easy for me to become tarnished and embroiled in confusion and bacchanal? I do not have the time, as a corporation, to come and clean up and to look at and to spend resources on this sort of thing. I have no problem, but do your investigation fairly and squarely. That is why I have always advocated that the Attorney General’s Office needs to be an independent one. This is why we needed constitution reform in this country, because there is need for a non-partisan appointment of the Attorney General. Because we are not seeing independence and objectivity when it comes to these investigations into corruption.

This is why I say it. Because you know elections would come and go and in two weeks time the local government election would be over and we would have to suffer the consequences from the politicking by the PNM. All this nonsense about a bag of goodies, “ramajaying” and damaging peoples’ reputations and persecution of innocent people. I want the Attorney General to be very aware because she is compromising her investigations. [*Interruption*] I wanted to get that off my chest because at the end of the day Government Ministers must understand that they do not represent only PNM supporters; they represent the entire country. And I come back and make that point again. [*Desk thumping*] They represent the entire nation.

Madam President, I just wanted to end off with the Minister of Finance by saying, again, that vision without an action is just dreaming. [*Desk thumping*]

Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand: Madam President, it is not all that easy to penetrate the language of accounting or to walk with confidence on the tight rope of budget balancing exercises. But if you had a sound colonial education and you survived it you could apply your mind to anything. So I have tried to apply my mind to this Bill, and I have laboured hard to work out the following.

We had expected a budget deficit of \$618.9 million, but this deficit would turn into a surplus of \$191.7 million and it seems to me that the logic of the Government is that since we were already braced for a deficit, let us go ahead and have a deficit. Because if we did that we would have \$618.9 million plus \$191.7 million to blow; a total of \$810.6 million to spend, since we were not expecting to be in surplus, and we have already braced to be in a deficit. We said that we were going to be in deficit and look we are making sure we are in deficit. This kind of logic seems to me to defy commonsense and it also defies housewifery logic. If I were expecting a deficit and it turned out that I do not have a deficit, and that, in fact, I am going into surplus—maybe, it is an ancestral thing or a genetic thing—what I would say is, good, the banks are not going to get any interest from me on this one. Frugality; prudence; I would save the money; I might invest the money; I might put it in the Revenue Stabilization Fund.

I had always understood that if we get any excess money from oil we are going to put it in the Revenue Stabilization Fund. I saw from the last budget statement that legislation was going to come here to make sure that the Revenue Stabilization Fund was properly established. So the first question is: If you are not going to put that money in the Revenue Stabilization Fund there must be a very good reason to spend it or you must have a very good place to invest it in order to bring you something. As I said, I would spend the money on something that was necessary to be done. Something I had not budgeted or bargained for. Even so, I would try and restrict my spending to the surplus. And I would thank the gnomes of Zurich—I do not know if they are living in Zurich again—that this year I was going to break even. Sure, I would blow the surplus but I am not going back into deficit deliberately. I would really need to have to spend the money.

Madam President, I really wish that Governments would handle taxpayers' money in this home-spun way; instead of feeling it is not theirs—well, it is not theirs yet anyway—so they could be expansive; they could live on the never, never, and let succeeding generations have to pay the price.

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So I looked at the document called the Senate and I looked at the first Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation Schedule, to see if I could find justification for what the hon. Minister said. The Minister spoke of new expenditures for new programmes; and he spoke of the need for increased expenditures in areas where implementation was proceeding at a rate faster than anticipated. I am only in the arts but the word “implementation” is a different word from “spending”. So I wanted to see whether implementation was proceeding so fast in a number of areas that we are well on schedule with what we had planned to do. In fact, that we are going so fast that we need some extra money—great progress. I do not mind if implementation is proceeding at a rate faster than is anticipated. I do not mind giving you more money. But if spending is proceeding at a rate faster than is anticipated, I am not giving any more money. I am going to check up on your implementation. And there is nothing here to indicate that implementation is proceeding, but money is spending.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs and Acting Prime Minister (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Madam President, according to Standing Order No. 9(2), I now move that this honourable Senate continues to sit until the end of business.

Question put and agreed to.

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Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Madam President, I am looking at these two phrases and I want to go to the first one, “new expenditures for new programmes”. Well, I would be charitable that he does not really mean “programmes”; he means “new liabilities” that he did not expect; liabilities that had not been anticipated or budgeted for.

In the Senate document, Item 18(a) says:

“Annual subsidy to BWIA to replace revenue foregone resulting from a reduction of airfare on the Domestic Airbridge.”

We did not really expect that, so that is reasonable. But I see that that is \$20 million. My mathematics is not so hot, but if the airfare has been reduced from \$300 to \$200 and you want \$20 million, you are telling me that 200,000 return tickets were sold. So make sure that the Auditor General does not catch up with you because if she does not I am going to catch up with you because I want to

know that there were really 200,000 tickets being subsidized to justify the \$20 million. In principle, this is a new expense, it was not expected; sure, go ahead, have it, but I do not see how there could be 200,000 tickets to be subsidized. So I think \$20 million is too much. Is the mathematics correct?

Sen. Dr. McKenzie: Yes, the mathematics is correct.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Number 23, impeccable. It states:

“The Government of Trinidad and Tobago’s share of the cost involved in the establishment and operation of the Caribbean Court of Justice.”

They say that it is a one-off contribution to the trust fund. I hope they do not come back next year and say that they have to make another contribution. Yes, I do that—and although we are under threat from Sen. Mark, I would like to appeal to him—is he here?

Sen. Dr. McKenzie: Yes, he is here; he is hearing you.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: I would like to appeal to him to use his good office and show his pride in our country's independence and in the independence of the Judiciary to persuade his colleagues to make an exception and support our immediate participation in the Caribbean Court of Justice. [*Desk thumping*]

Another item that I feel we have to pay up but we could have anticipated it—and I do not know why, year after year after year, we do not anticipate it—is “Item 25; Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, \$9,100,000—Payment of compensation to farmers for crops damaged by flooding during the period November to December 2001 and March to July, 2002”; year after year.

Sometime before the imposition of the desalination plant—because that matter never came to Parliament—Sen. Prof. Kenny and I did our best to point out that this country had rainfall and a water supply, which, if captured, could more than serve the needs of the country. And we said that a desalination plant was a totally wrong, bad and possibly corrupt investment. We spoke about re-forestation; we spoke about the water table; we spoke about wells; we spoke about lakes in which there could have been tilapia; we spoke about lakes that could be used for boating as part of the tourism industry; we spoke about how we are going to collect our water in the right way—that would involve us in keeping our rivers clear; it would involve us in getting rid of some of the bush fires, and protecting our lands. We would be able to deal with drought; we would have our own rain water to use in the dry season. So the flooding would have stopped because we have collected the water and the drought would have been alleviated.

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So when year after year farmers have to be given compensation for flooding, I give it grudgingly; the poor fellows need it, but something has to be wrong in our planning that there is this annual problem of having to compensate farmers for flooding and we also have the other problem of persons bawling that they are not getting water because of the drought.

I have another grouse—I am sorry the hon. Minister is not present. I am very disturbed about the growth of the bottled-water selling industry. I do not know if there is a conspiracy somewhere to allow these people to make money. This is a small country and we are giving the Chief Executive Officer of WASA a set of money; plenty salaries going there; they are getting free houses, subsidized houses or cheap houses and so on, why can WASA not guarantee citizens of this country that they are delivering water that is safe for us to drink? That is not an impossible task. Madam President, I drifted a little; I am really dealing with that money for farmers. I only drink bottled water when it is given to me free of charge, or if I visit persons in whose drinking glasses I do not want to drink from, I would take the entire bottle. But at home I am not drinking that. I have already told my wife that if I die after drinking water from the tap, she should sue WASA and make sure and get plenty money from WASA for poisoning me. I would continue to believe, every day of my life, that WASA is delivering water that is safe for drinking.

There are some expenses or liabilities that were not anticipated and it seems to me to be justifiable and that we could not put off paying them. But when I look at the Senate document most of the new expenses could have been anticipated and budgeted for, and in many cases there are calls for more money due to overspending and not from over-implementing. Why do we have to come here and approve money for shortfall in provision for payment of arrears of increments to teachers? When I first read it, I said “shortfall in the provision for the payment of arrears of increments to teachers for the period 1987 to 1995”. So I said that we knew about this thing from 1987 to 1995 so why is it a shortfall? Why did you not say that it was not worked out properly and it was a mistake? What is a shortfall? *[Interruption]* The hon. Minister knew that it was not paid, so why a shortfall?

I want to look at some other things where I am very skeptical. With respect to 18(c)—Madam President, it is two months before the end of the financial year and they are saying here, I quote:

“Expansion works to be undertaken at Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited.”

Why does the Government want that now? Why could they not put it in the new budget? Maybe, the hon. Minister would explain why it has to be done now and why it cannot wait for the new budget. [*Interruption*] Madam President, it is the \$40 million figure that I do not understand—“additional equity in PLIPDECO to maintain our percentage holding”. Is that \$40 million plus expansion works to be undertaken—unless by some metamorphosis they mean the same thing. I think they mean two different things. And I am asking about the expansion works to be undertaken at PLIPDECO, and I am asking: Was it necessary to come to ask for this just two months before the end of the financial year? Unless it was done already and we are owing.

I would also like to look at Item 30 on the Senate document—additional, \$671,000. When you are in the Senate and you are in the Parliament you would say, this one is a piddling sum these days—only 671,000. Item 30 states:

“The additional funds are necessary to meet cost relating to the filling of the under-mentioned contract positions.”

Why can they not wait for the new budget? Have these people been appointed already? Have they gotten the work already? What is the necessity? Remember I am in surplus. I do not want to go into deficit unless I really have to, so why am I doing this?

Madam President, Item 39, again, which says:

“To settle arrears of increments owed to Trinidad and Tobago Postal Workers;”

We knew about that. Why was that not budgeted for? Mistake.

Item 43—this is the one that is really worrying me—Ministry of Works and Transport, \$95 million to do what? To do things that they should have anticipated and they should have been doing as an ongoing exercise. Did something new happen to make it necessary to clear rivers? To carry out flood mitigation works? All these items seemed to me to have been things that could have been dealt with in the presentation of the budget. I take it that it is a confession of slackness, or a mistake that these things were not budgeted for before hand. That is what confuses ordinary people. The country's business is being discussed here; the country's finances are being discussed here; the press—well, they do not understand anything anyway—come and sit and they are writing things that they do not understand. I am just making the point that I know hon. Minister Enill, in September, will listen to this and present a literary-critic friendly budget and we will all understand it.

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I now go to Item 46, which really worries me. I see here that they want \$5.3 million for the provision of security and maintenance for the four new stadiums. So what? Are there no security arrangements at present? Is there no maintenance vote at present? We did not know we had the stadiums and we needed security and maintenance? Is this something new?

Then I see Item 46(b), which says:

“To meet the cost of the preparation of a revised national sport policy for Trinidad and Tobago.”

Which consultant is doing that? I am a consultant too, you know. If there is money sharing so, bring it. Why do we have to do this two months before the end of the financial year? What is the urgency of this? This is so vague; I do not know what it means: “To meet the cost of the preparation of a revised national sport policy for Trinidad and Tobago.” What is going on there?

Then \$8 million is needed to meet the cost of the expansion of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme. I wonder how many hon. Senators know anything about what goes on in YTEPP. The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), as far as the teachers are concerned, exists for them to go and teach two or three students who do not always come. So we are spending money on YTEPP—I wonder when last we have made a survey of what YTEPP does. All the teachers who are teaching it are heartbroken because they get intermittent and irregular attendance and few people finish off what they are doing and all the teachers are saying is, “Oh, gosh, I hope more don’t drop out because if more drop out I would lose money.” It is a little handout at YTEPP at the moment.

I do not want to “pound” the hon. Minister but with respect to the On-The-Job Training Programme—\$26 million for the year 2003. I always thought that with respect to an On-The-Job Training Programme the firms would have met most of the expenses. You go in there and you get a small salary. Or, are we subsidizing the salary that is given to these persons? If it is half and half it is a lot of money. And the same company benefits; the company has these people in as apprentices; they work them as “dogs bodies” so the company should pay them. I do not see why we should—and then to come at this last minute and ask for \$26 million.

So I have questions about some of the items here that are not necessary—and like everybody else—I wonder about the \$13 million going to LIAT. I know some of the people involved in these negotiations. When I was a lecturer at the university campus he was a cigarette-smoking radical and a smart man in social

sciences, and I am telling you that our Prime Minister is going to be inveigled into giving money to other Prime Ministers and we would get nothing for it. The \$13 million that we gave before that is down the drain. So if this thing is a loan, I want to see it as a loan; I want to see the conditions of repayment and no amount of buddy-buddy and hugging up; and talk about how we would form a small federation and so on, none of that is going to stop us from getting back our money.

We go now to Item 18(b). I heard one of the Ministers in the Ministry of Finance offering Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar a 40 per cent discount on a ticket to Cuba. He told her that they are starting on June 24 and she could come too and it is 40 per cent discount she would get.

Madam President, Item 18(b) says:

“To meet the cost of the strategy for development of airlinks to Central and South America utilizing the strategy of guaranteed purchase of seats.”

What is this all about? We are targeting Cuba, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, and we are paying out \$16.3 million in airline tickets. Who are riding those free planes? Is it the businessmen? All of them are going there with two bundles of bhaji; 20 pounds of tomatoes and five topi-tambos? What is it all about? Are they doing their own private trade missions? Are we subsidizing the businessmen to make trips to these countries to set up trading links? Are those countries to which we are going, paying any part of the price of the ticket? Trade is not a one-way thing where you go and buy people things; you buy and you sell. If they have an interest in it, and it is nothing spurious then they should say, “Okay, we want to set up trade relations; let us have a system whereby both our Governments could put up some money to fund tickets for our citizens to travel.”

But I do not understand what it means to try and integrate the Trinidad and Tobago economy into Latin America. I do not want to integrate the Trinidad and Tobago economy into Latin America at all. I want to sell them more than they are selling to me. That is all I want to do. And I prefer to spend money to encourage high quality production here—because if you have something good to sell people are bound to buy it. Maybe, that is not true but I am not spending \$16.3 million every year—between June 24 and the end of this financial year, we have to give \$16.3 million to buy seats from BWIA to get this initiative off the ground. So I am not too happy about that at all, Madam President.

In the last part of my contribution I want to focus on the provision with respect to education. Maybe the hon. Minister would tell me if I am reading it

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wrong, but according to the schedule it says an increase of \$113,983, and according to the Senate document it says \$114 million. So page 19 of the first supplementation schedule says that the increase is \$130; and page 2 of the Senate document says \$114,929, whereas the supplementation schedule says that the increase is \$130 million. Is that a typographical error? Which is the correct figure? [*Interruption*] All right, there is an explanation that 16 of the variations have gone there. As I said, it is very difficult to walk this kind of jungle.

Madam President, I have, on two or three occasions, said to the Minister of Education and, therefore, I do not mind saying it now, it is my considered opinion that the Ministry of Education has fallen under the influence of a set of old fogies and minds of the past who are bringing their outdated vision to the development of education and the work of reform is in the hands of the very officials who created the mess that the system is in. And in the meantime we are spending money—a fatal and excessive reliance upon foreign consultants and local consultants of doubtful repute. That is the mess that the Ministry of Education is in, Madam President.

I want to look at page 2 of the Senate document. Item 26(a) says:

“To meet a shortfall...”

As I said, we already knew that. It should have been budgeted for.

Item 26(b) says:

“(i) 3rd tranche provision for library and textbooks”

We had budgeted \$28 million for that and it is now going up to \$38 million. So there is an extra \$10 million being asked for provision for library and textbooks. Madam President, if you know what a colossal waste of money that is.

Before the latest textbook scandal broke, I went to the Minister of Education and I told her that I have had justiciable evidence of booksellers, who were correcting textbooks because they were given inside information from members of the textbook committee before the textbook committee had reported. I told her that there was unrest in the whole exercise because the booksellers, the principals, the authors were not satisfied with the way things were going. She said, all right, she would look at it. Then we see the textbook committee puts in a report and it clearly says that certain books are unsuitable and then it goes and recommends those books. When the mark bursts and the newspapers gets it, the Ministry says, “Do not worry; we would give some supplementary texts.” That is where some of that money is going. We are going to give them some free books to add to the

bad book that we told them is recommended. That is just a minor part of the problem; the real problem is that we have to create our own textbooks.

Madam President, we had bookmaking facilities at the Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre; very fine printing and binding facilities. And there was a place where you could get the teachers together. The easiest thing in the world is to put out an advertisement saying that we want to create a textbook for standard three in English. All teachers who teach standard 3 and who know the English curriculum let us hear what are your ideas. Bring them down to the centre; talk to them; find out who are the good teachers; form a group of teachers; work on a manuscript; circulate the manuscript around schools to see how it works; and you end up with a textbook created by your best teachers and tested in your schools and then you are ready to go.

The operation is going to be one that would improve teaching; it would improve the sense of responsibility and commitment of our teachers; it would do a lot for the printing industry; it would make use of the Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre; and it would allow us to design a new kind of textbook which is shaped by the change in sensibility that has occurred in the last 50 years. No child reading a textbook today just wants to see the words on the page; they want words; they want pictures; they want charts; they want what they are seeing on television and they want what they are seeing on the computer. We have to create a kind of textbook which marries the word to the other forms of communication which are a natural part of the sensibility of the present generation of children.

So we are still importing these textbooks, which are designed and manufactured overseas. Our children are quite modern. They have problems with them. And we have a chance to sit and work them out. Look how much we are spending. We have the time; we have the money and we have the skills to produce our own textbooks. So I am very unhappy that we continue to just send money down the drain on the purchase of usually foreign-created textbooks which are inappropriate when they first come and are even more so one year later.

Madam President, when I look at an item here—it is really pathetic—Item 26(b)(ii), “payment of outstanding bills”. What is that? Is that for roti? Is that for paper? Is it a taxi fare? I do not know. Are you coming to account to the Parliament for money that you want and say “payment of outstanding Bills”? That means nothing.

Then in 26(b)(iii) “construction of primary and secondary schools”. That is bad enough. But down below we see additional funds for the construction of the following schools. That is in the development budget. Are these new schools? Are these increases in schools that we have already planned? It raises questions because down below in (c) there is “Additional funds for the construction of the following schools”. So any sensible person would want to think that construction of primary and secondary schools cannot be additional funds for the construction. They would have to feel that this is something new that is coming up. Construction is not the same as renovation or refurbishment. I do not know what it means. I feel we need a police officer. I do not know how the costs can go up so fast.

The Caroni Village SDMS Boys’ School has moved from \$2 million to \$4.5 million; Charlieville ASJA Boys’ Secondary—from \$2 million to \$4 million; Charlieville ASJA Girls’ Secondary—from \$2 million to \$4 million; Sangre Grande SWAHA Hindu College—\$2.5 to 5.5 million; Ste. Madeleine Government School—from \$5 million up to \$8 million; Cunupia—from \$6 million to \$10 million. I would really like to know how we account for these increased costs. They are coming to tell us that they have to pay it, but I want to know why we are allowing the cost to multiply by over 100 per cent within a space of one year.

Then to rub salt into the wound you look at the kind of money that is being spent on special education. This is a country whose conscience I think has begun to be awakened and whose eyes have begun to be opened to the plight of the differently-abled people in our society. When you look at their needs—I cannot find that figure—in the 2002/2003 budget under special education:

Refurbishment of school for the blind—\$200,000;

Refurbishment of school for the deaf—\$100,000;

Lady Hochoy Centre—\$500,000;

Audrey Jeffers School for the Deaf—\$180,000;

Princess Elizabeth Centre—\$180,000.

Madam President, when you think of the lavish increases in the ordinary schools, and you think about this gaping need in the society for these deaf, dumb and in other ways differently-empowered children, I feel that they could come here and ask for much more money for these schools and I would have no qualms about saying, “Yes, go ahead”.

I just went through the details of it to suggest that when a Government is coming with a Bill like this and it wants to talk about transfers from one Ministry to another; and it wants additional funds to what is being voted, it has a duty to show us its implementation record and to prove that the money that is needed to be spent needs to be spent. The fact that it is two months before the end of the financial year makes this an even stronger necessity.

On page 87 of the development programme I want to take my cue from a sum given to consultancy services of \$1,800,000. Madam President, just to bring to your attention and to the attention of hon. Senators, that there was a newspaper advertisement recently inviting teachers to be trained for the diploma in technology education, which was going to be taught by facilitators from Mount St. Vincent University. Mount St. Vincent University is a small university with approximately 3,500 students, which up to about five years ago, was just a women's university; the whole syllabus or curriculum was directed by what the patriarchs and the patriarchy would think is appropriate women's education which means that it is not a science university at all. Up to this time it is very weak in science and technology. It does not have departments or faculties of science and technology. And this university, a number of years ago, got some of our hard earned IADB loan to prepare the Secondary Education and Modernization Programme (SEMP) curriculum for technology education.

7.00 p.m.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. Dr. E. McKenzie*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Thank you, Madam President and hon. Senators. They got a contract to prepare the SEMP curriculum for technology education, and when that curriculum was examined about a year ago at a consultation, it was found to be riddled with misconceptions and over-reliant on imported kits and high-technology equipment which would continue to cost us year after year after year. That is the history of Mount St. Vincent's involvement in our education system. But believe it or not, this same Mount St. Vincent University was given a Canadian \$188,000 contract to design, develop and deliver a technology programme for teachers in our secondary schools, and that Canadian \$188,000 is just a start. It is a more lucrative contract than that.

Madam President, I want to go with you to part of the evaluation. Three bodies applied for this contract. One of them was Edu-Systems Inc which is an education business company. They are essentially a middleman, a service company. They would find a university to get to do the work after they get the contract. It is a typical Trini type of thing. The other people who applied were Mount St. Vincent and the University of the West Indies, Faculty of Humanities and Education.

Here are the scores. These people are mad, because I do not know if it is out of 10, 12 or 20:

General background of the University: Mount St. Vincent, 8.75; Edu-Systems Inc, 8.75; UWI, 3.75. Similar work done/prior experience: Mount St. Vincent, 12.6; Edu-Systems, 9.5; UWI, 6.5. Qualification and experience of personnel—this is so impertinent, insulting and disgusting—Mount St. Vincent, 20.25; Edu-Systems, 20; UWI, 8.5. Proposed implementation plan: Mount St. Vincent, 23; Edu-Systems, 12; UWI, 9.5. Accreditation status—The UWI, whether you like it or not, is a major university in the Western Hemisphere.

Sen. Seetahal: In the world.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: Accreditation status: Mount St. Vincent, 10; Edu-Systems, 5.75; UWI, 1.75. I will tell you who did it too just now. Financial capacity: Mount St. Vincent 10, Edu-Systems, 0; UWI, 0.

Sen. Dumas: Madam President, could we ask what he is reading from and the date.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: I am reading from the report of the evaluation team. This information was got by Mr. David Subran who wrote under the Freedom of Information Act and got this information from the Central Tenders Board:

“I wish to refer to your request dated 23rd September 2002 under the Freedom of Information Act 1999 and to submit the following:—

(1) Amount (\$) bid by each tenderer:

The contract was awarded to Mount St. Vincent University at a fee of \$188,000 (Can)...

(2) Positions held by Members of the Evaluation Team”

I am giving the public the names. So they could go and hang them.

“Mr. Stephen Joseph Assistant Programme Coordinator,
Qualitative Improvement, SEMPCU,
Chairman”

I hope he is not your brother, hon. Senator.

Sen. Joseph: No he is not.

Sen. Prof. K. Ramchand: “Ms. Sharon Mangroo Director of
Operations,
Technical/Vocational
Education &
Training, Ministry of
Education

Mr. Lloyd Pujadas Director of
Curriculum,
Ministry of
Education

Ms. Susan Smith Contract Officer III
(Ag.) Central
Tenders Board.”

So these four people, if I could have used a bad word, I would tell you what they did on our university. I would not use it, but just imagine it.

So, Madam President, I am telling you, the people who know about energy and know about other areas to do the kind of thing I am doing, might find similar holes in the budget. I am not saying that what is happening in education is happening everywhere, but I am drawing the attention of this honourable Senate through this budget debate to some very severe problems of respect, self-respect, orientation and vision in the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education is, in everybody's opinion, the most important ministry in the country because this is where our people are being shaped and formed.

Madam President, on that note, I thank you.

The Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano): Madam President, I will not be too long. I see two of the Senators whose statements I wanted to deal with have left the Chamber. Let me go backwards and start with Sen. Prof. Ramchand. Despite the explanations that have been made in the Chamber about how the Revenue Stabilization Fund works, there seems to be a continuing lack of understanding as to how the system works.

People seem to think that because the price of oil is above the benchmark that was used in the preparation of the budget, that difference automatically goes into the Revenue Stabilization Fund. That is not how it is done. How it is done is that the benchmark that is used in the preparation of the budget is used to do a calculation in terms of total revenues for the year. That is based on basically two factors. One is the price of oil, but the other is the level of investment that the companies will be making in further drilling activities.

The calculation is based on submissions that are made by the oil companies themselves. If, however, they tend to explore more than they had budgeted for, then the net revenues earned by the State are therefore less, regardless of the price. Therefore, even if your actual price of oil can go to \$30 or \$40, you might still not meet your revenue target, and it is as simple as that. Therefore, it is the excess of the revenue target, not the price of oil, but the revenue target that gets put into the Revenue Stabilization Fund. We will be bringing very soon legislation to regulate the Revenue Stabilization Fund, and it is very likely that there will be a contribution made to the fund in this financial year.

The Senator was talking about bottled water and WASA. It is a free market. If anybody wants to bottle water, it can be just ordinary water; it can be pink, yellow, green, whatever they want, they are free to do that. There is nothing wrong with WASA's water. The only issue is because of the source of where it comes from, water in WASA has to be treated with all sorts of chemicals—chlorine, fluorine and all sorts of other things to take sediment out of it. Therefore, the water that you get has a taste. Some people do not like it. It is perfectly potable, perfectly good for you, but it has a taste, therefore, there are those who are affluent enough who feel they do not want to drink that water because they do not like the taste of it. It has nothing to do with anything else. WASA's water is perfectly good and has been for many years.

The Senator mentioned YTEPP and On-the-Job Training programme. Let me deal with that a little. YTEPP, in spite of the comments of the Senator, is an extremely useful programme. It was set up by the NAR, I think, in 1988 or '89. Presently, it has a throughput of approximately 8,000 students in two tranches. About four thousand and four thousand. The reality is that these students are receiving a level of education and training that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to get. That is the reality. It gives them a skill, and it is a measured skill.

What is done is monitored by the National Training Agency and the certificates that they get are certified, the TTNVQ level one. Now that is not very

high, but it is a certain level. They teach masonry, carpentry, plumbing, dress making, dress design, caring for hair, all sorts of things, and people are able to fend for themselves and to employ themselves and make a living. That is what education is all about.

Yes, it is fairly rudimentary and I have asked the board to see whether, in fact, they cannot take the programme up to TTNVQ level two so that students going in can do level one and if they are good enough they can go on to level two, but understand, we are talking about persons who have pretty well dropped out of the educational system. They do not read well, write well, they only understand very basic mathematics and, therefore, it is designed to deal with that level. Now, we are hoping that we can raise the whole level of the programme, but it is an extremely useful programme. As I said, it is about 8,000 beneficiaries of YTEPP each year.

The On-the-Job Training programme is also an extremely useful programme. It was set up during the early 1990s and stopped when the UNC came into power and restarted again last year with the mandate that they must put through 10,000 students each year. The rationale behind the programme is that there are far too many kids who come out of school and either with O'levels, A'levels or even say from COSTAATT with some sort of a technical degree, and even from the University of West Indies, because we have, believe it or not, several hundred graduates from UWI who have come through the programme here.

The problem is that they enter the job market and employers say, "Do you have any experience?" And they say no. It is a question of, how do I get the experience before I can get a job? Many employers are unwilling to go through the effort of trying to give them any experience and train them because they feel that as soon as they have a rudiment of training, they will leave. Therefore, the programme was designed to rescue those students.

At this point, there are almost 5,000 beneficiaries of OJT this year. We are behind schedule because of the funding. What had happened was that Sen. Ramchand had asked why we came at the last minute for \$27 million. We did not come at the last minute for \$27 million. We started off a year ago requesting \$60 million. We got \$17 million. Therefore, the programme, for 10,000 students simply could not be done with \$17 million, so we knew from day one that we would run out of funds, but the Ministry of Finance said, "Listen, when you get there, come back and talk to us." And that is exactly what we have done.

Because of the limited resources, we have been waiting since May for the releases. In fact, we had difficulty meeting salaries for the month of June because

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the exercise that we are doing here today was not done and we had exhausted all of the funds, and to meet the salaries we had to pull funds from overseas travel, all sorts of other things.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand: Madam President, I thank the Minister for the information. I am not really hostile to the programmes, but can he say whether the new university, the technical university, will take these programmes under its protection?

Sen. The Hon. D. Montano: Not directly. What is likely to happen is when the new university starts, a major part of what you now know as TTIT will form the nucleus of the new university. Most, if not all of the programmes at TTIT are what you call a co-op type programme. The students have to work and study, so that it is dealing with that as they go along. So we will deal with that when we get there and we have a lot more to talk about then.

Also, the Senator had asked about the \$30 million transfer to Liat. Well, \$30 million is not being given to Liat. It is being loaned to the governments that have a shareholding in Liat. It is an interest free loan with a moratorium but I cannot remember how long the moratorium is for.

The rationale is very simple. There are those who are fairly hostile towards relationships with the smaller islands, but the reality is that they are very significant to a great many manufacturers in Trinidad and Tobago, and the slippage of their economies is having a fairly significant impact on our economy. Most of the exports that are done from Trinidad in terms of the manufacturing base are exported within Caricom, not outside of Caricom. It is extremely difficult to penetrate outside of the Caricom market.

Now, this is why the next issue that he had raised, why the level of the \$16 million support to BWIA to penetrate to Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica, the reality is that those are enormous markets for Trinidad and Tobago. The Dominican Republic has a population, I think, of about 11 million. Cuba has a population of about 17 million and Costa Rica is about 8 million. So when you look at the size of those markets compared to Caricom, the opportunities there are absolutely horrific and, therefore, we have to do everything that we can do to penetrate those markets.

Marketing and the global economy is not a one-way trade, and we cannot adopt the position that we want to sell to them, but we do not want to buy from them. We cannot do that. Our manufacturing sector must do what they can to compete on the marketplace, and we must simply do better than they can. We

believe that they can. We have been doing it successfully in small ways and we think that if we are able to get into the market in the Dominican Republic or into Cuba, our manufacturers will be extremely successful, and to support our national airline in developing these routes which we hope will be trade routes is the logic behind it.

Now, the \$16 million was worked out in order to put the airline in a position where it would be simply breaking even on those flights. That is all. Not so that they will be making any big set of money. Just so that they will be breaking even. Bear in mind that what we are looking at is the long-term economic advantage that will accrue eventually to our manufacturing sector.

There are also other avenues for advantage. For those merchants who do not manufacture anything but purchase from the United States, Britain, the Far East, or whatever, there may be alternatives in these markets that may be cheaper and we simply do not know anything about them. Therefore, we are trying to develop those links. If we can import at less than what we are importing for now, it means that the prices of whatever it is fall, it means the cost of living here is less. That is the logic behind it.

The Senator started to make some statements about the University of the West Indies and how it ranked up against this university in Canada. I do not know that school in Canada, but Senator, let me assure you that in the international arena, the University of the West Indies does not have the reputation that some think it has. I would certainly like to think that it should have, and it is certainly my mission to make it so, but my understanding is that there is a significant myopia in terms of how we view the University of the West Indies, and while we would like to say that it is a premiere international institution, it is not, Sir. It is a good school, but it is not a premiere international school. It can be, it should be and it must be. So I agree with you on those issues.

I wanted to talk a little also about something that Sen. Seepersad-Bachan mentioned and she referred to me, some statements that I made a few nights ago about the desalination plant. Allow me to just clear the air in the Senate here as to exactly what she was talking about, because she misled us.

What she was saying was exactly what I had said the other night, and it is that under the last administration, in order to justify the desalination plant, it was propagated that water would be purchased from DesalCott at \$4.45 and sold to the companies in Point Lisas at \$7.05 or something of the sort. It was in excess of \$7.

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The issue was, that is a gain. If one is buying for less than one is selling, then one is making a profit. The fallacy in the argument was very simple, and when they were trying to promote the idea of the desalination plant, I said it very simply then as I will say it now. At the time the deal was entered into, WASA was already selling water to the plants in Point Lisas at \$7 and whatever it is. They were already doing that. That was not a new deal. That was an old arrangement.

The cost of the water that they were selling was \$1.90. Therefore, all that WASA did was erode the profit margin that WASA was making in that arrangement. That is all that happened, if you work it out. If you work out what the losses are, it works out at \$15 million per month. That is what that deal has cost this country. So, the Senator is absolutely and completely wrong. She has completely misunderstood what her own government did. Either that, or she is trying to mislead us.

She started to talk also about On-the-Job Training programme and how there should be tax incentives to employers to hire employees, and so on. With the greatest of respect, there are tax incentives. The tax incentives were instituted by her government, and the allowance is 200 per cent. The only problem is that what they did was they created the incentive, but the employer has to be certified by the National Training Board. Now, they did that. What they promptly did was they disbanded the National Training Board, so nobody can actually get the allowance. With the greatest of respect, Madam President, the next Bill that we have to debate, the Income Tax (Amdt.) Bill, one of the things it will do is fix that problem, but you know, they really do not know what they are doing.

To go back to dealing with some of the statements that Sen. Wade Mark had made, it was disappointing to hear Sen. Mark say how he would deal with the Independent Senators and to say if the UNC Senators were attacked, they would attack Independent Senators. It is very discouraging to hear language like that in this place.

This is the Senate. This is not a playing field. This is not a boxing arena. This is a place where we are expected to take part in civilized debate. We do not have to agree with one another, but we are here to present our points of view. It is frequent that the Independent Senators do not agree with what we on the Government side are saying or doing, and they may chastise us. That is their duty.

While we may not agree, they are free to say whatever it is that they wish to say without fear of the Government doing anything to intimidate them. Now, I have just dealt with some of the things that Sen. Prof. Ramchand said. I did not like everything he said, but he is free to say it. Under no circumstances would any

member of the Government attack a member on the other side, whether it is the Opposition or the Independent side. We would never use that expression. In terms of debate, yes. In terms of politics, yes. We will do what we must do, but we will never do what Sen. Mark was suggesting. Never! That is not the type of behaviour that we would expect or do on this side.

The Senator started to talk also about his friend, the Ambassador of the United States, saying how investors are going to stay away because we do not have any anti-terrorism legislation and so on. I would suggest to Sen. Mark that he invite his very good friend, the American Ambassador, to advise his government that maybe in order to deal with terrorism they should sign on to the International Criminal Court. Maybe that would be a step in the right direction, because they have no place to come here and tell us what we should be doing. This is a sovereign nation and it will stay so under the People's National Movement.

Madam President, you know, Sen. Mark had also asked about the \$30 million for Liat which I have already dealt with, and then he started to lament the fact that Government was not supporting BWIA and only giving \$36 million to BWIA without knowing what the true facts really are. The reality is, in terms of BWIA, in November of last year, the Government made an arrangement to support BWIA to the tune of approximately \$80 million.

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

This year, as you know, we have agreed to support them to the tune of \$116 million. If you add it up, it is almost \$200,000,000 for BWIA. The reality is that BWIA has to be serious about what it does. BWIA must not get the idea that the Government just has huge pockets and is simply going to funnel taxpayers' money into a company that has no hope of coming out of the mess. They have to fix themselves. Well, as you know, of the \$116 million, I think \$56 million was for severance of workers who have already been severed, but we are trying to monitor that cash flow situation. That is a huge bill for the taxpayers to bear, so we need to be careful.

I was surprised to hear Sen. Mark talk about the \$1.5 million that had been vired away from the Ministry of National Security and Rehabilitation on three-year projects that had to do with buildings. It did not have anything to do with anything else other than buildings, and he said, "When people are being arrested and released", and I was shocked when I heard that because we just debated a Kidnapping Bill where one of the things that we wanted in it was where kidnappers who had been arrested would be held without bail. Not released.

Of course, in their infinite wisdom, the UNC decided not to support that, so that he is, in fact, literally aiding and abetting the criminals in a revolving door situation. If we arrest them, they come in and they go straight back out, so I could not understand what his statement could really mean. They say actions speak louder than words. They refuse to support our legislation and yet we are being chastised.

You know, he said also that the Cabinet was too large and we should get rid of two persons in the Cabinet. I think he knows about downsizing. [*Laughter*] He has experienced that firsthand, so I guess that maybe we should take his advice.

He spoke also about they had given the PNM, he said, \$40 billion. Of course it is \$16 billion and \$20 billion he is talking about, and that the PNM was wasting \$36 billion. Mr. Vice-President, allow me to suggest that the only money we are wasting is on their salaries because they make no meaningful contribution here and their stated policy is to oppose everything that we do. Of what use is that? Of what possible use is that when they come here and say, "It does not matter what you do, we are going to oppose everything you do." That is a waste of money. Yes, we are wasting that money. I will agree to that.

Mr. Vice-President, I think I have done most of what I wanted to do this evening. It is getting late, so I will close up and leave the rest of it to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance.

Thank you very much.

Sen. Dana Seetahal: Thank you, Mr. Vice-President. I sat here today and heard all sorts of comments on the roles of the different sides, as it were. The role of the Government, the role of the Opposition, and more significantly, the role of the Independents. We are to be balanced, have a balancing influence, not taking sides, not attacking the Opposition, otherwise we would be dealt with. When I looked at the Government side a while ago, I saw seven members sitting there out of 15. I looked at the Opposition and I saw two members, and then I thought that were it not for, at that time, eight members out of nine of the Independents sitting here, they would not have even had a quorum, so at least we contribute to the balance in that sense. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, Mr. Vice-President, we all know that in this Parliament, as in all parliaments, there is an absolute freedom of expression, and it has been said that one might not agree with a person, but one ought to die for his right to say what he or she has to say. I have always subscribed to that, so much so that at times, Members or supporters of one side have accused me of being for the other and vice versa.

That has happened outside the precincts, of course, but even in the Parliament, one has seen time and time when one does not say things which find favour in one side, they tend to dismissively not even watch one, and when the voting time comes they show that they have paid scant regard to what one is saying, but we—and I speak for my colleagues—press on. We have differences in views and we air them, and personally, I think anyone who chooses to attack that independence, and the right to express it, is out of order and out of place and that will certainly not stop me nor any of my colleagues, I can assure anyone else.

Talking about freedom of expression, Mr. Vice-President, I turn to the question of the allocation for the sitting commission of enquiry. Now, it is said, and I am reading from Part B of the Report by the Commission of Enquiry into the Elections and Boundaries Commission, it is said that a commission of enquiry should be subject to no rules save that it must be fair; that commissions of enquiry may make findings of fact which are very damaging to those whom they name, they may ruin reputations and careers and, therefore, the members of the Commission or any commission of enquiry ought to be scrupulously fair in that regard.

Mr. Vice-President, we have heard complaints about the current commission of enquiry from the Law Association. We have heard of letters written by the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions complaining or warning as to possible prejudicial pretrial comments, and up to today, we had responses by the Chairman of the commission of enquiry talking about people should know their business and the DPP should read the Constitution, and in previous days, that the head of that commission of enquiry has a right and he may do anything he wishes, even if it is to point fingers at persons. Point a finger in their face.

In that scenario, Mr. Vice-President, I really want to query whether we, as Members of Parliament, should continue to support what is turning into a national fiasco. In August of this year, that commission of enquiry will be sitting for one year. We voted moneys in 2002, \$2.233 million for commissions of enquiry. At that time there were three. In 2003, we have already voted \$1.7 million for this one commission of enquiry and we are now proposing to add \$1.5 million to pay for people serving in that commission of enquiry?

Personally, I think that that should be stopped right away. The behaviour of the Chairman of that commission of enquiry does not justify the continuance of it, and I think to allocate any more money is to condone the behaviour of the commission of enquiry. I have strong reservations. That is putting it in a positive light. I do not think we should vote any more money to the Chairman or members of the commission of enquiry. The \$1.5 to the \$1.7 million we have already expended.

Moving on to my second point which has to do with the Caribbean Court of Justice, Mr. Vice-President, no reasonable person should doubt or challenge the oft said statement that having a third-tier Court of Appeal, a final court of appeal in our jurisdiction is something that would give the finality to our actually achieving sovereignty. It is the icing on the cake as it were. That is what keeps us back from having the real status of even a second-class nation. We are basically still treated in other places like a colonial entity. Other countries, India, Australia, Canada, many countries that used to be tied to the apron strings of the Privy Council have gone their own way, but in the Commonwealth Caribbean, apart from Guyana which just has two courts, we continue to hold on to this anachronism.

During the tenureship of Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj who was at that time the Attorney General under the UNC government, a Bill was put forward in which it was said that the Privy Council should be the final court of appeal for other matters but we would have the Caribbean Court of Justice for death penalty matters because it was said that the Privy Council was hamstringing us from hanging people, as it were.

Of course there was a lot of opposition to this because we did not want the Caribbean Court of Justice to be seen as a hanging court, and rightly so. In 2001, the then government signed the treaty which was to be given effect in 2003. Yet, of course, as many things, the Caribbean Court of Justice has become a political football and it appears that without the three quarters that we need in the House of Representatives or the two-thirds in this Senate, we will be paying \$199 million to set up this Caribbean Court of Justice and we will not be able to share in the benefits except, perhaps, for the Caribbean market and economy issues.

That is tragic. It is tragic because Lord Brown Wilkinson and other judges of the Privy Council have said basically that they think that the final court of appeal for any jurisdiction belongs in that jurisdiction. Effectively we are saying, no, no. We want to still hang on. Just now they will be kicking us out and saying look, you could want to hang on all you want, but we do not want you, which is what happened in respect of national independence subsequent to the break up of the Federation. We will have no dignity. We will have to go.

What is the point of section 109 of the Constitution? If we do not amend it, we will be behind the others, apart from the Bahamas, and have no final court of appeal by our own choice. So I agree. I think that from the 444,000—I do not know where that was going—it was necessary to have that amount, \$199 million to really set about this court, and one would hope that the governments of the

region really keep to their promise not to make the selection of the judges or anyone else there a political kind of situation. But of course, we will have to wait and see, because in many other situations, we have had that kind of political interference, it has been said, with the judges, even in the regular courts.

So, it is not that we have to wait for total assurance that everything would be perfect before we move ahead, because we will never move ahead, and it seems to me what we have here is the usual fear of change and the anticipation of the worst, because we do not have any mother country to keep hanging on to.

The third point I want to make is what was alluded to already, I think, by Sen. Prof. Deosaran in his contribution, the payment for some 30 nationals to pursue the LEC at the Eugene Dupuch Law School. It has been said by the Attorney General that because of the fact that we do not have enough places here, we pay for these 30. Senators may not know that that law school was really set about at the persuasion of the Government of the Bahamas, and last year, for instance, there were only 10 persons in the first year, whereas in Hugh Wooding Law School where I happen to teach, it was 140 students I had in my class. So, out of that 140, two-thirds of the class comprised Trinidadians and Tobagonians, 100 or so, and there was a waiting list of people who had taken the external degree, so we had to, it was said, make room for them.

[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

I wonder why this is so since in the past, our Chief Justice de la Bastide had questioned the need for expanding the numbers. He has said, should we not have control over the numbers in the profession? It seems to me that if we continue expanding and taking in more and more people, it used to be that there were 40 people every year coming in because that is what UWI took from Trinidad and Tobago. Now anyone can take the external degree, and it seems that anyone can, without going through the training through the Caribbean University of the West Indies, for which it was designed, they can come to the law school and the Government will pay.

That is what is happening. We are opening—not controlling the numbers in the profession. We are opening the floodgates and we are paying for these people abroad. I want to know if we are paying other than mere tuition. Are we paying for their board and lodging as well? Because if so, then every Trinidad student living anywhere other than St. Augustine should be paid for in St. Augustine, because those are the students who have performed better in exams, they are assigned to St. Augustine but they do not get any assistance from the Government.

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There are people who might just scrape through and they would have done the external degree with no West Indian training. They would not have had to have the three A' levels to satisfy the requirements of the University of the West Indies which are very stringent, so much so that it is very well recognized in major universities of the United States, I can tell you, and in England, but the external degree is not as recognized. Nevertheless, those students are being paid for in the Bahamas and I want to find out if it is just tuition or more.

Secondly, a point concerning the law school. In 2001, we breached the treaty when legislation was passed to enable people who had no training in the West Indies, in the Caribbean, to be admitted to practise law. That was passed. I raised this already. It was said we are looking into it, but we are not looking into it, it seems. We are talking about Caribbean lawyers, about moving forward, about Vision 2020, and yet we are going back 25 years ago to what we had there with lawyers who are trained solely in England, who will know nothing about any of our IRA legislation, about anything to do with the peculiar situation with the criminal practice and procedure which is different.

They will not know a lot of different things in the civil practice, in land law, in the peculiarities of the jurisdiction, yet they can just go six months in England somewhere and after they can come here and be admitted here to practise and talk with a little English accent and get more money than locally trained people because they have a little English accent, and you know how people like that. They think that means "you really know the law boy!" You could talk with a little accent. Not to mention if you have a higher colour too. That is one breach of the Treaty at which the government of the day should look.

Also, if we continue to pour money into the law school, Madam President, we need to actually consider how it operates. We have regulations, we have a lot of things, we have meetings, but the law schools are going their way without any kind of policy setting from the government. We pay our money. We are actually ahead of Jamaica, Antigua, lots of countries. But do we have any real input into how it operates?

At present, for instance, it is not the policy of the Council of Legal Education to sanction persons who are practising to teach at the law school. They are very strict about that. So what you find is, you have a product, purely theory, and not enough practical experience from students, and that is against the trend of the world. Contrast that with Harvard, with England, with many law schools and you will see that if we continue this way we will not grow. It is time for the Trinidad and Tobago Government to take a stand on what is going on in the Council and

have some kind of input in how that curriculum and how the selection of staff is made, because we have too long just gone to the meetings, just said any kind of political rhetoric we want and not have anything to do with how it is run. From personal experience, I am telling you I think it is time that we do.

I want to join with Sen. Prof. Ramchand when he made the comments, my fourth point, about the allocation for things like flooding and matters of that kind. Ninety-five million dollars is now being sought to be allocated for preventative steps in flooding, yet in the original budget for this year, Madam President, only \$12 million were allocated; \$9 million for the drainage and \$3 million for construction.

One would have thought that given the number of floods and everything, the problems with roads and people blocking roads every year, we would know what is happening, yet about a month ago, the Minister of Works and Transport was saying he knows there will be flooding and he knows there will be the worst floods that we have, but he has not yet gotten to do a lot of works that he wanted to do; that people had visited the sites but they had not got the money.

What kind of planning is this? It seems to me that we need to really get this thing going properly. If you are the Minister and you have staff, they must know that things are going to flood, that you need to dredge drains, roads and rivers. It does not come as a shock every year. I know that, and I am not a Minister. I see it when I am driving along the streets. Every year, right there by St. Augustine, one good rain and the roads are flooded. Inside UWI floods because the drains outside are not cleaned properly. We have CEPEP, yes, and they are doing a good job manicuring the place, but in terms of dredging, they do not do that. Probably we should hire them to do it.

Finally, with respect to the arrears of the public service, Madam President, I see in the supplementation of the budget here, the proposed, \$114,929,000 is being sought to meet the shortfall in the provision of payments of arrears of increments. In the 2003 budget, \$172,961,000 was allocated. This was for the Ministry of Education alone.

What I want to know is, if they allocated \$172 million, when they calculated it down to \$961,000, they would have some idea of what they were paying back? Did they not know? People employ accountants. They should have an idea. Why do we need \$114,000,000? That is more than 50 per cent of what was sought. What is this? Tell us something; we need to know.

It is not only the Ministry of Education. It is also the Ministry of Health. We were told in 2003 that there was \$62 million estimated for the settlement of

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arrears. Now \$85 million is being asked for further. That is more than 100 per cent. Why? It is not like it is any new arrears. Arrears are arrears. It is like I am paying my phone bill. I know what the arrears are up front. Public Utilities, \$4.7 million was allocated and now \$22.9 million is being asked for.

These are questions that if we were talking about having respect for each other, I think that if we are expecting to have any serious contribution, not just coming here and saying, "Here is what we want, we have the majority and we will go with it." If we are going to make useful contributions and if we are going to represent the people who want to ask these questions, I think, Madam President, before we ask it and come to dig up in these schedules and look into this and say, "I am not an accountant but what does it mean" and crosscheck. These things should be told to us.

That is what I call respect and that is what I hope we have. Not to say, "Why are you wasting time? We want to go home. It is 8 o'clock already." We should not have to be doing this. We should be able to pull out the points that we want, rather than come here and have to sort out this. We should be here telling some Senators that the University of the West Indies does have an international reputation and certainly is not like 1 per cent as compared to some unknown Canadian university. Those are the things we should be able to deal with rather than have to go through and ask what about that \$5.9 million.

I really think it is a bit unfair and I think the Government should take note of that and in the future, make this thing user friendly, if they cannot go through the whole thing. Give detail so we would have something in writing and highlight the points to us here when they come. Do not just read out something, "flat, flat, flat" and everybody is falling asleep. Make it active.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan: Thank you, Madam President. I thank you for the opportunity to make a small intervention in this Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum, the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 2003. Madam President, in Trinidad and Tobago today, we are experiencing a social crisis, the gravest in decades. We have the youth that is practically collectively suicidal, and in this Bill that we are so sedately debating in this Senate today, I see a virtual attack on the youth, and I will go into that later in the Bill.

I see also no indication that we realize the gravity of the situation with respect to upgrading the fight on crime. We see that Sen. Danny Montano, with the PNM's

usual lack of foresight and vision, attacked Sen. Mark, and I use the word advisedly, for indicating that with all this crime in our country, moneys were reallocated away from infrastructural development in the public order and safety programme.

Madam President, the Senator mentioned that money that was taken away was simply from buildings, but this is a basic lack of foresight, vision and an understanding of how development takes place, because in buildings there are people. This is why when the UNC came to power, all the police stations in this country were in a totally dilapidated condition. That is why the policemen had no motivation to fight crime or to do anything, because of thinking like that.

Unless there is a police force, a fire service, protective services, the prison service that has the infrastructural environment to carry about their business in order to fight the crime and to protect this country in the way they are supposed to protect this country, unless we have that infrastructural support for these people we would get no production and no service. This is why Sen. Mark mentioned the fact that this schedule on page 13 of my document, where they have a whole list of projects that have been downgraded, it is totally contradictory to what is happening in our country today. I do not understand why this was not understood by Sen. Danny Montano as we presented it.

Madam President, we have a situation where the whole country practically, all the intelligent people in this country are totally appalled at the spectacle of the commission of enquiry into the airport, and I have sat here this evening and I want to place on record my total agreement with my colleagues both on this Bench and the Independent Benches that this spectacle must stop immediately, and this country must cease making itself a laughing stock in the Caribbean and the world.

We are a small developing nation, it is true, but we have some status, or we had some status in the international environment, and it is being totally degraded by what is happening in our justice system here. This commission of enquiry has broken all the rules that are traditional to this sort of enquiry, and lawyers, the Bar Association here has condemned the modus operandi of this commission of enquiry, yet we are asked to come to this Parliament today to vote more moneys to support this travesty of justice which is being perpetrated on this society and we call for an immediate end to this.

I totally support my independent colleagues and my colleagues on this side of the bench in calling for the PNM Government to take stock of what they are doing to our country. Sen. Seepersad-Bachan mentioned that. It is not just the

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Government they are embarrassing, they are embarrassing the whole country when they continue with this sort of practice.

They talk about 2020 and developed nation status, but I would like to assure the PNM Government that in any civilized society with developed nation status, the entire Cabinet will be asked to resign because of travesties like this in the Government. So, they are very lucky that we have not yet attained developed country status, as they would like to call it.

Madam President, I would like to bring to the notice of this honourable Senate some of the issues in relation to the lack of development, and so on, in this city of Port of Spain, because as we debate this Bill today, right around us, as we well know, there is practically a genocidal war going on in our country. Young people are wiping themselves out.

8.00 p.m.

Madam President, on behalf of the people of Port of Spain East Dry River, Belmont and Laventille areas, we want to know, at the end of this debate, what is in this variation budget for them; what development works and improvement in their situation can they expect. Traditionally, the PNM has had a history of over 35 years of making promises and enunciating dreams with no real programme of analyzing what has been accomplished and, on the basis of that project, what can be accomplished. They come to us every year and talk to the population, as if we have just fallen from the sky, as if there is no history to this talk they come with, especially around election time.

I agree with my colleague, Member of Parliament, Dr. Moonilal, that we are in the silly season and we have to be prepared for the kinds of statements that are going to be enunciated by the members of this PNM regime.

For example, Madam President, in the context of what is happening now, I read from the *Mirror* newspaper of Sunday, July 26, which states:

“PNM backing ‘push up’ model of development to replace ‘trickle down’”

This article is based on an interview with Ken Valley; he said a number of very fine things here. [*Interruption*]

Madam President: It has been done more than once today. I would appreciate if you would say, “Minister Valley”, “the hon. Kenneth Valley” or whoever it might be.

Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan: Thank you, Madam President. The Hon. Ken Valley, the Minister of Trade and Industry, is purported to have said in this article that the party's concept of development is people centred and community driven. He stated:

“We, in the PNM, believe that Local Government agencies must operate as catalysts and facilitators in community development.”

He went on to use a number of other platitudes: that they believe in community participation, social cohesion, equity, autonomy, responsibility, partnership and integrity; all the lovely platitudes that the PNM likes to mouth on the eve of an election.

I have reason to believe, based on documents before me, that the people of Laventille, East Dry River, Belmont and so on, have had firsthand, and have also felt in their souls, the marginalization and oppression of this regime for over 35 years. They have cause to believe the sentiments expressed in 2003 are exactly the same as 10 or 12 years ago; nothing has changed in their lives. They have expressed these sentiments in various documents, which I would bring to your attention at this point.

Madam President, I quote, to some extent, from a document entitled: “The East Port of Spain Council of Community Organizations”, based in Upper Laventille, East Dry River. This is an umbrella organization made up of: the Success Laventille Networking Committee; the Laventille Dry Abuse Demand Reduction Committee; Jubilange People's Community; St. Barbs Community Council; Chinapoo Community Council; South East Port of Spain Cultural Workshop; Trou Macaque Community Council; Sogren Trace Community Group; St. Martins Welfare Association; South East Port of Spain Achievement Organization; St. Joseph Road Youth Movement; Quevedor Circular Community Group; South East Port of Spain Community Council and Red Hill Laventille Village Council.

This is no fly-by-night organization; it is a solid people's organization founded over 10 years ago. Various organizations have different aegis and so forth, but this organization has come together to analyze and understand what is happening in their community and make proper representation to the powers that be of their plight and what they want to see for their communities.

Madam President, let me indicate to this Senate that we are talking about the East Dry River. I would like to give you some statistics from the East Port of Spain Solid Waste Management Plan and also give you a basic idea of the

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population and topography of this area. In this document East Port of Spain is described as having a hilly topography with narrow streets and lanes and steep slopes as the only means of access to some communities. According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the East Port of Spain area has more than half the population of the entire city. It stands at 27.9 per cent in comparison to the city, which has 49,031 residents. The document goes on to indicate the number of residents in each of these regions.

Over the years, these communities grouped individually at first, until they formed their collective organization, have been making constant representation for the allocation of moneys and resources to develop the East Port of Spain area, and to avoid the very catastrophe that we are faced with in these areas at this point in time.

I would like to quote from this document, as they have put their problem to the nation. One of the first areas that they dealt with was that governments must not just be facilitators. They have indicated to us that one of the latest interventions in this area:

“On February 15, 2003 Honourable Eulalie James, MP for Laventille West and the Minister in the Ministry of Community Development, in an effort to address the increase of crime in Laventille and the East Dry River, organized a Symposium entitled ‘Laventille Responds’.”

Out of that symposium came the Laventille Working Group, which produced a 25-page document on possible solutions to unemployment, crime and the social and economic problems of Laventille. This was presented to the hon. Eulalie James and Hon. Eric Williams, the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams, the Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs. So far nothing tangible has come of this latest symposium. The people of Laventille have a history of organizing these symposia and having nothing come out of them. This was the latest in a series of other symposia in Laventille over the last 10 years.

Madam President, on February 08, 1992, 11 years ago, the Laventille West constituency organized another massive symposium on unemployment and crime. It was organized by the late Member of Parliament, Morris Marshall, and Fr. Clyde Harvey. The theme was “Laventille Is As Great As You Think”. Nothing came out of this symposium, except the establishment of the Morris Marshall Foundation and a few scholarships for students.

In 1992, there was another symposium in Chaguaramas, which brought together all these community-based organizations, social organizations and so on.

Some of the issues raised were youth employment; underemployment and integration; full and equal participation for poor men and women in their labour markets; promoting economic growth, equity and development of small and micro enterprises. Madam President, we could go on and on, but the people of Laventille, Belmont and East Port of Spain are symposium-weary. All these talk shops; all these interventions have been made in these areas; all these promises have been made and nothing tangible except crime, more poverty and more unemployment.

One of the salient points that have been made by this group and international organizations, and we are seeing it here today with this Bill, is that too little importance is placed on developmental projects and programmes and too much emphasis is placed on welfare-type programmes. The people of Laventille have articulated this in the following manner; at the end of all these talk shops, this is what they have to say:

“We honestly believe that the hosting of Symposiums by themselves have done, and can do, very little to assist with the solving of our social and economic problems. In fact, we believe that the Government of the day should not, and must not leave this role up to the private institutions like the UNDP and other Non Governmental Organizations. Community Empowerment Programmes must be initiated by the State. It is the State who owes that responsibility to the populace. We need to quote from the said ‘Directional Plan For Poverty Eradication’ to galvanize this point:”

This is taken from the Directional Plan for Poverty Eradication, Page 4:

“For most countries in the region, the institutions for social development allocate a disproportionate amount of their resources to welfare programmes...”

This is the point I am making. We see in this allocation budget that welfare programmes are the focus of development and not institutional and development programmes, as compared to those of a development nature.

The document continues:

“The transition from welfare oriented services to community based welfare and developmental services require new skills and capabilities as well as new revamp institutions and administrative structures. Reform of administrative structures in Central Government is a major requisite. Neither NGOs, nor local Government, nor business groups, nor organized labour, nor Community

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Based Organizations (CBOs), nor Credit Unions, can at any time, even with the most intensive capacity building, be the agency through which the contradictions of planned change and induced development are primarily or ultimately addressed. These are tasks for the public sector. Therefore the public sector must improve its performance in its core activities; maintaining public order, providing infrastructure that cannot be provided by the private sector, improving human resources and providing a safety net for the poor.”

This brings me right back to where the document says that “the public sector must improve the performance of its core activities; maintaining public order, providing infrastructure” and so on.

As I said very early in my contribution, Madam President, a number of public order projects were simply downgraded and, therefore, this is in direct contradiction to the role of the State. It is in direct contradiction to the state in which we find ourselves in the society at this point in time: the total runaway crime situation. In that context, this situation is totally manufactured in our society; it is not an accident. What is happening in our society is not something that could not have been avoided or foreseen, because 10 years ago, organizations and groups, such as the Makandal Daaga symposia in the University of the West Indies and different conferences could have foreseen and forecast this exact social situation that we are facing in this country, because of the policies of the PNM administration over the years with respect to how they deal with infrastructure and the youths.

I agree with my colleague, Sen. Prof. Deosaran, when he said that there is a very strong link between infrastructure, crime and the sort of social environment in which young people grow up and their antisocial tendencies, if raised in situations of deficient infrastructural and social programmes. It is in this context that we must view this article of the *Sunday Mirror* of June 22, 2003: “Laventille Institute project on stream”, given the total lack of educational facilities in the East Dry River/Laventille area, over the 35 years that the PNM has been in power and the expressed disregard today of the need for infrastructural and institutional works with respect to this Bill.

This article purports to tell us that at long last the people of Laventille are going to be the beneficiaries of a technical institute. I do not hesitate to say to this honourable Senate that, “It is too little, too late, for Laventille”. The people of East Port of Spain are suffering from a symposium syndrome; the clinical signs are the total breakdown of traditional and family values, ethics, morals and a total demise of the cultural art form created in these areas.

Madam President, I quote from the Solid Waste Management Plan document, which I alluded to before. It is very interesting, because the Minister of Local Government was here earlier on and he went on for quite a long while about the role of local government, the accomplishments of the Unemployment Relief Programme and this regime in infrastructural development. Yet the East Port of Spain Solid Waste Management Plan, Port of Spain Corporation of April 22, 2003 is in total contradiction to what the Minister has said.

Let me quote to indicate what is actually happening with infrastructural development here:

“Before the advent of indiscriminate squatting in the Gonzales area, these lands were reserved forested areas, which had served to absorb most of the rainfall during the wet season. Needless to say that during that period the flooding of the area was minimal and landslips were nonexistent. However, during the late seventies and early eighties these lands were taken over by homeless people, mainly from the Port of Spain East region. Consequently, the entire area was cleared of all vegetation and dwelling houses were erected on these sites. As is well known, these homes were built without the necessary approval from the Town and Country Planning, and as such, basic infrastructure, such as roads, proper drainage systems, retaining walls where they were necessary, lights and pipe-borne water, were not put in place.”

This did not happen five years ago. This did not happen under the UNC government. We are talking about the late 1970s and 1980s. We are talking about a Government representative who came in the Senate today and ranted and raved for over half an hour, about all the achievements of this Government. This is a Solid Waste Management document; this is not a UNC document.

Madam President, the document goes on to say:

“The problems resulting from living under these conditions for the past ten (10) years are as follows...

The constant erosion of the Gonzales Hills due to leaching and landslides.

The formation of several large secondary drains, which are widening and deteriorating with the passing of each day.

The widening, caving and worsening conditions of all existing unpaved main drains on Lange Street, Jubilee Crescent and Upper Vincent Brown Street.

The clogging of culverts, manholes, box drains and other already constructed drainage facilities with silt and debris.

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The total collapse of five (5) concrete houses built on rented lands in the Lange Street, Jubilee Crescent, Upper Vincent Brown Street and the Jubilee Street areas.

The ongoing problem of the cracking of the walls of most of the concrete houses along the banks of the main unpaved drains mentioned in (5). Again we will like to state that these houses are not squatting units.

The flooding of Lange and Vincent Brown Streets, the uprooting of the lids on manholes along Lange Street and the flooding of the Village's Post Office. This building has been a regular casualty of this perennial flooding.

Individual residents and the Gonzales Village Council highlighted the aforementioned problems during the past twelve (12) years. Piecemeal efforts were made by the then DEWD Programme to correct the erosion of a bank on Lange Street, but very little was ever done."

This is the reality of the lives of the people of East Port of Spain and Laventille. This is the infrastructural reality. These are the conditions under which they live.

Madam President, when we come to this honourable Senate and bring these issues, those on the other side are very uncomfortable, because they know that they mislead the Senate when they say that the PNM has delivered on poverty eradication, infrastructural development and improving the quality of lives of our people. The quality of life has deteriorated over the last 18 months to an inordinate degree. *[Desk thumping]* This is just a continuation of what they have done over the past 35 years.

The UNC intervention was only over five years. How much can you do in five years? We did our best; it was just five years. *[Crosstalk]* I was born and grew up in Gonzales, and there was never water in Gonzales. There is water now, because when the UNC came into office they provided water in Gonzales. *[Desk thumping]* *[Crosstalk]* *[Laughter]* I want to emphasize that there is no history of delivery. There is no history of delivery and the people of this community have said as much to this regime.

I quote from a letter of 1993 written by the Concerned Citizens Committee of this area to the hon. Patrick Manning, Prime Minister, Balisier House, Port of Spain. The people there have recognized the hypocrisy of the PNM. They have recognized that the PNM makes promises that it never delivers on. They have made countless interventions; they have brought countless plans and programmes for implementation to raise the standard of living in those areas to suit the

infrastructure that has been ignored by the PNM. The people there wrote a very strong letter to the Prime Minister.

Madam President, this is not something that is happening today. This is something that has happened over 10 years ago. Compared to 10 years ago, the conditions under which they live have improved marginally, because of the UNC. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*] We could not transform Gonzales, East Port of Spain and Laventille in five years. It took 35 years to bring those communities to the state they are in now. [*Desk thumping*] We cannot transform them in five years.

Madam President, this letter was written after the symposium in 1992 at Chaguaramas that I mentioned before:

“In fact, after building up our hopes after this National Symposium on Job Creation with Television coverage and several Newspaper statements, we have heard no more from the Task Force for the past year. We will therefore like to know if our government, of which you are the head, is serious about implementing the decisions of the Task Force, or is it interested in these pronouncements purely for political purposes. We will like to recall, for the records, the Press Conference of August 19, 1992 (one month before the local government elections)...”

Shades of déjà vu.

“and the front page news article published in the Trinidad Express on August 20, 1992 stating that Dr. Emru Millette, Chairman of the Task Force on Job Creation, has identified ‘Projects to create 20,000 jobs’. Again in this article mention was made of the Jubilange project at Cumaca Road Valencia, and the fact that \$200,000 has been earmarked for the project.”

Madam President, my grandmother used to say, “If dey see it, I see it”. [*Crosstalk*]

This \$200,000 for an agricultural project never materialized. There is this misconception in this society that urban youths are not interested in agriculture; that they are only interested in the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) and the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP). In 1992, serious projects were identified. All the work was done and presented to government at the National Symposium at Chaguaramas. This was praised as a viable and laudable project, money was earmarked and it was never accomplished. PNM promises never materialize! Now they are talking about Laventille [*Crosstalk*] and what they are going to do for Laventille. Just like in

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this letter, on the eve of another local government election, Minister Valley is talking about promises, community partnerships and integrity. They just mislead the population and the population knows that. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President, this document written by the Concerned Citizens Committee was written on June 25, 1993:

“Mr. Prime Minister, we are beginning to believe that this very said talked about Symposium, which was scheduled to be re-convened on December 9, 1992 to present a ‘Progress Report’ to the nation is now dead. Just consider the fact that we, according to the Task Force report; ‘Food processing is involved in all 45 projects approved’.” [*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Hon. Senator, I appreciate what you are saying, but I am trying to understand how you are linking a document from 1993 with our Appropriation Bill today. I have tried to be generous and have allowed you to go on with all these issues, but I really need some kind of direction here now.

Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan: Madam President, we seem to have a serious difficulty in this country in linking the past with the present. We seem to see no link between what happened nine or 10 years ago with what is happening now and what will happen 10 years hence, if we do not keep a perspective and a sense of history.

We are talking about appropriation and allocations. In fact, the Port of Spain Corporation is not listed in this document. [*Crosstalk*] It is a variation, but what we have here is the minutes of the Port of Spain Corporation from Friday 08, May, in which the corporation has documented the fact that there is not enough money to deal with the infrastructural needs of the area. We have to link infrastructural needs to social needs, to the crime, poverty and degradation of these people, because if we do not, we are going nowhere fast.

When the corporation says that it does not have the allocation, that the Government has not made sufficient allocation to develop these areas, then we cannot see it apart from the whole question of crime in Laventille, of the gangs of youths killing each other, of youths who have no hope. People who would “steups” and laugh and disregard this, are the people who have this country in the mess it is in today, [*Desk thumping*] because they do not have the vision; they do not see the link. They feel that they talk to a fresh population every Monday morning. We have history, we have our memories and we know what happened 10 years ago is very relevant to what is happening now.

This document indicated that the people in Laventille have made several interventions and proposals and have gotten nothing from the PNM, and they wrote to the then Prime Minister saying just that.

On the question of how it relates to the Appropriation Bill, let me read from these minutes under the heading “Gonzales”:

“Three (3) projects at Jubilee Street, Chocolate Alley were submitted to provide drainage in the unplanned settlements and eliminate the resulting flooding in low lying areas. Two projects have been costed, the third is still to be done.

It was noted that the two (2) projects were in excess of the corporation’s annual allocation for development programmes in the sum of two million dollars.

It was suggested that an approach be made to the Project Unit of the Ministry of Local Government expenditure under the Minister’s Portfolio.”

From my personal knowledge, the cost of two of the three projects was \$1.8 million; that almost exceeded the corporation’s total allocation for the year of \$2 million. This is the sort of respect that this Government gives to Laventille, East Port of Spain and environs.

Madam President, we know that when the Minister of National Security comes here and cries “crocodile tears”—and I make no apologies for saying so—about kidnapping, crime and drugs and talks about 10 million different programmes that they are going to implement and spend a lot of money on to curb crime in this country, we know where the fundamentals are; we know where the money is not going to deal with the root of the problem in these areas.

The money is not going to deal with the infrastructure or social life of these communities; to have the children and young people grow up in communities that they can be proud of, that they can feel a part of or feel patriotic about. When you live in a slum, in an area where you know that nobody cares about you, where garbage piles up every day, where there is no acknowledgement that you are a human being and you deserve better, then you get crime, drugs, killings, violence and you get what we have in this country right now. This is the link that we have to make.

In the context of what I have just said, to bring our youths back to some sort of hope in this country, in the context of this need to send a message to our young people that this Government cares, that somebody cares about them, that there is hope for the future and that there is no need to go out there and, practically, commit mass suicide, we see an Appropriation Bill that is an attack on the youths.

Madam President, on Sunday last, there was the Milo Fest activity in the Queen's Park Savannah. Thousands of youths who participated in every sport imaginable, came together and had a day of fun, of constructive activity and there was not a single incident. There were tons of policemen there, but there was nothing for them to do. After a while, they were able to relax and enjoy a day with the youths. This is the power of sport. This is the power of constructive physical activity, because healthy bodies mean healthy and productive minds. This is what the UNC understood.

We understood the problem of education and the importance of sports; that is why we took 10,000 children off the streets, who the PNM used to throw on the streets every year. We put them in schools; we built 52 secondary schools. We built five stadia in our term of office. [*Desk thumping*] We had not seen one stadium built in 35 years. We built five stadia, because we recognized the power and importance of sports. We recognized that our young children must come off the streets; that we must engage their minds, their intellect and all their abilities and enable them to develop full potential as human beings.

The PNM did not know about that. All they know about is to manipulate these young people; give them cars, money and so on so they can vote for them at election time, to keep their powerful positions in this country. That is all they do; manipulate people. That is why they get so upset when we talk about history, when we make the link between the past, present and future. Those who do not recognize their history are condemned to relive it.

Madam President, I am talking about the attack on our youths. I bring to the attention of this honourable Senate the fact that moneys were decreased from the original allocations. In the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, there is a decrease of \$150,000 in the construction of indoor sporting in Arima. There is a decrease in the original allocation for the development of turf pitches in selected areas, another \$100,000. There is a decrease of \$300,000 in the construction of swimming pools. The upgrading of the Mahaica Oval, \$500,000; a national tennis centre, \$200,000; the upgrading of public recreation grounds, \$200,000. This is an attack on the development facilities for youths in this country; we have to think ahead.

We, in the UNC, know that when you put down these infrastructural facilities now, you are molding and developing the minds of young people who are going to be the basis of their society 10 or 15 years from now. If you do not take the time and effort and have the political will to do this now, what are you going to reap in the future? All these youths in the Community-based Environmental

Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) painting stones, is that all we can offer the youths of this country?

Madam President, they have taken money for their sporting and intellectual development away from them? Refurbishing of youth training facilities, \$250,000; to save the youths in marginalized communities, \$250,000, in this state of social unrest among the youths! Is this the sort of action the Government is taking at this point? Refurbishment of youth development and apprenticeship centres, education, molding them to be productive members of the society, this has been decreased to the tune of \$250,000. Youth health programmes, 200,000! We are talking about a situation in the East-West Corridor, where it seems to me that young people have no sense of the need to care for themselves, their health, their hygiene and sexual practices. They need to be educated; they need to be helped; they need to learn to care for their own lives, to save their own lives, yet we are decreasing their allocation. This is a travesty. *[Interruption]*

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan: Thank you, Madam President. There is a reason why this Bill will be passed this afternoon and that the attack and total neglect of our young people will continue. There is a reason why we will continue to see articles in the newspapers such as the *Sunday Mirror* of June 22, 2003, where the headline reads:

“Morvant cottage now a big eyesore”

This was an important community cottage built under the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). Several community groups have been asking for this facility to develop their programmes for the youth in the area. It is now decaying, and the Government refuses to do anything with this building.

Madam President, the reason we continue to see things like this, and the crisis management continues, and Members of the Government continue to laugh and giggle in their seats, is that our people allow themselves to vote for a tradition that, clearly, no longer works for them. Democracy is a two-way street. If we have a situation in this country where the electorate is prepared to make a statement, as with the upcoming local government election, to indicate to any government in power that they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the way it is running this country,

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then democracy, as we know it, would, perhaps, work for us. But when we have a situation where our people are content to allow the status quo to continue, because they are too afraid of change, then there is no reason for any government to perform.

If a government does not have to perform or deliver or prove that it is capable of the mandate which the people have given to it, if there are no political repercussions, then why bother? That is exactly the philosophy and policy of the PNM. It is a two-way street, and we have allowed them to do that. They felt the weight of the people in 1996, and I am certain that they will again feel the weight of the people of Trinidad and Tobago very soon. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people, all the time.

The people of this country are going to react very, very strongly to all the neglect, empty promises, unfulfilled dreams and hopes that they have had for their lives and the lives of their children. They have continued to live in poverty and total neglect, and it means nothing to the PNM, because they live in a very different world from which many of our people live.

Madam President, when the UNC came into office, 35 per cent of the population was deemed to live under the poverty line. Due to our aggressive social programmes, we were able to carry that to about 25 per cent, which is totally and unacceptably high for a country so rich in natural resources, oil, gas and agricultural lands and for our climate. It is totally unacceptable.

I am very, very hopeful that something positive would happen in this country very soon, because we all have to live here. No one can take any comfort from what is happening in this country. We can point fingers. We can say that it is this or that administration to blame but, at the end of the day, we all have to live here, and we are all exposed to the evils that are being generated daily in this society. No one is free; I am not free from this; my children are not free from this. At the end of the day, even the members of that administration are not free from the imminent danger we are facing in the society, if we continue to ignore the needs of our young people or the more depressed people of society.

Madam President, the story I have told of underdevelopment, neglect and lack of attention to very concrete programmes that were actually approved and never implemented, is not only the story of East Port of Spain and Morvant/Laventille, but also the story of the whole East-West Corridor. While we see moneys being taken away for the future development of our young people, their health and their physical attributes, we see what is important to the PNM Government.

Madam President, before I go on to the couple of points that are important to them, I protest, on behalf of the farmers of this country, with respect to the slashing of development programmes for agriculture. The United States has defied the World Trade Organization (WTO) regulations that prohibit subsidies to agriculture, and have decided to subsidize their farmers to the tune of over \$100 billion in the next 10 years.

Madam President, what do we have in Trinidad and Tobago? We have a government that is paying lip service to agriculture; that has slashed all the development programmes for agriculture. We have a government that has ruthlessly decided to throw over 10,000 workers of Caroni (1975) Limited on the breadline and create massive unemployment in a situation where unemployment is the biggest constraint to development. Our country is an open, volatile country. Irrespective of the income that we get from oil and gas, these industries do not generate the kind of employment that is possible with agriculture.

It has been noted, by experts in the field, that agriculture is perfectly capable of absorbing another 4 per cent of the unemployed people of this country, if we approach it seriously. What we have in this Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) Bill is total disrespect for the whole possibility of using that area to improve the unemployment situation in this country, to develop the food and nutritional status of the people of this country. We are neglecting an important opportunity to produce scientists, train young people as technicians in food technology, biotechnology, research areas, trade and transport, a whole host of areas that can provide employment for young people in agriculture. The alternative to developing a cadre of skilled agricultural workers, however, is CEPEP. In fact, in this allocation budget, they have closed down several training schools that would have been useful for agricultural workers.

Madam President, I would like to draw your attention to the sort of slashing of the budgets for agriculture. I am very sure that our farmers, who are battling to survive in this hostile environment of the WTO regulations, would be very interested to know what is happening here. Economic infrastructure, \$1,400,000, slashed; agriculture, forestry and fishing—when we have a situation where we need to seriously address the issues of reforestation, flooding, the denudation of our hills, forestry is slashed by \$1,400,000. Research and Development is fundamental to any development process. How are you going to justify less attention to research and development? This is the strength of the movement forward. If you do not do research and development, you weaken the movement forward in any sphere of enterprise.

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The Trinidad and Tobago Marine Fisheries Research Project, slashed, \$400,000. Drainage and irrigation—many of the Independent Senators mentioned the whole question of perennial flooding every year, lack of foresight and planning. Instead of paying increased attention or making increased allocation to areas like these, we have \$1 million slashed for water management and flood control. Multi-sectoral and other services, \$1 million; rehabilitation and expansion of the Southern Wholesale Market—our farmers would be very interested to know—\$1 million slashed from this programme.

Madam President, this allocation reveals the basic policy and premise of the PNM: they totally ignore development, the future of our country and our youth; they slash all the development and infrastructural programmes and they increase allocations for things like foreign travel, consultancy and other contractual services; \$5 million allocated to that. They even slashed development of the master plan for the College of Science, Technology, Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT), \$500,000; a drilling school—this is the school I was trying to remember—\$50,000. This is what we see in this Bill, an underlying philosophy.

Madam President, this Bill really brings home to us, very clearly, the underlying philosophy of the PNM Government, which has not changed in the last 40 years. This philosophy of neglect for what is important and what is necessary for the future and a total obsession with the present; with the make-work, with the CEPEP, with allaying the instant fears of people, playing on people's fears and insecurities and making as if they are doing something about it, while they are really the perpetrators and cause of all the fears, insecurities and problems that we have in society.

Madam President, I would like to see something positive. This Government will be in power for five years. We all have to live here and bear the consequences of these policies.

Madam President: Senator, you have two minutes more.

Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan: I would really like to see the PNM change their attitude towards development in this country. It is a very small hope, and it is only the people, in their collective wisdom, who will decide when they have had enough of the PNM.

I thank you.

Sen. Brother Noble S. A. Khan: Thank you, Madam President, for allowing me to share in this debate. Indeed, the matter of finance is most fundamental to

governance, because it is through the system of finance that we hope, by the grace of God, to bring betterment to our people, ourselves, our children and future generations.

The mechanism is well entrenched in our Constitution and also by one of the first bills that placed power into our hands, as we transferred from colonialism and what have you, to self-rule through the Exchequer and Audit Act. This Bill before us today is under those two most seminal documents.

The documents circulated follow a long tradition that has been with us for some time. Some of us who might be a little more familiar with the system and with documents such as these in the past, what has emerged today has demonstrated an element of inadequacy, insofar as the sharing of information is concerned, and also as a tool of management, when it comes to the mechanics of implementation.

Madam President, notwithstanding the shortcomings, I am sure the thinkers within the Ministry of Finance, the universities and seats of learning, would have been addressing these questions, if not in their minds, would have surmised them.

I would like to suggest a review, in order to make what could be effective tools of management. I saw in the estimates that there was some funding provided, but, regrettably, I see it was a decrease from the question of financial reform. The suggestion of reforming, as far as the mechanics that are before us in the form, is one that I think is very urgent. If we are to move or give credence to where we hope or aspire to go forward into 2020, then these elements should bring before us the mechanics, tools and techniques and make them relevant to what we are about.

Technology, if widely used by intelligent men and women, can lead us away from much rigidity and allow us some forms of freedom, particularly, freedom from fear. Part of what is before us is to make us a people who feel comfortable, who would be building a society of peace, love, caring, and all the things that we would like to see come into practice. But very often, these words degenerate into just clichés we use at times to suit us. This could lead to some of the problems that confront us. Very often, the problems that confront us could be considerably worsened by prevailing insensitivity.

Madam President, the insensitivity I am speaking about is not deliberate or not seeking to want a better society. It is an insensitivity to what exists in our country, to what is available for us to meet the challenges of sustained development. How we go about altering that mental fix, as we may call it, that misdirection of

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ourselves, that total ignorance of what we are about, is by learning; by changing our ways, by adopting what is available and redirecting, so that those reflexes which lead us away, could be directed to what is desirable or to what the majority of us would like to see: a society of which we could be proud, in which we could feel safe, which we can definitely think of in terms of our children, ourselves and future generations.

Money is said to be “the root of all evil”; I do not subscribe to that. Those from the traditions would say that the love of the world is the root of all evil. Yet, in some of our prayers and hopes, we speak in terms of: give us good in this world and some in the hereafter. Obviously, in a sophisticated society of the world today, money plays a very important part.

From the presentation of the Bill, I know there was high gear in seeking to get funds available, so that we could spend. I do not think it was cheating to not tell us the direction of the whole matrix of the economy, how it fits in with the monetary uses to which it could be placed or how it could put us into a better position, from the economic angle; but, definitely, \$750-plus million is plenty money. The way I understand it is that a substantial amount of this will be put into the system.

Madam President, I will not burden us with any form of economic or monetary matrix, for which I, myself, might be totally inadequate to get into, but this is one area in which we can think in terms of using the resources as a sustained growth mechanism.

9.00 p.m.

I think when it comes to this area it is one that we should pay particular attention to. I know much of the funds have been allocated under the development programme and one thinks that development programme is building a stock of goods that would go towards further production of goods and services. This is an elementary understanding of what I have of it, but I get a feeling that much of it would end up in consumerism and I do not think that is the way we should go—to build an economy on consumerism—and this is what is before us. So despite what we may say, and what we may feel we are going into, it may be as I said before in a way, not really goal-oriented to a better society.

Of course, how we do that would have reflections on what is before us, and I do not want to sound too laborious, doleful, or dismal to describe what is before us. My contribution is geared towards a shifting of our intellectual paradigms towards that end, and if it could act as a stimulus, I think we would have made

some contribution towards that. For a second I thought there was a small clash between the University of St. Vincent and the University of the West Indies (UWI).

I know that much has been said about Laventille and I was born and grew up in that area and I still live there, I never moved out, and what was said I can identify with and testify to. I know in Laventille, there is an institution and if you were to go up on the Main Road by the rum bond—it is burnt out now—you would see a big banner on it—*[Interruption]* It is good to see that rum bonds are turned into universities and in the towns you see drug stores turned into rum shops. If you go where Walcott Drugstore was at the corner of George and Prince Streets, you will see a snackette, and at the corner of Queen and Nelson Streets what used to be Alfred Richards Drugstore is now a rum shop. But in Laventille there is that big banner with the Institute of Technology, I think it is, it is open air too because if you were to go in, you would see no facilities. And it is not just Laventille; we are using that as a symbol for the oppressed, the poor, and those who want to make an effort to get out of the morass in which we find ourselves wanting to get out.

This week I was in Plaisance, an area in Laventille and it was a very nice experience for me. There were some houses being reconstructed and the thing about that is that they were not houses *per se*, but there was a commitment, a feeling of what we ourselves had felt. And in a document which we submitted to the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, we had suggested that the houses should not be what we are accustomed to, the barrack-type structures, or cabin-type structures that were set up some years ago in Beetham under which are sewer lines. I do not know how they got the permission of the health authorities to pass them, where there is so much pollution taking place. Those houses that would be put up are beyond friendliness to the area; they are treating people like people, an understanding that one could think in terms of. I felt very elated about that and I give credit to the Minister and that vision he has for housing.

Poverty, like crime, has always been with us and so many other things that were there in the beginning. The attempts we have made over the years seem to leave so little, that one gets the feeling that we are on a path of building a society based on death pathology at the end of it. This is frightening, but it is real, and it is an important aspect. If we do not recognize that and address it, not as a matter of urgency by putting a plaster on a sore foot, but really taking it and establishing a link so that we would get that inspiration that is there with us, and put it into practice, and give it meaning.

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I know in a question raised, the Minister of Public Administration and Information responded by using some very pretty terms like: value for money and I would still like to think in terms of reform that I would be seeking out things like implementation, participation, partnership, co-operation and involvement with the people who have put us here through our President, our Prime Minister, representation and what have you. So that we should really think in terms of commitment and live it, not only by the oath which we take, but let it get into the soul, the root, our inner selves, and our hearts. These are important factors in dealing with this because as I said before, it is by the funding that we really make the things happen, but giving materially is one thing, giving of yourself is the key thing.

You may give as we give the houses, and the water and figure that we give of the best, but there is more to it in giving these things. If you establish a connection, there is a connectivity in every human being, as I felt it last week with those houses that were commissioned to be built, that if you play that out against the background of our people I think it would go a long way to give meaning to what we are about through this part budget.

I know we have heard much from the various Senators, but there is need to address some unscrupulous tyrants and behaviour, and I will like to think in terms of the tyrants as really not the person, but the behaviour in the area of the criminal activities taking place, and it is in this area we are addressing the establishing of the participation of the people. If we do not establish that, we would not get the response that we would like.

The establishment of that participation will come through that feeling you will be connecting up with. It may seem to be a bit farfetched, but if we were to think in terms of our youths, innocent as they may be and they are, they are established through the linkages and this could be done by—all of us do it—but the importance of the results that are coming through are not desirable and these are small numbers; the killings and the kidnappings and I do not think these are things that we cannot address, the challenges are there, but it is a question of the approach to it. I know we have good men—

Hon. Senator: And women.

Sen. Bro. N. Khan: And women too, obviously. If we bring in more women—and I am happy to see that we have a woman in the Ministry of Finance, that was a secret mission I always had, and maybe a Minister of Finance being a woman. I use my personal experience in growing up, I come from a family of 15

and when you think in terms of my mother raising so many children, and though I am using my example, you will find that is the situation that exists throughout Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean area and how our women folk were able to steer us through that and bring us to what we are now. So I always felt that the mechanics of using funding and finances are among those that our Caribbean women have honed, so I would really like to see them in the Ministry of Finance and dealing with the financial part. I know in the past, in the days of the “kitchen cabinet” we have had women and I personally am looking forward to seeing something coming out of that experience. I hope I will be around to see what emerges out of it with our women in the Ministry of Finance in a tight spot. I have high respect too for our present Minister in the Ministry of Finance, so with that combination it is very exciting to me from that point.

I am being prompted—and I will share it—on our acting Prime Minister. If the rest of us do not know it, I think she knows that I have high respect for her too; both as acting Prime Minister, in her ministry and as a person too. She is a person for whom I have great respect in how she carries herself and I think the nation too and we are glad for people like her.

Returning to the youths: I know this year was supposed to be declared the Year of the Youth, again I wonder if it is just palliative or, I like to use the local parlance—if it is just salt fish skin they are throwing out to us. I see on some of the documents there have been reductions in areas of expenses where the youths have been identified. I had high hopes too when Sen. London was holding on for a short while in the Senate, I saw him as a youth and I am looking forward to see more come. Some of us, as we go down in age, we become a little more passionate and hope for expectation, but there is also an anxiety within us to see that it gets going because time is not with us.

These are some of the things I would like to see and be considered because the budget, as we know, has been more or less cast and it has been hinted here but we might just be going through a mechanism of getting things passed, but I would not like to subscribe too much to that. To deliver is a hope, it is what we are here for, and particularly those who hold the reins of Government to be energized, empowered, motivated, and to be equipped. These are important aspects as a Government, as a people, and as a Senate that we should definitely bring into our midst.

In passing, I would just like to touch on the external affairs. I know that we are represented. I do not know if we could call it that, it is to some extent external, but more regional and family-like to what is taking place in Jamaica. We hope by

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the grace of God that more can come out of it, of a people coming together, of establishing an identity, and also to address questions of the violation of international law and the UN Charter, which we had just had so much experience of. I know that to some extent some would say it is a question of a civilization of violence and death, and sometimes I fearfully think about the extent to which this has permeated our small islands here, but at least we have hope and expectations; I feel we are on the correct path.

Insofar as our Constitution is concerned, I mentioned earlier that these documents before us emanate out of our Constitution, so I would like to touch on our Constitution and with your permission, Madam President. No one can deny that the Constitution is a noble document by which we live and especially when we consider its relation to ourselves and what exists in other states outside our country. In this global village there is much of which we can be proud. There is also the need for responding to development, the need for change, and to this extent I would like to make mention that we are dealing with finance and I guess it will overflow and the section that deals with finance—even as I mentioned earlier the question of change—be as early as possible if we are to move into 2020 quickly because time is not on our side. We should look at that.

When we think in terms of the sacred trust that is before us, the wealth expressed in monetary terms, the question of prioritizing, and humbly meeting that trust is one that is very fearful if you could think in terms of that, and particularly that there be adequate safeguards. Though we have it in books, the safeguard must emerge within ourselves first, so that the legitimacy could be accepted by ourselves and the rest of the nation as we go about planning and spending the money that is for us.

When we think in terms of a just and humane society of working conditions, we can definitely enjoy the leisure and social and cultural opportunities, the concentration of wealth in just a few hands and its distribution is most important, and one could think in terms of what exists as far as the population and culture is concerned. This is not properly addressed when I think in terms of participation, of meeting, partnership and discussion. I speak particularly here in the area of the Caroni impasse as it was called at some time. I know we have had experiences in health that are not so pleasant too, and again we hope to build a cadre of persons and this year we are seeing in terms of establishing the University in the Bahamas where our lawyers can go and we are building.

There is the question of doctors for health care and we tell our people that this is a service that we would like to provide and the people are not getting the

service and the doctors are unable to practise. This does not go down too well and it is something we have to address, and the quicker we do it, the better we would be. I know there are mechanisms through the industrial court, but I do not think this is the area where we should play out these scenarios. It should be as I said before, a question of participation, collaboration and mediation. This is the way it should be done so at some stage that confidence could be reimposed in ourselves.

On the question of the environment, I think we have that as one of the heads of expenditure too. Our sister had touched on Laventille/Beetham area. I understand that that area, as far as the world is concerned—and I might be on sensitive ground here—has one of the highest rates of asthma among our young children. It is rather pathetic, but when we think in terms of what exists, we hope in the area of environmental control that will be addressed.

More cars are coming into Trinidad and we have two types of gas; the leaded and the unleaded. All of us drive cars and I think the unleaded is more expensive as against the leaded gas. There may be some technology in it, and I made a plea some time ago that this be addressed because the effects are not pleasant. We had the experience in Wallerfield where we saw what the negative effects of lead had on the children and I think that is very urgent and I would like to see that addressed. As a people who are patient to have been subjected to so many negatives, though we are using the Beetham area as a model, I think it exists in other parts of the country too and this is a matter that definitely needs some priority.

Madam President, allow me to express my gratitude to you for allowing me these few moments to share with the rest of the Senate. Thank you, and may God bless us.

The Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs and Acting Prime Minister (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Thank you, Madam President. I know you did not expect me to contribute this evening, but in fairness, before the hon. Minister winds up, I think I need to respond to two things which came from Sen. Mark and Sen. Prof. Deosaran who is not here, so the hon. Minister would not have to do that.

One is concerning the construction of the community centres; Mon Repos and Point Cumana and I know it worried him simply because Mon Repos is in San Fernando East and Point Cumana is in Diego Martin West. The Senate would remember that Mon Repos and Point Cumana came into the estimates in 2001. When we left office in 1991 to 1995, Nipdec had already started a feasibility

study on Mon Repos; it was one listed to be built as a community complex, and work had started in terms of design for that community centre. However, unfortunately, after we left, it suddenly fell off the priority listing and Mon Repos was never built and we felt we had the responsibility to the community which was misled during that period and we put Mon Repos back on the list.

Incidentally, the sod was turned for Point Cumana on two occasions before the election of 2000. My predecessor in the ministry who was a candidate for Diego Martin, turned the sod to start it. No centre was built for the year. The following year for the election again, tents went up, there was a refreshment bar, the sod was again turned for Point Cumana and no centre was built and, therefore, we felt we had a responsibility to build both centres. Just remember, we were going to build both, we put both on the priority list, as we felt they were important because after misleading a community we had to build them.

In the estimates, there was a small amount of money for construction of community centres in the first year and we allowed Nipdec to use that to do some designs. While that was happening, we budgeted \$3 million for the next year. However, when the plans eventually came, that money was not sufficient and what we are having here now is to make up the deficit for the new price of the centres.

There were no overruns or anything like that. Sen. Mark is so concerned. He is so accustomed to overruns that he never really stops to think why we asked for a variation. He was so sure it was because of overruns, but if he had only studied the history of those two centres, he would have understood that there were no overruns. We budgeted \$3 million, which was not sufficient. After we got the result of the tenders we needed more money to complete the tenders.

Point Cumana is almost completed, but we have to pay the contractors. We wanted to open the centre, but cannot get releases. It was the same for Mon Repos, so I hope that would satisfy the problem the Senator has with the centres. There is nothing spectacular about Mon Repos; we have built other community complexes and when we are talking about moving forward, we have the facilities there for training, computer rooms, and some accessories we have put into the other complexes that we have built since 1991 to 1995, we are putting into these centres. So that should take care of the Mon Repos and Point Cumana.

Sen. Mark: Could the hon. Minister indicate what was the final cost to construct and complete the Point Cumana Community Centre and the Mon Repos Community Complex? I am interested in that.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: What is the difference?

Sen. Mark: Let us know please?

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: You do some counting; \$2,062...million [*Inaudible*] and you add a commitment of \$697,652—you are given the final figures when you get there, and the first expenditure; \$2,467,000 and an additional commitment for Mon Repos of \$2.8 million. A little over \$4 million, it could be even \$5 million.

I will like to tell you that Nipdec just sent those figures for you this evening. Nipdec just sent me a statement to make you feel comfortable.

Sen. Mark: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: I know you will, and I know you are very kind when you hear the truth. The shortfall was just \$2.7 million. There were no overruns, and you will be quite proud of both centres.

The second area where the Senator felt we were spending, or where we were asking for more money is in the social sector area. I do not think he understood why that happened and I am not going to be able to advise him tonight. At some other time I will do it and I am going to do it on the hustings as well. What has happened is that we have what is called a new coordinating committee of the social sector. What we found is that in a particular area we have social development officers, social delivery officers, cultural officers, community development officers and the Minister of Education. In fact, when you are talking about social sector, it is not necessarily social development. Social sector ministries—forget the name—it is Culture, it is Community Development and Gender Affairs, it is Sports, it is Youth Affairs, it is Education. All those are what you call the social sector ministries and, therefore, we now have a coordinating committee where all these are brought together because we are trying to make the sector a little more efficient and effective and that is an experiment we are going to be working on for the next 18 months. Therefore, we have brought all these together.

We have seven areas: Community Development is so structured in the seven areas that is why we are taking the lead. We are using the administrative areas and in each of the seven areas there are five teams, and for each of the ministries I have talked about, we are putting on one new officer and we are now appointing a regional coordinator in that area. So we will have seven regional coordinators, five teams, and about seven persons in each of those teams. The programme coordinator is the Permanent Secretary who leads that team.

In Tobago we are having two areas; one regional coordinator with two separate teams. In all we are creating 195 new positions. Sen. Mark, these were

advertised on the newspapers some time ago and we received a number of applications, but if you had been following, you would have seen all the advertisements. People have been applying but we have to pay those persons and the money that you see there is for payment to these officers who will be functioning in this structure.

I am quite sure when we are finished you will be very pleased with what has happened because we are talking about delivery and we wanted to bring things together so we do not waste officers' time and money. That in a nutshell, is what it is all about, and Cabinet had approved that some time ago. I have the Cabinet Note of November 21, 2002 and that is why we are asking for the extra money for this particular social service delivery programme and I know you are going to give it your blessing.

Sen. Prof. Deosaran spoke about crime and the Neighbourhood Watch Programme, which he felt was no more. Members of Parliament would remember that programme was started by this administration between 1991 and 1995 but as everything else, as the administration left like the Civilian Conservation Corps and most of the programmes, the last administration closed the programme by removing the community policing end of it. The Community Police supported the Neighbourhood Watch Programme and, therefore, when you got rid of the community police, automatically you got rid of the support for the Neighbourhood Watch Programme because even though the groups existed, that link with the police was no longer there.

What we had to do—and I am quite proud to say—is that we have decided to bring back the Community Police and I am sure Sen. Prof. Deosaran would be extremely happy about it. We are now moving to take back our communities. We have changed the name, but the same principle is there, we have a document on it and I wish to tell you that on Saturday July 05, 2003 at the Trinidad Hilton at 2.00 p.m. we are going to launch this new initiative again, which is part of our crime plan. Basically, there are some elements of the neighbourhood watch extended a little further.

I would not bore the Senators this evening with the details of it, but an invitation is extended to all to attend, and by tomorrow all the invitations will be out, and again, we are going to have the strength of the community police. In this particular exercise we have partnered with a number of groups; the Ministry of National Security and Rehabilitation is a part of it, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the Association of Village Councils, general Chamber of Commerce, all of them would be appearing on the programme on Saturday. I am

quite sure you heard the Prime Minister when he talked about this new initiative which is part of the entire crime plan. Money is in the budget for the Neighbourhood Watch Programme and it is the same money we are using for this Community Safety and Enhancement Programme. That is the third area.

The fourth area I would like to look at very briefly is Sen. Dr. Kernahan's contribution as she spoke about Laventille. Whenever anybody speaks about Laventille I am always interested. I have been vilified in this Chamber time and time again for my personal intervention and that of my ministry into Laventille. Everybody knows that I go to Laventille and when you do not want to say good about the visit you will say that we are not assisting the people, when you want to say evil about it, you say we go to meet with community leaders, but we are accustomed to it and we still go and will continue to go to meet with the people. When you ask what we have done for Laventille, let me tell you that we have two monuments in Laventille that will always remind you that you did not care about Laventille.

One is the Desperadoes Pan Theatre, on which \$8 million was spent. We left in 1995, and the theatre was almost finished. We had done that to say thanks to Laventille for the music they gave to the world. That pan theatre was designed with concessionaires and so forth, there was some economic value out of it, plus they would be able to sponsor concerts all the time, but because it was built by the PNM, it was never officially opened and it was left to be vandalized. It is a monument to the Opposition.

We did not ask at this time for a variation, but in the next budget we have to get almost \$4 million to rehabilitate it. Just recently we sent one of the best architects up there and realized it was further vandalized because the bathroom facilities, airconditioning, and a room which was to be used for recording from which the equipment had been stolen. They refused to assign guards there because they wanted it to be vandalized, and then you come to this Parliament and say that you love the people of Laventille.

The second monument—to show that they did not care—are the houses in John John which they wanted to call the “football hotel” which they wanted to sell to Jack Warner. In 1991—1995, there was a fire in Laventille and I was the Minister of Community Development at that time, I was out there on the night of the fire with others from my ministry. We had to house those people in several places, some in the Spree Simon Complex and eventually, some at Maloney. Those people wanted to stay in Laventille. We came out of office and the UNC came in and they decided that those towers were too good for the people of

Laventille; just because they saw some carpet on the floor, it was too good for the people so they decided they would sell them to Jack Warner. But because of the insistence of the people who said they cannot bring anybody else there, eventually they were given back but not even at the terms which we wanted, because we were going to give them at subsidized rates which the people could afford.

What they did was go into the people's bank accounts, see how much money they were working for and selected. However, they are still there and whenever the UNC look at those two buildings they would always say: "We love Laventille". It is a monument to the kind of caring they have for Laventille. When I hear the Senator this evening telling me how much she loves Laventille, I am surprised because that does not seem to be what is being demonstrated.

I heard the Senator talk about Gonzales and the water she brought to that area. We had just done one of the best pre-schools one could find anywhere, it is next to the St. Peters Spiritual Baptist Church in Laventille. It is a lovely pre-school with an adjoining room where we put in special bathroom equipment for children, special sinks, we have ordered special beds from abroad for those children. It is one of the best, and the yard is tiled and we did it because we felt whatever we are doing; whether it is Laventille or Westmoorings you are getting the best. [*Desk thumping*] It is a credit to us. I go up there all the time and I noticed they had no water on Gonzales Hill; the residents and the church use tanks, and at times a truck would bring water. I therefore asked WASA to bring pipe-borne water and water is now coming from Picton, over the hill, the same line that is going to Hilton Hotel is coming down and it is almost there. I just told Sen. Dumas to remind Mr. Wayne Joseph that it is time to make the connection because we want to have the water before we allow the children to enter the school.

So when you hear about love, you ask me about it and I will tell you what happened in Gonzales. Right over the road from Gonzales, there is a dilapidated centre, I think the gas truck did something to it and we are now going to attend to that. I can tell you all the programmes that we have been doing in Laventille. When they talk about the young people and what they would do for them, so many programmes that young people enjoyed were stopped and we are now trying to reopen some of the same programmes they closed.

Let me close quickly because it is late. What is interesting is when I came here I did not intend to speak; I said I would do some homework. We partnered with a number of organizations in Laventille and any organization in Laventille that comes to the ministry with programmes that we feel can help—because we partner with the NGO's—we would usually support the programmes. We have just

done a first study of Laventille from an extensive profile of every community there. There are a number of groups and civic-minded people in Laventille and they get together, they prepare programmes and come to the ministry for funding. I spent the morning listening to them but what is amazing is that in looking through some of the programmes—I brought this one to read because I intended to support some of the programmes—only to hear the Senator reading from the same document I had intended to support. She thought she came with this lovely document, but was reading from the same document I had—*The East Port of Spain Council Community Organization*. I sat here and read this document this evening to talk about the things I wanted to support. She did not tell us that on the front page of the document was a meeting with the Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant, the hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, one would believe we had nothing to do with it. She said that they handed me some copies and I did not look at them. Here I am looking at all the programmes; the sewing programmes et cetera.

Sen. Dr. Kernahan: Madam President, on a point of order, the Minister is misleading the Parliament. I never said the Minister did not look at the document, I mentioned that the documents were given to the Minister.

Madam President: I do not think there is a point of order there.

Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams: I am not the type of person to be easily shaken by that because sometimes when persons criticize certain things, you would want to believe that those persons who did this document actually were against the government or something. Interestingly, let me tell you who were the contact persons; Mr. Michael Peters, Mr. Oba Kiteme, Mr. Trevor McMeo, and Mr. Malcolm Kernahan. Just for the record, those are the persons who were part of the preparation of this document. Are those persons serious about this?

They sent a copy to the Prime Minister; they sent a copy to me. The Prime Minister sent me a note saying; “May we discuss.” Whenever the Prime Minister says, may we discuss I know what he means; look at it, see what is relevant and move on. Therefore, I want to let the Senator know, like every other organization, we look at all that are sent to us and we are serious about what we do for the people in Laventille and anywhere else. [*Desk thumping*] It is very difficult, especially with Laventille, to catch me flat-footed.

I heard Sen. Bro. Khan talk about the rum bond, which they are going to be using for a trade centre for the people of Laventille. We have done a number of centres in Laventille, the Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme (GAPP) is

now in Laventille itself, it was at the Youth Training Facility. We had an incident there so we had to move them to the Morris Marshall Foundation. I go up there as often as possible. I was in Trou Macaque because we had a problem there. It is not easy to get construction done in these areas. Trou Macaque had a serious problem, people do not want to work there for various reasons, as the Minister I had to go and try to get people to go back to work there. This is all part of it, so the Senator should not criticize and say people just do not care, because we care.

I am glad that Sen. Bro. Khan recognized the houses that are being built at Beverly Hills, and added to that, just yesterday we unveiled plans for a recreational facility for that area; it is one of the most modern that you would find in the Caribbean, because whenever we are putting anything in, we are going to lift that standard because we know what we have to do for the people. It is going to be a family-type facility and I will tell you what family means. If you have a swing, normally you have a child on the swing and someone will push it; everything is large so a mother can sit on it with her children. The architect did it in such a way that the entire community is involved; parents et cetera, everybody could be at the facility. It is about one of the best I have seen, and it is beautifully landscaped.

We sent an architect up there—and I am sorry Sen. Smith is not here—because we went to Sen. Smith’s panyard as well—Carib Tokyo—which is part of that hill and had an architect design the new Carib Tokyo facility.

I do not want to bore people this evening because we will find time to let you know exactly what is happening, but I felt it was important as you go with your “glory” to remember that there are people who care about those people; people who care in spite of the fact that you criticized us and you said we deal with certain people at certain levels. I will still go to Harpe Place and have my camps and my parties. I will still go to all the other areas on “The Hill.”

We are running 13 camps in Laventille for the August vacation and I am quite sure that when we are finished they will tell us we have gone with the community leaders to run the camps. Be that as it may, Madam President, I just thought the intervention was necessary at this time so that they would understand Government’s policy and when people read documents from 1992, let them know we are in 2003 and we are planning for beyond.

Thank you.

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):
Madam President, first of all, let me thank all the Senators who contributed; their

contributions were excellent, the debate was great, and at the end of it all I am happy to note that once again we have proven ourselves to be the custodians of the trust of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I also wish to place on record the efforts of our hard-working staff who spent a significant amount of time, effort, and energy to bring us the information that we had discussed this evening.

Madam President, it was my understanding that we had also prepared a 55-page document that was going to be circulated, and if that in fact had occurred, then 100 per cent of the questions that were asked would not have had to be asked because all the answers were there. I wish to apologize for that, but it is still available, and I would refer to this shortly to make the point.

Let me just deal with a couple things. Sen. Bro. Khan talked about the presentation. This was an issue with which we had been struggling over time in terms of the presentation of fiscal information. You see, the Government and the agencies that the Government reports to have a particular structure in which these things are done and in some instances, it is set out in the law how we should deal with it. Sometimes we are tempted to make it more customer friendly if you will, but it does not normally meet the requirements of the law and, therefore, since this is a law-making body, we have to follow the law and then change it at some point in time. We are, in fact, looking at that.

Sen. Dr. Kernahan made some comments, and I just want to tell her how the process works so we would understand that in a real sense, when we come here, it is really not about doing things in an anyhow manner. This is how the process works: Each ministry develops a strategic plan which is based on the Government's vision. So you have a policy position, the party says this is what is going to happen, the Minister with responsibility looks at that and brings it in a document called the strategic plan. Within that strategic plan, you look at all the issues, try to operationalize them, then develop an implementation matrix, but remember this is happening at a particular point in time for future events. This is a living situation, changes occur, things happen, people come in, people leave, different kinds of issues take place and, therefore, when we come to debate these issues, what we are really attempting to do is reflect the changes that have taken place and the reality of what needs to be done.

Let me give you an example. The hon. Senator talked about us slashing, slashing; slashing this, slashing that, giving the impression that we got up one morning and had no basis for it. The facts are as follows: work has not started on

the rehabilitation of the Southern Wholesale Market as was anticipated—this is in reference to the Ministry of Agriculture; to date only a project manager has been hired who is expected to prepare the necessary designs.

Retention fees with respect to the Water Management and Control Project would no longer be required in fiscal 2003, but in 2004 instead. I do not know on the basis of this particular information where one can say that agricultural expenditure has been slashed, slashed, slashed to the detriment of the programme. I really do not find the information on the basis of what we have submitted to deal with that particular issue and, therefore, I find difficulty in providing information and having it being used in a way that really does not follow.

Sen. Seetahal made the point about presentation and information and she is correct, but again, the information in the 55-page document would have dealt with that and I think in the future we would have to treat with it.

Sen. Prof. Ramchand talked about the timing of this Bill. This information was prepared, I believe, sometime at the end of April/May and it went to the other place on June 16 after it went through all its processes. Quite frankly, we had hoped that the following week, we would have brought it here to deal with the last quarter because you are looking at a situation where we had passed a budget in September, events have occurred, we are in a position to do a review, when we did the review, at that point in time it is projected into the future, and if nothing happens we would have a surplus. However, things happened and we identified what they were; Caribbean Court, increments and all the things we identified in 742. When you take that into account and project it into the future, you come up with a result and that is the result that we have reported.

I do not know what one could draw from that, from the manner in which we are doing the activity. All I am saying is that at the particular time when the exercise was done and projected into the future, this was the result. When you add to it the commitments we have made and the things we needed to do, this is the result. If that result is taken and expressed in terms of the original result, this is the difference. That is basically what we are saying.

A lot of the information that comes to us from the agencies that collect the data—arrears is a particular one where the process that one goes through when we are doing an exercise and the ministry has to quantify the results. Let us take as an example, the Ministry of Health. There really is no way you would be able to do that unless you have actually done the exercise, and the way the exercise is

actually done, is that an individual has to get all the information from the time he started in the service; he has to go through a process; get it audited; make sure it is correct; and when that happens, he then applies for it. It is a very long and difficult process and what we have found over time is that as the information comes, it changes, and that is what is reflected in the supplementals.

We have said many times when you do not know what the number is, estimate it, and when there is additional data, bring it for us. Yes, we know that it exists, but in the real calculation of the information, really and truly sometimes the information is incorrect. That speaks to the quality of our human resources and the continuing need for radical reform to our system of delivery. We really need to get to the stage where we can get the best persons and have them accountable for the best results under the current system that has eluded us.

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan made many interesting technical points about a very complex issue; the energy and gas sector. We have listened to her and she said a number of things during the debate, but we continue to say that notwithstanding what was done on the master gas plan, we have determined that we are going to bring in our own consultants to look at the oil and energy sector and then determine what we would do. We said that exercise would be completed by the end of August, and in the next budget we are going to make statements about it and we are going to continue with that particular policy.

Some of the things that have been talked about were: benefits to be distributed, gas master plan, flour price issues; shift of the policy and so on. We could deal with that, but now is not the time for that, so I would not try to do so at this particular time.

Madam President, the \$30 million for LIAT, I think that was dealt with; the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, the details are on pages 21 and 22 of this document which I honestly thought was in circulation. What it contained are the positions, the office holders, salaries, allowances, method of employment, period of contract, conditions of service, who got what, when they got it, whether it was negotiated by the Chief Personnel Officer or not. So that information is currently available.

The other issue about public administration, and the question about \$900,000 are on page 24 of the document. It identifies salaries, wages, and all the various expenses.

Commission of Enquiry, it identifies the chairman and his commissioners, \$1.6 million and \$100,000 would be met from the funds allocated from the Office of the Prime Minister.

Sen. Mark: On a point of clarification, Madam President, would the hon. Minister be circulating that document to all Senators, seeing that we did not get them before?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Yes, Madam President, the intent was that the document would have been circulated so that the debate would be about different issues. There is one point I wish to make, on page 46 of the document—because one of the things I believe we should do is always make sure that when we talk about those in our society who are less fortunate that we should use words that respect the intent of what we are attempting to achieve.

Madam President, the Transformation and Development Centres would provide basic services of the former relief centres, but there would be heightened focus on skills training, self-development, and access to employment opportunities to prepare recipients for self-employment. Training will cover broad parameters of service, technology, industry and management with a micro enterprise orientation. The expected outcome is that the beneficiaries would be transformed from being consumers of welfare service to being contributors to national development. Monitoring and evolution mechanisms would be developed to ensure the effectiveness of the programme.

The difficulty, Madam President, is that this programme is called a soup kitchen. It seems to me that—

Sen. Mark: It is a fact.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: This is a soup kitchen? A programme that identifies training and skills and so on?

Sen. Mark: Madam President, if the hon. Minister can provide to this Senate a detailed account of how many people have been trained, given what he has identified, at least the country would know what they are doing, but we do not have the facts before us, so I call it a soup kitchen.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: It will be available, Madam President, because we want to ensure that the country knows what we are doing.

Madam President, in terms of the Revenue Stabilization Fund, we have answered two questions on this, and there is a Cabinet Note currently dealing with this particular matter, and as soon as Cabinet deliberates on it, we will move forward.

There is just one other comment I want to make in general. Sen. Mark continues to say that this Government is about squandermania and he uses

examples of not providing an Emergency Health Service (EHS) as an example of this. Whatever the reason, Madam President, the way I want to respond to that particular statement is as follows: what one person believes to be squandermania is really food on the table for someone else. I therefore wish to indicate that this Government does not subscribe to anything called squandermania. It understands that we have scarce resources, and the utilization of those scarce resources must be to the benefit of all our citizens. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, with those few comments, I beg to move, that a Bill to supplement and vary the appropriation of the sum, the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 2003, be now read a second time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 63, I beg to move that the Bill be not committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Question put and agreed to.

Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be now read the third time and passed.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs and Acting Prime Minister (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Madam President, before I move the adjournment of the Senate, I would like to inform hon. Senators that there will be two sittings of the Senate next week: Tuesday, July 08, 2003 and Wednesday, July 09, 2003.

Tuesday, July 08 is Private Members' Day, and Wednesday, July 09 we will do three bills: the Medical Board (Amdt.) Bill, a bill to amend the Income Tax Act, and a bill to amend the Supreme Court of Judicatuwre Act.

Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate be adjourned to Tuesday, July 08, 2003 at 1.30 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 10.03 p.m.