SENATE

Tuesday, January 18, 2005

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 Sen. The Hon. John Jeremie and Sen. Brother Noble S. A. Khan from today's sitting of the Senate.

SENATORS' APPOINTMENT

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Prof. George Maxwell Richards:

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Appointment of a Senator

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MRS. ANGELA CROPPER

In exercise of the power vested in me by paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, do hereby appoint you, ANGELA CROPPER, a Senator.

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 5th day of January, 2005."

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MRS. MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH

WHEREAS Senator John Jeremie is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

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 immediate effect and continuing during the period of illness of the said Senator John Jeremie.

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 18th day of January, 2005."

"THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MS. ALTHEA ROCKE

WHEREAS Senator Brother Noble Khan 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, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(c) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ALTHEA ROCKE, to be temporarily a member of the

Senate, with effect from 18th January, 2005 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Brother Noble Khan.

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 13th day of January, 2005."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Angela Cropper, Magna Williams-Smith and Althea Rocke

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I take this opportunity to welcome our newest Senator, Mrs. Angela Cropper, to the Senate. We look forward to hearing you participate in our debates and we hope that you will find it interesting. [*Desk thumping*]

FINANCE (VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) BILL

Bill to vary the appropriation of the sum of the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 2004, brought from the House of Representatives [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance*]; read the first time.

Motion made, That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Hon. C. Enill*]

Question put and agreed to.

PAPER LAID

Post Caroni (1975) Limited–A Comprehensive and Integrated Development Plan. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo)*]

VENTURE CAPITAL (AMDT.) (NO. 2) BILL

Special Select Committee Report
(Presentation)

The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas): Madam President, I beg to lay on the Table the Fourth Interim Report of the Special Select Committee of the Senate appointed to consider and report on the Venture Capital (Amdt.) Bill (No. 2), in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 51(2).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Government Agencies (Advertisement Agencies Employed by)

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

A. Could the Minister provide to this Senate the names of the various advertising agencies employed by the various Government ministries, state enterprises, statutory authorities and other Government agencies and departments over the period January, 2002 to April 30, 2002?

B. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a breakdown of the expenditure per agency in respect of the various Government ministries, state enterprises, statutory boards and other Government agencies and departments over the same period?

C. Could the Minister further state the amount of money utilized in both the print and electronic media in a detailed way over the same period, as well as the various events hosted, promoted and advertised?

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Madam President, I can respond only to matters under the purview of the ministry for which he is responsible. Accordingly, the response to this question is in respect of the Ministry of Finance, the statutory boards and state enterprises which are under the purview of the Ministry of Finance.

The advertising agencies employed and the expenditure incurred for the period January 2002 to April 2002 are as follows: With respect to the Ministry of Finance, no advertising agency was employed over the period, therefore, no expenditure was incurred. With respect to the statutory boards, the National Lotteries Control Board employed one advertising agency over the period, a company called Diversified Communications Consultancy. The expenditure incurred amounted to $485,826.15. The National Insurance Board employed one advertising agency over the period, Willow Works; the expenditure incurred amounted to $31,711. The total expenditure for the two statutory authorities amounted, therefore, to $517,537.15. Nine of the state enterprises under the Ministry employed advertising agencies. I have asked that a list be circulated and I think that is being done now.

The amount of money utilized in both the print and electronic media at the various events hosted, promoted and advertised are also identified. By way of a summary, the print media advertising expenditure amounted to $532,287.45;

statutory boards, $667,162.70 and state enterprises, $2,540,615.40. The schedule is rather extensive, so I have asked that the report with the information be circulated for the benefit of Senators.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, I am sure that this is a typographical error on the part of the parliamentary staff. In question No. 19, I never asked to be supplied with information from January 2002 to April 2002; that would be silly of me. [*Laughter*] My question that was accepted was for April 2004, because this question was submitted since last year May. I could not go beyond May, so I took April 2004. I do not understand how we can have a question for just two months; something is wrong. I do not know how you would like to address this matter; if the Minister would want to go back and deal with it. What would you suggest? Clearly it was April 2004.

Madam President: I would have to go back and look at what the original question was and see whether the dates were wrong and, maybe, then I would make a decision on it.

Vide end of sitting for written part of the answer.

National Lotteries Control Board
(Former Acting Director of)

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

A. Could the Minister inform this Senate in what capacity is the former Acting Director of the National Lotteries Control Board, Mrs. Phyllis Alfred presently employed by the Board?

B. Could the Minister further inform the Senate:

(i) What is the present monthly salary of Mrs. Alfred?

(ii) How long has she been employed in her new capacity and what is the precise duration of her contract?

(iii) What are the terms and conditions of her employment?

(iv) What are her exact functions and duties?

(v) Was the position she now occupies approved by the Cabinet and publicly advertised?

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Madam President, the former Acting Director of the National Lotteries Control

Board (NLCB), Mrs. Phyllis Alfred, is not currently employed by the board. However, because of her expertise, wealth of knowledge and experience, Mrs. Alfred is occasionally called upon by the board to assist with special assignments and for advice, whenever the situation demands. In these circumstances, Mrs. Alfred is paid for the services rendered.

The following are the services provided by Mrs. Alfred to the NLCB, the duration and the fees paid: Service—setting up of full time operations in the NLCB's Tobago branch, June to November 2003, fees paid, $6,700 per month; research, March 2004, $6,700; and part of May 2004, $3,500. Mrs. Alfred has also been requested by the board to provide some professional guidance in the human resources department during the month of June 2004. Cabinet approval is not required by the board in these circumstances.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, could the hon. Minister indicate to the Parliament what is the present status of Mrs. Phyllis Alfred? Could he also tell us who is the Acting Director of the National Lotteries Control Board, at this time?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: I can answer one of those two questions, Madam President. As far as the information available to me, Mrs. Alfred is not currently employed by the board. With regard to the second question, I really do not have that information at this point in time; but I could find out.

Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
(Consultancy Services Rendered to)

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

A. Could the Minister inform the Senate of the terms and conditions of employment and the duration of the contract of Mr. James Humphreys in respect of consultancy services rendered to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago?

B. (i) Could the Minister state whether this position was publicly advertised; and

(ii) If the answer to (i) is in the affirmative, could the Minister provide the Senate with the relevant documentary evidence?

C. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a detailed breakdown on a monthly basis of all monies paid to Mr. Humphreys for work completed on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, it should be noted that a similar question was answered in the other House on June 09, 2004.

The Government hired Mr. James Humphreys to provide the following services:

(i) to sensitize relevant Government officials on how the communication function in developed countries is managed; and

(ii) to develop among stakeholders an understanding of how a proactive and integrated Government agenda is realized.

Mr. Humphreys is a highly regarded academic and practitioner in the field of strategic communications, policy development and change management. While in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Humphreys conducted five training sessions as follows:

(i) May 05, 2004, the a.m. session to public sector communications specialists, speech writers and advisors to Ministers;

(ii) May 05, 2004, p.m. session, communications specialists from state enterprises, representatives of the media houses and some private sector agencies;

(iii) May 06, 2004, permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries;

(iv) May 07, 2004, communications personnel in the Ministry of Public Administration and Information and the Office of the Prime Minister;

(v) May 08, 2004, executive members of the Government. The contract was not advertised and no documentary evidence exists.

For his services Mr. Humphreys was paid a fee of $52,201. It was also agreed that the Government would pay the airfare for Mr. Humphreys to and from Trinidad and Tobago, as well as for his accommodation during his stay here. The cost of his airfare was $34,180.65 and his accommodation expenses amounted to TT $5,956.26.

Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Mark: Could the hon. Minister indicate whether Mr. Humphreys is still employed by the State or his Ministry; secondly, why this position was not advertised and whether it is a normal practice on the part of the Government to just hand pick consultants for projects and programmes?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. L. Saith: Mr. Humphreys is not employed at this time. He was employed on a consultancy basis for the five days indicated. It was felt that he had the skills needed at the time and on the basis of a sole selective process he was selected.

Forensic Science Centre
(Upgrading of)

48. Sen. Dana Seetahal asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

A. Is the Minister aware that there have been enormous delays in obtaining analyses and reports from the Forensic Science Centre (FSC) due to a lack of staff, equipment and facilities?

B. Could the Minister inform the Senate of the status of the proposed upgrading of the FSC with particular reference to:

(i) staffing, including replacements for persons on leave;

(ii) equipment; and

(iii) facilities?

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Madam President, hon. Senators are advised that the Minister of National Security is aware that there have been delays in obtaining reports from the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre (FSC) in the areas of narcotics, documents and firearm examinations. These delays have been due, mainly, to an inadequate number of scientific officers. Equipment failure and lack of facilities have not been significant contributors to these delays.

The Ministry of National Security has increased the establishment of scientific officers by 12; six of these positions were filled in May 2004. Steps are being taken to award scholarships to nationals of Trinidad and Tobago to pursue post-graduate training in forensic science, with a view to filling the remaining vacancies. It is to be noted that post-graduate training in forensic science is not available at the University of the West Indies and, as such, there is no pool of nationals from which to source the expertise. It is, therefore, difficult to obtain replacements when officers proceed on leave.

With respect to equipment upgrade, the Ministry of National Security has allocated a total of $900,000 in 2005 to secure equipment for the centre, including the following: a second genetic analyser for use in DNA analysis; a chromatograph/mass spectrometer for use in the analysis of narcotics; an x-ray x-rayable body tray for use in the pathology section and a stereozoom micro system for use in firearms. Additionally, the sum of $3 million has been allocated for extension and modification of the centre in fiscal year 2005.

Sen. Seetahal: The hon. Minister mentioned the question of a second genetic whatever, in respect of DNA. Was it not intended that DNA testing should have

been operational at the end of last year? That is my understanding of what was said in your last budget response to my question.

Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph: I had indicated that we were supposed to have had it up and running by December. The purchase of this second one is a back up; there is already in existence one such piece of equipment.

Forensic Science Centre
(Analyses and Reports from)

49. Sen. Dana Seetahal asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

A. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a detailed list of all outstanding requests for analyses and reports to the Forensic Science Centre by the police and/or prosecution?

B. Could the Minister explain to the Senate the reasons for the delay in providing these analyses and reports in respect of the following:

(i) Narcotics exhibits;

(ii) Firearms and ammunitions exhibits; and

(iii) Other exhibits?

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Madam President, according to information from the Director of the Forensic Science Centre, as at January 05, 2005, there were 3,154 cases awaiting processing at the Forensic Science Centre which can be disaggregated as follows:

Cases	Years	Number
Homicides	1994—1999	8
	2000	12
	2001	10
	2002	7
	2003	14
	2004	65
	Total	116
Toxicology	1994—1999	Nil
	2000	16

Cases	Years	Number
	2001	25
	2002	22
	2003	23
	2004	41
	Total	127
Firearms/Ammunition	1994—1999	Nil
	2000	16
	2001	72
	2002	360
	2003	381
	2004	514
	Total	1,343
Documents	1994—1999	375
	2000	22
	2001	17
	2002	9
	2003	27
	2004	25
	Total	475
Narcotics	1994—1999	Nil
	2000	18
	2001	41
	2002	18

Cases	Years	
	2003	186
	2004	741
	Total	1,004
Arson	1994—1999	Nil
	2000	12
	2001	6
	2002	22
	2003	20
	2004	24
	Total	84
Pathology	1994—1999	Nil
	2000	Nil
	2001	Nil
	2002	1
	2003	2
	2004	2
	Total	5

Madam President, this gives us our total of 3,154.

While in 2004 there was a slight decrease in the number of exhibits submitted for analysis, some 11,502, overall this figure has been consistently increasing. Between 2000 and 2003, for example, the number of exhibits increased by 109 per cent: from 7,555 in 2000 to 15,832 in 2003. Moreover, given the current crime situation, particularly as it relates to the use of illicit use of firearms in the commission of crimes, there has been a noticeable increase in the narcotics, firearms and ammunition categories. Between the years 2002 and 2004, the number of narcotic exhibits increased by 66 per cent and the number of firearm exhibits increased by 89 per cent. In fact, of the 3,154 outstanding cases, 2,347 or 74 per cent pertained to these two areas.

This steady increase in the number of cases and exhibits, coupled with the problem of inadequate manpower, combine to create the backlog at the centre. Hon. Senators are asked to note, however, that the Ministry has taken steps to ensure that the situation is remedied in the shortest possible time frame. In addition to the creation of 26 additional positions at the centre, efforts have also been geared at upgrading the equipment and providing appropriate training opportunities for members of staff.

Sen. Seetahal: There is one matter, Madam President; the Minister did not mention any reason, specifically, with respect to the 375 documents 1994 to 1999. My information is that there are cases from 1999. For instance, there is a forged currency case from December 07, 1999—that was five years ago—still awaiting a report. There are many other cases, but that is one example. Could the Minister specifically address that and murders also, since for these crimes people are in custody. How is it that we have anything outstanding in relation to capital matters? It is a learning experience for me; I would like some response.

Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph: I am not in a position to provide you with a response, as it stands now. At some subsequent time, I will be in a position to say.

Sen. R. Montano: Madam President, could the Minister please state whether this means that prosecutions have not been able to take place in those 3,000-plus cases?

Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph: I am not in a position to respond to that; I will have to find out. It may be, but I do not know.

Sen. R. Montano: There is a follow up to that. If that is the case and prosecutions have not been able to take place, are there persons currently incarcerated and awaiting trial while their matters are not processed, as a result of waiting for these matters to come up and if so, what is the number of those persons?

Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph: Madam President, clearly, I will not be in a position to respond. If the Senator poses that question, I will be more than willing to provide the Senate with information as it relates to those matters.

Forensic Science Centre
(Court Matters Dismissed)

50. Sen. Dana Seetahal asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

A. Could the Minister inform the Senate whether any court matters have been dismissed because of the delay in providing forensic evidence from the Forensic Science Centre?

B. If the answer to (A) is in the affirmative, could the Minister provide a detailed list, inclusive of the name of the accused, date of offence, nature of the offence and if drugs involved and the quantity of all the matters dismissed?

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Madam President, hon. Senators, the Commissioner of Police has advised according to his records no court matters were dismissed during the years 2002, 2003 and 2004, because of the delay on the part of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre in providing the necessary reports. As a result of this response, part B of the question is not applicable.

Ministry of Health
(Acquisition of CT Scan Machine)

51. Sen. Sadiq Baksh asked the hon. Minister of Health:

With respect to the newly acquired CT scan machine, could the Minister inform the Senate:

(i) whether it is a multi slice or a single slice machine;

(ii) on what date was the machine commissioned; and

(iii) what is the total cost, inclusive of installation of the machine?

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, one multi slice, a 16-slice CT scanner was purchased for the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex and one single-slice CT scanner was purchased for the San Fernando General Hospital. These machines were commissioned on April 28, 2004, at Mount Hope and July 12, 2004 at San Fernando.

The total cost, inclusive of installation of these machines, is as follows: for the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex the unit cost was $5,534,382.69; installation, $364,014, a total of $5,907,396.60. With respect to the scanner at San Fernando, the unit cost was $2,633,274; installation, $225,036, a total of $2,858,310.

POST CARONI (1975) LIMITED
(DEVELOPMENT PLAN)

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo): Madam President, earlier in this sitting I had the honour to lay on the Table a document entitled *Post Caroni (1975) Limited – A Comprehensive and*

Integrated Development Plan. This plan is intended to provide an overview of this Government's plan for the future use of lands vacated by Caroni (1975) Limited, hereinafter referred to as "Caroni", consequent on the restructuring of the domestic sugar industry in August 2003.

I wish to advise hon. Senators that the Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove National Company Limited (Divestment and Business Development) Bill, 2004, has been introduced in the Lower House. That Bill represents a critical component of Government's strategy for the effective management of lands vacated by Caroni (1975) Limited, in keeping with the principles of sustainable development for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Bill will, essentially, allow for the vesting of real estate owned by Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove in the State, as well as the management of lands previously owned by Caroni (1975) Limited and Orange Grove, by the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited, hereinafter referred to as "EMBD", a wholly owned State enterprise incorporated under the Companies Act, and the stimulation of economic activity on those lands through the establishment of light and heavy manufacturing, agricultural and residential estates and commercial complexes. Accordingly, a key feature of the Bill is that while it provides for the sustainable use of those real estate undertakings, it also ensures that the State retains responsibility for the allocation and future development of those lands.

The Post Caroni (1975) Limited plan clearly sets out five key elements in the restructuring of the domestic sugar industry:

(i) the reconfiguration of the local sugar industry;

(ii) the creation of a growth pole on Caroni (1975) Limited lands;

(iii) the training and retraining of the employee base of Caroni (1975) Limited;

(iv) the disposal of assets owned by Caroni (1975) Limited; and

(v) the retention of Caroni (1975) Limited as a non-operating company.

Hon. Senators would recall that in 2002 the Government undertook a comprehensive review of the sugar industry, in the context of global issues of efficiency and competitiveness facing that industry. As a result of that review, we formed the judgment that Caroni (1975) Limited, Caroni, in its existing form, would have been unable to discharge, effectively and efficiently, its principal functions: sugar cane cultivation and sugar production, as well as the management

of its significant real estate holdings. International market conditions have since worsened, in light of the recent preliminary ruling of the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the European Union. That ruling significantly changed the current preferential treatment afforded to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, by the European Union, and resulted in lower market prices which would, essentially, drive out high cost producers.

Accordingly, the decision by the Government to undertake the downsizing of the domestic sugar in August 2003 was, indeed, well timed. That restructuring involved the following broad elements:

(i) The establishment of a new wholly owned state enterprise, the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited (SMCL), to undertake, separately and exclusively, the sugar cane processing and sugar refining activities, previously conducted by Caroni (1975) Limited; and

(ii) The establishment of a framework for the management of Caroni (1975) Limited's 76,608 acres, to provide maximum value to the national community and, in particular, to those 9,007 former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited affected by the restructuring.

Hon. Senators would be pleased to note that the new company, SMCL, is now engaged in the purchase of sugar cane from private sugar cane farmers. In addition, the Government intends to introduce a quality-based system for purchasing sugar cane under which the price of sugar cane will be based on sucrose content, which will be determined through appropriate testing by an independent testing committee. This notwithstanding, pending the establishment of the testing committee and to assist farmers during the transitional phase in 2004, SMCL purchased sugar cane at the factory gate at a guaranteed price TT $180 per tonne.

The sugar production target for the 2004 milling period was 60,000 tonnes. However, actual production was 42,838.25 tonnes. Production was negatively affected due to adverse weather conditions, low syrup purity in the cane, the impact of high volumes of extraneous matter and labour issues which plagued the 2004 crop, both at the beginning and towards the end. To meet the shortfall, SMCL imported raw sugar for its refining operations, which was sold to our domestic manufacturing sector and domestic and regional trade partners.

With the downsizing of the sugar industry and the vacating of lands previously utilized by Caroni (1975) Limited for sugar cultivation, the Government needed to ensure that the future use of those lands were determined

by some technical criteria that would redound to the maximum benefit of the national community and the displaced employees of Caroni (1975) Limited. Accordingly, in January2004, we appointed the Interagency Land Use Planning Team to undertake a comprehensive exercise to review all maps and existing records of Caroni (1975) Limited lands, in order to ascertain which lands would be considered more suitable for various types of agriculture and built development.

In June 2004, Cabinet endorsed the recommendations of the team and was satisfied that those recommendations were technically feasible and appropriate. The Government intends to utilize those recommendations as the basis for future development of Caroni's lands and to ensure that such development takes place on a sound and sustainable basis, from a technical, economic and social perspective. Accordingly, we have identified several sites for the establishment of light and heavy industrial estates as well as commercial complexes throughout Central and South Trinidad that would stimulate economic activities in those areas and convert them into new and dynamic centres of economic growth, which would assist in the overall diversification and strengthening of the national economy.

To that end, Government intends to consider for possible development one heavy industrial estate at Point Lisas north and south, seven light industrial estates for development by Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (eTecK) at Dow Village; Reform; Factory Road, Chaguanas; Endeavor, north of the Divali Nagar site; Preysal; Debe and Tarouba, Pointe-a-Pierre; two commercial complexes through the encouragement of private entities by the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited (EMBD) at Endeavor and Balmain, Couva; four sites providing 2,042 upper and middle income residential lots to be developed by EMBD at Caroni Savannah Road, Egypt Village, Waterloo and Beaucarro, Freeport.

Hon. Senators would no doubt recall that the Government made 11 commitments to former employees under the enhanced Voluntary Separation of Employment Programme (VSEP), in August 2003. Included in these commitments was the offer of priority consideration for the lease of a residential lot on the condition that the former employee did not own a house on January 01, 2003. I wish to announce that on the basis of the recommendations of the Interagency Land Use Planning Team, 20 locations have been identified as suitable for the establishment of residential sites to meet the demand of those former employees who are considered eligible to receive priority consideration for the lease of

residential lands. On the basis of a comprehensive evaluation exercise conducted by the auditing firm Ernst & Young, 6,164 former employees have thus far been deemed eligible to receive priority consideration for the lease of residential land. That notwithstanding, the number is subject to change consequent on the completion of the evaluation exercise being conducted by Ernst & Young.

Since that time, we have been working assiduously to ensure that residential lots are developed and made ready for allocation to eligible former employees in a timely, efficient and transparent manner. To that end, we have mandated the Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited to undertake the development of a significant portion of those residential estates. It is well advanced in the process of conducting the relevant engineering designs and surveys and obtaining the necessary approvals from the Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Environmental Management Authority and the relevant utility companies for the proposed residential estates.

Caroni has already embarked on an extensive communication strategy advising former employees of the status of their request for priority consideration for the lease of residential and agricultural lands through the issuance of over 14,000 letters, in that regard, by December 31, 2004. Through those letters, former employees are not only assured that the Government is well advanced in meeting its commitment to provide priority access to housing, but they are also assured that any queries with respect to their eligibility to receive priority consideration for the lease of such lands, will be adequately dealt with by Caroni.

I also remind this honourable Senate that this Government remains committed to the principles of transparency and accountability, particularly as it pertains to the delivery of its commitment to former employees in respect of their request for priority access to residential land. To that end, the Town and Country Planning Division will assist in the preliminary allocation of residential lots, according to the number of requests per site. Moreover, in the final analysis, the allocation of residential lots will be undertaken through an open, random selection process following which a master list of all successful applicants will be compiled and made available for public viewing.

We have also undertaken to share with the representative union for the former daily paid employees of Caroni (1975) Limited, the All Trinidad Sugar and General Workers Trade Union, a list of all applicants considered ineligible to receive consideration for the lease of residential lands, to further ensure the integrity of the allocation process and a certain level of comfort among all stakeholders. Senators would also recall that

among the commitments we made to former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited under their enhanced VSEP, was the commitment to give priority consideration to leasing a plot of agricultural land to each daily and monthly paid employee who indicated that such an interest was for the sole purpose of agricultural activity. Madam President, you will no doubt appreciate that in discharging this obligation the Government has spared no effort in ensuring that such land allocations take place on the basis of sound technical criteria.

In this regard, the Government needed to ensure that the sites on which agricultural plots would be allocated could satisfy all the existing technical criteria for the development of agricultural land in Trinidad and Tobago and, in particular, ensuring that more suitable agricultural lands were reserved for those purposes. Accordingly, the Government took due note that Caroni lands accounted for approximately 25 per cent of the arable land of Trinidad and Tobago. Based on the findings of the Interagency Land Use Planning Team, we considered that Caroni lands were categorized within the framework of the Trinidad and Tobago Land Capability Survey Protocol 1974, under which lands are classified in seven classes, with class one representing land best suited to agriculture and class seven characterizing lands best suited to forestry and environmental protection.

We have also considered that of the 76,608 acres owned by Caroni which were available for development, 1,402 acres could be used to accommodate heavy and light industrial estates, commercial complex and residential sites, as proposed by Caroni, and 1,027 acres would be used to meet the demand for residential lots by former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited.

In addition, taking into consideration proposed developments by the National Housing Authority, the Land Settlement Agency, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee as well as the existing land use, it is estimated that the total land available for agriculture would be 68,599 acres or 89.6 per cent. The comprehensive exercise undertaken provides assurance that the demand of the 7,105 eligible former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited will be adequately met in 17 locations throughout Caroni's landholdings.

We recognize also the need for undertaking the infrastructural works required for agricultural activity. To that end, the Government has decided the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and the Estate Management Business Development Company Limited would develop, on a phased basis, those 17 sites involving, approximately, 14,000 acres out of a total proposed agricultural

acreage of 34,451 acres. Both agencies have jointly established a steering committee which, through the workings of a technical team, would oversee and spearHead the development of those 17 estates. The steering committee has already begun the developmental process which includes award of contracts for consultancy services, preparation of design reports, award of contracts for infrastructure and final survey works, distribution of parcels and infrastructure and final survey works.

It is anticipated that the development of the agricultural estates will proceed on a phased basis, with the first phase involving the development of four estates at Caroni, namely, Waterloo, Beaucarro, Exchange Village and Reform Village. Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has been requested to undertake the allocation of two-acre agricultural plots, pending the completion of the infrastructural works on the sites so that occupation would be possible. However, the allocation process will be undertaken once surveying of the respective sites has been completed. Former employees have already been informed as to the status of their requests for priority consideration for the lease of agricultural land.

Madam President, the Government also made a commitment that all pensioned eligible former employees would receive their pension on the dates due. At present, all pensionable former employees are receiving their pensions from Caroni on a timely basis. Caroni is also working assiduously with the various stakeholders to ensure that pension arrangements are placed on an actuarially sound and credible basis. The process is at an advanced stage and it is anticipated that the resulting framework will be coordinated by a group of insurance providers independent of Caroni.

Hon. Senators would also remember that the Government undertook to provide former employees with access to train and retraining opportunities. I wish to advise that as at December 31, 2004, approximately 3,600 former daily and monthly paid employees have indicated an interest in availing themselves of training opportunities in a wide range of technical and non-technical courses. Of that amount, 2,586 former employees have already completed their respective courses and while some have already found gainful employment, others are being assisted, in that regard, through Caroni's ongoing job placement programme established in conjunction with potential employers.

Finally, Madam President, the Post Caroni (1975) Limited plan also sets out the framework for the disposal of Caroni's other physical assets, which would allow, in some cases, priority access by former employees and the retention of

Caroni as a non-trading company to manage a number of post-restructuring issues, that would lead to the eventual liquidation of the company.

2.30 p.m.

Accordingly, hon. Senators will no doubt appreciate that the combination of commitments provided to former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited, as well as the numerous employment opportunities which would be created through the establishment of various types of industrial and commercial activities would ensure that the former Caroni (1975) Limited employees are secure as it sounds.

Moreover, through the restructuring of the domestic sugar industry, the retraining of the former employees of Caroni (1975) Limited and the establishment of industrial and commercial activity, this Government is well on its way to effectively transforming decades of economic decline experienced by those communities previously dependent on the sugar industry into hubs of sustainable economic growths which would serve to consolidate and strengthen the wider economic growth and development of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you, Madam President.

VENTURE CAPITAL (AMDT.) (NO. 2) BILL

Special Select Committee Report (Adoption)

The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas): Madam President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Be it resolved that the Senate adopt the Fourth Interim Report of the Special Select Committee of the Senate appointed to consider and report on the Venture Capital (Amdt.) (No. 2) Bill.

Madam President, the purpose of this Motion is to seek an extension of the time given to the Special Select Committee to ensure that it has the opportunity to receive the amendments that are now being drafted for which there is an administrative hold-up at this point.

We assure you that the committee expects that this matter will be resolved within the next period, and we therefore ask for an extension of time given to the committee to report.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Report adopted.

FINANCE (VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) BILL

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

That a Bill to vary the appropriation of the sum of the issue of which was authorized by the Appropriation Act, 2004, be now read a second tine.

This Bill was passed in the other place where the House of Representatives met on Friday, January 14, 2005 and approved a number of proposals with respect to the closing of accounts for fiscal year 2004.

These proposals included a variation of the 2004 appropriation and the write-off of losses that were approved by Cabinet in the fiscal year 2004. The Variation of Appropriation 2004 in the sum of $80,389,615 relates to four Heads of Expenditure as follows:

an increase in Head 15—Tobago House of Assembly, $13,814,514;

Head 18—Ministry of Finance, $10 million;

Head 36—Ministry of Housing, $56,575,101;

a decrease in Head 26—Ministry of Education, $80,389,615.

Madam President, these variations of the appropriation with respect to these four Heads of Expenditure were due to the following:

With respect to Head 15—Tobago House of Assembly, under the Health Sector Reform Programme, the Ministry of Health incurred expenditure on behalf of the Tobago House of Assembly related to the design and construction of the new Scarborough Hospital. The increased allocation in the sum of $13,814,514 is required to supplement the development programme allocation of the Tobago House of Assembly in order to bring to account the transaction under the correct Head of Expenditure, which is Head 15—Tobago House of Assembly.

With regard to Head 18—Ministry of Finance. On September 07, 2004, Hurricane Ivan inflicted severe and widespread damages to the infrastructure, buildings and food crops in the neighbouring island of Grenada. In order to assist in restorative and reconstruction works, Cabinet agreed to provide financial assistance to the island in the sum of $10 million.

In the 2004 appropriation, there was no allocation to meet this expenditure; consequently, under section 115 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the said sum was advanced from the Contingency Fund which has a

limit of $25 million. This variation in appropriation is now sought in order to replace the $10 million advanced from the Contingency Fund.

Madam President, I wish to advise this honourable Senate that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago had provided significant assistance to Grenada by way of building materials, foodstuff, military and rehabilitative support. The private sector has also made tremendous contributions towards the relief effort. Overall, the response from Trinidad and Tobago to the relief drive was overwhelming.

With respect to the other Caribbean islands which were also affected by this and other hurricanes during the 2004 hurricane season, it should be noted that provision was made in the 2005 appropriation and funds were distributed accordingly in this fiscal year.

With respect to Head 36—Ministry of Housing, the transfer of $56,575,101 is required to bring to account expenditure incurred by the National Housing Authority (NHA) in excess of the approved appropriation over the period August 2002 to August 2004.

Funds were allocated to facilitate the rehabilitation programme of the authority which involved refurbishment of rental apartments. After utilization of the approved funding, NHA continued with the programme as there was a dire need to treat with serious safety issues such as faulty electrical wiring, rusted railings and defective plumbing that affected tenants.

The additional expenditure was met by utilizing revenue that the authority collected and which should have been deposited into the Consolidated Fund. The Ministry of Housing's revenue records need to be regularized by bringing into account the expenditure incurred by NHA. This process is a non-cash transaction which requires the preparation of documents for accounting purposes. That takes care of the additions.

With respect to Head 26—Ministry of Education, savings of $80,389,615 were identified because of the following:

1. A number of posts on the ministry's establishment remained vacant during 2004.
2. The positions of Head of department and deans in primary and secondary schools were not filled as new job specifications were not completed.
3. With respect to settlement of arrears to public servants, there are still a number of outstanding applications with respect to retirees and legal

personal representatives of deceased teachers. The allocation made in respect of this was also not utilized.

4. The tendering procedures with respect to the primary schools' computerization programme initiated in the last quarter of fiscal 2004 resulted in funds allocated not being utilized for that particular period.

Madam President, the Finance Committee also agreed to the write-off of the sum of $346,391.31 representing overpayment of salaries, travelling and upkeep allowances and employee fraud spanning the years 1984 to 2003. The Cabinet approved the write-offs of these losses in fiscal 2004, details of which were supplied to hon. Members.

With respect to transfer of funds between subheads of the same Head of expenditure: In fiscal 2004, the hon. Minister of Finance approved the transfer of funds in the sum of $624,540,482 between subheads under the same Head of expenditure. It should be noted that these transfers were approved based on requests made by the Minister of the respective ministries.

Madam President, by way of clarification, whenever the estimates have been decided on, projects are usually in the planning phases and, therefore, during the course of the year in implementation, it is not inconceivable that one would find circumstances in which projects are ready to go and the specific allocation is not available.

On the basis of the system on which we operate, there is a procedure by which one can make application to the Minister of Finance who, on the basis of justification, will approve the transfer in accordance with the regulations.

Madam President, it should be noted therefore, that these transfers were requested to reflect changed circumstances in ministries and departments and in some instances a consequential reordering of the priorities, and the effect of this is that there is no increase in the total appropriation.

A statement showing the transfers approved by the Minister of Finance and explanations for some of the more significant transfers were attached as Appendices I and II of the Agenda for the Meeting of the Finance Committee which was provided to all Senators.

Sen. Mark: Madam President, could the Minister clarify for us what is the Contingency Fund, and when it was established? I am not too clear about it.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, the Contingency Fund was established by Parliament, the latest being two years ago and the amounts keep

changing. I think the last change was two or three years ago, but it was established by an Act of Parliament, and the fund also existed under the administration that preceded the current administration.

Madam President, hon. Senators are also asked to note that the Government in its mid-year review exercise had revised the revenue projections for fiscal 2004 to $20,448.7 million, an expenditure of $20,011.6 million resulting in an anticipated surplus of $437.1 million. This position was communicated to Parliament at the time of the presentation of the 2005 Budget on October 08, 2004.

Based on the Ministry of Finance's data on the actual fiscal out-turn for 2004, total revenue was $20,868.3 million and overall expenditure was $20,622.3 million resulting in an overall surplus of $246 million.

With respect to the Contingency Fund arrangements, the reference is 136/1979 Contingency Fund increase resolution approved by the resolution of Parliament under section 16(1): Be it resolved that the Contingency Fund be increased to $25 million.

Madam President, this exercise in which we are engaged, is one in which the Government is seeking to close its accounts. We have reported that these are matters that have come to our attention for which parliamentary approval is required so that the State’s accounts can be closed, and that the normal procedures relative to the audits, reports, and the work of the Parliament through its Joint Select Committees and other bodies can move aHead.

Madam President, with those comments, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Sen. Wade Mark: Thank you very much, Madam President. Let me first extend greetings to our new Senators: Sen. Angela Cropper and also acting Senator Althea Rocke. I welcome them to the Parliament and to the Senate in particular.

Madam President, we are dealing with a very important matter involving the variation of sums amounting to some $80 million in this instance from the Ministry of Education, and reallocating it to the Tobago House of Assembly, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Housing.

Now, I would like to begin by asking the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to explain to this honourable Senate how did this overestimation of $80 million arise? We have seen where in the documents provided, a number of important

positions and vacancies were suppressed. Minor equipment that were supposed to be purchased obviously were not.

The question here is: when the ministry submitted its estimates, and, seeing it had been doing that for some time now, the professionals who work there would have done this particular job based on experience over the years. One wonders whether it was a case of overestimation of expenditure, or whether it was a simple case of convenience given the reallocation to the various Heads of Expenditure 15, 18 and 36 respectively. We would like to know what was the basis for this overestimation.

We understand that there are still public officers in the teaching profession who have retired and are still in the teaching service who are yet to receive their arrears. I do not know if the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Education can bring this Senate up to date with how many public officers are still owed arrears of increment seeing that the ministry has excess funds to reallocate or to transfer out of the ministry completely into other Heads.

As you will see when we look at the figures that have been provided to us, a large sum of money has been reallocated from this Ministry of Education under Personnel Expenditure, and vacant posts amounting to some $14 million in value have not been filled, yet the Minister has money to transfer to the Tobago House of Assembly and to the scandal called the National Housing Authority (NHA) which we will deal with in detail.

I am sorry that the Attorney General is not here today because this is tantamount to Government fraud involving three Ministers of Housing, two are in this House and one is outside of this House, but we will deal with this matter in detail as we proceed.

We on this side would like to know the justification for the suppression of this large amount of money when many schools in this country are short of teachers, and we are seeing that some $14 million has been suppressed by the Ministry of Education.

Madam President, we would like the Minister of Education or the Minister of Finance to let this Parliament know how many public officers in the service are still owed arrears of increments. We see where minor equipment amounting to some $25 million was disposed of by the Ministry of Education. They had no use for $25 million as it relates to minor equipment.

They sent back $14 million in 2004 because, as I said, they failed to fill vacancies while hundreds of children are left unattended on a daily basis in this country because

of a lack of teachers. Yet the Ministry of Education finds the money to return to the Treasury and the Consolidated Fund and the Minister of Finance dutifully places that money under different Heads as we have identified earlier.

What is even more baffling is that it is minor equipment amounting to some $25 million. What does that entail? We have not been told by the hon. Minister of Finance. Did this sum incorporate things like teaching aids that the students would require at the primary and secondary school levels? Did minor equipment entail the purchase of computers for students? Did it entail the purchase of overHead projectors, desks and chairs? We do not know, and the Minister has not told us what this amounts to, or what it entails. Did it involve the absence or the inability of the principals of schools to purchase television sets, radios or refrigerators? We do not know.

All we know is that other minor equipment amounting to $25 million was suppressed by the Ministry of Education and we would like an explanation from the Minister of Education, and if she is unable to do so, I hope the Minister of Finance would be able to provide us with some answers. Because if you have suppressed $25 million in minor equipment that would have been needed by these schools, then I think that is a reprehensible act on the part of the Ministry of Education.

We want to know whether this is a slick way, a questionable way of addressing shortfalls or commitments this Government would have entered into, and as a result, children of this nation are being called upon to pay for that particular action on the part of the Government.

3.00 p.m.

So, Madam President, maybe there is a solid reason but I am yet to be convinced. Why, for instance, this $80 million, particularly when it deals with minor equipment purchases and the suppression under Personnel Expenditure of critical posts, as well as a settlement of arrears to public officers? We would like to get some information and clarification on this matter.

But let us deal with the politics of reallocation, because $80 million went from the Ministry of Education. Where did it go to? We are told in a document that you have, Madam President—and I go to page; well, it is not numbered, but it is under the Heading "Variation of Appropriation, 2004". I want to read the first sentence.

> "The Variation of Appropriation for fiscal 2004 in the sum of $80.4 million is required to bring to account an advance made from the Contingency Fund…"

And my hon. colleague has clarified that:

"and to meet inescapable commitments during fiscal 2004."

The only commitment that I saw in this document—the Bill before us—that can be identified as "inescapable" is the Grenada allocation of $10 million. No one would have predicted Hurricane Ivan. So I can understand the inescapable obligation of the Government in that regard, but explain to me, or try to clarify for me, what were the inescapable obligations and commitments under the Tobago House of Assembly as well as the Ministry of Housing.

I notice this regime—and I want them to recognize and understand, do not get your Head swollen with a little victory in Tobago; do not get carried away. Tobago is not Trinidad. Let "we" understand that. So do not come and behave like a tyrant and a dictator, as you have been developing over the last couple years. Cool your Head! Do not allow THA—we are not the DAC, you know. UNC "ain't" DAC. Understand that. So this phyrric victory that you have had after you have spent $10 million in Tobago—bring down a Prime Minister who has abandoned his official duties in the country, going house to house campaigning, it tells you that they were very nervous and they felt they were going to lose, so they brought down captain to cook, even Mrs. Manning got into the act, all over the place, getting sick; rain falling on her; wetting the lady, and so on, campaigning for a Tobago House of Assembly election. But I want to tell you, do not allow Tobago to fool you, eh. And do not feel you could replicate that in Trinidad, you know, because we are preparing for "all yuh". So, Madam President, I just want to tell them that that victory is a hollow victory.

Let me come back to deal with this question of disaster. Why, for instance, you allocate $10 million to Grenada—and we have no problem with that—but this unpatriotic and treacherous Government has not come to the assistance of the people of Caparo? Every time it rains in this country, Caparo villagers are in trouble. What is this Government doing about it? Would you not say that is an inescapable commitment? Why is that not an inescapable commitment? So you have no commitment to Tobago, because I saw on television recently where Tobago is still in trouble after Hurricane Ivan. A lot of people still have difficulty in accessing what they lost, and so on, during that period.

I want to tell them—they are talking about victory—less than 35 per cent of the people voted in Tobago, eh. The vast majority of people in Tobago rejected the PNM out of hand in the Tobago House of Assembly election. This is a minority regime! Twenty-eight per cent of the people must have voted for "all

yuh". But Trinidad and Tobago is a different kettle of fish, I want to warn them. Anyway, let us come back. I will deal with you as I proceed.

We want to come to the question of local disasters. Why has this Government failed miserably to come to the rescue of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago? This Government is a treacherous regime! Why are they not coming to the assistance of the Caparo residents, the people in south Trinidad who are reeling under the pressures? As I said, we have no problem with giving $10 million to Grenada, but fix Trinidad and Tobago first, Mr. Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*] Fix Trinidad and Tobago first! Charity begins at home!

The Tobago House of Assembly—request for $13 million. It reads:

> "The sum of $13.8 million is required to supplement the 2004 Development Programme allocation of the Assembly to bring to account an interdepartmental adjustment voucher…"

Big term, you know! Up to now they "ain't" tell you what that term means, you know.

> "with respect to expenditure incurred on behalf of the Ministry of Health under the Health Sector Reform Programme for the construction of the new Scarborough Hospital."

This so-called interdepartmental adjustment voucher simply means that there was a cost overrun on this project, but they would not tell the country that. They use big expressions, big terms, to confuse people! What is this so-called interdepartmental adjustment voucher about? It is a cost overrun of $13.8 million on a hospital whose foundation has not yet been completed. So, Mr. Orville London, the new Chief Secretary, has been presiding over a scandal in Tobago called the Scarborough Hospital Project.

I have an article here, written by one Camini Maharaj. It is dated December 12, 2004. It is Headed: "Hospital Hotbed". On page 2 of this article, it says:

> "The project has virtually doubled from $135.9 million to $264 million, less than halfway through the contractual period and it is some 14 months behind schedule."

This is what they want us to approve today—$14 million in a project that is 14 months behind schedule. The cost overrun has moved from $135.9 million to $264 million and it continues along its merry way. So this reeks of mismanagement and corruption. That matter is now before the Integrity Commission and a dead commission that is yet to come to life, Headed by a lady

called Annestine Sealey. I do not know if she "gone" to sleep, but this commission is required to investigate into the Scarborough Regional Hospital which is riddled and reeking of corruption! That is what we are being asked to approve. I know that we have no say over financial matters, because this is a rubber stamp Senate. They extricate it from the Standing Orders. We have no power to delay the Minister of Finance, but we have power to say that we are not supporting that scandal.

I am sorry that the Attorney General is not here. He finds a lot of time to use the Anti-corruption Bureau, who I saw—and I was shocked and amazed to see the Anti-corruption Bureau, Headed by a fellow called Mr. Piggot and his whole band drinking Scotch and having a good time at Cabildo Chambers with the Attorney General sometime before Christmas. What is going on here? The same corruption bureau this is coming after the Opposition, that is harassing prominent citizens, is drinking with the Attorney General! This is a political police arm, this is under the direct control of the Attorney General and the Attorney General is sleeping! He is quiet on a lot of issues, but when it comes to the UNC and harassing them, we have information that a plot has been hatched at Whitehall to harass UNC members, both inside and outside the Parliament between 2005, leading up to the general election. That is what the PNM is about.

So we are being asked to approve in this Parliament, moneys that have already been spent. This is not money to be spent, you know, as the Minister said. He is closing his books, so the money gone! But we are being asked to approve—and he gives us no explanation. Minister of Finance, or Minister in the Ministry of Finance, we demand a status report from you this afternoon on the Scarborough Regional Hospital. [*Desk thumping*] Do not come and tell us we must approve $13 million and not tell us what is the status of the Scarborough Regional Hospital. What is the status? Is the matter before international arbitration? What is the status? We do not know, and you are asking us to give blanket approval to some $13.8 million because of cost overruns? Madam President, we will not support this measure. We will not give any cover to any signal or sign of corruption. This UNC will not support that.

I want to go on to another item. I call it the fraud of the decade. Look at the Ministry of Housing. The Head is 36—$56.6 million. Madam President, I want you to follow this thing carefully. This is a national scandal! Where is the DPP? Where is the Attorney General? Where is the police? Where is the fraud squad? This requires the fraud squad intervention! This is Government fraud! I will read it for you. It says:

"In March of 2002, approval was given by the Cabinet…"

This is a Cabinet that was appointed, you know, by a President; not elected by the people, you know; appointed. They gave approval for the Rehabilitation Programme in which NHA would undertake the refurbishment of its rental apartments.

"The NHA continued with the programme after..."

Imagine, we, who are in power, allocated a certain amount of money to the NHA; NHA exhausted the amount of money under the hon. Danny Montano, who was then the Minister, and do you know what they did? They went to a fellow called Caulder Hart or Caulder Hall—what is his name? He is a fellow from Canada who is in charge of UDeCOTT.

Sen. King: Hart.

Sen. W. Mark: Hart. He has a big heart. Do you know what he did? He utilized your money and my money without any Minister of Finance approval. UDeCOTT loaned to the NHA, $43.6 million and also $20 million. On whose authority did Mr. Caulder Hart loan this money to the National Housing Authority to continue the Refurbishment Programme, where all these criminals and thugs were employed to harass UNC supporters in the 2002 election; where they spent over $85 million of our taxpayers' money to pay new stars they created in Trinidad? You remember Jennifer Lopez and Harrison Ford? All these fellows went to collect money—$85 million of corruption and ghost gangs. That is why you have all the killing fields in Laventille today; that is why you could never solve crime because you created crime; you cannot solve crime!

Imagine this, $43 million plus $20 million, $63 million they loaned to NHA. What is worse about it, the NHA expended that money in the sum of $56.6 million without the approval of the Minister of Finance! Can a ministry that the Parliament has given a certain amount of money to spend—we approved a certain allocation to the National Housing Authority and the National Housing Authority, without the approval of Parliament, spent in excess of its allocation; and to compound the madness, a man called Caulder Hart, who is the big man in charge of UDeCOTT and the big man in charge of the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Company, took your money and my money and loaned it to the Ministry of Housing, the NHA section.

This is not all. Where is the Attorney General? I want to know if the Minister in the Ministry of Finance allowed or gave approval to the NHA to borrow $56.7 million from Caulder Hart/UDeCOTT. We want to know that. Bring it in writing

here. Let us see the approval. But that is not all. By letters dated August 11, 2003 and September 17, 2004, the NHA—this is a powerful agency now, you know; this agency is more powerful than the Minister of Finance—advised the Minister of Finance that it met the additional expenditure by utilizing revenue which it collected and which should have been deposited into the Consolidated Fund.

So they collected rent moneys over a two-year period and instead of returning that money to the Treasury and to the Ministry of Finance, the Minister and the Ministry of Housing utilized that money to deal with rentals of apartments? No. They used the money to pay back. They borrowed the money from UDeCOTT to fix and to refurbish apartments. Over a two-year period, August 2002 to August 2004, they collected revenues from their housing rental function and instead of depositing that money into the Treasury, they proceeded to give back that money to UDeCOTT.

This is lawlessness! This is criminality! This is a national scandal! How can you have the National Housing Authority taking it upon itself to use the moneys it had collected in revenues which it was supposed to deposit in the Ministry of Finance via the Consolidated Fund, taking that money and paying back UDeCOTT? Who gave UDeCOTT the power to give NHA a loan in the first instance? This is a national scandal! This is corruption!

I would like the Minister of Finance to tell us, because the corollary of this is that the NHA is in deficit to the Treasury and to the people of this country to the tune of $56.7 million. Do you know where they got the money from to settle this account? It was from the Ministry of Education. They went to the Minister of Education and said to her, "Reduce allocations because we need to balance our books here." So the poor Minister of Education dutifully complied and took $80 million from her allocation in 2004, and out of the $80 million, $56 million were allocated to the NHA to settle this matter. So do you know what? Minor equipment for children in schools cannot be purchased because we pay ghost gangs $56.7 million. It is ghost gangs, criminals, thugs and drug pushers who ended up getting all of that money—one man collecting $400,000 at the end of each fortnight. That is what happened in NHA! They threatened both the Chairman of the NHA, Andre Monteil, and another person called Noel Garcia. They had to give them police protection, 24 hours a day for almost a whole year.

So this Government that speaks to the issue of transparency and integrity is encouraging and promoting fraud illegality. They have broken every financial regulation in the Audit and Exchequer Act, and do not tell me that the Minister of Finance is not conscious of that. The Minister of Finance is the promoter of that, because they know what went on here and they told the Minister of Housing—

first it was the hon. Danny Montano, then they fired him after the election. I remember my partner saying to the whole country, he has a yacht and he intends to float somewhere overseas if they do not appoint him to some position. Then they appointed the hon. Martin Joseph, now the Minister of National Security, and now we have one called Dr. Keith Rowley. All of them presided over this scandal and they are all accountable and culpable.

I saw in the newspapers on Sunday, Desalcott, where they went to the Karamath's home and Kanhai's home. I saw in the newspapers where Kenneth Valley, the Member of Parliament and a junior Minister and the Minister of Industry and Trade, was a big financial consultant to Karamath and Desalcott. I want to know if the Anti-corruption squad would now visit Kenneth Valley's home and search his premises for documents, because he was a major financier of that project. It is one law for the PNM and one law for the UNC.

Madam President, I am calling on the Minister of Finance to account to this Parliament for this fraud, this national scandal that took place in the National Housing Authority, and who is going to be held accountable for this national scandal. We want to know.

Sen. Enill: On a point of order, Madam President. The way in which the Member just characterized a transaction is inaccurate. There was no suppression; there was no sitting down and determining that this is what you would do and this is what you would not do. At the end of the year, in looking at the results of the Government, certain things came to the front, and what we are seeking to do here is to correct it. In the case of the NHA, the fact of the matter is that revenue that was available to them was, in fact, used, and in order to do that, they would have had to get the authority of the Ministry of Finance. Having given it to them, we would now correct it and we could have done it one or two ways. We could have done it by a supplementation or a variation. What we are doing here is a variation simply because insofar as education was concerned, there were funds that were available. So the question of talking about conspiracy theory, and this happened and that happened, those things do not occur in real life. What, in fact, happens is, you come to the end of the year, you look at your books, you see what has happened, and you deal with the consequences of increases of expenditure or savings in a context to close the accounts.

Sen. W. Mark: Madam President, my colleague and hon. friend has not answered my concerns. Is it a fact that UDeCOTT loaned to the NHA some $63 million? Is that a fact? Who authorized UDeCOTT to lend NHA our money when the Parliament had allocated a certain amount of money to NHA—without approval? That is a criminal act! [*Desk thumping*] I am saying that NHA—

Sen. D. Montano: On a point of order, Madam President. That is not a criminal act. The Senator is misleading the House. UDeCOTT is a private company that is governed by a board of directors. It had a source of funds that it had borrowed—[*Crosstalk*]

Sen. W. Mark: It is a state enterprise. It is a public company!

Sen. D. Montano: It is not a public company. It is operated by a board of directors and the transaction is not fraudulent.

Sen. W. Mark: He is misleading the country. That is not true.

Sen. Seepersad-Bachan: We have never heard that before.

Madam President: I do not know whether it is private or public, but I have been listening to you, Senator, throughout your contribution and I always get a little concerned when we keep accusing people who cannot really defend themselves, of things like corruption and misappropriation, et cetera. So maybe you could be a little milder with your words.

Sen. W. Mark: Of course, with your support, I am going to be milder.

All we are asking is for the Minister of Finance to table in this Parliament all the documents giving approval to UDeCOTT and to the NHA to spend our revenues that they collected in order to pay back UDeCOTT. We want those documents in the Parliament here. This is inexcusable! I feel for the hon. Minister in the Ministry of Finance. This is bound to be a scandal! How can a Minister for Finance justify this kind of madness? He cannot!

The corollary of this is that they had to reduce moneys from the Ministry of Education, stifling, stymieing and compromising our children's education! That is what this amounts to! So to pay criminals, thugs and bandits, the children of our schools did not get some $14 million to $25 million worth of minor equipment, and a Minister is yet to define for you and for us in this Parliament, what constitutes minor equipment. He has not said that! This requires an enquiry; this requires public information. We need public information on this scandal.

When we look at the statement on transfers, the office of the Prime Minister on page 6: “Official Entertainment—$7 million”. They used the Nelson Mandela visit to justify $7 million. But I would not query that right now because I do not have the details and the Minister has given me a bulk figure of official entertainment from one Head to another Head within the same Ministry.

The Prime Minister of this country, the Minister of Finance, when he was under attack in the other place—we accused the Government of spending $15

million on public relations and advertisement in promoting the anti-crime legislation. It is on record in the Parliament that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance got up and said it was only $1.9 million. Today we are seeing, in this document, "promotions, publicity and printing—$2.5 million". And in an effort just to deal with this matter, go to page 21 and you will see what this $2.5 million was spent on—Item 4, to facilitate expenditure incurred for the cost of print and electronic advertisement for the Government's anti-crime legislation. That is what this is about.

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: So did the Prime Minister tell the country the truth when he told us $1.9 million, and now we are being asked to approve a document in which we are now seeing $2.5 million? Who was lying? Who was misleading the country at the time? To even compound the madness, on page 8 of the same document, you will see, under "The Ministry of National Security"—I am sorry that he is not here—"anti-crime legislation". If you look at where money came from and where it went to, "promotions, publicity and printing" amounted to $3 million.

So it was $2.5 million coming from the Office of the Prime Minister for the anti-crime advertisement to fool people, and the Ministry of National Security spent $3 million on the same anti-crime advertisement. So the tally is $5.5 million spent on the anti-crime campaign to fool the population that the police bills will solve crime. But we were told it was $1.9 million by the hon. Prime Minister. I see where the cousin of the Minister of National Security, Major Peter Joseph—this is a family business, you know.

Sen. Joseph: He is not my cousin.

Sen. W. Mark: He is not your cousin. Is he your friend? Well, if he said he is not his cousin, he is his friend now. I know "fellas does" say cousin is their friend now, you know. I would not argue that. He said he is his friend. No problem.

I saw on this particular page where the Anti-Crime Unit—that is a total waste of time; they have done nothing to justify the $100 million which had been allocated to them. Brigidier Peter Joseph should resign and go home! [*Desk thumping*] That unit got over $100 million—it is almost like a ministry—and when my good friend, Howard Chin Lee, was there, they brought thunder on the brother, run him

from the Ministry, put in a Minister of "Silence" and nothing is going on in the Ministry of National Security. They want to run Howard out of town to bring in the Minister of National Security who has time to write to some lady called Carol Williams, calling on her to retract, what? The truth about kidnapping in this country that he has presided over, and wants her to apologize. They are right to insult you and say, "to hell with you". You want her to apologize? Sorry, Madam President, I want to withdraw that statement.

Madam President: You see, I did not even have time to tell you what you said. You were well aware that you were saying it.

Sen. W. Mark: Sorry, let me withdraw that statement. They told him "We are not withdrawing any statement". So you have an Anti-Crime Unit that is not doing anything and money is going after it. "Crime Stopper—$20 million", you would have seen in the document.

I want to go to the Ministry of Health quickly. Go to page 13 with me, because I know you are enjoying me. You will see where moneys have been moved from one Head to another Head within the same Ministry. NWRHA got $12 million; Eastern, $3 million more; SWRHA, $7.8 million more. I want the Attorney General of this country to investigate this: "Ghost Gangs at the NWRHA". This was a report—[*Interruption*] You hate the *Guardian* now? You are against the *Guardian*? I thought so. I just wanted to know if you hated the *Guardian* so I could tell the *Guardian* writers to write that: "Joseph hate 'all yuh'".

In this article, on page 4, we are told that some 2,310 non-existent employees are being paid on a monthly basis by the NWRHA. Nobody from the NWRHA has denied this report. We call for a criminal enquiry; we call for the removal of a fellow called Hugh Eastman who is the chairman of the NWRHA and whose wife runs an agency or a consultancy that is recruiting personnel for the NWRHA. That is a conflict of interest! We want a criminal enquiry into the operations of the NWRHA. There is too much corruption under this PNM—too much!

I noticed how and when the plot was hatched to destroy the National Broadcasting Network. If you look at the document you would see where, under the Ministry of Public Administration and Information, a sum of $12.4 million was transferred to Nalis. But the scam of the decade has to be the closure of the National Broadcasting Network. I do not know if my hon. friend, Sen. Dr. Lenny Saith, is sleeping—they are misleading him or he is being misled—but he came and gave the country some mumblings that people could not comprehend at the end of the day. Because at the end of the day, the National Lotteries Control

Board drew their Lotto on Channels 4 and 16. The same NBN that closed down was resurrected overnight. They closed the station at midnight on Friday, January 14, 2005 and at 6.00 a.m. on the 15th it was on the air. They are calling themselves NCC/TV. Madam President, did you ever hear about such a television? That is courtesy the PNM and Dr. Lenny Saith. But the real intention is to give Channels 4 and 16 to the Chairman of the National Lotteries Control Board, and they want to close down the whole of—

Sen. Dr. Saith: Senator, thank you for giving way. Let me put it to rest right now. There is no intention of giving Channel 4 to anybody. Whether it is the Chairman of the National Lotteries Control Board, whether it is the Chairman of the UNC, it is not going anywhere. It is remaining with the Government.

Sen. W. Mark: All we are getting are frills, and the people who are effectively running that NCC is the Chairman of the National Lotteries Control Board and he has a front fellow called Bert Hinkson who is now the CEO of the whole operations.

Anyway, you see that, that is a national scandal under the PNM and I want to predict here, it is only a matter of time. As soon as Carnival is over on February 08, 2005 you will see what will take place with that Channel over the next few months. All they are doing is engaging in deception and deceit, fooling the people, but you cannot fool "we". We know what is going on and we would always expose you, relentlessly and mercilessly. It is you go or we go, but I know one thing, "all yuh" going.

Let me just wind up because I know you would tell me just now my time is up and I need another hour. We go to page 16 and we see where, again, moneys were transferred from one Head to another Head under the Ministry of Works and Transport: "Port Authority Contribution Towards Deficit in Coastal Steamer". When we alerted the country to this scandal called the *Sonia*, everybody attacked us. They accused us of all kinds of things. Look at it here; the *Sonia* crashed. Dead! [*Senator raises newspapers*] You see, it is accustomed sailing in the calm waters of the Mediterranean. They forgot they were coming to the Caribbean.

I want the hon. Minister of Public Administration and Information to investigate this thing. At the end of 18 months—12 for the *Sonia* and six for some stupid vessel they call *The CAT*—do you know what is going to happen? Taxpayers would be paying close to $80 million over an 18-month period to fool the people of Tobago so that they could win 11 seats. That is why I told you it was a pyrrhic victory. It is not going to be long.

Up to now the Minister has not responded. We said that vessel was an old one. We said that vessel sailed or traversed the waters of Naples and Albia and they doubted us. Now we are being told by the Minister of Works and Transport that it is not a new vessel. We told them that! He is now trying to come back and appear to be honest, when his chairman, my good friend, Noel, who does not understand his place—he does not understand that he is a not a political appointee, you know, and when we are attacking politicians, we do not want minions and pipsqueaks to respond. We want the Ministers to respond!

I want to say, in winding down, that we have called for a number of clarifications in this matter. This Government is presiding and supervising over large-scale corruption, favouritism, nepotism and cronyism, and we call for an investigation into the matters that we have brought to the attention of this honourable Chamber this afternoon. The United National Congress will not be supporting—they do not need our support, but we are going to record for the parliamentary record that we will not, in any way, give approval to fraud, corruption and activities that are in contradiction to the Audit and Exchequer Act of this country. We, in the UNC, will not support that Bill that is before us today.

It is only because we are very discerning that we are able to penetrate the inadequacies, the weaknesses, the deficiencies and falsehoods that they have sought to peddle on this population through this Parliament today. Like Tobago, it is a matter of time. They went too early. We are going in 2007 or before, but we are planning now for them. They would have a funeral service in this country come 2007.

I say, in closing, let our people not wallow in the valley of despair. I want to say that hope is near. It is the United National Congress, because we are here.

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

Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand: Madam President, I do not like to speak after this man. But I thank you for the opportunity. On the face of it, we are about to conduct a simple exercise, which is to ratify or rubber stamp certain transactions that have already taken place. I am not pleased about that, but that is what we are about to do. We are not being consulted; we are not being given the opportunity to suggest changes; we do not have a chance to make a difference. We simply have to rubber stamp. The deeds have been done already.

I put it like this to remind self-respecting Members of what Parliament has come to in the last 50 years of Cabinet rule. Madam President, if I may digress relevantly, the Constitution says that Cabinet is responsible to Parliament. If

Cabinet takes a decision to give $10 million to Grenada—it is an emergency—at the earliest opportunity Cabinet must come to Parliament and say, "Look, this is what we did. Do you want to talk about it? Do you want us to give more? Please let us legalize and ratify this thing. We want Parliament to accept it." Let the record show that Parliament has approved of this. But because of our system, because Cabinet knows that when it comes to Parliament, it has a majority supporting it, Parliament simply has become a rubber stamp and, in some cases, they do not even bother to come for the rubber stamp.

To give another example: If the Government wants to rescind a previous motion that was passed in the House that the Red House is to be renovated for Parliament; if they want to rescind that, it is very simple. Come to the House with a motion and let there be a national debate. At least give us a chance to say what we think on this subject. I am warning them. If one government feels that it can do things without Parliament, you are setting an example; you are setting a precedent. One Prime Minister would come and say, "I am doing this because I want it", the next Prime Minister will come and do the same thing, and you are establishing illegality.

I am speaking on this Motion even though we cannot affect the particular issues because I think certain principles are involved. The details of what the Minister calls "inescapable commitments" during fiscal year 2004, for which, according to him, there were insufficient allocations, are quite interesting, and although Members have read them, I just want to say them out again.

The sum of $13.8 million is going to the Development Programme allocation of the Tobago House of Assembly to be used specifically on the construction of the new Scarborough Hospital. Is that inescapable commitment? Are they saying that they planned badly and, therefore, there were insufficient allocations at the start? I do not find inescapable commitment and insufficient allocation a satisfactory explanation. This money is being given—and I do not want to pass any judgment on how it will be settled in the end, but this money is being given in an atmosphere where there are certain questions hanging over that project, and yet the Parliament is not getting an opportunity to discuss it and to say, "No, you cannot do that unless we find out why the costs have gone up"—but $13.8 million.

Of the $10 million going to the Ministry of Finance for financial assistance to Grenada, I, personally, feel we should have given more. Nobody can object to that, but it still should have come to the House for discussion. I think I really should put on record that I am very proud of the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago for the humane feeling that was shown and for the

immediate and practical actions that were taken when this calamity struck. So although I am saying it should have come to Parliament and we could have given more and we should have had a discussion, I really think it was wonderful the way the people of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government responded.

The third area that is benefiting, $56.6 million to the Ministry of Housing to cover expenditure incurred by the NHA in excess of the approved appropriation for its Rehabilitation Programme for two years, August 2002 to August 2004. I do not know how these things work. But by what authority was this excess expenditure incurred? And why, in 2005, are we hearing about excess expenditures relating to 2002? I saw something very startling on page 3 of the document called *Senate*. Again, I do not know how this could happen.

The third paragraph on page 2 states:

> "By letters dated August 11, 2003 and September 17, 2004, the NHA advised…"

I do not know whom they advised. Was it the Cabinet? Was it the Prime Minister? Was it the Parliament? Was it the general public? But they advised:

> "that it met the additional expenditure by utilizing revenue which it collected and which should have been deposited into the Consolidated Fund."

I do not know if the Minister is reporting a misdemeanor or a crime here. Is this something wrong? Is this something good? Is this something bad? But he is reporting it blandly. Then above that—I am just a literary person; I do not understand these things:

> "The NHA continued with the programme after utilizing the original funding through re-imbursement by Urban Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago, of $43.6 million and a loan of $20 million."

Well, who told Urban Development to give them that? Why did Urban Development give them that? Who gave them the authority to spend it?

So I find that—although this is coming as an explanation, the report, to me, is very unsatisfactory and it raises all kinds of questions about how our money is being spent. As I have already suggested, these are done deals, but I think there is a point in raising them and raising certain matters of principle with a view to introducing more acceptable practices in the future.

On the same page 2 of the document I have already referred to, the one titled *Senate*, I am flabbergasted to see the line: "Explanation for Savings of $80 million-plus", and the next line says: "Savings of $80 million-plus were

identified". What is a savings? If I tell you I have made savings, what I am telling you, is that I had a certain amount of money to do certain things and through prudence, wisdom, skill, judgment and making good bargains, and so on, I spent less than I had and so I made savings. I did all that I had to do and I did it more cheaply, so I made some savings.

Now, I think the hon. Minister of Education should stand and take a bow; I would sit. Her Ministry has made savings. The Ministry has a good record. It made savings, in 2001, of $62 million; in 2003 it saved $117 million. Now, let us get it clear, I am not talking here against the Ministry. I am unhappy that the Ministry did not spend all the money that it was given when there are so many problems in the Ministry. But I am not, in this contribution, criticizing the Ministry. I am on a tack that people would laugh at, a biblical one that runs, "Man was not made for the Sabbath, the Sabbath was made for man." So if I have a ministry, and I have been allocated so much money, and I have not spent it all, but I am on the way to spending it; I had certain problems about getting to the point where I could spend it and now I have got there, I do not see why, because there is a convenience called a fiscal year, you could tell me, "You 'didn't' spend it; you lose it". When I query that, people say, "That is how it is". What happen? God came down and gave Mr. Enill a tablet saying that is how it should be?

We are the lawmakers. Why does a ministry that was not able to carry out its projects, have to lose the money that was allocated to it? I am not accepting the Minister's explanation that there were changed circumstances or different priorities. The Ministry of Education did not fail to spend its money because its priorities had changed. The priorities remained the same and there were not any different circumstances. The circumstances remained the same.

So I am appealing to the lawmakers in this country that this provision in the budget that if you do not spend it, you lose it, is a draconian thing which does not take into account the complicatedness of carrying out a programme in a year, especially in a ministry like the Ministry of Education. So let us abolish the word, savings. Maybe it is a savings to the Minister of Finance.

4.00 p.m.

The Minister is a terrible man that he is just looking to see if you spent your money. If you did not spend the money he would say, "I made some saving here." That is hard. I used to do that to my children. The Minister balances his books. He makes savings.

The underspending had to do with a number of things such as the positions of Heads of departments and deans in primary and secondary schools which were

not filled. I understand that the criteria or specifications for these jobs have been in contention, mainly because people who were acting in these positions on the basis of seniority without academic qualifications would have been disadvantaged by the statement of criteria which would have called for certain academic qualifications. A long negotiation has gone on over that involving the Teaching Service Commission. I understand that now there is a memorandum of understanding and advertisements have gone out. I am sorry that these appointments have not been made. They are very important. But 'don't' say "savings".

The whole question of discipline in the schools, of more contact between the teachers and students and giving people more time to take care of the children is being addressed, through the deans and Heads of departments. Heads of departments now have a stated responsibility; the opportunity and financial motivation to look more closely at the teaching in their departments. I hope that Heads of departments would not be scared to report members of their departments who do not teach. There are teachers who sit in the staff room and leave their classes. Heads of departments are afraid to report them. I hope that the system of Heads and the recognition of Head as a paid position with certain responsibilities might lead to a tightening of the teaching in the schools and better control of the students in the classrooms. It is a very important thing. They have met and consulted and got over a set of problems. The Ministry has advertised the positions to be filled, but they are losing the money. In the middle of next year, I expect the Minister to come back to ask for more money because he made these appointments and did not get the allocations. I am sure the ministry will have to come back to ask for money.

Another reason for the non spending of the money, I think, might be a little slackness. Some teachers, not just retirees or the representatives of deceased teachers, still have not had their backpay. That money is needed. I do not see why the ministry should lose it.

Tendering procedures with respect to the Primary Schools Computerization Programme were initiated in the last quarter of fiscal 2004. I think that there are some serious problems about the computerization of primary schools. Where would you put the computers? How would you stop them from being stolen? How many would you put in the schools? How will the children use them? Do you have staff to teach them how to use them? There are problems surrounding the computerization of primary schools. I can understand why this has not got off the ground as yet. But that is no reason for the ministry to lose the money.

Years ago, I got hold of a Cabinet note in which the ministry reported on itself. The Permanent Secretary pointed out the shortage of school supervisors.

That shortage still exists. When you talk about positions that are not filled, just look in the crucial position of school supervisor, there are many vacancies. If there are no vacancies to be advertised create them—we need the supervisors. You cannot have a school supervisor handling more than one, two or three schools—depending on size or location. At present supervisors have too many schools. The poor school supervisor needs a helicopter. I do not know if *The Cat* can be used in certain flooded parts of the country to carry around school supervisors. The school supervisor has to be in five or six different places. It is too much work for the school supervisor to do. That money should be available, it should not be transferred. This ministry is in real trouble. If I were in the government, I would want this ministry. It has trouble and I like trouble.

There are conflicts in that school supervisors in the rankings are supposed to get more money than principals. The money has been topped up by an allowance, so that the salary of the supervisor is higher than that of the principal. The supervisors are unhappy because that allowance is not reckoned with when the pensions are being worked out. Although a supervisor gets a higher monthly salary, he will get a smaller pension. That issue needs to be resolved before more school supervisors are appointed. I regret that many things have not been done by the Ministry but, I am trying to be sympathetic and to understand why these things have not been done and to point out that this ministry has more problems than most others. It is more than any other ministry, involved in complicated personal and human relation problems. It is not easy. This ministry suffers most from not having completed its programme. It is a crying shame that year after year, they lose some of their allocations.

I could go on. I want to emphasize my point about some of the disadvantages that the children of the country have to endure because of things not happening in the ministry. I make the plea that the ministry should be eased up and allowed to spend the money when it can. We are not only talking about Heads, deans and supervisors not being appointed.

On page 11, there is a statement of transfers for 2004. Under General Administration, vacant posts, salaries and COLA, there is $11 million; secondary education, salaries and COLA, $76 million; and primary education, salaries and COLA, $103 million. That is not money taken away from the ministry, but transferred from one Head to another within the ministry. These posts are not being filled. That has a very harmful effect on the whole system and complicates the problems of the ministry. The sum of nearly $200,000 has not been spent because of positions not filled.

If a principal wants money, there are 19 steps that the principal has to follow to get that money. It takes a long time to access money. Have you ever visited the staffrooms of our secondary schools? Have you ever walked the classrooms of primary schools? Have you checked the toilet facilities? Have you ever asked teachers if they can get stuff photocopied? They cannot. The ministry's money is being taken away. I hope that the Minister would not get vexed with me. I have to repeat my point. The Ministry of Education should never have unspent money because the great mistake of modernizing our system by beginning with the secondary schools has left the primary schools in a calamitous situation.

You could come with Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP) new syllabus and curriculum, but if you do not work on the primary schools—! The children who go to the secondary schools at present, nearly 60 per cent are not ready for secondary school. By the time the new SEMP curriculum goes into effect, it might be 90 per cent that are not ready. We have much work to do in the primary schools. This is a Ministry of Education. SEMP is going on. The bosses who lent us the money said that we have to do it on the secondary schools and use foreign consultants; use their building designs and do everything that they say. We borrow the money and pay interest and they have a right to tell us what to do. I will not accept that. I will hold my classes in a cowshed if an agency that is lending me money tells me, "I will not lend you the money, if you are trying to devise this system for yourself." If you tell me, "We are lending you the money, but put us in charge of devising it for you," I do not want your money. Be that as it may, they are doing their thing, but the primary schools are getting worse and worse and we need to spend money on them.

I have not been speaking in order to criticize the Ministry of Education, but to say that I am sympathetic to the problems of the ministry. I find it hard that we have rules which say that because a ministry for good understandable reasons has not spent its money, it has to lose it at the end of the fiscal year. That is the appeal on which I close.

Thank you.

The Minister of Education (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning): Madam President, I rise to make my contribution in this debate on the Finance (Variation of Appropriation) (2004) Bill. I have heard the concerns of the Senators on the other side and I want to allay their fears. I will start by saying that the programme of reform in the Ministry of Education is on track. When I talk reform, I talk reform in the early childhood sector; the primary sector; the secondary level and even adult and teacher education. I have heard the concerns and this contribution would speak to that concern.

The Bill seeks to provide for a reduction in the appropriation for the Ministry of Education in the amount of $85,389,615 in order to supplement other Heads of expenditure. As the Minister in the Ministry of Finance said, this is a normal practice following the end of each financial year as he tidies up. The question has been raised in the other place and this place as to the reason. I will quote the Minister in the Minister of Finance. There are three reasons; posts on the ministry's establishment remained vacant in 2004 and the positions of Heads of departments and deans in primary and secondary schools were not filled as new job specifications were not completed. With respect to settlement of arrears to public servants, there are outstanding applications with respect to retirees and legal personal representatives of deceased teachers. The tendering procedures with respect to the Primary Schools Computerization Programme were initiated in the last quarter of 2004, resulting in funds being under-utilized.

During the financial year 2003—2004, the Ministry of Education undertook approximately 292 projects; 289 were fully underway during 2004. The Ministry of Education has been projectized. We have been able to identify the programmes; create teams to work the programmes and identify time lines to ensure that each team, understanding the task that it has to do, would meet the time lines. By and large, we have been loyal and kept the faith.

I am able to list some of the accomplishments for 2004. I will talk about institutional strengthening. The ministry was able to establish a number of units; re-organize educational facilities and management division; set up and expand the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit; establish a Student Support Services Division; a Distance Education Unit and a School Textbook Rental Unit. It is important to say this because as the Senators on the other side spoke a while ago, you had the sense that many vacancies existed and the education system was breaking down.

We have been able to establish a Teacher Professional Development Unit; a Quality Assurance Unit; an Employee Assistance Unit; an International Affairs Unit; a Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training with a focus on literacy and a Joint Task Force on School Discipline. These units are guiding the development of the system. We have been able to strengthen the Legal Unit; Communication Unit; Information Technology Unit and the administrative system, through organizational redesign and training of civil service staff. The ministry has been able to work with other ministries to ensure that student performance would improve.

We worked with the Ministry of National Security to address school discipline; the Ministry of Health to diagnose services for students who need help;

the National Parent Teachers' Association; Soroptomist International for establishing homework centres; the University of the West Indies for teacher training and research; Social Services Delivery Office of the Prime Minister for social support of students' families. In 2004, the Ministry of Education had been able to put a number of the institutional strengthening units and programmes in place to move towards a reform of the educational system.

We have seen some fruit. Let us take the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit. Enrolment at the national level climbed to over 27,000 children between the ages of three and five, in 940 centres, supported by over 2,000 teachers. We have collaborated with the School of Continuing Studies at UWI and Servol. Last year we trained over 350 teachers. Last year we had a Green Paper on standards for regulating early childhood care. We had a symposium and over 1,600 stakeholders participated. Soon we will be submitting to Cabinet and Parliament a standard for regulating early childhood services.

In 2004, at the primary level, we did the continuous assessment process. We were able to put in place a number of systems in the primary schools to look, track and continuously assess what is happening from standards 1 to 5. We have been able to introduce mark books; assessment books and put in place in the National Test. This is very important. We collected data on the students from standards 1 and 3 to get a sense of what is happening. Now that we have a clear sense of what is happening, we are now putting programmes in place to alleviate those problems and deepen the process as we continue researching. It will be data driven action. We have been putting in place a support for the curriculum where the sum of over $22 million has been spent on the young students in the primary system to supply school books.

Resources were spent on braille and materials for children with special needs. The ministry hired 480 clerical officers and attached them to all primary schools in the country. Principals in primary schools never had clerical support and, for the first time, we were able to put that in place. We have established the Student Support Services Unit and targeted the primary schools. Ten per cent of the primary schools now have student support services. It means that in 2004, 3,000 students have had psycho social support; that is for students who we know need assistance. Sixteen primary schools were upgraded and repaired. We paid special attention to the toilets and dilapidated schools.

I inherited a system where 50 per cent of the 480 primary schools are over 50 years old. They are old and falling apart and we have started a repair system. Last year we repaired over 116 schools. We have signed a contract for school security.

We have upgraded security in over 284 primary schools; 141 primary schools were equipped with computer laboratories. Those schools are secure; the rooms have been expanded and the electrical system has been upgraded.

I now turn to the secondary level to talk about what we did in fiscal 2004. Thirty-one secondary schools were upgraded and master plans were done for eight. You would have observed in the newspapers last week and today, we have started to advertise for contractors. The terms of reference are out for contractors to start construction and the upgrading of secondary schools. While that is happening, over 67 schools have been approved for upgrade and construction to start. We have looked at Marabella Junior Secondary School; Siparia Junior Secondary School and Marabella Senior Comprehensive School and we have de-shifted and converted the latter.

Thirty-six local school boards have been appointed and they are functioning; 679 computers have been allocated to 100 secondary schools and Internet access has been given to 196 schools. We have increased meals to 125,000. Over 3 million seats were purchased for transportation at a cost of $22 million and approximately 75,000 received books from Forms 1 to 3. Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) was piloted successfully in 19 schools. This year almost all secondary schools are taking exams in June and $30 million were allocated for book grants.

Madam President: Hon. Senator, you will continue after the tea break. We will suspend for tea and return at 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: Madam President, I will continue where I left off. Before the tea break, I was itemizing all the projects we began in the fiscal year 2004. We also had a project where we did education for parents of students, where over 9,800 parents were facilitated. We had parents from Forms I, III and IV who were exposed to those programmes. Those programmes consisted of peace projects because we were sure that we wanted to encourage a decline in the indiscipline and the inappropriate behaviours of our students. We had programmes on anger management and stress management. We had programmes for teachers on how to manage classes and for students in the out-of-school suspension centres where anger management was used. Madam President, this brought about a decline of 50 per cent in suspension notices. Over the last fiscal year we also recruited and trained a large number of security officers as school safety officers and we allocated them to a number of schools.

During the fiscal year 2004, we began our decentralization programme and we have acquired property in San Fernando in the Victoria Educational District, which was the first in a number of district offices that we are setting up. The staff has already moved over to those offices as we develop and build.

Some of our financial resources went for training and, therefore, we were able to invest in our human resources. We trained our managers and principals in leadership, and our officers and schoolteachers in technical skills. Over 56 members of our immediate staff got scholarships in Masters programmes and 25 other officers are pursuing short courses at the University of the West Indies.

Madam President, I have spoken about construction and institutional strengthening and we have the quality issues: the curriculum. We have been able to put in place a Curriculum Council and with that, we are now moving into the system to establish a quality assurance unit, which would take care of the implementation of the curriculum in the school system, the Adult Education Programme, the Special Education Programme and the Literacy Programme.

We have begun the development of a website for the Ministry of Education for a school net programme. Where the quality issues are concerned, we have also prepared a draft bill, which is now before the Legislative Review Committee (LRC) to ensure our supervisors are well looked after. By next week that draft bill will be brought before the LRC. Madam President, as soon as that draft bill is approved, it will be laid in Parliament so that we could debate the de-linking of the education system.

I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Education spent over 96 per cent of the original allocation of $2.3 billion in fiscal year 2004. [*Desk thumping*] While we spent 96 per cent in recurrent and personnel expenditure, we spent over 100 per cent in our development programmes. [*Desk thumping*] Madam President, one sometimes gets the impression from the other side that this is such a very strained situation. We also heard that in the Lower House and it took us back to do some research to find out exactly what happened over the years. While this is no different to what has been happening in the years that we have looked at, in 1998, the amount of savings that the Ministry of Finance was able to take back from the Ministry of Education—and mark the year, Madam President, 1998—was much more than the percentage that we are giving back today.

As I said before, Madam President, three projects were delayed: the settlement of arrears to public officers; the filling of vacant posts and salaries and the purchase of 3,500 computers for primary schools for the development of a school net programme. I will now go into some details about these projects.

Madam President, I will start with the filling of a number of vacant posts on the ministry's establishment for which provision was made in year 2004. Those posts include a number of non-teaching posts and teaching posts in the teaching service establishment, for example, Heads of departments, deans and senior teachers.

Madam President, during 2004, and after extensive review of the Heads and the deans programme, the ministry obtained Cabinet approval in September 2003 for the creation of 1,569 positions of Heads of departments, deans and senior teachers on the staff establishment of the Ministry of Education.

This is important because as we decentralize and as we encourage schools to manage on site, we are putting in place a structure for that management to take place with the local school boards, the principal, Heads and deans. Madam President, in the given schools in time to come, there will be a local school board, a principal and a number of heads of the clusters of subjects and deans of discipline. Every 200 children in a school would have one dean. That group, Madam President, would then take over the management of the schools. That is where we are heading.

There seems to be, however, quite a lot of misunderstanding about this programme. In 2002, when I got there, I observed that the Ministry had a pilot programme of Heads and deans in only 17 government secondary schools. In 2003, the Teaching Service Commission appointed all persons who were serving in this pilot project: 75 positions of heads and 54 positions of deans. Those persons served from 1993 to 2002.

Madam President, when I got there the ministry sought to implement the programme system-wide. Because this Government does not do things like that, the proposal on the table at that time was fraught with difficulties and we were not able to implement the programme. The proposal sought to upgrade existing positions of Teacher IIIs to heads, so that if there was an existing Teacher III who was not successful in receiving a promotion, that teacher would have no substantive position in which to remain, his position would have now been occupied by another person who was successful in being promoted to a Head. Madam President, we had to withdraw that proposal. We had to sit and look at that programme and we have since rectified the situation. In addition, an informal programme of Heads of departments and deans still existed in the schools and also we had to deal with that.

Madam President, consideration was given to all that was happening there and it took us a while. Furthermore, with the implementation of the new classification

and compensation plan for teachers there was a lack of persons with the requisite qualifications for the promotion to heads and deans and other administrative positions. However, TTUTA and the CPO worked with us—TTUTA has been very supportive and very helpful to the Ministry of Education—and therefore there is now a memorandum of understanding between TTUTA and the CPO which is addressing the issue by creating a transition period during which persons without the prerequisite qualifications would be afforded an opportunity to be interviewed for these positions, pending measures being put in place by the ministry.

Madam President, out of a total of 1,569 new positions, 483 would be Heads of departments in primary schools, 571 would be heads of departments in secondary schools, 515 would be deans in secondary schools and 240 would be senior teachers in primary schools. The ministry is working collaboratively with the Teaching Service Commission to fully implement this programme. Right now, Madam President, advertisements are out; applications are being received and just after carnival we would start interviewing. We believe by the end of this academic year our Heads and deans would be in place. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, this review was necessary having regard to the need to consult and to dialogue with all our stakeholders which involved TTUTA, the Principal's Association of both government and government-assisted schools and primary schools. Therefore we now have a consensus and the programme is being implemented.

With respect to settlement of arrears, having regard to the size of the teachers' workforce, which is over 12,000 and the period of arrears, 1985 to 1997, a substantial provision of $120 million was made for the payment of arrears to teachers under the Settlement of Arrears to Public Servants Vote. Payments totalling $67.4 million were paid in 2002/2003 and $78.6 million were paid in 2003/2004. The ministry experienced challenges in sourcing the records of retired teachers, as well as in linking periods of service across ministries, which contributed to delays in payment to some teachers. However, of the remaining balance of the 10,069 teachers, some 9,008 have been paid as at December 2004. [*Desk thumping*] This leaves a balance of payment for only 269 teachers. So when we are told that teachers are not being paid, I would like to repeat to this honourable House that we have a balance of only 269 teachers to be paid. Madam President, because this last group is so difficult—we cannot find a lot of information about them—a special Liabilities Unit has been established in the Ministry of Education to give dedicated attention to this exercise. We are working assiduously to bring this exercise to an end in 2005.

The Ministry's 2003/2004 Budget included a provision of over $31 million towards the acquisition of computer hardware and software for the continuation of the Primary School Computerization Programme. The ministry sought to step back and review its IT strategy in light of Government's overall NICT Programme. We have been working with the Ministry of Public Administration and Information on a schools net programme. We have been looking at what has been happening overall in the NICT Programme and, therefore, at the end of fiscal year 2004, the ministry had completed its new ICT draft policy, which will inform the way forward for its computerization programme. The primary school computerization programme is now on track and tenders for the procurement of some 3,500 computers are to be advertised shortly.

The Ministry of Education has delivered all the priorities of fiscal year 2004, as indicated on pages 46 and 48 of the budget. [*Desk thumping*] Madam President, I repeat, we have delivered all the priorities for fiscal year 2004. I have mentioned them before but they are worth mentioning again. We have established a national curriculum. They are up and running. They are meeting very often. They are going into the system very shortly to ensure that the national curriculum is being implemented as it should be.

We have established a Textbook Rental Unit and the textbook committees, and I know they are meeting. They met up to yesterday and it was reported that they are coming up with some very brilliant ideas. We are going to make a difference with the textbook industry in this country in a short while. We have provided the Book Grant, as was promised, to Forms IVs and Vs. We have introduced CAPE on a pilot project in 19 schools. Madam President, that introduction has been so successful that all secondary schools are now doing the CAPE examination in, at least, five subjects in July 2005.

Madam President, we have de-shifted the Marabella and Siparia Junior Secondary Schools, which have gone very well. The schools have been de-shifted and their senior counterparts converted. We have exceeded our targets for providing meals to our children. We have established project Peace and the Joint Action Committee with the Ministry of National Security to address student indiscipline. We have recorded a decline of over 50 per cent of school suspensions.

Madam President, we are on track and we are on course. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Of course.

Sen. The Hon. H. Manning: We have promised and we have delivered.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Sen. Roy Augustus: Madam President, we on this side are always very lenient in that the Minister went on a long discourse, albeit, on many occasions irrelevant to the contents of the Bill. There were times when some of us on this side would have preferred to raise the question of irrelevance and I begged them not to do so.

Madam President, it is always good to hear what a Minister says is being done in a particular ministry. I really wanted to hear what this Minister said, particularly, if this Minister would have mentioned something new, or some things that had been done.

I remember recently in one of the debates I indicated that the Minister's speeches always seemed to be in the future tense. I must confess that I continue to get that tense whenever I hear her. While I have been hearing that so much is going on in the Ministry of Education, I am not seeing it on the ground. In fact, when I hear of the number of units that have been established, the number of different committees that have been set up; I am yet to see positive results coming out of the ministry; I am yet to hear, even from the Minister that all the timelines—and I am hearing timelines but not hearing dates to the timelines—that we have achieved this by the particular time we have set ourselves. I heard the Minister speak about a reduction of 50 per cent in suspensions. I would have liked to hear in what time period we are talking. I would have liked to hear how many suspensions we have had in a particular time period, and based on what was put in place, what was the total reduction.

Madam President, all I am seeing on the ground, however, are barbed wire topped walls going up, which seem to suggest to me that the discipline in schools has not been treated with, as much as the Minister said it has been. I am seeing a number of retired police officers being trained to be security wardens in school. I do not know how much training these retired security officers have been exposed to. Those officers have served their time, not having been able to deal with the crime situation out in the streets we are now putting them in the school where the boys are younger and probably more creative or even “more bright”—if that is a term. As I have said, I do not know what training those officers have been exposed to and when I see these signals, they tell me we have not as yet taken control of our schools, in terms of the discipline, as we should.

My issue, however, today is about the savings. Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand spoke a lot about that. He has identified that these were not really savings; these are just moneys that were not spent. The Minister indicated that history shows that there have been savings in other times and she quoted from 1998, if I am not

mistaken. Madam President, I always wonder why a sitting Government must go back to what they feel was wrong during the previous government's tenure. My argument is that if in 1998 we did not deliver, we paid for that through Mr. Robinson in 2001. Madam President, now they have the opportunity not to do the same. Do not carry me back there!

If you are telling me that you have $80 million to hand back—and I do not agree with Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand. They have not lost that money because it was contrived that that money would come back in the present allocation this year. My argument is that it was not a question of the Ministry of Education losing the money, it was a question of the Ministry of Education either not having planned properly; or, having planned, not having executed properly; or, if they planned and executed, their priorities were wrong.

Madam President, if we are looking at the Ministry of Education with that $80 million that went back—I heard a lot of talk about how many persons got their arrears and so on, those arrears belong to those persons, I got some and my good friend there got some also, but we worked hard for that; harder than some persons in here are working right now.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Only the PNM could have solved that problem.

Sen. R. Augustus: Madam President, I have listened to my good friend—I told him already that I like to learn from him but with the NBN situation I have lost respect for him, you know. It is the first time I have heard that Minister mumbling, grumbling and shifting. I could not believe that was the Minister for whom I had respect. [*Laughter*]

I will continue, Madam President. They have $80 million because we have vacant posts throughout the system in the Ministry of Education. Vacant posts suggest to me that in an education system where the human resource input is most important, we have neglected it. We have used money to refurbish primary schools; to build walls and for other infrastructural things. We did not plan for them even though we now have money in the kitty and even though we knew we had to do it.

Madam President, we have an excellent planner in the Ministry of Education, by the name of Burgess. I call him Peter Minshall Burgess now because all he does is design, design and design. We have not seen one new building put up as yet from Peter Minshall Burgess; just designs. Madam President, in spite of all that expensive expertise that was brought in the person of Peter Minshall Burgess, we still did not plan for refurbishing primary schools in the July/August vacation

period to the extent that we should have planned and, therefore, we had to take money from another source within the Ministry of Education and from where did we take that money? We took that money from vacant positions. We have not filled the positions.

I heard the Minister say in her speech that they are now collaborating with the Teaching Service Commission and I really worry about that Teaching Service Commission. I worry about it! Madam President, that is why we want constitutional reform, not reformation of only the service commissions, total constitutional reform so that we could put everything in its proper perspective. They are collaborating with the Teaching Service Commission and yet we have hundreds of positions in the teaching service not being filled. There are hundreds of people acting—and I am going to say it over and over; I will repeat it here until it is done.

Madam President, everybody knows that there are a few of us who can deliver well, with the confidence that we should deliver when we are acting. Like in the Port of Spain district when 80 per cent of the principals and vice-principals are acting, tell me what the problem is. The whole school situation is replicated throughout the country in terms of the acting positions. When we cannot pay supervisors, and I am going back to that because that is where I am coming from. I raised the point about supervisors and I remember being told by the goodly Minister—and I will tell you that I really have respect for the Minister. I think the Minister is a lady and she tries well and I will always support her because it is education.

5.30 p.m.

Madam President, whenever I say something it is because I want to make sure that our young people—no matter what ethnic origin, our young Trinidadians and Tobagonians—that they are exposed to the full benefits of our resources—what the oil money is giving us, we must expose our youngsters.

I remember going into the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology (TTIT) about three years ago and when I saw Trinidadians there—do you remember that question? Who you saw when you went into TTIT? I saw Trinidadians there. I was happy that there was a facility that Trinidadians are exposed to for the benefit of the industries in this country. [*Desk thumping*] I am certain when I go into that new facility in John John, I will see Trinidadians there and I will be happy that they are exposed to some kind of training. It is extremely important.

We can not have money in the Ministry of Education and we cannot be hearing that on the legislative agenda supervisors will be taken care of and there

will be de-linking. We cannot hear conveniently today that next week something is going before the Law Review Commission—and it has not been happening.

Madam President, let me tell you how bad it is. If you are a School Supervisor III, today—you normally become a School Supervisor III—there are other ways of getting there, after you have served well as a Principal II in a secondary school and you would most probably have attained your maximum.

A School Supervisor III is paid $9,019 per month, and has been given an allowance because of this lack of de-linking of $3,600. In fact, a School Supervisor III today gets $9,019 plus $3,600. I think that is $12,619 per month. Remember that $3,600 is just an allowance. More than a year now it has been made pensionable—the allowance that is—and I want the Minister to tell me whether there has been any supervisor who has gone home on retirement. I may be wrong at this point because I have not checked this fully, but please tell me who have been paid on the basis of their supervisors' salary plus their pensionable allowance or whether they have not all gone home and have been paid their gratuity on the basis of their supervisory post and salary alone. But the Principal II is the reservoir from which you take your School Supervisor III. The maximum of a Principal II today—no allowance, flat maximum, pensionable pay is $14,366. Supervisor III, with allowance, is $12,619; Principal II, the reservoir from which you want your School Supervisor III, is $14,366. Vice-Principal II, maximum is $12,416.; School Supervisor III with the allowance is $12,619.

Madam President, will you want to be promoted or if you had been promoted already, will you have the incentive or the motivation to work?

Sen. Dumas: Remember the history.

Sen. R. Augustus: Remember the history. I can tell you the history of that and my good friend again—the history of that was the negotiation between the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association (TTUTA) and the then Government, and the Public Services Association were the ones who were determined that they would block the supervisors from coming into that role. Legislation had been prepared in our time, 2001 and since then that legislation has not been brought before the Parliament. So do not tell me about the genesis, do not tell me about the history. The history is that you have been there three years and you should have dealt with the people. That is the history. [*Desk thumping*]

The School Supervisor II—$7,937, plus $3600, $11,500. In fact, the School Supervisor I is also $7,000 plus $3,600—$10,600. The Principal I, the reservoir

from which you get your School Supervisors I and II, $13,416. Three years, and I will tell you something. On January 21, 2005, that is this Friday, the principals and the teachers are going up again. They gone again! If I were a supervisor today I would have fallen sick Friday. If I had been a supervisor in the service—it is a good thing I am too old for that now—I would have fallen sick on Friday when them boys getting all that money and you are telling me now—and Madam President, do you know something? We wonder why we are not getting the results out of the primary school system as we need to get, when supervision is so extremely important.

There are those of us who grew up in the teaching profession who understood what happened when a supervisor came into your school and when that supervisor came by your desk, when that supervisor tested your class, and when you were able to interact with that supervisor and get advice. There were those of us who understood that when the supervisor came to the principal and asked that principal for his vision, and asked that principal for his or her programme of work to help them to develop it. Do you wonder why those supervisors are not motivated to do what used to be done in our time? Because they are not being paid! It looks as if nobody cares about them. You wonder why now the good school principals are not seeking promotion to the ranks of the supervisory staff. We wonder, after three years and this Government was put there by a man whose father was a principal so they should have an idea what the education system is all about. Do you know the school supervisors are operating under strain? Talk to the teachers in the schools.

When last have the schools been visited by panels of supervisors in the main? They do not. They cannot. And it has nothing to do with the money now. It has to do with the understaffing of the school supervisory establishment. There is not one educational division in the whole of Trinidad and Tobago—and correct me if I am wrong—where you have the full establishment. And they have to work additional to what the establishment was designed for 15 or 20 years ago, so that is why you have money going back because you are not paying people who are there and you do not have enough people there. That is why money is going back, and then you take the money that you should have used to develop your human resource base in your schools.

I heard Prof. Ramchand say today, give me the children and a mango tree or cow pen and something like that and I will teach them. I remember the cow pen; that was said by somebody years ago: how the schools were cow pens and cow sheds, and so forth, yet those are the schools that are producing now. We think

that the big fancy buildings are important. We think that you can put a big edifice, like taking the Red House and changing it for the Prime Minister and he would work better. Nothing could make him work better. We think that these large edifices can do what the teacher is supposed to do. They cannot! Teachers need support systems. So when you do not utilize the money that was allocated to you for developing your human resource and for ensuring that you have enough people there, and you take it to build wall with barbed wire—if you know how I hate it when I pass by a school and I see this big wall, this big dungeon. I used to laugh at the schools in Brooklyn and I used to say that could never happen to us. But if we do not have teachers it must happen to us and if we do not therefore fill our schools with teachers and provide them with proper supervision then it will continue to happen to us. And no matter how many retired policemen we put there, no matter how many walls we build, no matter how much barbed wire we put there, we are doing nothing.

When I read that we are transferring money from one Head in the Ministry of Education—do you know how much money really it is? It is not $80 million. Let me see if I could find it here. How much money we really move from paying teachers because there are vacant posts. I will find it. Give me a little chance, I will find it. But it is over $100 million, if I am not mistaken, because when you look at the back of the document in the Ministry of Education it is $215 million they transferred from one Head in the Ministry of Education to the other Head. So the small thing that they took from housing to send for deceased Mark Guerra to paint a house is joke to the $215 million that were transferred from one Head in the Ministry of Education to another Head. We must go into an aggressive position of finding teachers, of filling every post, of identifying whether we, in fact, have enough posts for the number of children that we have, the areas from which they come, the backgrounds from which they come, because of the problems they have, because of the need to look at the parental control which we do not have as much today because everybody is working.

When I hear a teacher saying it is the parent's fault, we do not do this with the parent. When you grew up as a teacher, whenever there was a problem you had to solve it and I am saying the supervisors are the ones who will help the teachers to solve those problems of visiting with the parents. I am saying therefore, unless we fill those positions and fill them wisely—I am not too sure if there are 100 posts today; 100 posts are enough. I am not too sure if the 100 posts are classified properly. In other words, five teachers in Success R.C., Church Street, Laventille, would five teachers be enough for 20 children as five teachers, let us say, in Kelly

Village? Or what kind of five teachers do you need? Are we addressing that or are we just recruiting? We are not even recruiting. We have money to pay people and we are not paying them and we are sending it back. I am very, very worried about that, and I will tell you something.

Madam President, I do not think that I have seen a denominational school with walls as yet. Tell me if I am wrong. Is there any denominational school with those high walls with barbed wire? I do not think I have seen that and yet there seems to be a disturbing trend of interfering with our denominational schools. I am hearing through the grapevine that there is the possibility of changing—I have read all kinds of documents, and I have not seen it in paper so correct me if I am wrong, but there seems to be an approach which seems to say when we put some money in your school 40 or 50 per cent, then let us own it jointly. I am hearing that. Please tell me I am not hearing the right thing. Tell me that I am hearing rumours.

I am also hearing that we want to interfere with the 20 per cent to the denominational schools. Tell me I am wrong. Let them tell me that I am wrong. [*Interruption*] I want to hear you. I know you are riding high. It nearly broke up a whole union? I cannot hear the hon. Senator; he is talking softly. Let them tell me that I am hearing wrong, that they are not going to interfere with the 20 per cent. They are not gong to make it 30 per cent or 15 per cent, neither are they going to change the concept or the method with which it is going to apply. It has been working.

The Americans have a saying, "when it is working do not fix it". I mean the real flagship of our education system is the denominational schools and, therefore, the Government should do everything possible to support these denominational schools. I am hearing we should have a local archbishop, and I am wondering if we do not already have the local archbishop chosen; ready to move the 20 per cent and all these kinds of things.

I have observed the operations of this Government—if something is floated, how is it called? Fly a kite. If the Prime Minister flies a kite, and there is a hue and cry—they know this country so well, seven days, it will drop in seven days and it will come back in another form, and you will get it again. Thank God the Pope understands this thing well and the Pope will deal with anybody who thinks he has people in whom he is well pleased.

I want us to understand that what we have to do is not to destroy the fabric of the denominational school system, but support it; and not only support it, but

learn from that system so that we can take our Government schools and bring them to the level of the denominational schools. Let us not destroy what we have there. I will be anxious to hear somebody tell me that all I have been hearing as far as the schools go is, in fact, not true. Please tell me it is not true.

I am certain, however, that my good friend will make a statement on it very soon because he knows, as well as I do, what the whole situation is. He is a good friend of mine, and he will tell me in public whether I was hearing the correct thing or not.

Madam President, some money has been shifted around also, in the Ministry of National Security. I always like to end on the note of the Ministry of National Security, because, like everybody else in the country, I am worried about the situation in terms of crime in the country—very, very worried. Whenever I see shifting around of money in the Ministry of National Security from one Head to another, like $39 million to the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SAUTT), tell me what value have we got for that? How in shifting that money—and my good friend and colleague, Sen. Wade Mark, indicated clearly and other Senators, that these moneys have been shifted around even without coming to the Parliament early enough to say, hello, we want to do this. What value have we got? So many murders every day; kidnappings are still on the calendar. Do not tell me how much it has been reduced. The same young people from the same geographical and cultural areas are killing themselves, some in reprisals, some for other reasons. What have we done? What has SAUTT with the $39 million extra done to lower that? What has it really done? Who is really going out there to see how they could change that style? I am a Roman Catholic and people would recognize that from the school I worked at and I read the Bible ever so often. I go to church, too.

There is this thing about the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world". He did not say my sin or yours, but the sins of the world. We live in Trinidad where there is a sin of crime. And, therefore, one is probably looking for a lamb, not of God, but a lamb; and I will give you the figurative meaning as far as I see it for this lamb, to take away the sin of crime, and it has to be somebody in some kind of position.

We know the lamb as a very passive animal and, therefore, a lamb is supposed to be very vulnerable in violent places. This is why Jesus Christ was the lamb who took away the sin because he became very vulnerable and exposed himself to the sin of the world so that he could take the sin away. I am asking, "Who is the lamb"? Who is going out there from that side with all their talk, and

face down what is happening in all those little areas, the pockets that they encouraged over the years? Who is now going to go out there and clean up the act? Who is going to be the lamb? Thank you very much.

Sen. Basharat Ali: Madam President, it was not my intent to speak to this Bill today but I would like to make a very brief intervention and specifically to address certain subjects relating to budgeting. I would like to speak on discipline and prudence in budgeting.

When I looked at these papers over the weekend and being a non-accountant I found it very difficult and I only had to go to the numbers that were in the 2005 budget document, the *Draft Estimates of Expenditure*, because that document gives figures for 2004. There are two columns there, in fact, which I did not quite understand. One column was for the actual 2004 estimates and then there is another column which says 2004 Revised Estimates and I just could not make sense out of some of the numbers which appeared in the Schedule to the Bill. It was in the column, Provision of Estimates (Original and Supplemental, 2004).

I was fortunate I got here 15 minutes early—there was not much traffic—and even more fortunate that I was able to relate to two very top accountants on the other side, my good friend, the Minister in the Ministry of Finance and my good friend also, the hon. Minister of Legal Affairs, Sen. Danny Montano, and to relate to them what my little problem was. That I could not find the numbers on this Schedule anywhere within that last budget document, the 2004/2005 Estimates. And when the Ministry of Finance personnel came, Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano was kind enough to get his people to provide data which brought an explanation to me of these items.

I really would like to speak to two items and they are the main items in this Finance (Variation of Appropriation) (2004) Bill, and they relate to Head 26, the Ministry of Education and Head 36 which is the Ministry of Housing. When I looked at that first column that I was talking about, Provision of Estimates, Original and Supplemental 2004, under the Ministry of Education Head 26, the number I saw there, $2.741 billion, a number I could not find but I learned subsequently it must have been the June 2004 variation of appropriation. The original number, in fact was $2.841 billion reduced to $2.741 billion. In fact, the net decrease in the budget of the Ministry of Education is not $80.4 million but $180.4 million which makes a big difference. In fact, notwithstanding the account of the stewardship of the hon. Minister of Education in her contribution to us, we have a much bigger number to explain, not $80 million but $180 million, and I am still at a loss to know where that number came from.

Madam President, I see you are shaking your Head. In fact, the original budget number—I am relating the revised provision to the original provision so that is $2.84 billion minus $2.66 billion revised provision gives me $180 million. I am saying there is a much bigger figure to account for than the $80 million.

I wanted to find out where that went, and the same problem—

Sen. Enill: Madam President, just by way of clarification. The closing of the accounts, which is what we are looking at, is really based on the approved allocations that reflected a mid-year review. Remember, we had a mid-year review which we debated and then the numbers were adjusted to reflect a revised allocation. It is based on the revised allocation, in attempting to close the accounts, that we are now dealing with the differences in overspending and in sums not utilized and that is really what the issue is.

So that in respect of your original question about the original estimates, you are correct. There was a mid-year review, there was a debate, there was a variation, there was a discussion and at that debate all the issues that we are explaining now with respect to the closing of the accounts were explained, but they were explained in relation to the Variation of the Appropriation. I do not know if you understand that.

6.00 p.m.

Sen. B. Ali: Thank you, hon. Minister. I was here for that June supplementation and variation of appropriation bill. That was June 2004. In fact, the warrant that was shown to me by the Ministry of Finance referred to that. I am not questioning that. I am saying that these numbers, if you look at them just like that, you do not get the full picture. I do not see transparency and the reverse happens now in the case of Head 36, Ministry of Housing, where the original provision was $217,573,000 and the estimates on this page speak of $247 million. At that time, there was already an increase of $30 million in the June variation of appropriation and supplementation.

Once again, on the schedule, under Head 36, based on the original estimates, the figure for expenditure increase is not $56.6 million, but $86.6 million, and the numbers on that particular sheet do not account for that increase. If there was an explanation to us here, we would be much happier. We do not have the resources, those of us on this Bench, especially if it is not in our discipline, to do any research. We are always complaining about it. In this particular case, this was a matter which was dealt with in the Lower House on Friday and is coming to us

today. There was a letter saying that if it was passed there, we would deal with it today.

We did not have any time; this is why I was grateful to the hon. Minister, Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano and to the staff for enlightening me. There are bigger differences than we see and there should be a greater degree of discipline in budgeting. If I have a budget and I can give back in one year $180 million, then somewhere along the line I am doing a lot of over-budgeting. I know that the hon. Prime Minister has said in the case of Tobago that what it wants it gets. I do not know if he says that about the Ministry of Education. It may be that, but I am saying it as I see it.

I see the hon. Minister is laughing. Hon. Minister, I will not talk today about the $120 million funding of LIAT which comes out of the Caricom oil facility. I have here your contribution from *Hansard* on October 26, where you explained that that Caricom oil facility was handled in trust by the Caribbean Development Bank. I am not going to talk about that today. I will wait probably until June. I have a long while to wait, until the next supplementation and variation of appropriation bill comes up, when I will be able, legitimately to, raise this. If I raise this now, my good friend, Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas might say that I am being irrelevant.

Sen. Enill: I will ask him not to say that.

Sen. B. Ali: Well, I do not intend to go there today. I have other matters related to that budget which I will talk about another time. I am still waiting for a statement from the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and I have what you said in *Hansard* on that same day relating to that matter.

I know that the Government places a lot of stress on certain things. Transparency they speak about a lot; accountability they speak about a lot and I would support them any day and every day on the basis that we should be here being transparent and accountable, but sometimes I get concerned. I should mention, under those terms, which also is a basis of budgeting, that I had cause and I did read the Green Paper on Procurement, which I thought was a very clear document. The closing date for comments was January 15, so I am now waiting to see how it gets translated into law, which includes the repeal of the Central Tenders Board Act.

I am in support of a lot of what there is, but sometimes I get concerned. That document speaks to the subject of accountability, value for money and transparency and suddenly, for example, last week there is that National

Broadcasting Network (NBN) matter, which disturbed me a lot. I raise it today—the NBN/NCC matter. It disturbs me, but I do not understand it. I really do not understand it.

I see the Minister of Public Administration and Information looking at me. All I know is that the NCC has leased—I do not know whether it is the studio—from NBN and right now all we are getting is "wine and jam" for the whole day, except at 1 o'clock in the afternoon and 6.30 in the evening, when it is like old times again—Play Whe. There is no change, so I would like someone to give me an explanation.

I looked at it purposely yesterday at 1 o'clock and at 6.30 and there was the Play Whe draw. There was no difference at all between what I saw on TIC and what was there before NLCB came on. It was the same person, Tony Lee, whom I know very well. In the evening, it was the same story. It was Miss Olliviere, I believe her name is. I do not think that Tony Lee works with NLCB. I do not know if the lady works with them, but I would like it, Madam President, if the hon. Minister would clarify for the Senate what that lease arrangement is: what are the terms, and I am interested in whether the licence for that channel is sublet also to the NCC and how it is done. NBN, I presume, is still an entity and I presume they still have the licence. I am very willing to yield to the Minister so that we all get an explanation on what it is all about.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Thank you very much. Let me start off by saying that there is a reason for it being on Channel 4 and not Channel 2. Channel 2 is owned by NBN. Channel 4, as Sen. Mark well knows, is owned by the Government. It was bought from AVM by the Government and it has always been operated by NBN on behalf of the Government. That was why it was called The Information Channel. What was done is that NBN, having taken the decision to separate its staff, go off the air, reorganize, restructure and come back on, there is a situation where, because of conditions which were being imposed by the sole television station in respect of coverage of Carnival, to make interim arrangements for the coverage of Carnival, NCC has been given, through a memorandum of understanding, facilities at Channel 4 to be able to broadcast Carnival. They have recruited, for a three-month period, on a month-to-month basis, whatever technical staff they need for carnival.

Having got the facilities, NLCB, because of their contractual arrangements—remember they have a contractual arrangement with Channel 2—if they wish to use some of those facilities for broadcasting, then an arrangement can be made in terms of the operation of the station, though it is an NCC operation on a pure

memorandum of understanding for the purposes of the Carnival and Carnival-related activities. Is there anything else I can explain?

Sen. B. Ali: Mr. Minister, I still have not got an explanation as to the licensing arrangement because presumably they have been operating under the Telecommunications Authority and I have not got a feel. NCC is a separate entity from anybody. How are they operating and with what kind of licence? I do not know if you can assign that licence just like that without consent.

Sen. Dr. Saith: They are operating on the basis of a memorandum of understanding. They are operating it for the Government who owns the station. The Government owns the station and the Government has said to them: Will you, for these three months, as NBN was doing, manage the station for the three months? There is no transfer of licence. The licence remains the Government's licence. They are providing the management and the technical people to run the station for the Government. That is why I say it is not leased to them. It is a memorandum of understanding to manage the facility for the next three months in order to enable them to carry their Carnival broadcast.

Sen. Mark: May I just seek clarification through you? [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. B. Ali: I am still unclear as to that relationship and I am willing to give way to Sen. Mark if necessary. The NCC is one entity and the Government is a separate entity and the licencee presumably still remains NBN.

Sen. Dr. Saith: That is what I am trying to say. The licence is not NBN. Channel 4 was never part of NBN. When Sen. Mark bought it and put it as The Information Channel, it was always meant to be the government's information channel. That particular channel is not NBN. I can explain it to you afterwards. Others seem to have caught on. I can go one-on-one with you later.

[*Sen. Wade Mark stands*] [*Crosstalk*]

Madam President: Somebody is making a contribution. [*Senator begins to talk*] I did not tell you you can.

Sen. Mark: I am seeking your leave.

Madam President: You have to ask the person who is speaking.

Sen. Mark: He has granted that long time.

Madam President: Are you prepared to give him an opportunity—

[*Sen. Ali assents*]

Sen. Mark: Thank you very much, Madam President. All I wish to ask my honourable colleague is whether he would be prepared to table in this Senate the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding entered into between NBN and NCC.

Sen. B. Ali: Madam President, I would like what Sen. Mark has said there to be done for the benefit of, not only us, but also for the people. Everybody must know that this is what is happening over the next three months because everybody is saying: Carnival is only until the 8th, so what is going to happen after?

Right now, from the little I see on the air—I do not look that much at it—is Ruskin Mark or one of these guys hosting a programme, but really they go to the library and produce songs and whatnot. I do not know much. I would be very pleased if the Minister would prepare a document and make it public so that every citizen could say: Well, okay this is what we expect. Right now, when you put on Channel 3, you see one thing and you do not know what it is because there is no commentator for long periods. Whether it is a live interview or a tape, you do not know. I think we all are owed that by the hon. Minister or whomever the Government chooses to do it.

That was one of the principal reasons I chose to speak. It was really a follow-up because there were these gaps in the information from my point of view. The hon. Minister puts it differently. If I had the supplementation documentation from June, it might have been easy, but I did not have that and I still thank him and Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano.

I am in support of this—there is no reason for us to support it or otherwise. If we do not, it still goes, so I am happy to support the variation of appropriation to close the accounts for 2004. We look forward to the next one, which will probably be June 2005.

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): Madam President, it was not my intention to participate in this debate, but I feel it necessary to at least clear up some points, if only for the record.

I was not in the Chamber when my colleague—after all, he is my colleague—Sen. Wade Mark made his contribution, but he specifically accused the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister of deception and other kinds of things as they relate to the campaign involved in the Police Bill. He said that the Prime Minister was less than truthful when in answering a question he said that the campaign cost a little more than $1 million.

Sen. Mark went on to say that if we look at Sub-head 2, Sub-item 62, under Promotions, Publicity and Printing, we would see where the transfer of funds of $3.0 million to the Ministry of National Security was to support Promotions, Publication and Printing. He said that this is where we hid some of the moneys used for the public campaign. Let me, for the record, indicate that the additional $3.0 million requested by the Ministry of National Security was to support the Ministry's public education campaign as it related to certain specific things. In the first instance, it was based on media briefings and public education programmes as part of the initiative for public security and safety during the period January 12—28, 2004.

You would recall, Madam President, that it was a time when there was public concern.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, in accordance with Standing Order 9(8), I beg to move that the Senate continue to sit until completion of the debate on this Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

FINANCE (VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION) BILL

Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph: Thank you, Madam President. That was part of the promotion on publicity activities.

Madam President, you will recall also that in 2004 there was almost a deliberate campaign designed to prevent both citizens and foreigners from participating in the Carnival. Remember at the time there was talk that nobody could guarantee the safety of foreigners and local citizens were literally encouraged to stay away from participating in the Carnival, telling them that there would be blood baths.

You would recall all the hysteria that was put out [*Interruption*] Well if you cannot recall, I cannot blame you for that. As a result of that, there was a campaign launched called “Safer together”, a Carnival awareness campaign; we are looking after your back; giving people some hints, et cetera as it related to how they could promote their security and safety for Carnival. That was done at a cost of approximately $867,000.

You would recall that we also reintroduced the campaign. When we did it last year it was done generically, so that once it was acceptable and useful, we reintroduced it this year. We made the point that Carnival is a very important

industry. I am sure it is a billion-dollar industry. It puts us on the map. Our Carnival competes with Rio and the Mardi Gras. It is different because of the participative nature of it and more and more people are interested in participating in Carnival, so that we have a vested interest also in making sure that the security and safety of participants is provided. This campaign was conducted to the tune of some $867,000. We also attempted to bring some discipline in terms of the management of traffic in the city of Port of Spain. Madam President, you would recall that we launched a campaign to inform citizens that we would be reinforcing the laws, because we have gotten used to not obeying the parking laws, et cetera, and we felt that we needed to inform citizens before we started to implement these measures. That was another area in which we mounted a campaign to the tune of $184,000.

When the Parliament passed the Firearms (Amdt.) Bill, we mounted a public education programme to inform citizens of the measures. I remember Sen. Roy Augustus in the last debate lambasting me. He said all we were talking about were the penalties because we introduced illegal use of a firearm by so many thousands of dollars and so many years and that all we were talking about were punitive measures. What were the other measures that we were dealing with as they related to firearms? He felt that there was a requirement to inform the public, both legal and illegal owners of guns, of what was expected of them as it related to the new amendment. That was at a cost of over $100,000.

The last piece of the campaign was what was referred to as face-to-face. You recall we started to publish pictures of persons—and I have to be careful—who could assist law enforcement agencies with respect to the solving of crime—very specific. I am saying very specific because I remember one newspaper saying criminals were wanted. We never said anything like that. We were very guarded; we had to stay within the four corners of the law. These were persons who could assist the law enforcement agencies in their fight against crime. Those are the areas in which the additional amounts of moneys were spent as they related to promotions, publicity and printing.

The other area was Sub-head 4, Current Transfers and Subsidies and the Sub-item 5, which was Crime Stoppers of Trinidad and Tobago. I had indicated here that the Ministry of National Security had gone to Cabinet and asked for $20 million to assist Crime Stoppers in mounting the "Take the guns off the street" campaign. All indications were that Crime Stoppers as an entity, a non-profit organization, started to gain some success in terms of persons calling in to Crime Stoppers to tell them about some of the crimes, et cetera. So we spent $2 million for them to help us to get the guns off the street.

You will recall that some time last week, in some of the publications, Crime Stoppers was giving an indication of its success. Unfortunately, in order to get Crime Stoppers to participate in this initiative, because of the fact—and I have to be careful; I do not want anybody to say that I am criticizing the private sector—that the private sector was not as forthcoming in providing the financial resources to Crime Stoppers as they would have liked, we decided to use taxpayers' money because we felt that it was being well spent in terms of the $2 million.

I heard Sen. Mark criticizing our using Crime Stoppers. One of the challenges that face us and a part of the reality is that there are many of our citizens who do not have as much confidence in law enforcement as they ought to for a number of reasons and as a result of a number of years. As we attempt to bring back confidence in all our law enforcement agencies, we have to use what we have until we get what we want. In those circumstances, we had to use Crime Stoppers.

Let me correct also the—I do not want to say misconception, but my colleague Sen. Roy Augustus talked about an extra $39 million for the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SAUTT). It was $39 million for the establishment of SAUTT. My colleague feels that the country has not seen the result of SAUTT. We do not share that view. We felt that given the circumstances in which we found ourselves we needed to establish the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago. We have done that and we are satisfied that we are starting to see some of the results of SAUTT as we put things in place to make sure that we transform the police service. At the end of the day the police service is the entity responsible for providing us with adequate law and order.

As we transform the police service, SAUTT is a—I do not want to say stop-gap measure, but SAUTT is designed to give us a transitional arrangement in which we treat with crime and criminal activity. I do not know where the Lamb of God is going to come from. I do not believe there is any one person who can go there and change the situation. We all recognize that we are not satisfied with the level of crime in this country. That goes without saying and politicizing it will not provide us with the solution.

Let me just say something, if I can, to provide some comfort to this honourable Senate. Yes, the number one criteria used to determine how efficient and effective law enforcement is, is murders. Murders are tangible. We are not satisfied with the murders that were committed in 2004. We look at the period 2000 to 2004. In 2000, there were 119 murders; in 2001, there were 150 murders; in 2002, there were 172; in 2003, there were 229 murders and in 2004, there were 260. We cannot be satisfied with that in terms of the absolute numbers.

The only comforting thing—and I do not know if we can find comfort when you look at the murder rate—is that if you look at the percentage increases between 2000 and 2001, there was a 26 per cent increase; between 2001 and 2002, there was a 14.6 per cent increase; between 2002 and 2003, there was a 33 per cent increase; between 2003 and 2004, there was a 13 per cent increase. There is little comfort in that at least we are holding the rates. It is not acceptable and we have to find ways of dealing with it. It does not call for any rocket scientist or science to do that, you know.

6.30 p.m.

Madam President, when you look at the United States of America, almost all of the major cities have been able to show a decline in the murder rate. Let me pull out something from what they say is working. We really targeted gangs, drugs and guns. We are trying to target those areas where there is a high proliferation of gangs, drugs and guns. This requires a different kind of policing. That is the challenge. I have said over and over that what is expected is—and I will not do it, notwithstanding challenges we face in the police service. I will not publicly criticize the police service. I will not do it. My mother used to say: "In all your faults, I love you still." We recognize that there are some things that they must do differently. Behind closed doors, we would continue to criticize and urge them to do the right things. We cannot publicly "beat up" on the same organization we want, notwithstanding its shortcomings. Until such time, we have to use what we have, until we get what we want. We are going to bring about a transformed police service.

There is no question about that. We have already started to take steps to do that. There was the question of the consultants. We are taking steps to deal with the challenges we face, as they relate to treating crime and criminals.

Sen. Mark: We want you to "beat up" the criminals.

Sen. The Hon. M. Joseph: When I "beat up" the criminals you would say that I have a death squad in the police service.

Madam President, let me give this honourable Senate the assurance that this Government understands. I was looking at an Ansa McAl poll on Sunday. The number one concern was crime. The rating was fair, good, and very good. Crime was number one. We recognize that what is necessary is a law enforcement agent that recognizes that we have to be doing things differently to bring about the results. We are going to bring about the results.

I felt it necessary to make this brief intervention to clear up some of the misconceptions. [*Interruption*] I have cleared up the ones raised as they relate to Senators on the other side.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan: Madam President, I rise to make a brief contribution to the Finance (Variation of Appropriation) (2004) Bill before us today. It is amazing to me how—going through this seemingly innocuous, official document—when one goes through it with a fine-tooth comb one would see revealed, on deeper examination, all the stories of incompetence, inefficiency, deception of the smoke and mirror tactics and all the misplaced priorities that are used by this regime to govern this country. We should not be surprised because this is the modus operandi of the PNM.

As an ordinary citizen, housewife and somebody who tries to find basic logic in events, along with the other ordinary citizens, you would ask the question that came out of the discussion between Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith and my colleague, Sen. Mark a few minutes ago: What was the point of rushing to close down NBN, put so many workers out of work and disrupt a section of the society in these hard times, with nothing to replace it? The Minister said six months down the road. That can be translated into a year or two. They would then have to bring in an untried and untested organization to fulfil certain obligations—the Government has—with respect to the NLCB. We are confused. Ordinary citizens in this country are genuinely confused at this point.

We saw the same thing with Caroni (1975) Limited. We rushed to close down Caroni (1975) Limited, but this document shows that we are beginning to fund the Sugar Manufacturing Company to the tune of over $48 million and the rum distillery to the tune of over $5 million. What are we doing? We are breaking down on one hand; we are not building anything. In the meantime, thousands of people in the country are suffering. Children are left without the means to pursue their education. Families are broken up and people are suicidal. What is the point?

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

This is a population that has lost faith in this regime. Before I get into my discussion, I would like to totally agree with my colleague, Sen. Augustus, when he asked certain questions of the Minister of Education after her contribution. Mr. Vice-President, as a mother and grandmother looking to access the best education for my children and grandchildren, I am part of the population of this country that

has totally lost faith in government-run institutions: primary and secondary. Every day we are seeing more and more private, primary and secondary institutions springing up in the country and they are being totally patronized by the population, because people do not want to send their children to the government-run institutions anymore. Everybody knows that the government institutions are hotbeds of terror; violence; mayhem; teachers who are totally disillusioned, demotivated, lock themselves in the staffrooms and do not go to classes; and children are running wild in secondary schools. The demographics do not make a difference. From Port of Spain to Rio Claro and through San Fernando, it is a national phenomenon. More and more people are turning to the private secondary and denominational schools to provide decent education for their children. In spite of all the units that the Minister of Education is purporting to set up within the Ministry and all the positive things we hear are happening in the Ministry of Education, as Sen. Augustus said, we are not seeing that translated into any change on the ground among the children in the schools, the principals and the teachers. When is this going to happen?

What I would like the Minister to tell us—it cannot happen overnight because it took 40 years of PNM neglect and misdirection of the whole education system, to bring it to this point—is whether it will happen in the next three or six years. They have been there for the past three years. What is the benchmark that she is using to measure performance, growth and progress in this situation? We are throwing millions of dollars, year after year, into the system, setting up these units and running around like chickens with our Heads cut off. We are not seeing the results of all this in the Ministry of Education. Where is the monitoring and assessment in a scientific way? We do not want it from the Minister's political point of view. Bring empirical evidence to this Senate and show us what the benchmarks are and what you have achieved. Let us have an assessment of what is happening in the education system. It is really out of hand.

We have a situation where thousands of children are left to their own devices after 12.00 noon every day. Their parents are at work; those who are fortunate enough to keep a job in this climate. Every Monday morning a new state enterprise is hitting the dust. There are many adolescents without any form of supervision. What is happening with the deshifting of secondary schools? It seems to be at a standstill. Thousands of children are at risk. This is totally unacceptable. I do not know what are the benchmarks that the Minister is using to assess the situation with deshifting and how well it is going, what is the percentage and when do we expect to reach the target of total abolition of this system.

I believe one of the reasons the population is making this huge shift towards the denominational and private institutions is that our secondary schools are huge. The children are incognito in these systems. They are falling through the cracks. As the movie said: "Nobody knows my name." You can go through five years in a school like that and nobody knows you, cares about you or can identify you. That has a serious psychological impact.

When I look at this document from the Ministry of Education, where money was shifted and savings were realized because deans were not appointed, I think this is a serious thing. What is happening in these huge secondary schools where there are 10—15 huge buildings housing several hundred students? We need a system whereby we can break down areas of discipline and deans can be responsible for a certain number of students, keep track of them, know their names, their problems, and refer them to guidance counsellors, social workers and have a follow-up on the children. We have said so many times that thousands of children drop out of the system and nobody knows or cares.

My daughter was telling me that the system in the secondary school is that when a child is missing from school, the teacher calls the name once or twice on the roll, if there is no response, she scratches the name and moves on. Nobody looks for the child. Nobody seeks to find out why this child is not going to school or what is the problem. Nobody goes to the home. These children are allowed to fade into obscurity and oblivion; but they re-emerge. They re-emerge holding guns to people's Heads in the streets. They are not lost; they re-emerge very dangerous, bitter and angry young people, willing to perpetrate any kind of crime to survive in an atmosphere that is extremely hostile to them. This is the problem in our secondary schools. What are we doing about that? Which unit is handling that? Which unit is handling the following up of the thousands of children who are dropping out of the system every day, with nobody caring about what happens to them?

The question of the transference of huge sums of money; $80 million, from the Ministry of Education, to every which way but the original intent, is extremely serious. I would like the Minister to give us the benchmarks, projections and time frames within which some gains and progress can be realized out of the billions of dollars that are pumped into the education system.

I would also like to agree very strongly, as a citizen, housewife and somebody who is looking for the logics in the events that occur around her every day. Where is the rationale? The Minister of Finance tried to explain this. I think it is trying to defend the indefensible. How is it possible, as Sen. Mark asked, that the Ministry of Housing is allowed to be practically a law unto itself, to access

moneys, not pay moneys into the Consolidated Fund and collect rent to do what it wants? As my colleague said, there is one law for the UNC and one law for the PNM. When you are in power you can do anything you want. Is that it? Is there no rule of law, process or procedure in this country anymore? Everything is broken down. How is it possible? I would expect that as a housewife, if you have moneys allocated for certain things and it runs out, you have to account for the moneys. You must go through the procedure to make sure that you account for more moneys coming into the system. It seems that the National Housing Authority (NHA) is a law unto itself and can do whatever it wants. This is very disturbing to any right-thinking person in the society. This is indefensible. I think if the Minister of Finance does the right thing, he would call for a serious investigation into this matter and look at the whole question of misbehaviour in public office, on the part of the officials responsible for this type of action.

Mr. Vice-President, I will go through some of the issues that struck me as I went through this document. Under the Office of the Prime Minister, Head 13, we saw transfers from pensions in the sum of $10 million and disability grant, $39.5 million. This went to fund the expenses of a Cabinet-appointed committee, $40 million for promotions and publicity with printing, $2.5 million. Sen. Mark dealt with that already. I want to ask the same question Sen. Basharat Ali asked: Is it a case of over-budgeting, or is it something more sinister? We are seeing the disability grant of $39.5 million and an explanation that the recipients of the disability grant went at a slower rate than expected. Why do we have the whole public service with technocrats who sit and figure out these things for us? We pay them billions of dollars every year to make the budget and come with realistic figures, so that we can establish a proper budget and allocate moneys in the best possible way. The Minister of Finance is telling us that we over-allocated to the extent of $40 million, because we did not foresee that pensioners and recipients of the disability grant would not need that amount of money, or is it something more sinister? Is it over-budgeting for a particular reason? As an ordinary citizen, I want to know. It seems incredible to me that, with all the technocrats, brains and moneys we pay for the upkeep of the public service, this is the sort of information that comes before this Parliament. It smacks of disrespect that this sort of explanation can come to the Parliament.

Out of the $50 million that was transferred from households, pensions and disability grants, over $40 million went to the expenses of Cabinet-appointed committees. The corollary to that is that the expenses of the Cabinet-appointed committees were under-budgeted to the tune of $40 million. Is that it; we over-

budgeted the disability grants to the tune of $40 million? It so happened that the expenses of the Cabinet-appointed committees were under-budgeted to the tune of $40 million that is why we had the transfer of funds? It seems incredible that in this sophisticated, technological age this type of budgeting could pass muster in Trinidad and Tobago in 2004.

Mr. Vice-President, the other item under Tobago, Head 15, is something which I would like the Minister to clarify. Under Sub-head 2, $10 million was transferred to LIAT (1974) Limited. I saw an article in the *Newsday* of Wednesday, January 12, 2005, recently where the Minister of Trade and Industry, said, and I quote:

> "Speaking at Riverside Plaza during the handing over of restructuring plans for BWIA, Valley said, 'The TT Government has never given any money to LIAT. A proposal had been put forward to use part of the Caricom Oil Facility Fund, to assist the Caricom countries in preserving LIAT…'"

The sum in question that was alleged to have been given to LIAT was $120 million. In this context, Mr. Valley said, quite categorically, that the Trinidad and Tobago Government has never given LIAT any funds. We are seeing here that $10 million was given to LIAT (1974) Limited. Perhaps, the Minister of Finance would clear that up for us. It seems to me that if we are willing to fund LIAT and look at it as though it is legitimate—the $120 million taken out of the Caricom Oil Facility Fund to fund LIAT (1974) Limited—why are we not willing to fund a reformed and reorganized Caroni (1975) Limited, an important institution in our country which, in addition, produces foreign reserves? It seems that we rushed pell-mell and willy-nilly to close down Caroni (1975) Limited because the excuse was that it was a drain on the economy. We are willing to fund other loss-making enterprises in the Caribbean. I do not understand this contradiction. Caroni (1975) Limited, in addition to producing foreign exchange, had serious problems of top-heavy management. Those problems could have been solved to take Caroni (1975) Limited into a viable enterprise and reduce the losses that they were realizing on a yearly basis. We found no middle ground with Caroni (1975) Limited. It was deemed fit for instant closure, regardless of the social, economic and human cost, yet we are willing to fund LIAT to the tune of $10 million, as this document says, through the Caricom Oil Facility Fund. I do not know why the double standard.

We have injected $48 million, under the same Heading, Sub-item 40, the Sugar Manufacturing Company. Under the Rum Distillers of Trinidad and

Tobago Equity, $5 million was injected. It seems to me that there are double standards and the lack of a cohesive and coherent approach to equity in the country.

Another thing that struck me, while looking through this document, was under the Ministry of National Security. The Minister made quite a passionate defence of his stewardship a few minutes ago. The bottom line is that nobody feels safe in Trinidad and Tobago. Crime is spiralling out of control. The Minister said on national television, that the record number of murders that occurred in 2004, was gang related. It has very serious implications, not only for nationals, our social and political life, but for foreign investment and the economic growth of our country. It is a serious thing.

When we see that we have transferred over $39 million to a special Anti-Crime Unit, we want answers. We want to know that we are getting value for our money. What is this special Anti-Crime Unit doing, that the ordinary police force is not doing? If they are not doing it, why are they not doing it? This is their statutory role as members of the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago? I ask this question because it seems to me that we are throwing good money after bad. We are not looking at the fundamental problems within the police service. Why are they not performing as they should? Instead of dealing with that problem, we have superimposed on that, a special Anti-Crime Unit that is drawing millions of dollars, creating dissent and disturbance among the members of that unit and the members of the police service, with respect to rank, seniority, perks and conditions. What are we getting for it? We are getting more murders, more fear and crime. Kidnappings continue unabated in this country. Where is the value for money in this?

I suggest that the reason we are not getting value for money and crime is spiralling out of control is that we have not dealt with the fundamental issue of corrupt elements in the police service. That is one of the fundamental issues in this country that seems to be a sacred cow. Nobody talks about it. It is like the uncle in the family that everybody knows about, but does not talk about. The corrupt elements in the police service are the issues that are going to be the core of all the negativity that surrounds the police service and puts the population at risk.

Mr. Vice-President, if you go into any village in Trinidad and Tobago, anybody can tell you that police vehicles pull up and items are exchanged between known drug dealers. They do not care anymore. They are moving openly. Any corrupt person worth his salt in the police service, has a couple of blocks going where they provide drugs,

guns and other illegal things for the young people who are vulnerable, because they are unemployed and have no direction. They are vulnerable to these elements. If you go into any village, they can identify officers who pull up and rap with these people. This is going on and nobody seems to be able to deal with it. The Minister of National Security turns a blind eye and the Commissioner of Police does not seem to deal with it. It has been a part of the system. It is getting worse with the increased presence of guns and drugs being transshipped through this country. We are going nowhere. We must admit it now, we cannot do anything about it, and live with it. If this is what the Government wants to tell the population, it should tell us now. As long as there are corrupt elements which are demotivating the—[*Interruption*] There are honest police officers who are heartbroken and hurt about what is happening in the police service. They have come out and named officers and members of the political directorate who are in league with these officers. This is all in the public domain. This is PNM country. This is Trinidad and Tobago, laissez-faire. Nobody cares because it is the PNM. If it were another political party such as the UNC, our Heads would have been hung on all the spikes in the square.

This is the double standards and hypocrisy that will keep this country spiralling downhill; where crime will continue to increase and get out of hand. We will talk and talk, and nothing will ever change or get better, unless we face the problem very squarely and straightforward and admit that we cannot do anything about it, or make up our minds to make some very hard decisions and do something about it.

Another issue is in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. As we all know, nothing is happening in agriculture that would benefit the farmers of the country. Therefore, I am not surprised to see that under Head 05, Item 08, Sub-item 006, the agricultural incentive of $396,000 was shifted from that for nothing less than official overseas travel. I think that speaks for itself; the type of priorities this Government has, with respect to the status in which agriculture is held in this country. The fact that thousands of farmers are suffering because they are being constantly flooded out—I would have thought that I would have seen some variation made to compensate farmers and get them back on their feet, give them subsidies and increase the incentives. Incentives were removed under this Heading. Nothing is in place. One would have thought that the agricultural sector had a bumper season this year. There is nothing in place to allay the grievous losses the farmers suffered from the constant flooding in 2004. It is business as usual, under agriculture.

Under the Ministry of Health, it was interesting to see the sort of transfers that took place. There were a couple of transfers that struck me. They were from repairs and

maintenance of equipment, $200,000; and drugs and other related materials and supplies, $15 million. These transfers went to, among other organizations, the NWRHA and the Eastern Regional Health Authority. It is interesting to see how moneys were transferred from these particular Headings. In talking to practitioners and workers in the health sector, as a member of the Joint Select Committee, when we did our tours of the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, doctors, nurses and workers complained about the need for funds, the injection of capital and the need for more attention in certain areas. When I looked around and saw the state of disrepair at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, I asked somebody knowledgeable in that field how they would describe/characterize the state of disrepair at the institution. They said to me that 80 per cent is in a state of total disrepair. Any casual observer of the centre can see that. With respect to equipment and maintenance, moneys are transferred out of these areas under the Ministry of Health. With respect to drugs and related materials and supplies, people are complaining. Every doctor you talk to, in all the institutions, complains about the lack of drugs, reagents, equipment and facilities.

I was talking to somebody in the Family Planning Association and I asked about the response of the public to the programmes hosted by the Family Planning Association. They are saying that it is a hoax; it is just a big joke. It is just a room with a name. There is no equipment to hand out to the public when they come for any advice or information about family planning. This is the situation in health. When you walk and talk among the people, you get the real picture, apart from all the rosy pictures that are being painted by the Ministers. Moneys are transferred to the Regional Health Authorities such as the NWRHA, which has very questionable practices. This is out in the public domain. People are calling for the Ministry to act on the findings of the internal auditor which audited the NWRHA.

This is a quote from the *Newsday* of January 12, 2005, which states:

> "The Medical Professionals Association of TT (MPATT) has said full and decisive action must be taken by the Health Ministry in response to the findings of the internal auditor of the North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA).
>
> NWRHA auditor, Harriram Laloo found various irregularities in the recruitment practices of the RHA. Workers were hired and given compensation packages without evidence being seen that proper procedure for approval was followed. An examination of the employment practices in the Human Resource department found that junior officers were receiving salaries and allowances at the range equivalent to a senior officer in the public service although they did not have the qualifications or experience."

This is health we are talking about. This is the people's health. We are seeing this cynicism and lack of motivation, which you are obviously going to get when this sort of nepotism is taking place in the health sector and the NWRHA. It is going to translate into poor health care service to the ordinary people who have to access these services.

We are seeing it in the recent scandal in the neonatal ward of the Port of Spain General Hospital, where many babies are dying. Senior employees of that hospital have come out in defence of the babies, good management and proper procedure, yet nothing is being done, except more money is being transferred into these organizations. There is no enquiry or remedial work being done to understand the extent of the corruption, nepotism, inefficiency and incompetence that is taking place in the RHAs. What is being done is that we are pumping more money into these institutions. How do we expect to deliver health care to the long-suffering population of this country, when we have square pegs in round holes, nepotism, favouritism, and hardworking administrators are being pushed aside by hand-picked people, those who know the system and who want to work and deliver health care, are being demotivated and deactivated by hand-picked officials who have connections in high places. This is what is happening in the health care system in this country in 2005. This Government says that it cares.

When I looked through this document from the Minister, I saw under Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment, the Organization Community Environment Improvement Initiative. I would like the Minister to tell me if that is an offspring of CEPEP. Is that the father or mother of CEPEP? What is this organization about? What does it do to justify $1 million being pumped into that organization? Who are the types of operatives that get work with this organization and what is their function within the communities in which they penetrate under the guise of being part of community environment improvement? That is a long, hard name—PNM's smoke and mirrors.

I have to admire them. They know the dirty politics. They understand the politics of survival. They understand the politics of the gutter, of the gun. People who are serious about national development, the promotion of health, industry, education, culture and knowledge do not understand the politics of the gutter, of the gun and dirty politics; that is why we are here and they are there. These are some of the issues I found very disturbing in this Bill. Some of the transfers, which I found very interesting, show us the priorities that this Government has, the lack of transparency and accountability and they set the tone for everything that is happening in the country. They have many fine phrases and justification,

but the bottom line is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. What are we getting as ordinary citizens having to take taxis, travel on the bus route, go out or come in at nights? How do you feel? What is your perspective on this as a business person in the society? As somebody who has the interest of education at heart, how do you feel looking at the education system, with the thousands of young people who are eager to learn, move forward and grasp at opportunities and are not being given the chance? They are stillborn. They have been given guns and negative messages under the guise of training.

I was sitting among a group of young people who work with the CCC. One newspaper columnist recently said that CCC stood for "commess", confusion and corruption. I could not believe the conversation that passed for intellectual discussion among these young people. I would have thought that these young people were relaxing and talking about what is happening in the CCC environment where they work. They were talking about which commanding officer was "tracking" which little girl, the river limes they go on, and the fact that instructors would come into the classroom and say: "We are not feeling to work today. Let us talk." There is obscene language that takes place in those so-called classrooms. It is a scandal. Nothing of any good is coming out of those programmes. It comes back to the question of how we are going to weed out and sort out the negative and corrupt elements in the police service and defence force. If we are going to put these people in charge of young minds, and there are corrupt, negative elements, they are corrupting the young people and bringing them into disrepute. They are learning nothing and are being exposed to the most corrupt, negative and illegal elements in this country. That is a very serious problem. I know it is not a problem for the middle classes in the country who have the money to send their children to the denominational schools and prestige schools. It is a problem for the ordinary people of Laventille, Morvant, the East-West Corridor, Maloney, Cocorite and Diego Martin, who feel that their child is 16 years old, left school, has no passes and wants to get into the CCC. They are jumping from the frying pan into the fire. These programmes are a national disgrace.

A commission of enquiry should be set up to understand what is happening with the kind of elements our children are being exposed to, under these programmes. I am not saying this because I want to make the Government look bad. I am saying this because I am really concerned for the future and the minds of the young people of this country. We all have to live and work here. My objective is not to make the PNM look bad. I would love if the Government would perform and advance the cause of national development of young people in this country. That would be good for everybody; then

I would not have to wind up my glass and lock my windows when I am going home at 10.00 p.m. because I would feel reasonably satisfied and happy in the country of my birth. All of us would feel happy and more satisfied in the country of our birth, if the delivery of health, education, infrastructure and social services are at the standard they are supposed to be, given our very fortunate resources: oil, gas and other natural products. We have a land that is fertile and rich with the resource of the people who are able to live together, who are productive and have brought us such a long way from the post-colonial era to post independence.

[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

Madam President, we have all the ingredients for a country that can be a model to other countries in the world, but what is missing is the political will to bring this to fruition. What is missing is that sense of nationalism. What is destroying us is the sense of rivalry, given the political system that we inherited from our colonial masters.

It comes back to constitution reform. We, as a country, have to come to grips with changing the system under which we operate, changing the system of politics from an adversarial system of politics and delivery of social services, to a system whereby every sector, class and race will feel that they have a stake in the country and that it is in their interest to push the country forward. I believe that we have come to this point. We are at an adversarial, tit-for-tat position. As a country, we need to decide that this is not working for us and we need to change it in the interest of all of us and in the interest of our future generation.

I thank you.

Sen. Sadiq Baksh: Madam President, I join this debate on the Finance (Variation of Appropriation) (2004) Bill, recognizing the difficulty that the Minister of Finance will always have, in terms of varying a budget and reapportioning funds to different Ministries.

Most times, and on this occasion, we have a position in which the Ministry of Education has its allocations decreased, for good reasons, I am sure. I am sure that the projects the Minister had in mind, and based on the allocation of over $2.7 billion to implement that amount of funds, would have taken a lot of project management to get it going. I am not overly bothered about the $80 million decrease in the Ministry of Education. Like my colleagues, we recognize the work of the technocrats in the Ministry, in terms of preparing a budget, which is an outline of the Government's proposal for the year. Some projects will get going and some will not. The real problem that would evoke the type of discussions that

we are having is because while we were in office, it appeared that the other side did not realize that. When we came with the Finance (Variation of Appropriation) Bill in any manner, it would have evoked the discussion you are hearing now, where you would see shadows where there might be none. That is why we are having these discussions.

I am more concerned whether we got value for money from the money we spent, and whether we have anything to show for it. I have no doubt that all the outstanding policies the Minister of Education spoke about would have been implemented. I am not certain we got the results we expected, not the question of reduction. What is worse is that I understand construction and the increase that might come about, in terms of the sum of $13,814,514 to the projects that went to the Tobago House of Assembly for the construction of the new Scarborough Hospital. I understand it quite clearly. There was the escalation in prices, designs, soil problems and many other things that were not catered for.

In the airport, if there were 10 additional projects to the terminal, it was a problem then. Why is it not a problem now? How is it, when there were additional projects there were discussions that evoked allegations of corruption, but when the shoe is on the other foot it is not a problem? I am sure—I am not one of them—that citizens out there would believe that the sum of $13,814,514 were funds to replenish the materials siphoned from the project. I am not saying that, but I am sure that people will equate it to that value. They would imagine that the entire amount was because there was the siphoning of materials from the Scarborough Hospital to private people, other projects, or maybe the contractor overcharged for the job. What is even worse is that we got an explanation by the Minister of Health, on a previous occasion in this Senate, that the contractor that actually got the job tendered $30 million higher than the lowest tenderer. I asked whether it was the Government's policy to award contracts to the second highest bidder, they said no, but in any case it was done. The Government accepted an initial price increase of $30 million. There were cost overruns, in terms of the projects. What is even worse is that we are not seeing any light at the end of the tunnel as to what it will cost. We varied it. We placed additional funds to the budgetary allocation, but we are not sure what it will cost in the end. It was a problem then, but it is not a problem now.

Madam President, we move on to the $10 million that was for unforeseen circumstances in Grenada. As was stated by other Senators on this side, we do not have a problem with the $10 million. We know nobody could have seen what

would have taken place. We all have 20/20 vision, but we did not want that. We did not expect it. It happened. We are not displeased that $10 million went to Grenada. We, however, felt that it was quite possible—if you look at other areas in Appendix II, there is a transfer of $31 million to supplement a programme for upgrading roads, Project PURE, from the Drainage Division, Ministry of Works and Transport. Every citizen will tell you that the roads are getting worse. They are not getting better. If you moved $31 million from the Drainage Division, could it not have gone to some of the areas that were affected by flooding? The same way we sent $10 million to Grenada, for which we have no objection, what happened to Kelly Village; Caparo; Chickland; Barrackpore; and Coconut Drive, San Fernando? The Government varied it and made allocations to other areas, why not those areas? Why not fix Trinidad and Tobago first, and then send the money to all other areas?

Madam President, on the question of housing, there was an increase of $56,575,101. Housing is an important benchmark for developed country status. We cannot argue about that. We do have a shortage of low-cost housing in Trinidad and Tobago. I am not sure that the funds that were allocated to the National Housing Authority (NHA) or the Ministry of Housing made an impact or improved the quality of life of the people renting those same apartments. What is worse is the $56 million that was transferred from the Ministry of Education was in addition to $150 million that was allocated and budgeted for the Uriah Butler-Churchill Roosevelt Highway. In addition to that, there would have been additional funding that was budgeted for the Ministry of Housing, that did not go towards the construction of new homes, but towards the maintenance of existing rental apartments.

I challenge the Minister of Housing to come and tell us about the condition of those same buildings they spent all the money on in 2002. They have not improved. They are worse than before. You would recall that there were Jack Spaniard nests which were painted blue, green and all sorts of colours. They were told to paint and they just painted. They did not clean the walls, treat the mildew or utilize anything to assist in the future maintenance of the building. In a short time, the buildings went back to their previous state. All the money was frittered away. My colleague spoke about that, so I would not delve into that area.

We are seeing that situation coming into the Parliament gradually and it cannot be allowed to continue. There are Ministers justifying what took place and what continues to cause problems in the country. They come here and tell us a different story.

Madam President, you would recall that some weeks ago, when we discussed the changes for the NWRHA and Central Regional Health Authority, I mentioned that we utilized funds for the purchase of a 16-slice CT scanner for Mount Hope and a single-slice CT scanner for San Fernando. I said it was bought some time ago and the Minister said—I am quoting from the *Hansard*—that it arrived this year. The Minister, in his discussion said:

> "This is the reason why, in the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, we have a 16-slice CT scanner. In San Fernando, we have not a single-slice scanner, but a multi-slice scanner."

Today the distinguished Minister of Public Administration and Information told us that it was a single-slice CT scanner. On that day I went and saw the name plate. I looked at the brochure on the machine. I called the manufacturer, but I was willing to give the Minister the benefit of the doubt. I penned a question on the same day; the answer to which I got today. This is no hearsay. I am not accusing the Minister of deliberately misleading us. Sometimes we get information that comes to the Parliament and the Ministers on the other side make it appear as though we are only saying these things because we want to say them. We wish that every Minister on the other side could be the best Minister we ever had. We want Trinidad and Tobago to achieve developed country status. We want Trinidad and Tobago to be a better place. We have no objections to that. The methods by which we highlight the problems we see could evoke much discussion from time to time. It is for that reason I have placed all of this in the context we are not seeing.

I am pained when I look at the funding, all the transfers to BWIA. Again, we have a stated policy that the UNC supports BWIA. When this administration wanted to privatize BWIA, we told them that was a bad project and that they should not do it. They privatized it for US $10 million and invested $40 million later on. This is where we are. On page 32, Head 43, under the Ministry of Works and Transport, transfers were required to meet—I am choosing from item 52:

> "to advise on transition arrangements for a regional airline and the implications for BWIA."

We are not opposed to a regional airline. We are not opposed to BWIA being a lead, equal or important partner in the establishment of the aviation industry of Trinidad and Tobago. We want it to be done in a proper manner; the plan for the establishment of a regional airline. They cannot be sending money all around willy-nilly.

7.30 p.m.

Madam President, with respect to the present state of BWIA, no amount of money could put BWIA right; and no amount of money that is being put in a bad project could make it a good project.

I want to give you an example of an incident which took place over the last few days at BWIA. At the last press conference, you would recall that I said that BWIA continues to be late from Toronto. I want to draw your attention to a real issue. A passenger by the name of Charles Manahar, a Canadian citizen, was travelling from Guyana to Toronto, and he fell ill in transit at Piarco International Airport en route from Guyana to Port of Spain. On becoming ill, the passenger was taken off the plane at Piarco Airport and he was sent to the Arima Health Facility. I was informed that he got the best possible treatment. Mr. Manahar was declared fit and he was sent back to the Bel Air Hotel where he overnighted in order to catch the flight the next morning. Madam President, the next morning, when the airline went to Bel Air Hotel, they found Mr. Manahar lying on the ground. They eventually took him back to the Arima Health Facility where he died.

His relatives came down on a BWIA flight from Toronto. They came and made all the necessary arrangements to have the body flown back to Toronto. BWIA told his relatives that the airbus was out of service, and they could not accommodate the exporting of the body from Trinidad to Toronto. In fact, as we speak, the body should be checking in as a package with Air Canada.

Two relatives came down and they were booked to depart on Wednesday, because they expected to have everything in place to accompany the body on the plane, but the body now has to go with Air Canada at an estimated cost of TT $8,000. Madam President, hear the insensitivity with respect to this matter.

The relatives went to BWIA to enquire as to whether or not they would be able to leave today, in order to be aHead of the body, and BWIA told them that they would have to pay Can. $400 each. The only reason they wanted to leave today was to be aHead of the body and to receive it on the other end. If that situation did not exist with respect to the airbus they would have accompanied the body in the appropriate manner. That is why no amount of money that you put into an organization with that kind of culture is going to improve it. These are real life issues.

The Minister of National Security comes here and talks and I have no doubt that his plans for improving the safety of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are

not going to work. We support the hon. Minister with respect to holding discussions behind closed doors especially with respect to disciplinary matters. We have no problem with that. We have no problem with the Minister introducing proper management techniques, but we have a problem when the Minister is not fighting publicly with the criminals in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] We want him to do that. You cannot talk outside about the harsh reality of Trinidad and Tobago and then meet behind closed doors with criminals and work with them whether it is for a political agenda, a private agenda, or any other agenda.

Madam President, do you know what is worse? Every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago knows the root of the crime problem. This is like everyone knowing every pusher on every block, except the police. That is just not possible. We are finding excuses more and more. There is a situation where people are giving all kinds of reasons, except the true reasons. I do not have that problem with the Minister of Finance. I have always found him to be forthright with respect to all the explanations that I have received from him thus far. I cannot say that for other Ministers. I do not believe that is intentional. I cannot believe that. The day I believe that I will have to lose all hope for the future. I do not plan to do that. I have a lot of hope for the future. I know that the future always holds hope, and for that reason I have drawn these matters to the Government's attention.

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

Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, thank you. It was not my intention to speak this evening on this particular matter. I want to make two points with respect to this Bill. I was listening to Senators on the other side of this House. The first point that I want to deal with is education. What we have noticed is that this Government will prepare a fancy budget and allocate maximum sums of money to critical Ministries such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and so forth. This is about the third time that they have come to this Parliament with an Appropriation Bill to deal with the removal of funds from the Ministry of Education. Why? Is this because of the failure of the Ministry to implement the different projects which were assigned?

What is really happening now is that the budget exercise is becoming a public relations exercise. They are saying that education is critical; they are dealing with primary education, secondary education and tertiary education and so forth. Some of my colleagues in the tea room reminded us that we already had three Appropriation Bills for 2004.

With respect to the Appropriation Bill which was done in July, the sum of $100 million was removed from the Ministry of Education. I remember the

Minister of Finance saying that was so because of the lack of capacity within the system to implement these projects on a timely basis.

When we talk about the performance of the Government, it sounds like a repeating record or a broken record, and that is why we are not seeing anything happening in this country. They give out grandiose ideas about tertiary education. Recently, we have seen many private sector institutions involved in tertiary education, but yet there are so many complaints about the primary and secondary education system. What are we feeding into the tertiary education system if our primary and secondary education system is not being strengthened? I think my colleagues, Sen. Augustus and Sen. Prof. Ramchand, made that point. We have to repeat this matter over and over, because nothing is happening. At the end of the day, the money is not getting down into the system.

When I heard the Minister of Education talking about all the units that are being set up—a lot of money is being spent on human resources in administration in setting up these units. We are seeing a trend where this Government is becoming so top-heavy in everything, and the money is not being trickled down. They have complained that under the UNC there were no units, but under the UNC there were schools that were built; there were people who were hired; and there was payment of increments. We did not have all those units.

I am wondering if this Government is getting caught up in the bureaucracy, and through the Ministries, the Government is becoming so top-heavy that it is not feeling the problem underneath. The money is not trickling down. We raised this same issue with the Regional Health Authorities. There are so many units that are in place—probably these units are shielding the top from what is actually happening down at the bottom. More money is being spent with respect to the setting up of these units, and less money is being spent on the appointment of Heads of department and deans in schools. Where is the team effort in the school? How is the curriculum to be developed if there are no Heads of department? What is happening with the quality of our education?

Sen. Dr. Saith: Madam President, I would like you to rule on the question of repetition. Sen. Roy Augustus did a magnificent job on that subject; Sen. Dr. Kernahan did not do a good as Sen. Augustus, but she repeated the same thing, and now we have Sen. Seepersad-Bachan trying to repeat the same thing again. According to the Standing Orders, there is a limit with respect to repeating the same thing over and over.

Madam President: I totally agree with Sen. Dr. Saith. Sometimes I sit here—and this is not the first time—and the same thing is repeated over and over. I am listening to Sen. Seepersad-Bachan and it is occurring to me that the Senator is repeating what has been said this evening by other speakers. This is a matter that we need to look at. If you have a different aspect to talk about, go aHead, but you are repeating what was already said.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, the point that I am trying to make is that there is a lack of management. If we look at every dollar that is being spent in the various Ministries, we are seeing a large portion of the money going back into administration, and the problem is not being addressed. We are not getting that money to trickle down to the actual problem that is at hand. That is the point I am trying to make. This is happening in the health sector when we talk about the bureaucracy with the establishment of the Regional Health Authorities, and it is happening now in the education sector.

There is a trend now where the Government comes with a very fancy budget, and then three months into the year, they will come with a Variation of Appropriation Bill. I am making this point because we did this twice in 2004, and in the next three to four months are we going to see a next variation for the 2005 budget? Are we going to see the same problems cropping up in that variation? There is lack of implementation; lack of appointment of people; and lack of construction of schools. This is a recurring problem and the Government is not addressing the problem. When is the Government going to start addressing the management issues with respect to implementation?

Madam President, the price of oil is now $40 and $50 a barrel. We are dealing with an expenditure of over $20 billion, and we are still seeing schools that are without teachers, Heads of department and deans. I have a serious problem with that matter. I am now facing that problem when I look at my own daughter. When one hears about the problems in the school system, one would see that there were no appointments of teachers because of the length of time that the Ministry of Education is taking with that matter. Something is wrong.

Madam President, probably what the Minister needs to do is to get closer to the problem and get a first-hand look as to what is actually happening. The Minister is probably being fed wrong information. I am not saying that the Minister is not doing her best; she is probably doing her best. That is one of the problems that you encounter when you have layers of management between the Minister and actually what is taking place. I am seeing that as a trend with this particular Government.

The other point I would like to raise deals with the Ministry of Housing. You would probably say that there were many speakers who dealt with the issue of accountability and transparency, but recently a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was held in public and a number of entities that failed to file audited statements for many years were brought before the PAC, and one such entity was the National Housing Authority (NHA). It was clear that the years that we were talking about where the NHA used the revenue collected as expenditure were 2003—2004, and there were no audited statements for that period.

The Auditor General had filed a report to this effect and talked about the non-submission of audited statements. I am asking whether during that period the Minister or the Ministers of Housing during that period recognized that this was actually taking place, or did the board, the Minister or management carry out this function without the awareness of the board or the Minister?

Madam President, the Government continues to expand and increase allocations to the Ministry of Housing. In fact, one of the questions raised in the PAC was the whole question of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) where the Government had doubled the allocation through the PSIP, and there was no accounting. In addition, it was also surprising to us that there were a number of loans that the NHA can access, and these loans are not being brought into the NHA's book.

Madam President, there were no audited statements for these years; there was expenditure because there were specific allocations. I do not know if there was a breach somewhere, because there were specific allocations and the allocation was exceeded, and no application was made for further allocation. This did not come forward in any Appropriation Bill prior to 2002, 2003 or 2004. There were revenues collected which were not deposited into the Consolidated Fund. According to the Act, that is a serious matter. I think that is misbehaviour in public office. I think we need to do a special audit, and not just a commission of enquiry.

I am asking whether or not the Minister of Finance is concerned about that matter and whether or not he is satisfied that the moneys being spent by the NHA are being accounted for, since there were no audited statements? There were no audited statements from the NHA and the Government continues to increase NHA's allocation year after year. The same thing was done here in this Appropriation Bill. I cannot understand how this Government could be telling us about accountability and transparency. I would imagine that the Minister of Finance would not increase any allocation to NHA until a proper audit is done with respect to all the moneys that were allocated to NHA. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Mark: Sen. D. Montano was the Minister of Housing.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: That is a problem. Probably, Sen. D. Montano is one of the Ministers who has to answer with respect to that matter. The mere fact that they were taking the revenues that were supposed to be deposited into the Consolidated Fund is unacceptable. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President, I am tired of hearing about transparency and accountability in this House. The public is also getting tired with the lack of transparency on the part of the Government, and they want to know what the Parliament is doing about that matter. Of course, we really have no power, and all we can do is talk about the matter. They have the majority, so they could do whatever they want; they could pass their own rules and laws, but there is no accountability and transparency.

When Sen. The Hon. Sahadeo talked about extractive industries and transparency initiative and so forth it sounded good, but what I would really appreciate is if the goodly Senator, through the Ministry of Finance, could influence some of these Ministers and get transparency off the ground. I am saying that as Ministers of Finance they have to be concerned, and they are accountable. [*Interruption*]

Madam President: Senator, you had an opportunity to make your contribution.

Sen. Mark: Yes, Madam President, I understand that.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, what is amazing is that we hear so much from this Government about transparency and accountability. One of the matters with respect to the NHA is that when one adds up the sums of money for just those two or three years that money is over $1 billion, and that sum of money cannot be accounted for. The Government is fully aware of this matter. I am talking here about what was reported with respect to the PAC. Mr. Garcia also indicated that the Integrity Commission actually called them in and they ordered a special external auditor to do the reports. I asked whether or not there was an internal auditor in the department and he said, yes. There were also allegations with respect to ghost gangs.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Madam President, on a point of order. I do not believe that it is customary for the PAC to report to this Senate through a Member. They will publish a report and the report will be laid in the Parliament. [*Interruption*]

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, let me just clarify this matter. That was a public meeting, and what I am reporting on was carried in the press. We passed a resolution on November 23, 2004 to hold the PAC in public and the press was invited. The NHA was reported extensively in the press.

Sen. Mark: That was in the newspaper.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: I am not quoting from the PAC or any private deliberations.

Sen. Dr. Saith: Madam President, I am not debating whether this meeting was in the public or not. I am saying that there is a process. The PAC could hold its hearings in public, private or in Committee Room No. 7 and do its work, but a report is then laid before this Parliament. As a Member of that committee, what the Senator is doing is making a report on the activities of the PAC.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: No. I am not making any report.

Sen. Mark: You are trying to cover up people.

Madam President: You should not preempt a report from a committee. Try not to do that.

Sen. C. Seepersad-Bachan: Madam President, the next morning, I was called on a radio station to answer questions with respect to what took place because the press carried the matter extensively. The chairman of the committee and several other Members of that committee were also called and asked whether they were satisfied with the NHA and two other entities. What they were discussing on the airwaves were the exact issues that were reported in the press. I am limiting my contribution to what was reported in the press. [*Desk thumping*] Madam President, I am guided by your ruling, and I am following that ruling. I am not preempting any report, and I am not reporting on any report.

The question was asked as to why the Integrity Commission had to call in an external auditor. Mr. Garcia said it. The radio station called me and asked about the relationship with respect to the authority and the Integrity Commission and so forth. I told them that they had the authority to do that. They were investigating the ghost gangs and so forth, but there was no response. It was clear that the CEO and the board had no idea as to what was happening there. How could this be if you are the CEO of the board? He did not know what the internal auditor reported; he did not know what the external auditor reported and the situation still exists. That cannot be accountability. [*Interruption*] How does the Minister of Finance feel about releasing funds to an entity that has not accounted to the Parliament? There were no auditing statements, and we

do not know what the internal auditor is doing. They told us that they had no financial comptroller and no accounting unit. What is going on? Millions of dollars are being released every year to the NHA!

Madam President, I think I have made my point. When Senators on the other side start responding and objecting, I know that I have gotten my point across. [*Desk thumping*] Whenever I see them in that mood, I know the point has been made and accepted and, therefore, I expect some action with respect to that matter.

Before I close, Sen. Dr. Kernahan brought up an issue with respect to Cabinet-appointed committees and the sum of some $40 million which was spent. I have served on a Cabinet-appointed committee before, and you do not get paid for your services. That is a voluntary service. I cannot imagine why $40 million were spent on Cabinet-appointed committees. Was it lunch for one year? This is a voluntary service. I do not know of anyone who gets paid for serving on a Cabinet-appointed committee. I do not know if these persons went on a trip, a cruise or so forth.

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

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Madam President, the hour is late. We had a very spirited and engaging discussion. I would really like to thank all the Senators who have contributed to the debate. Once again, for us on this side, this represents the effect of our ability to communicate the programmes, policies and other things that we have done. We get a good idea as to whether or not we are doing a good job. Quite frankly, from where I sit, the review is mixed.

In some instances, we had Senators who were so convinced about the information that we submitted that they repeated almost everything that I have said, and I want to thank them for that.

Madam President, those of us who do not understand what we are dealing with sometimes come to the wrong conclusion. The exercise that we are involved in is an exercise that we have set up in Parliament so that this kind of debate—the transparency in bringing information and discussing it—can occur. What I heard is that some Senators were determined that before the Government does anything it must get permission. That is not the system. Let us understand that.

We sit as a Government, and on the basis of policies, we estimate that there are going to be a set of policies and programmes that must be put in place. The technocrats

in the Ministries do the costing. Basically, every year they ask for more resources than the Government is able to provide. When they come to the table and make representation, we look at them and ask them to determine their priorities and to tell us what are their medium and short-term issues, and we would provide them with the necessary funding. We also made the point that because of the system under which we operate, there will be situations where there will be implementation issues and, therefore, we will have to review the priorities, programmes and activities in six months in order to make the necessary adjustments.

Madam President, the reason for that—contrary to what Senators on the other side who know would like you to think—is that there are certain limitations that we have to work with and which we have absolutely no control over, and one such limitation is the filling of vacancies. I am going to give you two examples before I deal specifically with some issues.

A Senator asked the question as to how advanced we are technologically, and that we should have information in a certain way. Let me give you an example based on my own personal experience. As a CEO, coming from the private sector, I am basically a "techno wizard". I understand how to use all the bits and pieces. In a particular interaction on the first day, there were two secretaries whom I introduced to the Microsoft suite of products. What does that do? That basically allows me, through a computer system, to put all my meetings and appointments on a system that is kept up-to-date through various instruments. For example, I could look at my phone and know that I have Senate this evening and so forth.

Seeing the programmes in the Ministry, I decided that we will go that way. I introduced it to the staff and they were happy for one day. Twenty-four hours later, they came back and had a discussion with me and told me, "Listen, this is really nice, you know, but I am accustomed to writing it down in the book. So, as far as we are concerned, from here on we are writing it in the book." Immediately after that, I had another situation. I will normally do my appointments and put them on the computer and print them and give them to the secretaries, and they will take the appointments and then write them down in the book. That is what I got into. That is the Government.

There was another situation with respect to the Customs Department. We often hear people talking about seniority and so forth. A guy got up one morning only to find out that he is in charge. He does not want the work; he does not even go to work. He is looking all around to see if somebody could find a way for him not to get the work. Every day he comes and says, "Boss, I do not want to do this

wuk." We will then go to the Public Service Commission and tell them that we do not think that this individual is interested in the job, et cetera, and the next day they will appoint that same fellow. [*Laughter*] Why? Based on the system, they are afraid of judicial review. They believe that if they do something else, they would be subjected to judicial review and they would be embarrassed. They are more afraid of embarrassment than fixing the system.

These commissions do not report to the Government. They have absolutely nothing to do with the Government. In many instances, we cannot even talk to them because they are independent. They choose whether or not to take our calls. There was a situation—and Senators are aware of this problem—where we changed four Heads at the Customs Department within 12 months. In fact, a guy took us to court because he had five days on the job and we did not give him the job. I want to put that on the record because, you see, when we recognize those issues, and we come up with the solution and say, "Listen, let us change the commission's structure because crime is the most important issue." If the mature view is that while people are dying left, right and centre you want to have a holistic approach to a situation, then that is fine. We must understand that it is going to be extremely difficult to have any changes to what we have this year.

I want to suggest to you that if I will be doing this debate 12 months from now, I can simply change the Ministries, the numbers and the same thing will occur, because we have the same system and we cannot intervene to make changes within the system to get a different result. No amount of money is going to change the results.

Madam President, the reality is that we have people in this country who are dying; we have people in this country who are suffering, and under the current system they will continue to suffer, because we, who have been elected to govern, are not being allowed to have the tools that are available to get the results.

Sen. Mark: We were there and we got the results.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, the fact of the matter is that when they came into government the debt profile of this country was zero, and they went and borrowed money. They went and negotiated and they got five and 10 years moratoriums, so for a particular period of time, the debt came off the books and, today, when we get into budgeting, the lump sums are coming up. We spend $6 billion a year on debt.

I am not normally one of those persons who would get involved in those matters, but I am becoming increasingly disturbed by what passes on as

information. If you really want to know what is the state I could tell you. The fact of the matter is, when you come here and talk about issues like that—let me tell you what is the problem that we are experiencing. The problem that we are having today is that there are no institutions to support delivery, because the administration that preceded us decided to deliver services outside of the system. When you deliver services outside of the system, what you are doing, in effect, is taking people within the system and paying them. They talked about Cabinet-appointed committees and, presently, we are having a problem because persons who are supposed to be serving on boards are saying that under the last administration they got paid. Nobody is willing to work for free. That is correct. [*Interruption*] The last administration has put us into a situation where Cabinet-appointed committees—you were not in Cabinet so you will not know—are paid on the basis of categories.

What happened was they recognized the problem, and the way they decided to deal with the people who had to deliver services was to take them and appoint them to committees, so that they could increase their income. We have seen it. We have found ourselves in a situation where the Public Service Commission is saying that we are trying to take away what they had before, and we are no good. That is the reality. There are many issues that we are grappling with, but the end result of all of that is the fact that every time we have to do this particular exercise, it is really about trying to follow the legislation.

The legislation says that we cannot close the books unless we account, and by this process that we are going through this evening, the appropriate allocations would be made and the transparency process will come when we do the big books. This is not the debate for the big books. The debate for the big books is when we return to make the nice promises and so forth. The books are big. There are yellow books, red books and green books. Every single cent that is spent is in these books.

When the Auditor General does her report—that book is also here and it contains 66 pages—every year it tells us which company was audited and which company was not audited. In one of these joint select committees, we had organizations that did not submit their accounts for 10 years. The fact of the matter is that the system does not work.

Sen. Mark: We need constitutional reform.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: That is a different matter. There are some specific things that we have to do for delivery, and we cannot talk about it in the context of everything else. On this side, we will continue to do what is necessary, based

on all the skills that are available to us, to ensure that we serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago, despite the difficulties.

Madam President, anyone who runs a business or who sat in government and had to project for the future understands that. This is really like trying to go to Maracas and looking in your rearview mirror with the windscreen totally barred up. That is what the future is. You do not know. In other instances, you make determinations about the future based on the past, and when you do that you are bound to have slippages; you are bound to have situations where you did not get it right; and you are bound to have situations where you had plans for certain things and they did not happen. The way we deal with that matter in the system is when we come to account.

The method by which we account is by providing you with the information, explaining it to you and when questions are asked to answer them. That is the purpose of today's exercise. It is simply to ensure that the process that we are embarking on—and you understand that we have been given approval for an amount. We did not change the amount, and the Government did not spend more than what the Parliament has given us approval for. In looking at this matter, what the Government had done was spent more here and less there. The overall expenditure is still the same and we have come to account on that basis. I do not understand what is wrong with that.

Madam President, I have heard the issue about fixing Trinidad and Tobago first. I do not understand where the discussion about fixing Trinidad and Tobago came from in the context of $10 billion. There is the sum of $1.2 billion available to the Ministry of Works and Transport, and there is a sum of $900 million available to the Ministry of Local Government. In fact, the $20 billion that we have appropriated is to be used for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. So, when we decide to give $10 million to the people of Grenada, what does that have to do with the discussion about fixing Trinidad and Tobago first?

If we are talking about certain situations where services have not been rendered in the way that you would have wanted them to be rendered, then there are Ministries that are accountable and you should hold them accountable. I do not understand how a national debate could be on fixing Trinidad and Tobago first. That is what we are doing. The fact that we have put $3 billion in the Revenue Stabilization Fund that is about fixing Trinidad and Tobago first; the fact that we are doing a number of things is about fixing Trinidad and Tobago first. I think it is a misrepresentation to talk about providing some resources to someone who is really without any; it is being very uncharitable.

Madam President, by definition, an estimate is simply that. Therefore, if what we have approved from time to time is an estimate of expenditure then, by definition, when we do the estimate, we are going to have differences. When those differences occur then we will have to report.

8.15 p.m.

The other thing about it that I find very strange is that, there is a $20 billion package. There is a whole Ministry with a plan with execution taking place—you heard the Minister of Education talk about 96 per cent. Yet the commentary that is coming forward is based on simply looking at 3 per cent and they are drawing policy conclusions on the basis of that. That does not seem to be something that makes sense. If one wanted to comment, for example, on the work of the Ministry, I think that one would have to do that when one has the information, the total package of information. It is only then one will be able to say the things that one is saying, and understand it in its reality. I do not see that happening here.

To deal with some very specific issues. I keep telling Sen. Mark, I would really love to be able to answer the questions that he has raised. But by his own admission in a lot of instances his specialty is theatrics. He said that this evening.

Sen. Mark: What did I say?

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: You said, Madam President, I am sure that you enjoyed [*Interruption*]

Sen. Mark: I was teasing.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Well, Madam President, he is either a teaser or an actor, and therefore the method by which I respond to Sen. Mark when he is serious is through questions. Because that way I could give a fair representation of the issues that he raises. So that if there are issues I would invite him to raise them under question time. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Mark: "Yuh cyar answer meh question man, yuh cyar answer meh question."

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: I choose not to, because the question that you need to ask, I need to understand and do not understand that right now. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Mark: "Yuh sure?"

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Yes, and that is a choice that is available to me, Madam President.

Sen. Mark: Manning training you well.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Mark: "Oh goooooood, he pass me".

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Sen. Prof. Ramchand raised an issue in which he frameworked the Parliament in a way in which I have a different view, and it is this: I got the impression from Sen. Prof. Ramchand's contribution that he was making a submission that things are happening and the Parliament has not been given an opportunity to deal with them before. In many instances, dependent on what the matter is, the framework is followed. And if it is that the framework has to change, then until such time as it changes, we will always have a difference of opinion, and I respect that.

Insofar as this framework is concerned, what we have to do is follow the law. And the law says that, insofar as closing of the accounts is concerned—which is what we are doing—these are the steps that we have to follow. After you have gone through your preliminary closure and you want to close the account then this is what you must do. In many instances we find out about it as well, after the fact. The tantamount in the other system too happens after you do a reconciliation, you start with something, you have something else, and you try to reconcile and you find out that these are things that are missing and you have to account for them, and this is the process of accounting for them. That is how you do it.

Really and truly I agree with you, maybe it is not savings if you look at it on the other side. When you look at it from the Ministry of Finance's perspective—which is really what this is—it is a finance issue. I have a savings here, I have an overspent here, so in the real sense I have not exceeded the allocation and it is in that sense that the savings are being used.

Sen. Augustus makes an important point which we accept. If on the ground there is a different reality to what we are saying, then it means that the time has come for us to change the delivery mechanism. What we are finding out is that those individuals charged with the responsibility for dealing with the particular issues are not doing it according to our wishes, and that is an issue we have, because we work within a system, the Parliament gives the approval, we issue the mandates and we try to manage them through a system. And if it is not getting down to the ground then it means that somewhere within the system, it is either that the system is deliberately interfering with it or that the system is incompetent, neither of which is acceptable. In the case where the system is incompetent, we have no control over that as well.

Again, I will give you another example of a situation that occurred with me. I had another secretary whose basic job was to ensure that you do not disturb the Minister. So you would call for me and she would say: "Don't you think the Minister busy, wha happen?" I said, well you know that is not what my office is all about, my office is to facilitate. And I heard on the ground that if you call, she would say, "But why all yuh people so, all yuh figure that the Minister could solve all yuh problems? Why yuh don't leave him alone, yuh ain't see he busy?" So I took steps to have her relocated to more appropriate interface surroundings where that level of interaction is acceptable.

But her evaluation came around, and the senior officer charged with the responsibility for evaluating came to me and said, "Minister, evaluation time", I said "and?" She said, "Well, you know we have to evaluate." I said, "Okay. Well, you know my story." She said, "No Minister, I have to advise you, you cannot do that. You see in the public service this is an employee who has had 23 years of service, and you cannot do that Minister. I said, "Well, what you come and ask me for? If I am telling you on the basis of the evaluation that the employee is no good, and you are telling me, I cannot do that in the public service, what you come and ask me for? The officer charged with the responsibility says to me: "If I go and write that, I have to explain it, not you, Minister. I am the one that has to go before them and me ain't going before them, so you could say what you want, I putting 3", and she put 3. The evaluation goes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; so they put box 3, and said thank you very much, Minister. And I could tell you about all kinds of instances like that within the system that deals with the delivery. So the point I am making is that if on the ground it is not happening, we need to do some different things, but there is a challenge.

The other point that I am making is that in some instances these are just timing issues. In other words, there is a date—this magical date, September 30—where you stop everything and you do an accounting, and therefore if something happens on October 01, then in respect of September 30, it can be considered not to have happened at all, but one day after it is accounted for, and I think in many instances, especially in education, that is happening.

Sen. Basharat Ali, let me just quickly deal with your Caricom oil fund, because I know it is an issue and it is simply this. When we set up the fund, we said a lot of things, but we also said that when the Heads decided among themselves that for a particular purpose the funds can be used, it will be considered. The $120 million as has been explained, falls into that category. It is something in which the Heads has said we wish to defer from the poverty

alleviation agenda, because we believe that this particular airline serving many of our territories, if it goes under it has this number of implications and, therefore, we consider it to be one in which it is urgent. It is important and, therefore, we prefer to use that assistance in this particular way. That is the sum total of how that has occurred.

So that in our allocation which we have in 2005, there is no change and there will be no additions at this time to the allocation that we have approved. So that in a real sense there is no additional resources that are being placed in that LIAT activity. It is simply, by agreement with the Heads how they chose to use a fund that we have set up for their particular circumstances. [*Interruption*]

Madam President: He is not giving way.

Sen. Ali: All right, I will wait for another time.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: I cannot be inconsistent, Madam President. Just one point I want to make insofar as Sen. Dr. Kernahan is concerned. There seems to be [*Interruption*]

The point that Sen. Dr. Kernahan made took in some assumptions that are not true, and they are not true because we have not yet reached the stage of development that the Senator alluded to, and we will get there eventually. You see, before you reach the state you have to vision it, you have to talk about it, you have to get people involved in understanding what you are attempting to do and you have to implement and build on it. I heard the Senator make the comment about Caroni (1975) Limited and I wondered how much of what Minister Sahadeo had said this evening, had actually been part—[*Interruption*]

Madam President, if when we speak about an issue, you believe it is old talk, then from where we sit that is our response to what we believe is correct, and I believe, whether you accept it or you do not accept it, or you have a different view, that is okay. But to say that we have not provided you with the information and we are not dealing with it from some perspective, I do not accept that.

Sen. Baksh again talks about BWIA, a proper plan, value for money and so on. And those are relevant secondary issues, and I say secondary because, in order to have value for money analysis, there are criteria you have to set up. But before you get there, you have to put in place the human resources to do that. You have got to put in place the systems to do that. You must have the management and those kinds of things, and those things are being worked on as a matter of course.

In terms of Sen. Seepersad-Bachan, what I want to say is that as usual, she is correct in a lot of the things she has said, and we will continue to listen to her.

However, the time to deal with the issues that she has raised is not now. I would deal with them when we get to the debate on the Finance Bill, which is coming in a week or two. Many of the issues here are really explanations of policy and evaluations of policy prescriptions, as they relate to what is happening. And when you talk about no accounting and transparency, somebody has to define in very specific terms, what those words mean. If you follow the law as it relates to what is required and you do it, so that we could have a discussion about things that are right, that are wrong and appropriate organizations take action, I do not understand what else you want for accountability and transparency.

I will tell you what happens in the reading that I have of some of the discussions, is that if we do not agree with you, then there is no accountability and we do not say that that is what we think you should be doing then there is no accountability and transparency. And I reject that because at the end of the day, we would pay the price for what we did and how we have done it, as in fact we have paid the price in Tobago. We won only 11, we are not doing something right.

So, Madam President, I am very sorry to have disappointed those on the other side, but I am so happy that I have been able to have them engaged in this debate, at a level that I consider to be in the interest of all of us. I really feel that I should go back and deal with all Sen. Mark's issues, because I would hate to have him be disappointed in me.

Madam President in all that is said, I wish to thank the hon. Senators for their continued support, because by engaging in this process we certainly learn a lot. And so, not having said it before I wish to welcome Sen. Cropper and Sen. Rocke on behalf of this side. Madam President, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Sen. The Hon. C. Enill: Madam President, in accordance with Standing Order 63, I beg to move that the Bill not be committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Question put and agreed to.

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

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Administration and Information (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith): Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate be now adjourned to Tuesday, January 25, 2005 at 1.30 p.m. at which time I believe it is Private Members' Day.

Madam President: I know that there was a matter to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment, but I believe that the Minister is ill.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 8.35 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Government Agencies (Advertisement Agencies Employed by)

19. *The following question was asked by Sen. Wade Mark earlier in the proceedings:*

A. Could the Minister of Finance provide to this Senate the names of the various advertising agencies employed by the various Government ministries, state enterprises, statutory authorities and other Government agencies and departments over the period January, 2002 to April 30, 2004?

B. Could the Minister provide the Senate with a breakdown of the expenditure per agency in respect of the various Government ministries, state enterprises, statutory boards and other Government agencies and departments over the same period?

C. Could the Minister further state the amount of money utilized in both the print and electronic media in a detailed way over the same period, as well as the various events hosted, promoted and advertised?

Pursuant to his reply earlier in the proceedings, the Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. C. Enill) caused to be circulated to Members of the Senate the following statistics:

State Enterprise	Advertising Agency	Cost $
Agricultural Development Bank	Valdez & Torry	1,390.35
	Saga Studios	7,063.97
Business Development Company Limited	Mc Cann Erickson	11,317.84
	Willow Works	25,709.13
First Citizens Bank Limited	Valdez & Torry	655,429.15
	Inglefield Ogilvy & Mather Caribbean	766,377.81
	Diversified Communications	337,560.50
National Enterprises Limited	Advantage Advertising Agency Limited	9,103.69
Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation. Limited	Willow Works Limited	97,740.00
Property and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	Forward Industries Limited	2,150.00
The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	Media Methods Ltd.	1,000.00
	Lonsdale, Saatchi & Saatchi	136,137.24
	Heritage Communications	6,325.00
Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	Advantage Advertising	48,421.50
	Collier, Morrison, Belgrave	243,649.52
	Intergrafix Advertising	62,895.00

State Enterprise	Advertising Agency	Cost $
	Mc Cann Erickson Limited	775,620.75
Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago	Rostant Advertising	25,891.12
TOTAL		**$ 3,213,782.57**

Ministry of Finance:

Print Media Advertising Expenditure amounted to $532,287.45 broken down as follows:

Trinidad Express	$ 56,119.35
Trinidad Publishing Company	$ 52,047.41
Daily News Limited	$ 42,076.69
Institutional Investor	$382,044.00
Total	**$532,287.45**

Electronic Media – No expenditure was incurred.

Statutory Boards:

Print and Electronic Media Advertising Expenditure amounted to **$667,162.70** as follows:

National Lotteries Control Board : **$485,826.35**

Print Media	$247,393.66	
	Express	$66,149.75
	Guardian	$53,227.99
	Newsday	$65,442.20
	Tobago News	$15,640.00
	Magazine/Brochure	$40,399.44
	Mirror	$ 6,534.28
Electronic Media	$238,432.69	
	Radio 92.1	$ 8,866.32

	95.5/105/106	$34,362.00
	103	$24,897.50
	92.5	$43,344.86
	102	$27,312.50
	100	$ 4,456.25
	101	$ 4,600.00
	610	$ 4,554.00
	Telemedia	$ 3,812.25
	91.1	$ 1,725.00
	TV NBN	$80,502.01

National Insurance Board: $181,335.35

Print Media :	$151,538.85	
	Express	$43,350.97
	Guardian	$22,612.40
	Newsday	$18,701.00
	Tobago News	$ 3,342.22
	Blast	$56,063.00
	TnT Mirror	$ 3,191.26
	TTARP	$ 4,278.00
Electronic Media :	$ 29,796.50	
	Radio104	$1,759.50
	97.1.1	$4,105.50
	Toco	$1,656.00
	NBN	$1,242.00
	103FM	$1,759.50
	102FM	$12,604.00
	i.95	$5,060.00
	TBN	$1,610.00

State Enterprises

Print and Electronic Media Advertising Expenditure for the State Enterprises over the period amounted to **$2,540,615.40** broken down as follows:

Print Media Advertising Expenditure:

STATE ENTERPRISE	EXPRESS	GUARDIAN	NEWSDAY	OTHER	TOTAL
	$	$	$	$	$
Agricultural Development Bank	1,215.60	3,591.92	1,215.60	2,431.20	**8,454.32**
Caroni (1975) Limited	11,828.57	7,642.45	0.00	0.00	**19,471.02**
Eximbank of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	0.00	2,156.25	0.00	9,545.00	**11,701.25**
Export Centres Company Limited	9,343.07	13,800.25	11,995.49	0.00	**35,138.81**
First Citizens Bank Limited	443,966.14	388,470.36	277,478.83		**1,109,915.33**
Lake Asphalt of Trinidad and Tobago Limited		4,609.20			**4,609.20**
National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation	1,155.75	958.64	7,823.74	1,000.00	**10,938.13**
National Commission for Self Help	0.00	1,291.68	1,351.25	0.00	**2,642.93**
National Enterprises Limited	7,427.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	**7,427.16**
National Helicopter Services Limited	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,065.00	**9,065.00**
Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	41,794.82	31,601.34	30,416.07	23,407.12	**127,219.35**
Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited	10,671.08	5,693.18	6,933.63	4,353.30	**27,651.19**
The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	27,993.20	56,801.85	18,650.25	141,660.42	**245,105.72**

STATE ENTERPRISE	EXPRESS	GUARDIAN	NEWSDAY	OTHER	TOTAL
The Solid Waste Management Company Limited	5,628.00	2,808.00	3,454.00	18,492.50	**30,832.50**
Tourism and Industrial Development Company Limited	0.00	0.00	0.00	18,619.03	**18,619.03**
Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited	0.00	1,613.57	567.52	0.00	**2,181.09**
Trinidad and Tobago (BWIA International) Airways Limited	11,205.01	16,586.91	5,343.19	0.00	**33,135.11**
Trinidad and Tobago National Petroleum Company Limited	30,784.91	21,167.16	14,503.70	3,179.75	**69,635.52**
Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago	11,630.52	2,785.19	2,846.24	0.00	**17,261.95**

STATE ENTERPRISE	EXPRESS	GUARDIAN	NEWSDAY	OTHER	TOTAL
Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme	77,167.04	0.00	0.00	80,947.90	**158,114.94**
Total					**$1,918,287.05**

Electronic Media Advertising Expenditure

STATE ENTERPRISE	TTT	TV6	RADIO	OTHER	TOTAL
	$	$	$	$	**$**
First Citizens Bank Limited	76,893.00	307,572.09	144,097.00	0.00	**528,562.14**
National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company	0.00	5,175.00	1,150.00	0.00	**6,325.00**
National Helicopter Services Limited	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,662.33	**3,662.33**

STATE ENTERPRISE	TTT	TV6	RADIO	OTHER	TOTAL
Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	23,862.50		12,765.00	12,420.00	**49,047.50**
Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited	0.00	0.00	3,600.00	0.00	**3,600.00**
The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	1,500.00		10,331.88	0.00	**11,831.88**
Trinidad and Tobago National Petroleum Company Limited	0.00	8,625.00	2,875.00	0.00	**11,500.00**
Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme	0.00	0.00	7,799.50	0.00	**7,799.50**

Total **$622,328.35**

Events hosted promoted and advertised were in respect of the following:

STATUTORY BOARD	EVENT	COST$
National Insurance Board	Interfaith Service	16,000.00
	Strategic Plan Retreat for Staff	67,765.00
	Media Briefing on 30th Anniversary activities	9,344.90

STATE ENTERPRISE	EVENT	COST $
Business Development Company Limited	Venture Point 2002	8,000.00
First Citizens Bank Limited	Corporate Banking Opening	141,000.00
	Sci-Technofest	240,000.00
Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	Petrokaiso Competition	114,660.00
	Calypso Revue Visit	48,000.00

STATE ENTERPRISE	EVENT	COST $
Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited	Annual General Meeting	20,830.98
The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	NGC Sports & Cultural Club (All inclusive Fete)	87,096.78
	Offshore Crew Dinner	37,471.00
	NGC Children's C/Party	21,547.50
	Petroleum Conference	10,377.41
	Hosting of Group from Dominican Republic	3,864.35
	Society of Petroleum Engineers Breakfast Meeting	5,000.00
Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited	Floriculture and Specialty Food Trade Fair	48,421.50
	Launch of Technology Park	427,015.45
	Local Tourism Campaign- Feel the Pride	270,453.18
	National Tourism Week 2002	123,860.58
	AVAVIT Tourism Trade Fair	80,299.17
	Tourism Industry Training	37,551.12
	TIDCO/TTBS/THA Certification Programme	135,350.96
	CHA Marketplace	77,287.71
	Foreign Fam/Press Trip	264,229.19
	National Agriculture Exhibition	1,650.00
	FCCA Conference Program	54,992.07
	PM’s Exporter of the Year Awards	286,340.17